

Guidelines for Returning to Good Shepherd School

As we plan to re-open, we intend to follow the CDC Guidelines, tailored to our organization as much as possible. Upon re-opening, we are adopting proactive measures specifically intended to help limit the spread of COVID-19 and safeguard children, families, and Good Shepherd School staff.

We will not be following the Hamilton County School schedule. While some of our breaks may fall within their calendar, determining if school closes for the virus or any other reason is made independently at GSS. If the Hamilton County or Lookout Mountain Governments or the Episcopal Diocese of East Tennessee invoke Stay at Home Orders, we would have to close. Otherwise, we intend to monitor things very closely, continue following our protocols and stay the course as we have the past six weeks. There have been no recorded outbreaks of COVID-19 in any Daycare/Preschools, many of whom stayed open throughout the pandemic for Essential Workers. We follow and always have followed many of these protocols already. That helps to keep us safe and healthy.

1. Limiting Persons in the Facility: Providers should prohibit persons from the facility with the exceptions of:

- Facility staff (Includes School and Church Staff and scheduled visitors)
- Persons with a legal authority to enter, including law enforcement officers, Tennessee Department of Human Services Childcare Licensing staff, Hamilton County Health Dept. and Child Protective Services staff
- Professionals providing services to children
- Children enrolled at the facility
- Parents or legal guardians who have children enrolled and present at the facility

2. Pick-up and Drop-Off Protocols

Pick-up and drop-off will occur outside the facility, in the circle, unless it is determined that there is a legitimate need for the parent to enter the facility (specific individual cases with pre-approval by Director or Assistant Director). Teachers will be outside with sign-in sheets and will greet the children and take their temperature with a non-contact temporal scanner thermometer before they leave the car. As long as it is below 100.4, teachers will get your child out of the car, along with their backpack. Please have their bag near their car seats for the teacher to grab. You will quickly be asked a set of health assessment questions. Signing in and out will occur at Drop off and Pick up. Please be sure to have a pen in the car with you to avoid the spread of germs from your hands. There will be hand hygiene stations set up at the entrance of the facility for supervised use, when needed. Teachers will take children directly to their classrooms to wash their hands. We will run 3 carpools in the morning at 7:30, 8:15 and 9:00. Those will be the only times children are allowed into the facility. If you arrive before these times, sit tight. The teachers will be out shortly. Likewise, in the afternoon, we will run carpool at 2:00, 4:30 (begins Session 3) and 5:45.

3. Screening

Persons who have a fever of 100.4 (38.00C) or above or any signs of illness will not be admitted to the facility. (We do not want sick people in the building for any reason) Please be on the alert for any of the symptoms of COVID-19 in your children and be sure to keep them home when they are sick and check with your family physician. Staff and children will be screened upon arrival. Staff all tested negative before reopening. Should a staff member have symptoms of COVID-19 or have direct exposure to someone with COVID-19, they must be quarantined and retested before returning to work. If they travel on an airplane or go out of town for more than two days, they must be retested before returning to work. Staff are required to report any illness to their supervisor, and they are required to notify their supervisor if anyone in their household tests positive for

COVID-19. Likewise, GSS families should follow the same protocols with their children and report any COVID-19 positive cases in their household to the Director or Assistant Director.

4. Class Size

As you know, registration took place for the Fall Program in February of 2020, before COVID-19 hit the US. At this point in time, limiting class sizes to 10 in the Fall may not be possible for some classes due to enrollment. We will use the Library, Youth Building and the Big Room downstairs as break out rooms for the Pre K , Fours and Threes Classes, since they have the largest enrollment. We will divide the classes and maintain the same children in each space each day. The teachers will rotate on a weekly basis. It is very possible we may have children not return in the Fall which will allow our groups to be smaller by the time we open. Groupings will include, to the extent possible, the same children each day to minimize exposure. We will limit the mixing of children by staggering playground times and keeping groups separate for all activities. Music and Godly Play will be done in the Sanctuary or Talbird Hall in order to maintain social distancing. For the first half of the year, we will not have Chapel, as it is a large gathering. If numbers improve, we will add it later in the year.

5. Face Masks

When feasible, staff members and older children (3, 4, and 5-year-olds) should wear face coverings within the facility as recommended by the CDC. Cloth face coverings will NOT be put on babies and children under age two because of the danger of suffocation. Please consider explanations to assist children with understanding why they will be wearing face coverings as well as why their teachers will be wearing them. We would like to ease the two-year-old's into wearing facemasks. Please begin working with them (and all Three, Four and Five-year old's) immediately and be sure to send them to school in a mask each day they attend. With Twos, we understand it may take time and the teachers will work with them each day for periods of time to make sure they wear them. All masks should be washed each night before they return to school the next day.

It is noteworthy to report we have had no issues with facemasks on the children throughout the summer. Even the two-year-olds have worn them beautifully. I am convinced the parents have done a great job introducing the concept and giving them time to practice before returning to school. It's had a very positive impact on their ability to wear them comfortably to school each day.

6. Under no circumstances will sick children be cared for in the facility

As always, if a child becomes sick while at school, the parent or guardian is contacted. Now, more than ever, we expect you to pick up your child immediately. Your child will be separated from other children at school and should be picked up in the school offices. Be sure to give your updated, accurate emergency contact information to your teachers.

7. If a child or staff member gets sick

We have a comprehensive list of cleaning and disinfecting protocols from the CDC should anyone within our facility get sick. They are the same ones we use for any contagious illnesses when they are present in our school. If COVID-19 is confirmed in a child or staff member, we have an additional list of cleaning protocols that immediately go into place. It includes additional cleaning and disinfecting in the classroom and any/all common areas used by the infected person. In that case, the parents will be notified immediately via See Saw. If an exposure occurred at school, the children and adults in that room will need to consult with their physician about testing and/or quarantine. The room affected will need to be closed for 24 hours while it is being completely cleaned and sanitized. In addition, the child or staff member will not be permitted to return to the facility except as recommended by the child or staff member's medical provider.

8. Social Distancing

Teachers will prepare their rooms for the Fall Program by marking the common areas of the rooms, as well as the Circle Time Rug and all tables with 6-foot increment markers to help the children maintain a safe "Social Distance". We are also realistic. While we will do everything in our power to assist the children with maintaining the 6' distance, we also know they are toddlers and very young children, and we can all imagine the scenarios where that distance between them may be breached. The American Academy of Pediatrics states that

a distance of 3' with preschoolers should be very effective in preventing the spread of the disease. In addition, we will continue to follow the protocols in place on cleaning and disinfecting toys and bedding, all hard surfaces, and hand washing throughout the day. Those are not new to licensed daycare facilities.

9. Talking with children about COVID-19 and returning to school

Please continue talking with your children about this new virus and some of the changes they are likely to notice upon returning to school. As is always the case, they will take their lead from you. If they've seen people in masks and worn masks themselves, that may not seem new to them at all. Being dropped off in the morning at carpool will be new, but most have experienced carpool in some form during their years at Good Shepherd School. It has gone very well this summer and I anticipate that will continue.

We often talk about the 3-week rule at the beginning of school. It takes a person 3 weeks to develop a new habit. Returning to school after a long break will likely be challenging for some. It is part of what we do and fully understand it's in play as we start back to school. Assure them they are safe at school and you are returning to get them. Always encourage them to have fun! Staff taking them from your car may make that transition easier than usual.

10. Possible Closure & Tuition

Unfortunately, closing the school again is not out of the question. **If there is a major change that necessitates the school's closing, for the first 30 days, we will expect tuition to be paid as always.** In the event the closing exceeds 30 days, GSS will operate as follows:

- Pre-K & Fours & Threes Classes will be offered online interaction/virtual learning for 1 hour each morning. In addition, teachers will send home learning packets. (either physically or via electronic communication, if needed)
- For all other classes, GSS Teachers will provide learning packets to be used with the children at home. Teachers will check in with parents to see if they'd like to do some online interaction and/or learning.
- If school is closed more than 30 days, we will invoice for the number of days you attend at the 9-2 rate, discounted 50%. We will not invoice for Extended Care.

11. Compliance

We are responsible for the health and safety of all the children and staff at GSS and will not compromise that for any reason. As we learn more about this virus and as medical professionals move towards a vaccine, we will certainly look at relaxing these protocols appropriately. Until that time, please follow them closely. These are not suggestions. If you don't feel you can follow them as presented, please consider withdrawing your child from school until you can. If you'd like to hold your spot until you feel comfortable sending your child back to school, you need only send in your tuition payment each month.

I understand this is a challenging and somewhat frightening time for everyone. I encourage all of you to support each other in staying as safe as possible outside of the school environment. The health and safety of everyone at Good Shepherd School also relies on your habits outside of school. Our hope is to continue moving forward with the protocols and success we have seen thus far, remaining open and serving the Good Shepherd School families. I will do everything possible to keep you informed with as much notice as possible about any changes.

We look forward to seeing you!!