



ST. MARK PARENT HANDBOOK

COVID-19 PROTOCOLS ADDENDUM

Providing child care services during the COVID-19 pandemic requires updated guidance from various authorities to help ensure that children are well cared for and providers help stem, not spread the virus. SMP will reference local, state, licensing and CDC guidelines to learn of best practices to create current protocols.

This document serves to inform current practices, and is subject to change. Should changes be made to our COVID-19 health and safety protocols, families will be notified in writing.

VACCINES

COVID-19 vaccination is strongly recommended for all eligible people in California, including providers, teachers, staff, children, and individuals sharing homes with members of our child care communities.

For information on vaccinations, please see [UCSF California Childcare Health Program](#) and [Vaccinate All 58 – Let's Get to Immunity.](#)

TESTING

Testing is one layer in a multi-layered approach to COVID-19 prevention. At this time, routine COVID-19 testing is not required. However, SMP management may request COVID-19 test results. In addition, SMP may require a prolonged period of non-attendance if requested test results are not provided.

Rapid at-home antigen tests are acceptable. Additional testing is made available to SMP community members through Aptitude testing at the Earl Warren Showgrounds at no additional cost. Please request to register for Aptitude testing via SMP management.

Results may be emailed to st.markpreschoolsb@gmail.com or brought to the Preschool Office.

FACE MASKS/COVERINGS

All Staff members, children over the age of two, and persons entering the St Mark Preschool facility will follow the Santa Barbara County and Licensing guidelines regarding face masks/ coverings. As of April 3, 2023, the California Department of Public Health Department recommends the following, regardless of the COVID-19 community levels:

- Wear a mask around others if you have respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, runny nose, and/or sore throat),
- Consider wearing a mask in indoor areas of public transportation (such as in airplanes, trains, buses, ferries) and transportation hubs (such as airports, stations, and seaports). This is increasingly important as the risk for transmission increases in the community.
- When choosing to wear a mask, ensure your mask provides the best **fit and filtration** (respirators like N95, KN95 and KF94 are best).
- If you've had a significant exposure to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, wear a mask for 10 days.

St. Mark will continue to monitor the latest guidelines as issued by the Health Department and Child Care Licensing. We will issue any policy updates/addendums to our SMP community regarding masking policy as we learn of most recent guidance.

HEALTH DECLARATION QUESTIONS

Please review this question each morning using the Procure App, prior to bringing your child to school.

*Has your child (or anyone in your household) experienced the following in the past 24 hours?
(Multiple answers can be selected)*

- *Fever over 100.4 degrees*
- *Cough or difficulty breathing*
- *Loss of sense of smell or taste*
- *Sore throat*
- *Fatigue or weakness*
- *Exposure to someone with COVID-19*
- *None of the above*

Note: Signing your child in certifies your answer.

WHEN SYMPTOMS ARE PRESENT

If your child has any symptom that is consistent with COVID-19, they will be required to stay home until:

1. They are minimally 24 hours fever-free (without the use of fever-reducing medication) and other symptoms have resolved **AND**
2. Documentation of one of the following is provided to SMP:
 - a. A negative COVID-19 test result within 24 hours of return **OR**
 - b. An alternative diagnosis documented by a physician, including a written statement of non-contagion and return-to-school date.

The COVID-19 symptoms include the following:

- Fever
- Sore throat
- Coughs

- Fatigue
- Diarrhea
- Shortness of breath / difficulty breathing
- New loss of taste or smell

Children will be separated from their class and sent home immediately if they have a fever of 100.4 degrees or higher or show signs of COVID-19. Staff and children will be monitored throughout the day for signs of illness. If a child shows signs of illness, the child will be taken to the office and a parent or caregiver will be notified immediately. If you are asked to come pick up your child, please do so immediately. Please be sure your contact information is up to date in the front office.

EMERGENCY WARNING SIGNS FOR COVID-19

If someone is showing any of these signs, seek emergency medical care immediately:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Bluish lips or face

The following is a list of steps to take after an individual has tested positive for COVID 19 REGARDLESS of vaccination status, previous infection, or lack of symptoms:

- Stay home for at least 5 days. The CDC guidelines for isolation can be found [here](#).
- Isolation can end after day 5 if
 - Symptoms are not present or are mild AND
 - You are fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication).
- If fever is present, isolation should be continued until 24 hours after fever resolves.
- If symptoms, other than fever, are not improving, continue to isolate until symptoms are improving or until after Day 10.
- If the confirmed case has severe symptoms, or is at high risk of serious disease or has questions concerning care, they should contact their healthcare provider for available treatments.
- Per [CDPH masking guidance](#), infected persons should wear a well-fitting mask around others for a total of 10 days, especially in indoor settings.
- After you have ended isolation, if your symptoms recur or worsen, get tested again and if positive, restart isolation at Day 0.
- If a staff member or child has a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19, the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department and the California Department of Social Services and Community Care Licensing will be notified immediately. These officials will help to administer and determine a course of action for our preschool.

CLOSE CONTACT

Close contact is defined by the CDC as (1) being within approximately 6 feet of a COVID-19 case for a

prolonged period of time and can occur while caring for, living with, visiting, or sharing a health care waiting area or room with a COVID-19 case, or (2) having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on).

Considerations when assessing close contact include the duration of exposure and the clinical symptoms of the person with COVID-19.

At this time, staff, parents and students are able to attend St. Mark if they have been around someone who was identified as a “close contact to a person with COVID-19.” Exposed individuals should be closely monitored for any symptoms of Covid-19, but do not need to self-quarantine. Testing¹ is highly recommended for those exposed within 3-5 days after exposure.

- Per [CDPH masking guidance](#), close contacts should wear a well-fitting mask around others for a total of 10 days, especially in indoor settings and when near those at higher risk for severe COVID-19 disease (see masking section below for additional information).
- Contacts are strongly encouraged to get vaccinated or boosted.
- If symptoms develop, test, and stay home (see earlier section on symptomatic persons), AND
- If test result is positive, follow isolation recommendations above

However, if COVID-19 has been diagnosed within your household, ***children may not return until 5 full days after the family member’s initial diagnosis.*** The child must present a negative test taken on day 5 and be symptom free.

DOCUMENTATION AND NOTIFICATION

We will be documenting and tracking incidents of possible exposure, immediately notifying Santa Barbara County Public Health, Community Care Licensing, and currently enrolled families of any possible COVID-19 exposure. We will be confidential in our reporting as required by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and/or the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA).

GROUP SIZE, CLASSROOM SPACE AND PHYSICAL DISTANCING

When community transmission of COVID-19 is high, St. Mark Preschool will reinstate the following guidelines:

- Class sizes will adhere to Community Care Licensing ratios for each age group.
- Classes will operate as cohorts/pods --- meaning if children mix, they will only mix within their age level groups and will not mix with the other age level groups. Our current age level pods are: Dolphins/Sea Turtles; Lady Bugs/Butterflies; Dragonflies/Grasshoppers; and Busy Bees/Honey Bees.
- Teachers will be assigned to their class and rotate to other classrooms only if there is no other alternative. Covid-19 preventative measures of wearing a mask indoors and offering a variety of activities that assist with social distancing will be utilized.

¹ Antigen test is preferred.

- Sensory play will be limited to individual groups. Children will be reminded to wash their hands before and after all sensory play.
- Activities will be set up with social distancing in mind.
- Circle time carpet squares will be spread out to encourage social distancing.
- Taped spaces on tables will be used to spread children out during table activities.

OUTSIDE TIME COVID PROTOCOLS

The use of outdoor space and time will be maximized to reduce time spent indoors which includes, but not limited to, groups having circle time and mealtimes outdoors. Activities that require close physical contact between children, ex: wrestling or tag, will be discouraged to the best of our ability. “Airplane arms” is a useful social distancing measure when standing in line or moving from place to place.

MEALTIME PROTOCOLS DURING COVID-19

Children will bring their lunch in a labeled lunch box. For health and safety reasons SMP does not provide refrigeration or heating of the children's lunches. Parents should take all necessary precautions to prevent food from spoiling (such as providing a cold pack) to keep food temperature below 45 degrees Fahrenheit.

Each day, children should be provided with:

- a labeled water bottle
- one (1) snack container for 2-3 snacks (for morning and afternoon snack time)
- one (1) separate container for lunch

Children will eat with their individual classrooms. Outdoor space will be utilized as much as possible during mealtimes so we can spread children out. Handwashing will be enforced before and after eating. All meal tables will be disinfected before and after all mealtimes. Children will not be permitted to share food.

VENTILATION SYSTEM

SMP takes steps to improve indoor air quality and reduce the risk of airborne spread of viruses and other contaminants. We require that at least one door or window be open at all times, and that each classroom is equipped with a portable air filtration system that use High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filters to remove the virus as best possible.

SANITATION

SMP cleans surfaces multiple times per day to reduce the risk of germs spreading by touch. All toys, learning materials and personal items will be cleaned and sanitized throughout the day to minimize transmission of illness. If SMP had someone who tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 24 hours, the space will be cleaned and disinfected according to the Santa Barbara Health Department guidelines for child care providers.

POTENTIAL SCHOOL CLOSURE/DISTANCE LEARNING

Our main goal is to assure the health and safety of every person in the St. Mark community. The intention of SMP is to provide in-person preschool and child care services to the greatest extent of our ability. However, should we receive guidance from governmental authorities that in-person services are not recommended due to safety concerns, we will move to a telepractice, or distance-learning delivery format. Additionally, St. Mark Preschool is a private childcare program and may choose to close as needed if we feel the risk of contracting COVID-19 is accelerated and/or unmanageable regardless of the recommendation of the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department. Tuition shall be required regardless of format and every effort will be made to return to in-person services as soon as possible.

Taking all safety precautions will not only reduce the risk of exposure but it will lessen the chances of having to close once again in the near or distant future. Cooperation and patience will play a crucial role in this determination. The guidelines and precautions we are implementing are to avoid the transmission of Covid-19. However, even with the most stringent of precautions we cannot guarantee that no member of our current community will contract Covid-19.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, additional restrictions may apply pertaining to:

- Domestic or International travel history
- Persons who have been in close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19
- Suspension of childcare due to COVID-19 outbreak
- Frequency of health screenings
- Emerging symptoms that may be consistent with COVID-19.
- Anyone who is symptomatic is sent home immediately, unless they have a prescription or doctor note that clearly states their symptoms are due to an allergy. The COVID-19 symptoms include the following: fever; sore throat; cough; fatigue; diarrhea; shortness of breath / difficulty breathing; and new loss of taste or smell
- In addition, if a child presents any of the following symptoms of Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C), the child must be excluded from child care for at least 72 hours after the symptoms disappear, unless it is cleared by a physician. We require a physician’s note that states the child is safe to attend group care. MIS-C can have any of the following symptoms:
 - Fever
 - Abdominal pain
 - Vomiting
 - Diarrhea
 - Neck pain
 - Rash
 - Bloodshot eyes
 - Feeling extra tired