

## **COVID-19 Guidelines & Acknowledgement 2020-2021 School Year**

ERS is committed to remaining open in the safest manner possible, as we navigate this pandemic. While the situation continues to evolve and still holds unknowns, we have created this list of policies based on guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Virginia Department of Health, as well as best practices recommended by the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS). Our plan for remaining open relies on the community's full participation in the guidelines described in this document and provided by public health officials. As the situation changes, the Board and Program Director will keep you updated on any adjustments to these guidelines.

Below you will find further detail on the measures we are taking to ensure our community is working together to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 at ERS. We welcome your questions, and value your participation in our community!

### **A typical day...**

#### **We will be outdoors!**

- Our goal is to spend every day actively playing, learning, and socializing in nature. We are committed now, more than ever, to outdoor education for young children. We are already equipped for outdoor learning and fun since this is how we have run our school for years.
- Outdoor time may include daily snack, lunch, and rest time, determined at the teachers' discretion and based on conditions outside and student needs.
- Groups will come inside to their respective classrooms in the event of lightning in the area or for respite during episodes of extreme heat or cold. We will also come inside when it is necessary for us to shelter in place, in which case we must gather in our designated shelter-in place.

#### **Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures**

Our new drop-off procedures are designed to reduce close contact between parents and teachers while still allowing for a smooth transition into school for the children. We appreciate your patience as we adopt this new process.

- Drop-off runs from 8:20 - 8:50 AM.
- Students must arrive with sunscreen and bug spray applied prior to drop-off. This is especially important during warmer months. Staff will reapply no more than once during the regular school day, and will reapply once more prior to after care for those who participate. A clean pair of gloves will be used for each child requiring sunscreen application.

- Upon arrival, please escort your child directly to their class' designated gate where their teacher will greet you, check your child's temperature, and ask you to complete the daily sign-in and COVID-19 symptom/exposure questionnaire.
- Please respect the 6-foot rule during drop-off and pick-up. We have placed markings along fences to help space out families and encourage you to wait in your car until you see there is an opportunity to sign-in your child at your respective gate.
- CDC recommends the same adult consistently perform drop-off and pick-up duties. To the extent this is possible, we appreciate your compliance with this recommendation.
- Pick-up runs from 2:40-3:05PM and works similarly to drop-off in reverse. There will be a grace period of 10 minutes, and parents arriving at ERS after 3:15 will be subject to a late pick-up fee of \$1 per minute per child.

### **Daily Health Screenings & Return to School Post-Illness**

- At daily drop-off, parents/guardians will be asked a series of health screening questions certifying that their child and household members are free from COVID-19 symptoms.
- ERS staff will check childrens' temperatures 3 times per day (upon arrival, at lunch, and after rest time).
  - Any child with a temperature over 99.4 *upon arrival* will not be allowed to remain on school grounds.
  - Temperature checks will be accompanied by teacher observations of the child's overall health. Symptoms for observation include dry cough, shortness of breath, chills, sore throat, and loss of taste or smell. A child who appears ill may be sent home at the Program Director's discretion even if their temperature is lower than 100.4.
  - Any child the Program Director deems ill will be separated from their class. The child's parents will be contacted and MUST pick-up the child within 60 minutes of being notified.
- Children must be symptom free without any medications for at least 48 hours before returning to school.

### **Personal Belongings**

- Each child must bring two CLEAN, FRESHLY LAUNDERED towels daily
  - One bath towel for drying off after water play and other miscellaneous use
  - One bath towel for nap time (we will provide a foam mat that will be sanitized daily)
- No toys or extra items other than required gear may be brought to school.

### **Meals**

- Catered lunch and shared snacks are temporarily suspended to mitigate risks of transmission presented by shared, family-style meals. If the Program Director and Board determine during the course of the school year that ERS can safely resume catered lunch and shared snacks, we will update these guidelines.

- Send a morning snack, a packed lunch, and an afternoon snack for your child; the provided foods should be consistent with our food and meal guidelines (please refer to Section 5 in the ERS Community Handbook for details). We encourage you to send the following:
  - Lots of fresh fruits and vegetables
  - Plenty of protein to fuel active days
  - Utensils
- Please refrain from sending any of the following:
  - Foods with added sugars or desserts other than fresh or dried fruit
  - Foods packaged in pouches or tubes; instead, opt for a version that requires your child to use a spoon or fork, so he/she can practice these self-help skills
  - Foods packaged with characters from movies, TV shows, or video games
- More suggestions regarding lunch, snack, and meal gear is available on the ERS [Parent Resources](#) page, specifically [here](#).
- Before and after eating snack or lunch, all staff and children wash their hands and the table will be cleaned and sanitized with disinfectant. Teachers will wear gloves and masks while assisting with meal time.

## **Additional Steps Being Taken to Mitigate the Spread of COVID-19**

### **Reducing contact across groups:**

- As directed by VDSS in its Phase 3 Guidelines, we will consistently keep the same staff and children in the same groups to the greatest extent possible.
- Classes will have separate outdoor play areas, will remain in their respective classrooms while inside, and use their own bathrooms for toileting and hand-washing to the greatest extent possible.
- Children in extended care will be assigned to consistent groups throughout the day to the extent possible.
- School-wide gatherings will take place outside, with each class distanced from the others.
- Staff will make every effort to remain distanced from each other, to the extent possible. Teachers from one classroom will not interact with students from another, unless necessary to assist in an emergency.
- Certain staff members, such as Floater, Assistant Teacher, Outdoor Resource Specialist, and Program Director may have interactions with multiple groups and will limit their contact with the children and teachers in each group to the greatest extent possible.

### **Hygiene and Cleaning:**

- Handwashing will be required of all staff and students upon arrival, after toileting, before and after meals/snacks, when moving indoors, and when hands come in contact with face or bodily fluids.
- Handwashing will be supervised/assisted by a staff member.

- Bathrooms, door handles, and other high touch areas will be wiped down throughout the day in addition to regular tri-weekly cleanings by our professional cleaning crew.
- Toys/manipulatives that cannot easily be cleaned will not be used; objects that are used will be sanitized daily, or removed and sanitized immediately if mouthed.

**Masks:**

- Staff and children above age 2, who can do so safely, must wear masks that are consistent with CDC guidelines while indoors, except when napping and eating. Parents must provide a clean mask each day, as well as one packed with their child's change of clothes. Some options can be found on our recommended [gear list](#) found on our ERS [Parent Resources](#) page.
- ERS will provide children with a child-sized disposable mask in the event they are sent to school without one.
- Mask use by children is optional when outdoors and is at the discretion of the parents.
- Staff will be required to wear a mask and gloves when assisting with toileting and whenever food is being handled.
- Staff will be required to wear a mask whenever working closely with children, such as handwashing, assisting with activities, comforting a distressed child or any other situation where physical distancing is not feasible.
- Staff can wear masks at any additional points during the day at their discretion.
- Parents/guardians must wear masks when entering the property; however, please note that parents/guardians are not permitted to enter the property without extenuating circumstances and prior permission from the Program Director.

**Physical distancing:**

- When possible, staff will encourage physical distancing and minimize sharing of objects, with the understanding that this is at times not possible with toddlers and preschoolers in a group school/play setting.
- During meal time, children will be spaced apart to the greatest extent possible.
- During rest time, children will be spaced at least 6 feet apart or be separated by a barrier, and arranged head to toe.

**Contact tracing:**

- Staff will keep a log of the children and other adults with whom they interact each day at school.
- Families must keep their child home if they or a member of the household are unwell, exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 (as outlined by the CDC), or test positive for COVID-19. They must immediately notify the school if their child or a member of the household develops symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19 within two weeks of being at school, even if their child has not returned.
- In the event the child or a member of the child's household has a positive test or symptoms of COVID-19, families must obtain clearance from their child's doctor, have

negative COVID-19 test results for the affected person, or quarantine for 14 days before the child returns to school.

- Families must immediately notify the school if they become aware of any person with whom their child or a member of their household has had unprotected contact that exhibits COVID-19 symptoms, is advised to self-isolate, quarantine, has tested positive, or is presumed positive for COVID-19.

#### **Adjustments in fees:**

- To operate as safely as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic, ERS is incurring significant additional costs for personal protective equipment (PPE), cleaning supplies, and more frequent, professional cleaning services. These costs are being defrayed as follows:
  - The portion of tuition usually allocated for catered meals offsets new costs stemming from PPE and day-to-day cleaning supplies.
  - Families are subject to a fee of \$25 per child/month (or \$250 per child for the school year) to offset the increased professional cleaning costs.

#### **Responding to COVID-19 Cases in Our Community**

- ERS is committed to remaining open, unless more extreme circumstances force our closure. Those circumstances include:
  - an outbreak of COVID-19 within the ERS community, in which case we will consult with the Health Department and could close for as many as 14 days, allowing our families to self-quarantine and ERS to conduct a deep cleaning of the school. In the event of isolated cases, ERS will consult current health and safety guidance and requirements when determining whether a short-term closure of a class or of the school as a whole is necessary.
  - a mandate from Fairfax County, or from the State of Virginia, that our region must enter into a mandatory stay-at-home order that includes the closure of child daycare facilities, which would then prevent us from allowing ERS to run in person.
- In the event of a confirmed COVID-19 case in the school, all families will be notified; however, the families who share a classroom with the confirmed case will be specifically notified that the case occurred in a classroom shared by their child. This will enable families to take additional steps to be tested, and to self-quarantine, as necessary.

## COVID-19 ERS Family Acknowledgement

Our family agrees to share in the responsibility of taking measures to protect the ERS community by adhering to the following guidelines:

- At drop-off and pick-up, I will not enter the preschool beyond the designated area, except when pre-arranged with the Program Director.
- On a daily basis, I will complete the daily health waiver certifying my children and household members are free of COVID-19 symptoms. Symptoms include fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, dry cough, shortness of breath, chills, sore throat, and loss of taste or smell.
- Should my child exhibit the aforementioned symptoms during the school day, he/she will be removed from his/her class and I will be contacted. I (or other designated parent/guardian) will pick up my child immediately and within no more than 60 minutes of being notified.
- If your child shows signs and symptoms, we consider the child sick and we encourage you to talk to your Pediatrician for advice on testing. Students must be symptom free without medication for 48 hours and can return to school with a doctor's note, a negative test for COVID-19, or after a fourteen (14) day quarantine.
- I will keep my child home if he/she or a member of our household is unwell, exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms, or tests positive for COVID-19. I will immediately notify the school if my child or a member of my household develops symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19 within two weeks of being at school, even if my child has not returned. In the event of a positive test or symptoms of COVID-19, I will obtain clearance from my child's doctor, negative test results, or quarantine for fourteen (14) days before he/she returns to school.
- I will immediately notify the school if I become aware of any person with whom my child or I have had unprotected contact that exhibits COVID-19 symptoms, is advised to self-isolate, quarantine, has tested positive, or is presumed positive for COVID-19.
- My child will be required to wear a mask while indoors (except while eating or napping) if they are age 2 years or older and able to do so safely.
- The safety of our small community relies on the precautions taken by all of its members, while at school and elsewhere. I understand that I play a crucial role in keeping everyone in the ERS community safe and reducing the risk of exposure by following the practices outlined herein and complying with guidelines and recommendations from public health officials while away from the ERS community. These measures may include, but are not limited to, appropriate use of masks, avoiding large social gatherings, eliminating or limiting high-risk travel, and taking self-quarantine measures as necessary.
- While present at ERS, my child will be in daily contact with people who are also at risk of community exposure. I understand that no list of restrictions, guidelines, or practices will remove 100% of the risk of exposure to COVID-19. The virus can be transmitted by people who are asymptomatic and/or before some people show signs of infection, and

by their nature, young children in a group preschool setting cannot be kept completely apart. By choosing a group care setting, I am choosing to assume these risks.

- I understand the inherent risks in sending our child to group care and hereby waive and release the Eastern Ridge School of any liability for COVID-19 related damages incurred by my child or my family.

Our family has read, understands, and agrees to comply with the provisions listed herein. I/We acknowledge that failure to act in accordance with the provisions listed herein, or with any other policy or procedure outlined by The Eastern Ridge School, will result in termination of services. I/We acknowledge that care for my child will be terminated if it is determined that my/our actions, or lack of action, negligently exposes another employee, child, or their family member to COVID-19.

Child(ren)'s name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent 1 signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent 2 signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_