

# The Heights Child Development Center

## COVID-19 Response Plan

August 19, 2020

The health and safety of our children, staff, and families is paramount. The below-listed policies and protocols are designed to help parents understand their role and the school's role in providing a safe and healthy school environment. These policies and protocols will generally be followed to the greatest extent practicable, will be adjusted as we continue to receive updated recommendations, and will supersede the policies listed in the School Handbook where applicable. **Please read through the policies and protocols carefully and please keep a copy handy for review, as necessary.**

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## (1) Texas Minimum Standard Health Protocols

We will continue to operate within the guidelines of the Texas Minimum Standards for Licensed Child Care Providers, as we previously have done. The Texas Minimum Standards includes a checklist from the Governor's Strike Force to Open Texas, in which we have used to create these policies and protocols.

In addition, we will follow the Guidance for Child Care Programs that Remain Open outlined by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for increased health and safety protocols. The areas of guidance the CDC and Texas Minimum Health Protocols address, and are specifically included in The Heights CDC policies and procedures, are:

- Implement social distancing strategies
- Intensify cleaning and disinfecting efforts
- Modify drop-off and pick-up procedures
- Implement screening procedures upon arrival

## (2) Preventative Health Measures

### Staying Home

It is vital that ***you keep your child home if they are ill (sick) or acting in such a manner that you believe they are becoming ill (sick)***. We encourage you to check your child's temperature before leaving for school and for any symptoms associated with COVID-19 (described below – pg5). We will first rely on the social responsibility of each family to be as prudent as possible in sending their child to school only when healthy, but our second step is to screen each child and family upon drop-off. It is important for each family and staff member to be as vigilant as possible in monitoring for symptoms and communicating with The Heights CDC office if or when they start to feel sick. A doctor's note of clearance to return to school may be required.

### If a Child or Staff Member Is or Becomes Sick While at School

If a child or staff member should become sick while at school, will escort them to an isolation room. As stated in our Health and Safety policies in our handbook, a parent will be called for the child to be picked up. To the extent possible, we encourage the designated parent or child caregiver, who normally drops-off/picks-up (more on this request below), be the person to pick up the sick child from school. Additional cleaning and disinfecting will be completed of the effected classroom or space that an sick child or staff member has been in.

### If COVID-19 is Confirmed in a Child or Staff Member

If your child, a member of your child's household or person your child has close contact with (a nanny, etc.) is confirmed with COVID-19, you are required to inform us in writing ***immediately and no later than 24*** hours of the diagnosis.

If a child or staff member is diagnosed, The Heights CDC will contact the Dallas County Health Department and Child Care Licensing for guidance on how to respond.

Children or staff with new or worsening signs or symptoms of possible COVID-19 (see list under Screening below – pg5) may not return to school until the following criteria have been met:

- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications)
- The individual has improved respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, shortness of breath)
- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared
- Received a doctor's note of clearance to resume participation at school

## **(2) Preventative Health Measures (cont.)**

### **Allergies and Teething**

Children or staff who show persistent signs of runny nose, coughing and other respiratory issues that may be due to seasonal allergies or teething will be asked to obtain a doctor's note of clearance to participate in school. This note will be dated, filed in the office, shared with your child's classroom teachers, and kept for 2 months. If symptoms are persistent after two months, we will ask that you obtain another doctor's note of clearance to continue participating in school. Please inform the school during the daily screening process about any allergy or teething symptoms your child may be experiencing that day. ***Do not give your child fever reducing medicine if they have an elevated temperature and send them to school.***

### **Group Events**

For the time being, we will not hold group events. This includes any school-wide functions or any individual class parties where parents are invited.

### **Limiting Access to Our Building**

We will be limiting the number of people allowed into the school in attempt to minimize the exposure to any infectious disease. Only the following will be allowed to enter:

- CDC Staff (teachers and administrators)
- Persons with legal authority to enter, including law enforcement officers, Licensing staff, and Department of Family and Protective Services staff
- Professionals providing services to children
- Enrolled children (non-enrolled siblings or other children not allowed)
- Parents who have children enrolled and present at the operation.

## **(3) Social Distancing Strategies**

### **Class Sizes and Classroom Space**

Our classes meet in individual classrooms that do not share space with other groups, have the same children each class day which make for stable grouping, and have the same regular teachers. The classes will remain in their classrooms each school day, except for outside playtime. Classroom arrangement will include additional tables so children can have better separation when doing table work or eating. Toys and materials that cannot be easily cleaned and sanitized will not be used and extra rugs, blankets, and pillows will be removed.

### **Outside Playtime**

- Infant classes will be taken on buggy rides around campus.
- Children in the 2-year-old and older classes play on the playground. We will stagger the outside playtime, so each group will use the space individually. High-touched metal and plastic surfaces will be cleaned routinely.

### **(3) Social Distancing Strategies (cont.)**

#### **Music Class**

The music teacher will visit each designated classroom so that the children are not traveling to a shared classroom anymore. Any materials will be disinfected before use with another class.

#### **Naptime**

Children's nap mats will be spaced out to at least 6 feet apart when possible, and positioned head-to-toe to further reduce the potential of viral spread. As always, the mats are disinfected after each use. For cribs, there is a clear acrylic divider between each crib to further reduce the potential of viral spread. The cribs are also disinfected after each use. A clean sheet, provided by The Heights CDC, is used each school day.

### **(4) Parent Drop-Off and Pick-Up Protocols**

#### **Designated Parent/Caregiver**

It is recommended that one parent or caregiver be designated to drop-off and pick-up the child at school each day. If possible, older people such as grandparents or those that are immune-compromised should not be the designated person, because they are more at risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

#### **Drop-Off Protocols**

Drop-Off of children will occur in the designated area for your child's age group. Infants, Ones, and Twos will arrive at the outer classroom doors that face either the patio or the toddler playground. Threes will enter at the Chapel Entrance. Fours and Transitional Kindergarten will enter by the gym.

#### **Late Drop-Offs**

School starts at 9:00am. It is essential for the efficiency of the drop-off process for parents and caregivers to be on time when dropping off. However, we understand there will be mornings when an emergency will arise delaying your arrival at school. Any late drop-offs will need to call the front office. (enter phone number here)

#### **Pick-Up Protocols**

Infants, Ones, and Twos will be picked up at the outer classroom doors (same place as drop-off) beginning at 1:45pm. Older Preschool kids will be picked up from their classrooms. Please enter through the Family Entrance on the West side of the building beginning at 1:45pm. CDC Staff will be assisting at each hallway entrance to keep safe social distancing.

#### **Communication**

School-wide newsletters will be sent bi-weekly via email. If you are not on that list, please email Lindsay ([lhollandsworth@theheights.org](mailto:lhollandsworth@theheights.org)) to be added. Each classroom has their own private Shutterfly site where calendars, schedules, lesson plans, and photos will be posted.

## (5) Screening: Staff and Children

### Who Will be Screened

The following individuals are required to be screened every day before entering the facility:

- School Staff
- Persons with legal authority to enter, including law enforcement officers, Licensing staff, and Department of Family and Protective Services staff
- Professionals providing services to children
- Enrolled children

### Screening

Upon dropping your child off, he or she will be screened for the following:

- Temperature check: Using a non-contact infrared thermometer, each person's temperature will be checked. ➤ For children, we will follow the requirement listed in our handbook; which is, if a child has a temperature of 100.3° or higher, they may not attend school. Children must be fever and medication-free for least 72 hours before returning to school.
- **Symptoms of COVID-19 that will be monitored each school day include:**
  1. Cough
  2. Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  3. Chills
  4. Repeated shaking with chills
  5. Muscle pain
  6. Headache
  7. Sore throat
  8. Loss of taste or smell
  9. Diarrhea
  10. Feeling feverish or measured temperature 100.3° Fahrenheit or higher
- If a parent believes that they or their child has had close contact to someone with COVID-19 but are not currently sick, they should monitor their health for the above symptoms during the 14 days after the last day they were in close contact with the individual with COVID-19.
- Please be familiar with The Heights CDC's Health/Illness policy. We will be enforcing our policy of exclusion if your child has any of the listed symptoms. We appreciate your diligence and understanding when we must exclude a child because they have an illness symptom present.

## (6) Enhanced Cleaning and Disinfectant Measures

### Cleaning and Sanitizing Toys, Materials and Surfaces

- We will continue our practice of collecting toys throughout the school day that have been put in a child's mouth (or that are otherwise contaminated) and place them in the "to be cleaned" bin to be sanitized at the end of the day.
- Staff will be cleaning and sanitizing other toys and surfaces frequently throughout the day.
- Additionally, a cleaning crew hired by The Heights Church will perform a comprehensive cleaning once everyone has left for the day.

## (7) Caring for Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers

### Holding, Feeding and Helping

The hardest part about social distancing is the thought that we will not be able to give the snuggles and hugs like we are used to. However, we know it is still important to comfort crying, sad, and anxious children.

In order to provide the safest environment possible for our children and staff, **the teachers will wear face masks or shields, to the extent possible, when in close contact with the children.** If a staff member is not able to wear a face covering, they will exercise the best respiratory practices, like covering their mouth if they have to cough, not talking directly in the child's face as much as possible, and washing theirs and the child's hands as soon as able.

## (8) Healthy Hand Hygiene and Face Mask Wearing

### Handwashing

Handwashing is the number one method of stopping the spread of an infectious disease in a school community. The Heights CDC has always placed high value on good handwashing practices, and we will be placing even more emphasis now. Each classroom is equipped with a child-size sink to make it easier for children to wash their hands themselves, and teachers will supervise as necessary to ensure good handwashing techniques are being used. The teachers will be building lessons about handwashing into their daily curriculum so that the children can develop the healthy habit of frequent and correct handwashing. Children and staff will wash or sanitize their hands multiple times throughout the school day. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Upon entering school
- After using the restroom or diaper changing
- Before and after eating
- After outside playtime.

Bottles of hand sanitizer and "touchless" stands of hand sanitizer will be spread throughout the campus. We encourage everyone to use these before entering the common areas to drop-off or pick-up your child.

## **(8) Healthy Hand Hygiene and Face Mask Wearing (cont.)**

### **Face Mask Wearing**

The staff will wear face masks at drop-off, pick-up, and during the day to the extent possible. Children over 3-years-old will be encouraged and offered to wear one but will not be required, forced, or pressured to wear one. Children under 3-years-old will not wear a mask due to the potential suffocation danger. All other adults (parents, necessary visitors, etc.) in the building will be required to wear a face mask.

## **(9) Food Preparation and Serving**

### **Snacks**

Snacks will no longer be served between the hours of 9:00am and 2:00pm. Your child will receive the lunch provided by the parent between 10:45am and 11:30am. Staff will wear gloves when preparing and serving food to the children.

### **Lunch**

Please reference the policy in the handbook for complete details about providing a lunch for your child. We are also asking that EACH serving container (top and bottom) be labeled with your child's name or initials so they can be easily identified if separated from your child during lunchtime. Children should not bring food to share with others.

### **Water**

Please provide a water bottle or sippy cup that is clean with fresh water for your child each school day. Clearly label the bottle with your child's name in a manner that it will not rub or come off.

## **(10) Financial Responsibility Policy**

### **School-Specific Quarantine & Temporary Closure Policy**

If the school is advised by the local health authorities to close for a quarantine period or if the school needs to temporarily close, the tuition for the first 30 days is not eligible for a refund or credit. For any subsequent days after the first 30 accumulative days of quarantine or temporary closures, families will be eligible for a credit for future tuition.

### **Personal Absences**

If your child may not attend because of COVID-19 illness or related reasons (i.e. a child must quarantine with their household), missed days will not be eligible for refunds, credits or be able to be made up.

## **(11) Covid-19 School Attendance Waiver and Release**

The virus that causes COVID-19 can infect people of all ages. While the risk of serious illness or loss of life is greatest in those 65 years of age and older and/or are immune compromised, persons in every age group can get COVID-19 and some will have a severe illness.

We should all be thankful that, with rare exceptions, COVID-19 is not claiming the lives of our children. However, we can never forget that a child with a mild or even asymptomatic case of COVID-19 can spread that infection to others who may be far more vulnerable.

COVID-19 is spread from person to person through contact that is close enough to share droplets generated by coughing, sneezing, speaking and even just breathing. COVID-19 can also be spread by touching objects where contaminated droplets have landed. Because of this easy manner of transmission, an infant, child, or young person who is infected with COVID-19 can spread the infection to others they come in close contact with, such as members of their household, teachers, or other caregivers. We have learned that infected persons with mild or even no symptoms can spread COVID-19.

These facts are vitally important when considering returning to The Heights CDC environment and should be considered by each parent before returning their children to our program. The Heights Church and The Heights Child Development Center are taking specific measures, as recommended by the CDC and Texas health authorities to promote a safe environment, but each family has to understand the inherent risk of their child participating in any kind of group care. We do not expect young children to effectively social distance from other children in their small class. We expect that infants, toddlers, and preschool aged children will, for example, continue to play in proximity to one another, share toys, or touch surfaces that may not be sanitized. Young children also need help from their teachers that requires close contact. For example, putting on clothing items, putting their lunchbox away, or help with restroom and diapering needs. Young children may also seek, and emotionally benefit from, comfort when sad or anxious. While our staff will generally not initiate hugs, it is expected that children will need hugs at times, thus, there will be some physical contact between teachers and children. To the extent possible, the teachers will remain with the same groups of children. However, there will inevitably be times when, for example, the teacher needs to take a break or is out sick and another teacher will step in from another group to cover them.

All these factors mean that while The Heights Church will take certain precautions recommended to combat the spread of COVID-19, these measures will differ from those suitable for other social, business, and commercial settings that adults may be more familiar with.

Therefore, as a parent or guardian, I agree that I will monitor the health of my/our child(ren) and not send them to The Heights CDC if my child(ren) is/are displaying any symptoms of COVID. I agree not to send my child(ren) to The Heights CDC if my child (or any of his or her siblings), or any other member of our household or any other person with whom we have been in close contact, are showing symptoms of COVID-19. I agree to seek COVID testing promptly and report results to The Heights CDC given the implications for other children, families, and staff. Likewise, I understand that parents or guardians should protect any vulnerable persons who are members of the same household or come into frequent, close contact with infants, children and youth who attend The Heights CDC.

I understand that participating in The Heights CDC program or accessing our facilities could increase the risk of contracting COVID-19. The Heights Church can in no way assure, guarantee, or warrant that COVID-19 infection will not occur though participation in our programs or by accessing our facilities.

I understand that I may and should consult my family's health care providers about the risks of COVID-19 and participation in The Heights CDC program and to do so as conditions surrounding COVID-19 change.

By signing below, I acknowledge receipt of The Heights CDC COVID-19 Response Plan and, particularly, this COVID-19 School Attendance Waiver (the "Waiver and Release"). I am 18 years of age or older, of sound mind, and understand and agree to the terms of this Waiver and Release. I have been afforded the opportunity to review the contents of this Waiver and Release with an attorney of my choosing if I believed it was necessary to do so, and am under no legal obligation whatsoever to enroll my child(ren) in the The Heights CDC programs or to continue to do so.

I understand and acknowledge that participation in the programs may expose me, members of my family, or those with whom I have close contact to COVID-19 and to a risk of COVID-19 infection. I understand that medical research regarding the potential for infection with and harm caused by the COVID-19 is ongoing, and that no widely-accepted vaccine against or cure for COVID-19 is currently available.

As a result, I understand that the potential risks associated with exposure to or infection with COVID-19 are not fully known, but may include significant and serious illness, bodily injury, disfigurement, temporary or permanent disability, and/or death. Nevertheless, having considered the risks of participation in the The Heights CDC program, including those outlined in this Waiver and Release, I have determined that I desire for my child(ren) to participate in the program, of my own free will and out of my voluntary desire for my child(ren) to have the benefit of the program. Accordingly, for good and valuable consideration, including without limitation the opportunity to participate in the program, I HEREBY ASSUME ALL OF THE RISKS OF PARTICIPATING IN THE PROGRAM, INCLUDING WITHOUT LIMITATION THE RISK THAT I, MY CHILD(REN), FAMILY OR OTHER PERSONS WITH WHOM I MAY COME IN CLOSE CONTACT, MAY BE EXPOSED TO OR BECOME INFECTED WITH COVID-19.

I HEREBY, FOR MYSELF AND MY CHILD(REN) AND MY AND THEIR RESPECTIVE HEIRS, SUCCESSORS, AND ASSIGNS, AND ALL THOSE CLAIMING BY OR THROUGH ME OR MY CHILD(REN), WAIVE, RELEASE, AND AGREE TO DEFEND, INDEMNIFY, AND HOLD HARMLESS THE HEIGHTS CHURCH, THE HEIGHTS CDC, AND ITS AGENTS, EMPLOYEES, MINISTERS, TEACHERS, TRUSTEES AND VOLUNTEERS (COLLECTIVELY, "INDEMNITEES") FROM AND AGAINST ANY LIABILITY, LOSS, EXPENSE, OR OTHER DAMAGE—INCLUDING PERSONAL INJURIES, PROPERTY DAMAGE, DEATH, COSTS OF COURT, AND ATTORNEY'S FEES—ARISING FROM, RELATING TO, OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF MY CHILD(REN) IN THE PROGRAMS, **INCLUDING THOSE WHICH ARISE OR ARE ALLEGED TO ARISE FROM THE NEGLIGENCE OF ANY INDEMNITEE.**

I have read, understand, and agree to the above COVID-19 Response Plan and the Release and Waiver contained in the Covid-19 School Attendance Waiver.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Today's Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Name

Names and ages of child(ren) attending: \_\_\_\_\_

**PARENT/GUARDIAN #2 (IF APPLICABLE)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Today's Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Name