**Duluth Forest Kinderhaus COVID Preparedness Plan**

*Fall 2021*

*(Updated 8/5/21)*

This Plan is written specifically for the fall season, beginning the week of September 13, 2021. 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, children will use the bathroom and wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before getting their cold weather mittens on, should they need them, At check-in with the teacher, a quick visual health screening will occur before your child heads off into the playscape. More information about arrival and drop-off will be included in your Handbook.

**Hand Washing**

Children will wash hands using soap and water or provided hand sanitizer upon arrival. Additional hand washing in our classroom will occur throughout the day as needed during any mealtimes, bathroom visits, or 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**

Any common surfaces such as doorknobs, tables, chairs, counters, sinks, light switches, etc. will be disinfected periodically. We are grounded in the research that provides the unlikeliness of surface transmission, especially with our use of natural materials.

Children’s hand towels will be replaced daily and washed before the start of the next school week.

**Face Coverings**

No masks are currently required. All teachers are vaccinated and we will **not** require children to wear one. You are welcome to have your child wear a mask of your own choosing, but you will not be able to require others to wear one unless such a requirement has been made by our licensing regulators.

If the State should require masking of child care programs again, the following will be our guidelines:

1. All adults must wear masks upon entering our space and while inside the classroom. Parents must do their best to honor others’ space at drop off.
2. Staff must wear masks while indoors, unless eating or drinking and only outdoors when other adults are present. Caring for children in a nurturing manner is a vital part of development and masks will allow us to continue this practice.
3. Children will not be required to wear masks outdoors. Children may wear masks while indoors if they can manage it on their own, but are not required to.
4. Face coverings should be washed after daily use.

**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.

Your child will be part of one of two groups: The Chickadees or The Chipmunks. 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, and use air purifiers to help circulate air when we cannot open the doors or windows.

**Playscape Use**

We will continue to use all materials offered within our playscape, as the research shows that surface contamination is not to be of necessary concern.

**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. Temperatures below 45 degrees Fahrenheit will constitute indoor lunch.

**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.

**Financial Implications**

Monthly tuition will be charged, as usual, one month in advance. In the event of a COVID-related illness wherein your child must stay home, you may request a refund for days missed ($38/day). A refund request may be made on Brightwheel. Refunds will not be given for general sick days, vacation, holidays, or breaks per our regular tuition agreement.

Staff will continue to be compensated during any COVID-related closures.

**Plans for sickness within the program and families**

If pandemic-related exclusion guidance should once again be required, we will follow that provided by the Minnesota Department of Health.

Please stay home if you are sick and get tested if you are exhibiting symptoms of COVID. This vigilance will help our program stay healthy!

**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. Please send a message via text, email, or Brightwheel. Confidentiality will be honored when communicating about a case or outbreak.

Staff and families will be apprised to all updates to this plan.