

## **COVID-19 Policy, Guidelines & Acknowledgement**

### **Updated March 8, 2022**

ERS is committed to remaining open in the safest manner possible, as we navigate this pandemic. 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. We have taken into consideration the unique qualities of our outdoor based program in creating an approach that is at the same time clear, common sense, and data driven.

Many of our staff and community members are fully vaccinated and we are monitoring community transmission of COVID-19 in our area. Our guidelines acknowledge the current situation. As the situation changes and we receive additional guidance, the Board and Program Director will keep you updated on any adjustments to these guidelines.

### **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 location.

#### **THREE PRONGED APPROACH TO STAYING HEALTHY AND IN SCHOOL**

- 1. Staying home when sick:** If your child shows signs of illness, keep them home and consult with your physician in accordance with our [return to school policy](#)
- 2. Vaccination status:** The need for restrictions of any kind are greatly reduced or eliminated if/when eligible individuals are fully vaccinated.
- 3. Face masks:** Decisions regarding masking will be made in accordance with community transmission levels and personal risk levels due to vaccination status and individual risk tolerance.

**FACE COVERINGS:**

Mask use will be optional for children, parents and staff on ERS property, both indoors and outside of the building, as long as community transmission remains low in accordance with the following framework, using data provided by the CDC, VDH, and VDOE, in combination with recommendations from the AAP and our medical consultant, John Farrell, MD\*:

	<b>Low Transmission</b>	<b>Medium Transmission</b>	<b>High Transmission</b>
<b>Vaccinated Staff</b>	Optional	Recommended	Required
<b>Unvaccinated Students</b>	Recommended	Recommended	Required
<b>Vaccinated Students</b>	Optional	Recommended	Required
<b>Unvaccinated Parents</b>	Recommended	Recommended	Required
<b>Vaccinated Parents</b>	Optional	Recommended	Required

\*Exception: See Summary of Protocols section below for masking when there is a positive case or a known close contact to a positive case.

- If a parent wishes their child to wear a mask under certain circumstances (e.g., when indoors), they will need to communicate their wishes in writing to the child’s teacher and the director.

**PHYSICAL DISTANCING:**

- When possible, staff will encourage physical distancing of 3 feet 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, and will eat outdoors as often as possible.
- During rest time, children will be spaced at least 3 feet apart or be separated by a barrier, and arranged head to toe.

**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 (adults) or 3 feet (children) of a person with COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period, having direct exposure to respiratory secretions, or living with a person who has COVID-19.
- For vaccinated individuals, close contact is only relevant if the vaccinated individual shows symptoms after the contact.

### **REDUCING CONTACT ACROSS GROUPS:**

- As directed by VDOE 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 and will remain in their respective classrooms while inside to the greatest extent possible. There will be some mixing of groups when playing in our large outdoor spaces.
- When sharing large outdoor play spaces our Toddler Group (Acorns) and our Early Childhood Groups and their teachers will remain separate, to the extent possible.
- Early Childhood subgroups will not mix when occupying indoor spaces, to the extent possible.
- Children in extended care will spend as much time as possible outdoors to mitigate the impact of being a mixed group of children from across classes.
- School-wide gatherings will take place outside.
- 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, to the extent possible.
- 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.

### **SUMMARY OF PROTOCOLS IF THERE IS A POSITIVE CASE OF COVID IN OUR COMMUNITY:**

- In the event of a confirmed COVID-19 case in the school, the families who share a classroom with the confirmed case or had suspected contact will be notified.
- Our policy currently aligns with the [CDC's most recent guidelines regarding quarantine](#). If an unvaccinated member of our community is exposed to a known positive case of COVID, they must quarantine for 5 days.
- If they remain asymptomatic, they may return to school on day 6, and should be "well-masked" during days 6-10 (kn95 or similar type of mask is recommended).
- Vaccinated individuals only need to quarantine if they are symptomatic.
- Throughout this time, monitor for symptoms, and the CDC recommends testing at least 5 days after the last exposure, whether or not they are symptomatic.
- The day of the last exposure is considered day 0. Counting begins on the following day.

## 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:

- Should my child develop COVID-like symptoms during the day, my child will be removed from class and I will be contacted. A 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 will keep them home from school, and 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.
- I understand and agree to the mask guidance set forth in this document.
- If I opt for my child to wear a mask, I will notify the teacher and the director in writing, and I agree to send my child to camp/school with properly fitting masks, daily.
- ***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 following state recommendations for vaccinations, and following CDC guidance for gatherings, events, and travel.***
- 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. 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.

### COVID-19 ERS Family Acknowledgement (signature page)

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: \_\_\_\_\_