

## General Health and COVID-19 Policy, Guidelines & Acknowledgement Updated August 17, 2022

ERS is committed to remaining open in the safest manner possible, as we navigate this pandemic, and the health of our community in general. 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. Moreover, we have tried to adopt a policy that makes good sense for minimizing the transmission of all illnesses, for the greater health of our community.

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!

- We are committed to outdoor education for young children. Our goal is to spend every day actively playing, learning, and socializing in nature. We know time in nature is one of the best ways for children to learn, grow, and stay healthy. 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 for Covid-19 and personal risk levels due individual risk tolerance, vaccination status, and recent infection.

**GOOD HYGEINE:**

Children and teachers will wash their hands upon arrival each day, after toileting (or assisting with toileting), and before and after snacks and lunch. They will also wash any time they come in contact with their own or others' bodily fluids, such as saliva, mucus, urine, etc. Staff will encourage and coach proper, *effective* hand washing as well as covering of coughs and sneezes.

**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 of Covid 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 and unvaccinated individuals, close contact is only relevant if the vaccinated individual shows symptoms after the contact.

## **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 testing, isolation, and quarantine](#).
  - Anyone who has been in contact with a confirmed case of covid should wear a well-fitting mask when in close proximity to others for 10 days after the last exposure and test on day 5 after the last exposure.
    - If test results are negative, finish out the 10 days of masking;
    - If test results are positive, quarantine for 5 days or until symptoms resolve and fever free at least 24 hours, followed by 5 more days of masking.
  - If they are asymptomatic, regardless of vaccination status, they are not required to quarantine unless they test positive on day 5, as described above..
  - Anyone who is symptomatic should test for covid and isolate until they receive their results.
    - Negative: return to school when symptoms resolve and fever free at least 24 hours (standard illness policy). Continue to wear well-fitting mask through day 10 since exposure.
    - Positive: quarantine for 5 days, return to school day 6 if symptoms are resolved and fever free at least 24 hours. Wear a well fitting mask days 6-10.
- The day of the last exposure or of a positive test result is considered day 0. Counting begins on the following day.
- Use our [Return To School After Illness Checklist](#) to determine the proper course of action any time your child has symptoms of illness

## ERS Family Acknowledgement for preventing the spread of Illness, including Covid

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 symptoms of illness 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 CHECKLIST linked in this document.
- I agree to follow all of the CRITERIA FOR QUARANTINE, TESTING, and MASKING 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, and will send my child to school with a properly fitting mask for 10 days following that contact, and test my child on day 5 after that contact..
- I understand and agree to the mask guidance set forth in this document.
- If I opt for my child to wear a mask outside of times when they have been exposed to Covid, 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 to illness 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 to illness, including COVID-19. I understand that no list of restrictions, guidelines, or practices will remove 100% of the risk of exposure to these illnesses. Viruses 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.
- **I understand that the best way to ensure that children and teachers are able to attend school consistently and to minimize illness or quarantine related absences is to keep my own child home when showing signs of illness.**

**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 illness, including COVID-19.

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

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

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