

SKYVIEW EARLY LEARNING VILLAGE

PANDEMIC HANDBOOK



Skyview Early Learning Village is committed to providing high-quality Child Care programs that promote health and safety for all children, staff, partners, and community. The purpose of this pandemic handbook is to outline our updated policies and procedures in support of the current COVID-19 public health emergency. To reduce the risk of respiratory infections such as COVID-19, our parents and staff must be aware of and adhere to all directives outlined by the local Public Health Department and the Early Learning and Child Care Act.

While infection prevention and control have always been a fundamental part of our Child Care programs, we have enhanced and adapted our policies and procedures in response to COVID-19. Our goal is to diminish the risk and ensure the health and safety of all.

OUR RESPONSE TO COVID-19

The following practices will be in place:

- Health Screening
- Alternative drop-off and pick-up procedures
- Exclusion of Sick Children
- Physical Distancing
- Hand Hygiene
- Environmental Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting
- Toys and materials Disinfection
- Food Safety and Provision

Health Screening

To reduce the risk of respiratory infections such as COVID-19, our daily health screening is an essential step. Everyone entering Skyview Early Learning Village (SELV) must have completed our online screening prior to entering. This procedure applies to all staff, children, and visitors (i.e. essential tradesmen, etc.)

Screening Procedure

Before Leaving Home

All parents/guardians must check their and their child's temperature and overall health. All staff must check their own temperatures and health each day before going to the centre.

Parents and staff complete the screening questions in advance, online via Fastoche.

The child's temperature will be verified upon arrival by their room educator.

- If the child displays a temperature of 37.8 degrees C, a second temperature will be taken after 5 mins to validate the first temperature.
- If the child's temperature is 37.8 degrees C a second time, the child will be sent home immediately. (The child and their teacher will isolate in our "sick bay" until the child can be picked up from the centre.)

Families with more than one child enrolled:

- The screening form must be completed for each child.

If any staff fails the health screening check, the Director will be notified and required to follow-up with the staff.

Arrival Procedure

Adults are to put on a face covering and may only enter through the main entrance of the centre. Alcohol based sanitizer will be available. Others waiting to drop their child must use physical distancing or remain in their vehicles until the other people have left. All staff will be required to wear masks when moving throughout the Centre. Essential visitors, custodial, or other Generations staff will be required to wear masks at all times in the Centre.

Parents picking up children from more than one cohort at the centre should not be allowed to enter the cohort room unless absolutely necessary. If they must enter, a distance of two metres must be maintained between staff and other children.

Parents are encouraged to park in the West or South Visitor lot if necessary to maintain physical distancing at drop-off and pick-up times. All instructions and/or custody arrangements will continue to be followed.

Departure Procedure

In addition to the process for arrivals to SELV that include a Daily Health Screen, departures from the centre must also be carried out in a way that minimizes risk. Parents/guardians are asked to notify the Centre 30 minutes in advance of picking up their child so the staff can prepare the child and their belongings for pick-up. Children will be assisted to sanitize their hands before leaving. Only one parent can approach the child's room at a time. Other parents waiting to pick up their children must remain outside or in their vehicles until the other parents have left the area.

SELV staff are to put on a mask and only enter and exit through the main entrance of the Centre. Staff will disinfect all personal belongings with hard surfaces to be taken home and wash hands with soap and water before leaving the Centre.

Exclusion of Sick Children

Staff will exclude a sick child when:

- The child is unable to participate in regular programming because of illness
- The child has one or more of the following symptoms: fever, cough, muscle aches and tiredness, sore throat or shortness of breath
- The child has any signs and/or symptoms that are greater than normal (ex. if a child has diarrhea consistent with teething and an additional symptom presents itself, such as lethargy)

When a child is ill and/or displaying symptoms of COVID-19, the educators are responsible for the following procedures:

1. The child is required to be separated from the other children and taken to the designated exclusion room. The exclusion room will have a handwashing sink OR hand sanitizer. The educator that has been in regular contact with the child must be the one to continue to monitor and supervise the child.
2. The parent/guardian of the child will be notified of the child's symptoms and asked to pick the child up immediately. If the child requires immediate medical attention, we will call 911. The child will be taken to the hospital by ambulance.
3. Only ONE staff will be in the exclusion room and attempt physical distancing. If physical distancing cannot be avoided, staff will be wearing Full PPE (personal protection equipment). Staff will wash their hands before donning a non-medical mask and after removing the non-medical mask, and before and after touching any items used by the child.
4. If possible, a mask should be placed on the child. A mask can be placed on a child only if they understand they cannot touch it. Masks should only be attempted to be used on children over 2 years of age.
5. Symptoms of illness must be recorded in the child's daily record and in the room logbook.
6. Continue to monitor and supervise the child until the parent/guardian arrives.
7. The exclusion room will be clean and disinfected immediately after the child has been sent home.
8. All items, such as bedding, toys, etc. used by the child in the 48 hours prior to the onset of symptoms and while isolated will be cleaned and disinfected as soon as the child has been picked up. Items that cannot be cleaned and disinfected (e.g. paper, books, cardboard puzzles) will be removed from the centre and stored in a sealed container for a minimum of 72 hours.
9. Staff and children who were in the same room will continue to group together for 14 days
10. Staff will self-monitor for symptoms for the next 14-days
11. Staff will notify parents/guardians of children who were in the same group with the ill child about the possible exposure and should monitor their child for symptoms.
12. Children who are being monitored by Public Health will be required to follow the Public Health directives the family was given, to determine when to return to SELV

Returning to the Child Care Centre from exclusion due to illness:

- Staff/children who are being managed by Public Health (confirmed cases of COVID-19) must follow instructions from Public Health to determine when to return to SELV
- If not advised by Public Health, the staff/child will not be permitted to return to SELV for a minimum of 14 days.
- Past the 14-day mark, the staff/child must be 24 hours symptom-free without the aid of fever/pain-reducing medication such as Tylenol, Advil, Motrin etc.

Physical Distancing

Physical distancing is a set of measures an individual takes to minimize close physical contact with others. Furthermore, physical distancing is an important measure to decrease the transmission of COVID-19. SELV recognizes that physical distancing between children in a child care setting may be difficult and wants to ensure children feel safe and welcomed in their learning environment.

How physical distancing will be practiced:

- a distance of at least 2 metres from others, as much as possible
- avoiding crowded places and gatherings
- avoiding common greetings, such as handshakes, hugs or kisses
- limiting contact with people at higher risk (e.g. older adults and those in poor health)

How can physical distancing be practiced in the same cohorts?

- spreading children out into different curriculum areas, meal and dressing times
- establishing and using visual and verbal cues to promote physical distancing
- increasing the distance between cots, resting mats, cribs or place the children's cots head to toe or toe to toe during rest times
- planning activities that do not involve sharing toys, materials or objects
- no singing activities indoors
- when possible, moving group activities outdoors to allow more space

Interactions with Infants/Toddlers

- Mouthed toys are removed immediately for cleaning and disinfecting and will not be shared with other children.
- All individual items will be labeled to discourage accidental sharing

Environmental Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting

Skyview Early Learning Village will take every reasonable precaution and is aware of all directives established by Public Health. Staff will be trained on the enhanced sanitary practices. SELV will be cleaning with the chemical solution Quat.

All surfaces, especially those that are frequently touched such as doorknobs, handles, light switches, toilet handles, tables, chairs, counter-tops, cabinet drawer handles, faucets, taps, learning materials, laundry machine buttons, etc., will be disinfected at least twice daily and when they become visibly dirty. All soiled or visibly dirty surfaces will be cleaned before disinfecting.

Toy and Material Disinfection

The disinfection of toys and materials is vital to ensuring the health and safety of children, as it reduces and mitigates the potential spread of germs and viruses among children and those who may come into contact with them.

All toys and materials that are plush and porous will be removed from the program and not used in play/learning - these include stuffed animals and cloth toys. In addition, water play, playdough,

and sand have been removed. All materials that cannot be effectively cleaned and disinfected will be removed from the program and not used in play.

Group water or sensory play is not permitted. Individual water or sensory play is permitted if all items are dedicated to individual children and physical distancing is maintained during the activity. Items that cannot be cleaned or disinfected such as craft supplies, nature-based objects, or sensory materials like playdough, must be dedicated to individual children and kept in a designated location (cubby/bag/container labeled with the child's name).

Cots and bedding are dedicated to one child and the linens are laundered weekly, or more if wet or soiled. High touch surfaces on cots will be disinfected at least twice per day (before and after rest time) and as often as necessary.

Outdoor Learning Environments

In shared outdoor spaces, cohorts must maintain a distance of at least 2 metres between groups and any other individuals outside of the cohort. Each cohort will have outdoor learning materials and equipment dedicated to them, or the items will be cleaned and disinfected before being used by another cohort. Outdoor bins will also be cleaned and disinfected. Outdoors is where children and staff can enjoy singing.

Off-Site Activities

Any child exhibiting a symptom associated with COVID-19 must be immediately separated from others in a supervised isolated area to continue assessment of suspected symptoms in order to determine further action and/or until they are picked up. The child exhibiting symptoms will be isolated in a separate area with a supervising child care staff member. The staff member who is providing care to the child should maintain a distance of 2 metres. If physical distancing cannot be avoided, staff will be wearing Full PPE (personal protection equipment). If possible, a mask should be placed on the child. The staff member who is with the child will contact the centre (using the centre cell phone) and the director or alternate will come to the off-site location to assist the staff that is with the other children. The parents or guardians will be contacted to pick up the child from the off-site location. If the parents or guardians are not able to pick up, the emergency contact will be contacted to pick up the child from the location.

Cohorts

A cohort is defined as a group of children and the staff members assigned to them, who stay together throughout the day, as well as day-to-day. Cohorts should remain as stable as possible over an extended period.

Physical distancing is not expected to be maintained at all times within cohorts. This means that the children and educators within a cohort will be able to engage in short-duration close interactions with each other within their indoor and outdoor learning environments. These close peer and educator interactions are critical for children's holistic development and learning and are a fundamental component of the SELV's pedagogical approach.

Any person (director, casual/float staff) who enter the space of more than one cohort are expected to wear a non-medical mask any time they are in the presence of other staff/children and should wash their hands (or use hand sanitizer) when entering or exiting each room.

Food Safety and Provision

Meal time practices will be altered to ensure there is no self-serve or sharing of food. Meals will be served to the children in individual portions. There will be no sharing of any kitchen utensils or items. Staff will ensure proper hand hygiene is practiced prior to handing or preparing food. All staff and children will practice hand hygiene before and after eating. Where possible, children will practice physical distancing while eating. No outside food will be permitted in the centre except where required and accompanied by a physician's note. Special precautions for handling and serving must be put into place between the parents and the Director or Alternate director.

Staff will not be permitted to plan and implement any cooking activities where food is prepared and shared with others.

Hand Hygiene

Hands should be washed for a minimum of 30 seconds and children should be assisted with hand hygiene. All individuals at the SELV must wash their hands at the start of the day prior to engaging in play with the group and again before leaving at the end of the day. Additionally, frequent hand washing must continue throughout the day especially from one activity to another and after going to the washroom, before and after eating, etc.

Gloves should be worn when it is anticipated the hands will come into contact with blood or bodily fluids and when providing care to a symptomatic child. Hands must be cleaned before putting on gloves and after removing gloves and that gloves are removed immediately after completing a task and prior to touching clean items and surfaces. 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer will be available throughout the SELV, especially in areas without immediate access to hand washing sinks, including outdoors. All hand washing sinks must be unobstructed; possess hot and cold water, liquid soap, and disposable paper towel.

Items to Bring:

Parents are strongly discouraged from sending children's personal items into the centre. Only essential items should be sent with children. Staff should also limit personal items being brought to the SELV. Any hard surface items (e.g. water bottle, keys, cell phones, purses/bags,) must be cleaned and disinfected each day upon arrival. Essential personal items should be stored in a dedicated area for each child or staff member (e.g. labeled cubby). All personal items used for diapering must be labeled with the child's name and stored in a dedicated area. All other personal items including clothing and footwear must be stored in a dedicated area for each child (labeled cubby).

We ask that the items are sent to the centre in a plastic or vinyl shopping bag.

Children attending a child care program are not required to wear a non-medical mask while at child care but can wear one if their parent/guardian prefers. Parents should ensure that the childcare program is provided with properly fitting masks for their child (labelled with the child's name), including an extra in the event that the mask become soiled or damaged.

If non-medical masks are worn, Alberta Health mask guidance should be followed and can be found: www.alberta.ca/masks.

Do not send a backpack.
Each item must be labelled with the student's name.

- Sunscreen
- Water-bottle
- Hat
- One pair of indoor shoes
- Minimum two extra sets of clothes
- Blanket (if you child requires a nap)
- Weather appropriate outerwear including footwear

Staffing

Staffing shortages pose the greatest risk to SELV operations due to the heightened requirements for exclusion from work based on symptoms.

Suspected Cases of COVID-19

Despite best efforts there remains the possibility that a child, parent, or staff of SELV could present with symptoms of COVID-19. At this point, strategies to contain the virus will be implemented. Child care centres have the duty to report suspected or confirmed cases of COVID -19 as soon as there are two or more children/staff members showing COVID 19 symptoms to the AHS Coordinated Early Identification and Response team (CEIR).

Program directly associated with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 must adhere to requirements from Alberta Health Services. This may include temporary program closure to allow for contact tracing processes to occur.

Communication with our Families:

Communication with our families continues to remain our number one priority. Alberta Health Services suggests that telephone or video conferencing be used to meet with staff and parent. If you need to communicate with your child's educator or Director, please call Skyview Early Learning Village. Tours for potential parents/children will be conducted and restricted to the rooms/spaces where the children are not present. Any changes to policies and procedures will be communicated to parents/guardians in a timely manner.

See our Parent Issues and Concerns Policy for guidelines to voice your concerns. Details are in the Parent Handbook that is given out upon completion of registration.

For up-to-date information, please visit, www.skyviewlearning.ca and check the Fastoche app.

For further information from Alberta Health found at: <https://www.alberta.ca/biz-connect.aspx>.