

COVID-19 HEALTH POLICIES

The virus that causes COVID-19 can infect people of all ages. COVID-19 is spread from person to person through contact that is close enough to share droplets generated by coughing, sneezing, speaking and even just breathing. COVID-19 can also be spread by touching objects where contaminated droplets have landed. Because of this easy manner of transmission, an infant, child or young person who is infected with COVID-19 can spread the infection to others they come in close contact with, such as members of their household, teachers, or other caregivers. Infected persons with mild or even no symptoms can spread COVID-19.

Learning Their Way (hereafter “LTW”) values the safety and wellbeing of its staff, children, and families. For this reason, LTW has adopted a COVID-19 Health Policy. These policies are subject to change and will be updated based on the recommendation and guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Texas Health & Human Services (Texas HHS).

Vulnerable/high risk groups:

It is recommended that individuals at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 consult with their medical provider to assess their risk and to determine if they should stay home if there is an outbreak in their community. Information about COVID-19 in children is somewhat limited, but the information that is available suggests that many children have mild symptoms. However, a small percentage of children have been reported to have severe illness. Parents should consult with their health care provider on what is appropriate for their child.

Based on currently available information and clinical expertise, people 65 or older might be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19. To protect those at higher risk, it is important that everyone practices healthy hygiene behaviors. Staff age 65 or older are encouraged to talk to their healthcare provider to assess their risk and to determine if they should stay home.

Preventative health measures:

LTW will follow all applicable regulations found in the Minimum Standards.

The following checklist is intended to provide a selection of important health and safety items. LTW will plan to ensure adequate supplies to support hand hygiene behaviors and routine cleaning of objects and surfaces.

For staff in LTW or other public spaces, we are confident that if certain measures such as respiratory etiquette (cover cough and sneezes), frequent hand washing / hand sanitation and environmental cleaning and sanitizing are widely observed, LTW can be operated in a safe and measured way.

COVID-19 HEALTH POLICIES

All staff will follow New Braunfels city ordinances and Texas HHS recommendations regarding wearing cloth face coverings. The wearing of face masks will be up to the individual teacher.

We cannot expect a group of PreK or School Age children not to engage in interactive play or share toys. Parents or guardians should monitor the health of their child and not send them to the program if they are displaying any symptom of COVID. Parents or guardians should seek COVID testing promptly, and report results to the program given the implications for other children, families, and staff. Parents or guardians should protect any vulnerable persons who are members of the same household or come into frequent, close contact with infants, children and youth who attend daycare.

Social distancing strategies:

Social distancing focuses on remaining out of congregate settings, avoiding mass gatherings, and maintaining distance from others when possible. The following social distancing strategies will be in place:

- Staff will maintain at least 6 feet of separation from other individuals. If such distancing is not feasible, other measures such as face covering, hand hygiene, cough etiquette, cleanliness, and sanitation will be rigorously practiced.
- Classes will include the same group each day, and the same childcare staff will remain with the same group each day.
- Each group of children will stay with their homeroom.
- There will be limited mixing of children, such as staggering playground times and keeping groups separate for special activities such.
- Outdoor areas (like playgrounds in schools and parks) generally require normal routine cleaning but do not require disinfection.
 - Learning Their Way will not spray disinfectant on outdoor playground areas- it is not an efficient use of supplies and is not proven to reduce risk of COVID-19 to the public.
 - High touch surfaces made of plastic or metal, such as grab bars and railings, will be cleaned routinely.

COVID-19 HEALTH POLICIES

- Cleaning and disinfection of wooden surfaces (play structures, benches, tables) or groundcovers (mulch, sand) is not recommended and therefore will not be practiced.
- If possible, at nap time, children's naptime mats will be spaced out as much as possible, ideally 6 feet apart and placed head to toe in order to further reduce the potential for viral spread. Nap mats will be disinfected after each use.
- Time standing in lines will be minimized.
- Children must wash or sanitize their hands immediately after using sand, water, or sensory stations.
- The distance between children during table work will be increased.
- When feasible, more outside activities will be incorporated.

Parent drop-off and pick-up:

The pick-up and drop-off of children will be completed outside of LTW, unless there is a legitimate need for the parent to enter. Drop-off will be done from the car. Pick-up will be parent walk up outside the building. Should the parent have a legitimate need to enter LTW, the parent must be screened by the operation as outlined in this document.

- Arrival and drop off times will be staggered.
- Children, but not parent/guardian, will enter by the exterior door that leads directly into their classroom if available. Classrooms with interior doors will be entered by the students through the front main entrance.
- Children will clean their hands immediately upon entry to LTW. If a sink with soap and water is not available, hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol will be provided. *Keep hand sanitizer out of children's reach and supervise use.*
- Parents will verbally give the staff permission to check the child in and out each day.
- If possible, older people such as grandparents over the age of 65 should not pick up children, because they are more at risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

Screening:

Individuals who have a fever of 100.4 F or above or other signs of illness will not be admitted to LTW. Parents are encouraged to be on the alert for signs of illness in their children and to keep them home when they are sick.

COVID-19 HEALTH POLICIES

The following individuals must be screened every day before entering the facility:

- Staff,
- Persons with legal authority to enter, including law enforcement officers, Texas Rising Star staff, Licensing staff, and Department of Family and Protective Services staff,
- Professionals providing services to children.

Prior to entering LTW the following screening method will be used:

- Ask parents/guardians to take their child's temperature before coming to the facility. Upon their arrival, stand at least 6 feet away from the parent/guardian and child.
- Make a visual inspection of the child for signs of illness which could include flushed cheeks, rapid breathing or difficulty breathing (without recent physical activity), fatigue, or extreme fussiness.

Illness:

Ill children and staff are required to stay home.

- LTW will communicate to parents the importance of keeping children home when they are sick.
- LTW will communicate to staff the importance of being vigilant for symptoms and staying in touch with the LTW Director if or when they start to feel sick.

Any staff or child will be sent home if they present with any of the following new or worsening signs or symptoms of possible COVID-19:

- **Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit**
- **Cough**
- **Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing**
- Sore throat
- Chills
- Loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Known close contact with a person who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19

COVID-19 HEALTH POLICIES

Potential exposure means a household contact or having close contact within six feet of an individual with a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 for at least 10 minutes. The period for having contact with an individual includes the period of 48 hours before the individual became symptomatic.

Any child or staff with a temperature of more than 100.4 will not be permitted to return to LTW until 24 hours after the fever has returned to normal without fever reducing medications. LTW will not allow a physician's note before the 24 hours.

Very commonly, a child might be present at LTW with cough and/or runny nose (mild respiratory symptoms) and the child is behaving normally with no fever. Children will be permitted to attend LTW if no other symptoms of illness are present.

Children or staff who become sick while at LTW will be sent home as soon as possible.

- The sick child or staff will isolate from well children and staff until they can be sent home by isolating in the main entrance.
- A sick child must always be supervised by staff. The staff member caring for the child must wear a mask and protective clothing/smock.
- The parent of the sick child will be contacted immediately and informed to contact their health care provider.
- The isolation area will be cleaned and disinfected after the sick individual has gone home.
- All areas used by the individual who is sick, such as classrooms, offices, bathrooms, and common areas, will be cleaned and disinfected.

Staff or children with the new or worsening signs or symptoms listed previously will not return to the Center until:

- In the case of an individual who was diagnosed with COVID-19, the individual may return to LTW when all three of the following criteria are met:
 - at least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications),
 - the individual has improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath), and
 - at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
- In the case of an individual who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and does not get evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, the individual is assumed to have COVID-19, and the individual may not return to LTW until the individual has completed the same three-step criteria listed above.
- If the individual has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to LTW before completing the above self-isolation period, the individual must obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis.

COVID-19 HEALTH POLICIES

A physician's note MUST in writing state, "_____ was seen and evaluated for _____. This individual does NOT have COVID-19 and is able to return to childcare without placing another individual at risk."

If staff members believe or a parent believes that they or the child have had close contact to someone with a confirmed case COVID-19, they should monitor their health for the above symptoms during the 10 days after the last day they were in close contact with the individual with COVID-19. The staff or child is not permitted to return to LTW until the end of the 10-day self-quarantine period from the last date of exposure.

If COVID-19 is confirmed (tested positive) in a child, staff member, or other adult who has been present in LTW, the Center will:

- Contact the local health authority.
- Contact Child Care Licensing.
- Close off areas used by the person who is sick for at least 24 hours.
- Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the areas.
- Wait up to 24 hours or as long as possible before cleaning or disinfecting to allow respiratory droplets to settle.
- Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person who is sick.
- If more than 7 days have passed since the person who is sick visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary.
- Continue routine cleaning and disinfection.

COVID-19 HEALTH POLICIES

Enhanced cleaning and disinfecting measures:

The following will be done in addition to (or in substitution of) existing cleaning protocols in place at LTW:

- Cleaning and disinfecting efforts will be intensified over the pre-COVID-19 standards. Additional CDC guidance can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>
- Cleaning products will not be used near children, and staff will ensure that there is adequate ventilation when using these products to prevent children from inhaling toxic fumes.
- LTW will follow their regular schedule for cleaning and disinfecting.
- LTW will routinely clean, sanitize, and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched, especially toys and games.
- LTW will clean objects/surfaces not ordinarily cleaned daily such as doorknobs, light switches, classroom sink handles, countertops, nap pads, toilet training potties, desks, chairs, cubbies, and playground structures.
- The HVAC system will be adjusted to allow for more fresh air to enter the program space, if possible.
- All bathrooms should be cleaned and disinfected regularly throughout the day; at a minimum bathrooms should be cleaned and disinfected three times per day.
- Cleaning products:
 - All cleaning products will be used according to the directions on the label. For disinfection, most common EPA-registered, fragrance-free household disinfectants should be effective. A list of cleaning products specific to COVID can be found here: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>
 - If surfaces are dirty, they will be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
 - The manufacturer's instructions will be followed for concentration, application method, and contact time for all cleaning and disinfection products.
 - If possible, EPA-registered disposable wipes will be provided to staff so that commonly used surfaces such as keyboards, desks, and remote controls can be wiped down before use.
 - All cleaning materials should be kept secure and out of reach of children.
- Clean and sanitize toys:
 - Toys that children have placed in their mouths or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretions or excretions will be set aside until they are cleaned and disinfected by hand by a person wearing gloves. Toys will be cleaned with water and detergent, rinsed, sanitized with an EPA-registered disinfectant, rinsed again, and air-dried. A mechanical dishwasher may also be used. LTW will be mindful of items more likely to be placed in a child's mouth, like play food, dishes, and utensils.

COVID-19 HEALTH POLICIES

- Toys shared with other groups will be sanitized before being moved from one group to the other.
- Toys that need to be cleaned will be set aside, placed in a dish pan with soapy water or put in a separate container marked for “soiled toys.” The dish pan and water will be kept out of reach from children to prevent risk of drowning. Toys will be washed with soapy water and rotated to promote frequent cleaning.
- Children’s books and other paper materials will be rotated if used by one group in a cohort. They will not be used by any other group for at least 36 hours.
- For clean and disinfecting bedding:
 - Only bedding (sheets/blankets) that can be washed will be used.
 - Child’s bedding will be kept separate in individually labeled bins/bags in their cubby. Mats will be labeled for each child.
 - Bedding will be sent home monthly to be cleaned or immediately if soiled.

Healthy Hand Hygiene:

All children, staff and anyone entering LTW will engage in hand hygiene at the following times:

- arrival to LTW and after breaks,
- before and after preparing food or drinks,
- before and after eating or handling food, or feeding children,
- before and after administering medication or medical ointment,
- before and after diapering,
- after using the toilet or helping a child use the bathroom,
- after coming in contact with bodily fluid,
- after handling animals or cleaning up animal waste,
- after playing outdoors,
- before and after playing in sand, in water or with sensory materials, and
- after handling garbage.

Hands will be washed with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If hands are not visibly dirty, alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol will be used if soap and water are not readily available.

- Children will be supervised when using hand sanitizer to prevent ingestion.
- Children will be assisted with handwashing.
- After assisting children with handwashing, staff will also wash their hands.
- Posters will be placed at all sinks describing handwashing steps near sinks.

COVID-19 HEALTH POLICIES

Food Preparation and Meal Service:

- LTW will not serve family style meals. Each child will be provided an AM snack. Each child will bring their own lunch.
- LTW will give careful consideration to the meal process and work on educating parents and families on the best way to provide their child's food and drinks for the day/week.
- If the child brings their own food from home, LTW will discourage the sharing of food between children.
- The children's lunch and water bottle for the day will be stored in their cubbies.
- Sinks used for food preparation will not be used for any other purposes.
- Staff will ensure children wash hands prior to and immediately after eating.
- Staff will wash their hands before preparing food and after helping children to eat.
- LTW will follow all other applicable federal, state, and local regulations and guidance related to safe preparation of food.

Policy Effective: August 14, 2021