

SYC Pandemic Plan

Please note: These plans supersede information provided in the Parent Handbook.

These policies are based on the best information we are able to gather right now. As the information about the pandemic improves and the advice of ODH, ODJFS, and the CDC change, we will update our policies and keep families/teachers informed,

Goals

- To keep children, families and teachers as safe as possible while meeting children's developmental needs

Emotional Health and Safety

- We will spend as much time as possible in free play.
- Children decide where to play and with whom - no requirement to social distance from other children
- We will focus on trusting relationships - teachers will comfort, hug, console children... and wash hands!
 - Before schools starts we plan to offer ways for children, families and teachers to connect, which may include:
 - Parent Orientation: Tentative date Thursday, Sept. 3, in the evening
 - Open House Visit Day: a few children and their adult, teachers, short classroom visit including health screening, washing hands, finding cubbies
 - Preschool Zoom with teacher(s)/families
 - See Parent/Caregiver Engagement section below.

Health and Safety:

Again, these policies are based on the best information we are able to gather right now. As the information about COVID improves and the advice of ODH, ODJFS, and the CDC change, we will update our policies and keep families/teachers informed. By being strict about enforcing health and safety standards, we will be able to allow children the freedom to play.

- **Masks:**
 - Teachers will be wearing masks whenever they are at SYC.
 - Children may wear masks if they want.
- **Handwashing**
 - Teachers will wash hands or use hand sanitizer often
 - Children will wash hands or use hand sanitizer (kept out of reach of children) often, as they have before, with the addition of after coming inside and prior to departure
 - We will teach and use healthy handwashing habits.

- Touchless sinks and soap dispensers (pending)
- **Illness Policy**
 - **Diligently following these rules helps us keep each other safe.**
 - ***We will use our best judgement to identify when children are ill, however, we are not trained medical professionals. Our goal is to keep our SYC community including children, families and teaching staff safe and healthy. Please note that we will be VERY careful in following through on these Centers for Disease Control Recommendations. Please help us by keeping your child home if they, or another member of your family, is ill.***
 - Parents agree to notify school of any conditions or changes in their child's health status, to inform school if their child tests positive for COVID, if someone in their child's household tests positive, or if someone the child has been exposed to tests positive.
 - SYC agrees to keep your child/staff member's identity confidential regarding illness, exposure, or testing.
 - Teachers and children will be screened daily for temp and health conditions. Teachers and children will be excluded from school for 72 hrs if they have:
 - One of the following: temp over 100, difficulty breathing, loss of taste or smell, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, new or worsening cough
 - Two of the following: sore throat, headache, listlessness or lethargy, muscle aches, chills, mild respiratory illness/issues
 - Any communicable disease on the communicable disease chart <http://www.odifs.state.oh.us/forms/num/JFS08087/pdf/>
 - If parent has any of the above consider keeping child at home unless symptoms are explained by an underlying condition (allergies, asthma)
 - If a child or teacher exhibits any of the symptoms during class, they will be taken to an area away from other people and will need to go home.
 - Parents must pick up their ill child within 30 minutes.
 - Be sure your contact information is current in the office and that your voice mailbox is activated and not full.
 - If the individual has had known contact with someone confirmed or probable to have COVID-19, prior to returning to the program, he or she must complete isolation or quarantine procedures in coordination with their local health department.
 - Teachers and children will be welcomed back to SYC:
 - Following ODH guidelines and suggestions for quarantine or isolation.
 - When it has been 72 hr since any symptoms without medication AND
 - Improvement in respiratory symptoms
 - OR they have been cleared by a doctor noting that they do not have COVID, have a negative COVID test or have a different diagnosis and have met the criteria for that condition to be able to return to school (a doctor's note may be required *If you are unable to get a doctor's note, please come talk to Susan or Amy.)

- Unfortunately, we also have to close the SYC playgrounds to non-classroom use. Teachers will need the extra time before and after class to set up, clean and sanitize the spaces. In addition, we feel it will be just too hard to control the size of the group/social distancing of the folks who stay to play.
 - Instead, you could consider making your own little bubble with a couple of the children in your class that your child is already exposed to and plan your own playdates in someone's front/back yard, the woods, or an open park space with parents visiting at a distance while the children play.
 - We hope to be able to relax these rules as the year goes on!!

Drop Off / Pick Up

- For now, parents/caregivers are not allowed in the classroom/building, as they present an increased risk of exposure. As things improve we hope to be able to allow parents back into the classroom as you expect at SYC.
- We will likely have staggered drop off / pick up times to start, give or take 15 min at the beginning or end of class. If a particular time is important to your schedule, we will work with you to make that work.
- Timeliness will be especially important with this phase of drop off and pick up, as teachers will be escorting children to their classrooms. We also understand that occasionally on some days, things happen. If you are not able to arrive at the designated time please contact the office to arrange for drop off.
- **Phase 1 (starting the year): Car Drop Off/ Pick Up**
 - Children in the 4s classroom will use the SYC parking lot off of High street and pull around to the curb at the designated drop off time.
 - Children in the 3s classroom will use the Weisheimer lot and pull up to the curb (north side of the lot) at the designated drop off time.
 - A classroom teacher will greet you in the parking lot. Teachers will ask you several health screening questions. Parents, wearing a mask, will open the car door and help the child out of the car seat.
 - The teacher will then conduct temperature checks of the child with a no touch thermometer, have the child sanitize their hands, say goodbye to you, and escort the child to the classroom.
 - 4s students will enter the classroom through the outdoor playground door.
 - 3s students will enter through the 2s playground into the 3s playground, and enter the classroom through the playground door.
 - Parents must wear a mask during drop off and pick up, and if they ever need to come up to the building to talk with Holly, Amy or Susan.
 - At the end of class kids will wash hands/use hand sanitizer and then be escorted with any of their belongings by the teachers to the designated drop off curb line.
- **Phase 2: Door Drop Off / Pick Up**

- We may decide to try dropping off and picking up outside the building at the classroom door later in the year, with a similar process for health screening, sanitizer, parents with masks, etc.
- **Supporting Separation:**
 - Everyone experiences separation differently, and teachers have many resources to help both children and caregivers who are having a hard time separating. This may look different at curbside drop off than it does in the classroom, though a lot of the same techniques will help.
 - We will help prepare you and your child both with a video of what dropping off looks like.
 - We can certainly reassure you that we will still support and care for your child by sitting with them, writing notes, calling or sending a picture of how they are feeling. As always, we will work with you and your child to find a plan that works for everyone.

Keeping Children/Teachers Safe During Play

Outside

- We will emphasize outdoor play even more this year, spending as much time as possible outside.
- Teachers will intentionally plan for outdoor play.
- Windows will be open when inside for ventilation.
- We are looking at funding for HEPA air filters for inside.

Limits on Materials

- The intense cleaning regimen will require that we limit quantities of materials in the classroom both in number and in type. Nevertheless, teachers will remain attune to children's interest and needs, and will provide what children ask for.
 - Some items will not be used at this time due to exposure risks: face paints, large sensory table, swimming pools
 - Some items will not be used at this time due to the difficulty in sanitizing them: soft toys/animals, bedding/pillows, area rugs, dressups
- Sensory play possibilities may include:
 - Individual sensory trays/bins
 - Individual containers of sensory materials
 - Running water outside rather than standing water
 - Mulch and sand outside!

Cleaning

Toys/Manipulatives:

- Will be sanitized after each group/class, more often if they have been mouthed or used for a long period of time or by a group of children
- For many items, each class will have their own set that will be rotated out and cleaned between classes. This means that there may be less quantity and variety of items, but teachers will be attuned to children's interests and needs and will pull out other items as needed.

Surfaces:

- Handles, tables, chairs, cubbies, bathroom, cabinet handles, etc - will be sanitized after each class
- Bathrooms will be sanitized after each use when possible

Cleaning Supplies:

- We will use cleaning/sanitizing products approved by the EPA for use against COVID-19.
- Our cleaning company will do a thorough cleaning of all SYC spaces each evening.

Playground:

- Sanitize non-wood items, high-touch areas

Snack

- We know that children are often hungry and some kids just aren't ready for breakfast before they leave the house. We also know that it's important for children to learn to listen to their own bodies to decide when they're hungry. However, sitting down to eat together can increase risk of exposure. As a result, here's how we'll be handling snack:
 - no more open snack per ODJFS regulations
 - bring one baggie/small container that the child can open themselves with one kind of snack
 - bring a water bottle that is easily opened/closed
 - In place of sit-down-snack and open snack, when a child is hungry, they will wash up, get their snack, eat it at a designated place, put their snack away, and wash again.
- As with all of our plans, we will revisit this snack policy as we see how it works with the children.

Items from Home

- Rather than sending in spare clothes each day, we are asking that each child send in a seasonally appropriate set of clothes (shirt, two pairs of pants/shorts/skirt, at least 2 pairs of underwear, socks) in a gallon-sized plastic bag labelled with your child's name and class.
 - We will store these at school. If your child needs to change, we'll put the clean clothes on your child, the dirty clothes back into the bag, and send it home for you to wash and refill. When the weather changes, we'll send all the bags home for a new set of winter clothes.

- We will still have a backup supply of SYC clothes for emergencies.
- We discourage children from bringing toys to school. Loveys or transitional objects are still welcome - preferably easily washed/sanitized ones.

Ratios/Staffing:

- **Every effort will be made to reduce the number of people your child comes in contact with. As much as we can, your child's class will be treated like a "bubble" with minimal contact with other children/adults.**
- **No one outside of SYC staff will be entering our spaces during the day, and only the cleaners should be in there at night.** Church staff/members will not be using our spaces at this time. If the church begins holding services/Sunday School at some point, we will be in conversation with them about what spaces/materials they used and how they are sanitized.
 - We are working on a plan for substitutes that involves the least amount of risk.
- Teachers may need to work in two separate classrooms, on different days or in mornings and afternoons. While this is not ideal, keeping our highly experienced teachers is essential to our program and some teachers may need more hours than one class can offer in order to keep working at SYC. We will do everything we can to reduce any cross-contamination between classes (changing clothes, washing up, being in the same "area" of the room for both classes, etc).
- Groups/classes may not mix with each other and spaces/materials must be cleaned and sanitized between groups. We must have at least one teacher dedicated to that group of children at that time.
- We are allowed to have up to 24 children with a ratio of 1:12 in the 3s, and up to 28 children with a ratio of 1:14 in the 4s. However, both those ratios and group sizes do not feel safe to us, nor do they meet our priorities for children.
- **We will start the year with 2 teachers and 12 children, a 1:6 ratio,** which is well below what is allowed. This may change and we will adjust our ratios and group sizes as the rules, enrollment and safety allow. We will not go above our typical ratios and group sizes: 3 teachers with 18 children in the 3s, 3 teachers with 21 children in the 4s.
- **Several factors go into our thinking about ratios. All are important:**
 - **Finances:** Moving to drastically lower ratios than we have budgeted for dramatically increases the cost of the program. In addition, lower total enrollment means that the financial burden for overhead expenses are shared by fewer children.
 - There may be federal funds available at some point but right now there is not. The PPP funds we received in the spring will help immensely, as will our savings, but they won't cover all the costs of reduced ratios.
 - **Safety:** Preschool children must be supervised at all times.
 - **Social/Emotional Support:** One of our primary roles as teachers is to provide social and emotional support to children. Being sure that there are enough adults to provide that support is important.

- **Teacher Morale/Support:** Our teachers value working as a team, and it will take some additional support for them to transition to working alone, as well as support from the office.

Tuition

- We have had to increase this year's tuition more than usual to compensate for the lower enrollment and ratios as well as the increased equipment and cleaning required during the pandemic. Please see www.syccolumbus.org for details.
- We know this may be hard on some families. If you would like to apply for a scholarship, please email the office at syc@syccolumbus.org. We have also had families express an interest in helping with the increased costs due to COVID. If you are able to do that, please visit www.syccolumbus.org and click on the donate tab at the top right and choose the Operating Fund. Thank you!

Delayed start of the school year

- If SYC is unable to open as scheduled in September, tuition will be prorated for the remainder of the year. Your contract will hold your spot for when school opens.
- No programming offered by teachers. As the primary purpose of virtual connection is to build and maintain relationships with children, it doesn't make sense to work on a virtual connection if we haven't yet connected in person.

Closing SYC for a period of time after the school year has started

- If SYC is closed for two consecutive weeks or less, teachers will maintain some level of programming/connection with families and no tuition will be refunded.
- If we are closed for more than two consecutive weeks, tuition will not be collected during the closure. No programming will be offered during this time.

Withdrawal Policy

- Should you decide to withdraw from the school after you have signed a contract,
 - For withdrawal requests received after August 3: Your tuition contract will remain in force until the spot is filled. The tuition deposit will not be refunded, and a \$40.00 withdrawal processing fee will be assessed before any tuition refunds are made.
 - Once signed, a tuition contract remains in force until a replacement is found. Replacements will be filled in the order in which written withdrawal requests are received. All withdrawal requests and/or appeals for special consideration must be submitted *in writing* to the SYC Advisory Committee: Lauren Marcum, Chair, 93 W. Weisheimer Rd., Columbus, Ohio 43214.