

COVID-19 Guidelines & Acknowledgement

Updated February 24, 2021

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 that represent the most current guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Virginia Department of Health (VDH), and the Virginia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). They were compiled in consultation with Dr. John Farrell, of Farrell Pediatrics and the AAP Return to School Task Force for Virginia.

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 details 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 drop-off procedures are designed to reduce close contact between parents and teachers while still allowing for a smooth transition into school/camp for the children. We appreciate your patience with each other and with us during drop-off and pick up.

- Please check your child's temperature each morning AT HOME. You will be asked to verify that your child does not have a temperature of 100.4 or higher.
- Drop-off runs from 8:30 - 8:50 AM.

Rules and Guidelines for Traffic Circle Safety and Etiquette:

- Please enter and exit the driveway and circle very slowly (max 5 mph)
- Please do not pass on the left, under any circumstances, *unless directed to do so by a staff member who is directing traffic*.*
- Please wait until the cars ahead of you have finished their drop off, so that you can move as far forward as possible before unloading your child.
- Any conversations between staff and parents beyond the basics of the day should be reserved for a call, email, or appointment at another time.

*We do not always have the ability to post someone in this role but will do our best to intervene when we can.

- 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/camp 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, and ask you to complete the daily attendance sign-in, COVID-19 symptom/exposure questionnaire, and daily COVID waiver. School year families please check in using the PikMyKid App; summer only families must use paper sign-in.
- Please respect the 6-foot rule during drop-off and pick-up. We encourage you to wait in or by 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 2:40-3:15PM and works similarly to drop-off in reverse (your group will be assigned a pick-up window within that time range). 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

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.

- Temperature checks will take place 3 times per day (at home by parent before school, at lunch, and after rest time).
 - In-school 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, loss of taste or smell, or other signs of illness. 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.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

- Each child must bring two CLEAN, FRESHLY LAUNDERED towels daily (**Summer Camp only**)
 - 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) Note: the nap mat listed on the gear list is optional for summer campers; a large towel is an acceptable substitute
- No toys or extra items other than required gear ([school year](#) and [summer camp](#)) may be brought to school.

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.
- Before and after eating snack or lunch, the table/eating surface will be cleaned and sanitized with disinfectant or provided with a fresh table cloth/picnic cloth. Teachers will wear gloves and masks while assisting with meal time.
- 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.

REDUCING CONTACT ACROSS GROUPS:

- As directed by VDSS at this time, 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.
- There will be no mixing of our Toddler Group (Acorns) with our Early Childhood Groups, to the extent possible
- Early Childhood subgroups (Chipmunks, Sassafras, etc.) may occupy the same outdoor space. Staff will maintain at least 6 feet of distance between them, and students and staff will wear masks when sharing the same outdoor space.
- Early Childhood subgroups will not mix when occupying indoor spaces, to the 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 closely 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 close contact with the children and teachers in each group to the greatest extent possible.

FACE COVERINGS:

Students

- All students 2 and older must come to preschool or enrichment programs prepared to wear a properly fitting mask:
 - Indoors:
 - At all times except when eating or sleeping
 - Outdoors:
 - At the teachers' discretion, based on proximity to peers and staff. Whenever 6 feet of distance cannot be consistently maintained, children in our early childhood program will be required to wear masks, and in our toddler program, they will do so to the extent possible.
 - When there is unavoidable mixing of children from different groups, such as during a shelter-in-place, ALL STAFF AND CHILDREN WILL WEAR MASKS.
 - Masks must stay over child's nose and mouth without noticeable gaps on sides
 - When outdoors on cold days, a balaclava may be used in lieu of a mask if it properly covers mouth and nose.
 - At least two clean face coverings (mask and/or balaclavas are included in this requirement) must be provided daily.
 - If a mask from home does not fit properly or becomes soiled, the school will provide a disposable mask.

Staff

- 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 when indoors (except when eating) and outdoors 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 must wear masks in all interactions, indoors and outdoors, with other adults such as staff and parents.

Parents

- Parents/guardians must wear masks during drop off and pick up and whenever 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.

SICK CHILD INFORMATION AND RETURN-TO- SCHOOL CRITERIA

- **If a child shows signs of illness at school**, parents will be notified and must immediately retrieve their child. In the case of an in school illness, parents will be provided with this [SICK STUDENT NOTIFICATION FORM](#), completed by ERS staff, which outlines the signs and symptoms observed at school. Please contact your healthcare provider and present them with the form.
- **In order to return to school after an illness**, your healthcare provider will need to complete and sign this [PERMISSION TO RETURN TO SCHOOL/CHILDCARE](#) form. This form must be returned to us prior to your child's return to school after an illness.

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.

DEFINITION OF CLOSE CONTACT:

- Close Contact, as used in this policy and any previous policies, refers to the most recent Virginia Department of Health (VDH) Definition of Close Contact: Being within 6 feet of a person with COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period, or having direct exposure to respiratory secretions.

TRAVEL AND GATHERINGS:

- If you choose to travel with your child or gather locally with people from outside of your household (thus widening your “bubble”):
 - Your child must stay home from school for 14 days following the last day of travel/close sacontact
 - OR
 - Provide the school with a negative COVID test. ***See TESTING section below for guidance on obtaining the proper testing for your circumstances***

ADDITIONAL CRITERIA FOR QUARANTINE

In addition to the Criteria for Quarantine outlined in **TRAVEL AND GATHERINGS (above)** and **SICK CHILD INFORMATION AND RETURN TO SCHOOL CRITERIA (below)**:

- If a household member is required to quarantine for any reason* you must:

- Keep your child home from school for the duration of the household member's 14 day quarantine
OR
- present a valid negative COVID test result for the person under investigation (the exposed household member) **See *TESTING* section below for guidance on obtaining the proper testing for your circumstances**

*Currently, VDH recommends quarantining/testing after travel

TESTING

- If there is **no known exposure** but there has been close contact with individuals outside of the family's bubble due to travel or visitors and the individual is **asymptomatic**:
 - A PCR test is required 5 days after travel or the last contact with the "bigger bubble"
- If there is **known exposure** and the individual is **asymptomatic**:
 - A PCR test is required on day 5-7 after the exposure*
- If there is **known exposure** and the individual is **symptomatic**:
 - An antigen test may be used 1-5 days after exposure*

**In both of these cases, since there was a known exposure, the individual must quarantine for the full 14 days following the exposure, regardless of the test results, due to the possibility of false negative test results.*

EXCEPTIONS TO QUARANTINE GUIDELINES:

Vaccinated persons with an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 are not required to quarantine if they meet all of the following criteria†:

- Are fully vaccinated (i.e., ≥2 weeks following receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series, or ≥2 weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine)
- Are within 3 months following receipt of the last dose in the series
- Have remained asymptomatic since the current COVID-19 exposure

Persons who do not meet all 3 of the above criteria should continue to follow current quarantine guidance after exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.

Fully vaccinated persons who do not quarantine should still watch for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days following an exposure. If they experience symptoms, they should be clinically evaluated for COVID-19, including testing, if indicated. In addition, vaccinated persons should continue to follow current guidance to protect themselves and others, including all other SARS-CoV-2 testing recommendations and requirements, and state, territorial, tribal, and local travel recommendations or requirements.

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, loss of taste or smell, or other signs of illness.
- 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 my child shows signs or symptoms of illness, I agree to follow the RETURN TO SCHOOL CRITERIA outlined in this document.
- I agree to follow all of the CRITERIA FOR QUARANTINE outlined in this document.
- I will immediately notify the school if I become aware of any person with whom my child or I have had close contact (see definition in this document) 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), while outdoors when unable to maintain 6 feet of distance, and during extended day programming, 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: _____