

Dear families,

This will be our second 'Back to School' experience during the pandemic. Summer camp 2020 and the 2020- 2021 school year taught us a lot about keeping our community as safe as possible during a pandemic. We were successful in keeping children and staff healthy (from COVID) last year, therefore we will continue to adhere to the same protocols that kept us safe. Knowing that the Delta variant is more contagious and now the dominant variant, we have added some additional layers of protection.

Last year it took all of us working together as a team to keep our community safe, and we are once again requiring that we all do our best to follow the protocols. Thank you!

Here is a list of protocols we have set up to mitigate Covid-19 risks.

**Many typical in-person events will be moved to an online format – e.g. parent meet and greets, parent-teacher conferences, parent informational night.**

**Social events, such as the Welcome Picnic, will not be held until community transmission rates drop significantly.**

#### **Arrival and departure from school each day**

- Temp check on arrival of staff and children. Parents, please wait until you receive the thumbs up that temp check was OK before leaving.
- Teachers signing children in and out - no parent shared pen and clipboard
- Teachers, parents, and all students aged 5 and older wearing masks.
- Masks recommended for 3 and 4 year old children. Masks not recommended for 2 year olds.
- Asking, if possible, same parent pick up and drop off each day
- Parents and teachers practice physical distancing in the hallways at pick up and drop off times.

#### **During the school day**

- Keeping children in classroom pods, with same staff, and avoiding mixing in halls and rooms
- Strict handwashing on arrival and throughout the day, especially before and after eating and playground/gym play. We will have lotion available to avoid dry skin/chapped hands.
- Practicing physical distancing within the class through limiting chairs around tables, spacing out rugs,
- Spending time outdoors and in the gym when possible - more space, better air flow
- Class has own gym play materials, such as balls - not shared between groups
- Bring your own snack/lunch to avoid buffet style set up
- Extra cleaning of high touch areas throughout the day
- Wearing masks when close to others and always in hallways, for everyone aged 5 and older, as per CDC guidelines.
- No parents in room at the moment, until cases diminish.

- Whenever possible, keep siblings placed together in same classroom
- Air filtration systems in all classrooms to help clean the air.
- Windows open whenever possible to keep the air fresh and flowing.

### **Health and wellness** – applies to children and staff

- We are requesting that children/staff stay home from school if there is an unidentified illness in the home, as well as child/staff member is showing signs of illness. We are asking everyone to be extra vigilant when there is a fever, runny nose, cough, diarrhea
- Children/staff must stay home 72 hours, fever free, before returning to school. Children/staff must stay home until symptoms such as runny nose, cough, diarrhea are resolved, or they have been cleared by a doctor to return to school.
- If a staff member or student tests positive for Covid-19, a doctor's note is required before a return to school.
- Depending on transmission rates at the time, we may require quarantining after travel, especially after Thanksgiving and Winter break . (Full two weeks, or one week, plus a negative Covid test taken after fifth day of return travel.)
- Depending on transmission rates at the time, we may recommend testing at start of school year, and after Thanksgiving and Winter break, before returning to school. We will make every effort to provide rapid tests that can be taken at home, free of cost to you, if we are recommending testing.
- All staff have either proof of full vaccination, or for those with exemptions, weekly Covid-testing will be required.
- Volunteers will be limited to one per classroom. All volunteers must show proof of full vaccination.

### **Testing**

- No cost to you testing is available at:
  - Sid's Pharmacy, 509 332 4608 <http://sidspharmacy.com/sids-covid-19-testing-and-vaccinations/>
  - Walgreen's [https://www.walgreens.com/topic/promotion/covid-testing.jsp?ban=covidinfoLP\\_testinginfoLP\\_fy21](https://www.walgreens.com/topic/promotion/covid-testing.jsp?ban=covidinfoLP_testinginfoLP_fy21)
  - Whitman County Health clinics <https://www.whitmancountypublichealth.org/asymptomatic.html>

### **When might testing be recommended**

- Child/staff member showing symptoms
- When any member of the family is showing symptoms
- After a potential exposure
- After a major holiday, when your family might have been part of a larger gathering, including people who have traveled
- After travel
- **At home tests available at MSoP for testing all children before the first day of school. Tests are highly recommended for the health of our school community.**
  - For convenience, and as an extra layer of protection, the school has purchased enough Covid-19 at-home rapid tests for each family to test their own child in the privacy of their own home. Tests will be available for pick up through the office on Wednesday, August 18<sup>th</sup>. Paperwork for

your child's file (immunizations, permission forms, emergency release, etc.) will be available for pickup at the same time.

- If the rapid test result is positive, the family should talk to their physician about the next step, which will usually include another test by a healthcare professional to rule out a possible false positive. A child with a positive test result should not attend school before talking to a healthcare professional.

### **What if we have a reported positive case in our school?**

- We would report this to our licenser, the Gladish Community Center and Whitman County Health.
- Parents and staff would be informed of the occurrence – no names will be used.
- We would immediately call a day of school closure for the class while we wait for further advice from the Whitman County Health Department – see step below.
- We would work with Whitman County Health Department to quickly put a plan into action. Whitman County Health would help us decide whether we had to close the whole school, or just a class, how long, and what extra cleaning steps would be needed.
- Parents and staff would be informed of the plan advised by Whitman County Health.

### **What about the other businesses in the Gladish Community?**

Leadership of the businesses in Gladish met via Zoom, and agreed to follow these protocols

- Mask wearing required for everyone aged 5 and older whenever in the public spaces of Gladish where children are present – currently basement and first and second floors.
- Report a positive case to Gladish admin, who will then report this to the other businesses. The actual business/person will not be identified to protect privacy.
- Whitman County Health will make notifications to anyone in close contact with the person who tested positive and will make recommendations regarding testing.
- All children using playground equipment will wash hands or use sanitizer before play. Children will follow playground/gym play with immediate handwashing.
- Gladish staff are cleaning all public bathrooms and high-touch areas at least twice a day. (Includes door knobs, light switches, handrails, elevator buttons, etc.)

### **What about tuition obligations if school is temporary closed, hours restricted, etc.?**

- **Fully open** Full tuition paid monthly, in advance
- **Temporary shutdown** This could be due to a need to quarantine a class, or due to a staff shortage due to sickness. Per semester, once temporary shutdowns cumulate to four weeks, a 50% credit for weeks closed will be applied to future invoices. (E.g. closed for four weeks, two weeks credit given). During the temporary shutdown, children will have occasional small group interactions and

story times via Zoom, plus enrichment and activity ideas supplied by staff for families to try at home.

- **Parent requests a delay in entry but wants to hold a space for their child** We will hold a space open for 25% tuition. The family will be notified by the school when space within the school is filling up. The family will be given up to a month to either decide on returning to school or releasing their child's space for a family seeking enrollment. At that time, the family will be released of any obligation to pay 25% of tuition, but would be welcomed back in the future, space permitting.
- **Back into lockdown?** If we were to go back into lockdown, families would no longer be required to pay full tuition. To maintain a space for when we reopen, families would pay 25% tuition. Families would receive support from staff at school through our website, community page, recorded story times, Zoom small group meet ups, etc.

### **What about distance learning, should there be another prolonged school closure?**

- Potential plans will be developed in cooperation with the board and staff, when staff are back under contract. Supports to families during another closure would include story time via Zoom, activity suggestions, sharing online resources

### **The most important points I have learned from attending webinars focused on reopening schools include:**

- A need to remain flexible and adaptable, in order to make changes when required.
- A need to communicate regularly with families and staff
- Children are missing social contact, so a strong focus should be on social-emotional development and unstructured play time
- Focus on physical distancing, not social distancing. Teach children how to stay safe but to maintain social connections. This includes new lessons in grace and courtesy – “Excuse me, you're in my space bubble. Please give me some space.” Proper hand washing and hygiene. Practicing physical distancing. Developing and using new ways to greet friends and say farewell.
- Teach children that we are practicing and using all of the new protocols as a way of showing others that we care about each other.

### **What precautions can we take at home to lower a child's risk?** (Recommendations by pediatricians reported in the New York Times)

- The most important step is to vaccinate everyone in the family as soon as they are eligible. This will lower the risk of a child getting infected at home and protect family members if a child brings coronavirus home from school. In addition, everyone in the family should get flu shots this fall.
- Parents of children should remember that risk is cumulative. Lowering your risk at home by avoiding crowds and enclosed public indoor spaces where you don't know the vaccination status of others can help reduce the whole family's risk. Paying attention to the community transmission and vaccination rates and wearing masks in risky settings can also help.

*“Think through what you do have control over and what you can do yourself,” Dr. Stuart said. “Try to minimize unnecessary exposure. Think of school as an essential activity. The*

*school might be one source of risk, but minimize the other potential sources for the household."*

- And of course, keep children home if they have any respiratory symptoms, remembering that [other viral respiratory infections](#), including respiratory syncytial virus (R.S.V.), are also circulating.

### **Calculating the risk of various activities**

- The risk calculator at <https://www.microcovid.org/> to be a useful tool for helping a family quantify risk in various scenarios and decide how they want to spend their risk budget.