

Duluth Forest Kinderhaus COVID Preparedness Plan

Fall 2021

Update No. 1

This Plan is written specifically for the fall season, beginning the week of October 11, 2021 and is fluid in nature. Our plan will be updated as new information becomes available and a new plan will be provided in respect to the winter and subsequent spring seasons, if necessary.

Arrival & Departure

Flexible drop-off will occur outside from 8:00-8:30am.

Flexible pick-up will occur outside from 2:30-3:00pm.

Staggered drop-off and pick-up are intended to decrease groupings of families and children during these times. Upon arrival, each child will use the bathroom and wash their hands. As they enter the outdoor space, a quick visual screening will occur. More information about arrival and drop-off will be included in your Handbook.

Hand Washing

Children will wash hands throughout the day at arrival, snack, lunch, bathroom visits, and after use of shared materials. Age-appropriate guidance on these skills will be provided during our first week and continue throughout the school year.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

We will routinely disinfect high traffic surfaces such as doorknobs, tables, chairs, counters, sinks, light switches, etc. We are grounded in the research that provides the unlikelihood of surface transmission, especially with our use of natural materials.

Face Coverings

- 1) Parents must wear masks while inside the classroom.
- 2) Though fully vaccinated, staff must wear masks while indoors, except during mealtimes. Caring for children in a nurturing manner is a vital part of development and masks will allow us to continue this practice.
- 3) All children are not required to wear a mask, indoors or outdoors, but are welcome to do so if they can manage self-sufficiently.
- 4) Masks for both adults and children will not be required outdoors.

If case rates fall to a low level, masking requirements may change.

Social Distancing

The outdoors allows children space and freedom to be themselves and play the way they were intended to. It is the safest environment to play and learn in, especially during these pandemic times. We do not enforce social distancing protocols while playing in the outdoors and play can naturally occur within close proximity to one another.

Your child will be part of one of two groups: The Chickadees or The Chipmunks. We will use these groupings during our afternoons to allow for smaller groups in enrichment and Maker's Space. Having two teachers available at all times will allow us to create these smaller groups when necessary.

Ventilation

The nature of an outdoor program provides unlimited ventilation and a low-risk environment. During the use of our indoor space, we will have screen doors and windows open, when weather permits OR use an air purifier to help circulate air when we cannot open the doors or windows.

Meals & Snacks

Each child will bring a lunch from home and will be provided with a bento-style lunchbox as part of their tuition cost. Each child will also need to bring a healthy morning snack that will be eaten at their own discretion during our forest time.

Each child will have a water bottle that stays at school. This will be washed with soap and water daily and filled with clean water before the start of the school day and as needed throughout.

Mealtimes will occur outdoors unless weather conditions do not allow. Indoor snack and/or lunch will be eaten using both our island table and sit-upons.

Schedule

We understand and respect the need to be able to rely on a predictable schedule as a parent. However, we reserve the right to change the schedule in the case of COVID-related circumstances.

In the event of another Stay in Place order, we will be closed.

In the event our program must close due to a COVID-related case OR per the Governor/State's direction, distance learning materials and/or videos may become available. These materials are not required and can be used by those that choose to do so. Play is their most important work. 😊

We will communicate any schedule changes as swiftly as possible to allow for family planning.

Field Trips & Events

We plan to move forward with field trips this school year following our on-site format used last year. Parents will be responsible for drop off and pick up on location to reduce group transportation.

Plans for sickness within the program and families

Please refer to the Minnesota Department of Health's Decision Tree attached hereto, in the case of illness and/or positive COVID test. Not included in the Decision Tree symptoms are runny noses. These can be a common symptom in the case of allergies and cold weather. If you are unsure whether your child is well enough to attend school, please communicate with staff beforehand.

In the case of a positive COVID test:

Staff member or student will isolate for 10 days following the onset of symptoms or from date of positive test.

In the case of a close contact:

Due to requirements provided by the State and St. Louis County for child care programs, close contacts of a positive staff member or student must quarantine for at least seven (7) days following exposure. Each close contact must test on the 5th day following exposure and receive a negative result in order to return to school the following week. If you choose not to have your child tested during their quarantine, a 14-day quarantine will be required.

A positive test of a child's family member will only require the child to quarantine at home. We will not close in that event.

Please stay vigilant on pre-screening your child daily before they arrive and stay home with the onset of any symptoms to help us stay open. Pre-screening includes taking their temperature (under 100.4) and checking them over for any symptoms. If a child shows any symptoms upon arrival, they will need to go back home. If a member of our staff is sick, that may impede our regular daily schedule.

Billing

Refunds will not be provided in the case of a required quarantine due to a positive test or exposure. Our staff continues to work and is compensated during these days off.

Communication

If anyone in your family tests positive for COVID-19 or you have been in direct contact with someone infected with the virus, you must communicate immediately with our staff, so we may advise families and take appropriate action. Please send a message via text, email, or Brightwheel. Confidentiality will be honored when communicating about a case or outbreak.

Staff will communicate to families any necessary information as soon as possible to provide time to plan.

This plan will be provided to families and any updates will be shared.

Staff will be educated and trained on providing the best care and practice possible, as new information arises.

Please understand that we will do our very best to offer a safe learning environment while staying true to the mission of our program: to provide opportunities for holistic learning through play and authentic experiences in nature while appreciating the child at an unhurried pace. This is an ever-evolving situation and we all need to offer flexibility and a willingness to adapt.#