



# **Little Scholars Child Care's Operational Guidelines for Coronavirus/COVID-19**

***\*\*\*Please note that this document will be modified as applicable when these restrictions can be lifted and/or amended to reflect new advice at that time and a revised version will be provided.\*\*\****

**September 2022**

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## **Intent**

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All parents and employees must review this document as it provides pertinent information about operational guidelines that Little Scholars is putting into place to reduce the potential risk of exposure to COVID-19, thus protecting our children, employees and their families. Once reviewed, a signature is required to demonstrate accountability in following all procedures. It will be beneficial to keep this handbook accessible for reference when needed.

## **Hours of Operation**

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Until further notice, our hours of operation are Monday to Friday from 7:00am-5:30pm. Employees will ensure that a deep clean of each room is completed between 5:30-6:00pm. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause but know that this extra measure will help keep our children, employees and their families safe. Please note that the \$1 per minute late charge will apply after 5:30pm.

## **Drop Off and Pick Up Routines**

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### ***Morning Routine at Home***

Please continue to take your child's temperature each morning to screen for a fever (According to the Region of Waterloo Public Health [ROWPH], 37.8C or higher is a fever) and keep your child home if they are not feeling well. Please also continue to complete the COVID-19 School and Child Care Screening [School and Child Care Screening Tool](#) to ensure you are able to attend. Please retake this screening every day before leaving for school/child care. Finally, please wash your hands before leaving the house as part of your morning routine.

### ***AM Drop Off Times***

Drop offs can happen anytime between 7:00-9:30am. Our program starts at 9:00am and we don't want you child missing out on any of the fun learning experiences we have to offer.

### ***PM Pick Up Times***

Pick up can happen anytime between 3:00-5:30. If you are in need of an earlier pick up, you must provide notice to the Director.

### ***Checking in with Educators***

At drop off and pick up, please ensure that staff are aware that your child has arrived and/or that your child is leaving. Staff must also be informed of any pertinent information (i.e. vacation time, alternative pick up or drop off arrangements, circumstances that might affect the child's day such as, injuries, little to no sleep, no breakfast, etc.) upon arrival to program.

### ***Escort/Emergency Contacts***

Other than to you, children will only be released to individuals authorized on the emergency and/or escort contacts filled out at registration. Any additional emergency add-ons must be provided to the Director before the date of pick up and/or drop off. All legal names must be recorded on the form as these individuals must provide photo identification.

## **Enhanced Sanitary Practices**

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*Definitions: **High-traffic surfaces:** Any surface that has frequent contact with hands (i.e., light switches, shelving, containers, hand rails, door knobs, sinks, toilets etc.). **Low-traffic surfaces:** Any surfaces that have minimal contact with hands (i.e., Window ledges, doors, sides of furnishings)*

Employees have been trained on the proper steps of cleaning and disinfecting both high and low-traffic surfaces. To enhance our sanitary practices, there will be an increased frequency of cleaning and disinfecting as high-traffic surfaces will be regularly cleaned and disinfected at least twice a day (more often if visibly soiled) and low-traffic surfaces will be cleaned at least once each day. All cleaning and disinfecting measures will be recorded daily.

### ***Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette***

Appropriate hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette are among the most important protective strategies and thus employees have received training on proper hand hygiene and will adhere to all hand washing steps set out by the ROWPH. They will also be able to assist children on appropriate hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, including the use of alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR), and reinforcing its use.

Hand hygiene should be conducted by anyone entering the childcare setting and incorporated into the daily schedule at regular intervals during the day, above and beyond what is usually recommended (for example, before eating food, after using the washroom).

### ***Sanitizer***

Hand sanitizers are not intended to replace hand washing but if soap and water are inaccessible at any point during the day, hand sanitizer, containing a minimum of 70% alcohol, will be acceptable only if hands are not visibly soiled.

### ***Gloves***

Gloves must be worn in the following circumstances and disposed after use:

- Administering first aid or medication
- Cleaning up blood and/or bodily fluid
- During diapering and toileting routines
- During the cleaning and disinfecting of toys, equipment and furnishings

### ***Ventilation***

Ventilation will be provided whenever possible by moving activities outdoors and through using mechanical ventilation including HVAC systems. By ensuring our HVAC system is in good working order, we will be able to reduce airborne pollutants, including virus particles. While ventilation is important, it must be used along with other public health measures as there is not one public health measure that can guarantee protection from COVID-19; multiple strategies are needed. In addition, the Ministry of Education in partnership with the Ministry of Government have provided a standalone HEPA filter unit for each of our classrooms.

## **Individuals with a Suspected or Confirmed Case of COVID-19 – Response Plan**

### ***Suspected COVID-19 while in childcare***

If a child begins to experience symptoms of COVID-19;

- Parents will be contacted immediately to pick-up up their child. If the parent(s) cannot be reached, the emergency contact person will be contacted to pick up the child
- The child must follow the isolation guidance below
- Please note that any siblings of the sick child must also be picked up and neither can attend while waiting for test results and/or while the sibling is in isolation

If an employee begins to experience symptoms of COVID-19 they must;

- Inform the Director
- Remove themselves from program as soon as possible and follow the isolation guidance below

### ***Rapid Antigen Testing (RATS)***

As announced on January 12, 2022, the Ministry of Education is providing licensed childcare programs with rapid antigen test (RAT) kits for symptomatic children and staff. RAT kits will be provided only to symptomatic children and staff who become symptomatic while at childcare. Tests for children will be sent home with families to complete testing at home.

### ***Suspected COVID-19 while not in childcare (including parents, child or anyone in your household)***

All individuals must continually self-monitor and monitor their children. All individuals must immediately report experiencing any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 to the Director regardless of when the onset of symptoms or signs occur (i.e., evenings or weekends).

### ***Follow up***

The parents of the symptomatic child and/or the employee are responsible to contact the Director on a *daily* basis and report any changes to their health and/or provide verification of their test results.

### ***What should I do if I have symptoms?***

Anyone who is feeling sick or has any new or worsening symptoms of illness, including those not listed in this document or the screening tool, must stay home until their symptoms are improving for at least 24 hours and seek assessment from their health care provider if needed. Please note, that if you have a fever you must be at least 24 hours fever free and if you have nausea, vomiting, and/or diarrhea you must be at least 48 hours symptom free before returning to Little Scholars. Individuals with severe symptoms requiring emergency care should go to their nearest emergency department.

If you have been told that you should currently be quarantining, isolating, staying at home, or not attending school or child care (This could include being told by a doctor, health care provider, public health unit, federal border agent, or other government authority) please stay home and do not leave except to get tested, to visit a clinical assessment centre or for a medical emergency. Follow any other guidance or directions that have been provided to you.

### ***When Can I return to Little Scholars:***

Your symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours (48 hours if you had nausea, vomiting, and/or diarrhea) **and** you have been fever free for at least 24 hours

### ***Additional Precautions:***

All individuals should, for 10 days after you tested positive for COVID-19 or from when symptoms started, whichever came first, wear a well-fitted mask in all public settings (including school and child care) avoid non-essential activities where you need to take off your mask (for example, playing a wind instrument in music class or removing your mask for sports; dining out) avoid visiting anyone who is immunocompromised or may be at higher risk of illness (for example, seniors) avoid non-essential visits to highest risk settings such as hospitals and long-term care homes. **Please note, no child at Little Scholars will be subjected to wear a mask.**

### ***Symptoms***

If you have one or more of the following symptoms;

- **Fever** (temperature of 37.8°C/100.0°F or greater) and/or chills
- **Cough** that is new or worsening (e.g. continuous, more than usual if chronic cough) including croup (barking cough, making a whistling noise when breathing) and not related to other known causes or conditions for which current symptoms do not represent a flare-up/exacerbation related to infection (e.g., chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
- **Shortness of breath** (dyspnea, out of breath, unable to breathe deeply, wheeze, that is worse than usual if chronically short of breath) and not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g., chronic heart failure, asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
- **New olfactory or taste disorder** (decrease or loss of smell or taste) and not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g., nasal polyps, allergies, neurological disorders)

### **Do NOT go to Child Care:**

Stay home (self-isolate) and do not attend Little Scholars until your symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours **and** you have been fever free for at least 24 hours.

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If you have one or more of the following symptoms;

- **Sore throat** (painful swallowing or difficulty swallowing) o Not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g., postnasal drip, gastroesophageal reflux)
- **Rhinorrhea or nasal congestion** (runny nose or stuffy nose) o Not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g., returning inside from the cold, chronic sinusitis unchanged from baseline, seasonal allergies)
- **Headache** that is new and persistent, unusual, unexplained, or long-lasting o Not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g., tension-type headaches, chronic migraines, receiving a COVID-19 or flu vaccine in the last 48 hours)
- **Fatigue or lethargy** (general feeling of being unwell, lack of energy, extreme tiredness) that is unusual or unexplained and not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g., depression, insomnia, thyroid dysfunction, anemia, malignancy, receiving a COVID-19 vaccine in the past 48 hours)
- **Myalgias** (muscle aches and pain) that are unexplained, unusual, or long-lasting and not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g., fibromyalgia, receiving a COVID19 vaccine in the past 48 hours)
- **Nausea, vomiting and/or Diarrhea** not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g. transient vomiting due to anxiety in children, chronic vestibular dysfunction, irritable bowel syndrome, inflammatory bowel disease, side effect of medication)

**Do NOT go to Child Care:**

Stay home (self-isolate) and do not attend Little Scholars until your symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours and/or 48 hours if you had nausea, vomiting, and/or diarrhea.

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If you have one or more of the following symptoms;

- **Abdominal pain** Not related to other known causes or conditions (for example, menstrual cramps, gastroesophageal reflux disease)
- **Pink eye** Not related to other known causes or conditions (for example, blepharitis, recurrent styes)
- **Decreased or no appetite (young children only)**

**Do NOT go to Child Care:**

Stay home until your symptom(s) have been improving for at least 24 hours.

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***If you have travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days***

You must follow the federal guidelines [COVID-19: Travel, testing and borders - Travel.gc.ca](https://travel.gc.ca/travel-health/alerts/20200320) after returning to Canada, even if you were not required to quarantine.

***Communication Plan***

Childcare centers do not have to report any individuals with symptoms or positive results to public health and public health units are no longer completing contact tracing in childcare centers. Thus, we are doing our own internal tracking of symptomatic and positive individuals and we will be transparent as possible in the communication of any confirmed cases without disclosing any identifying information. We will monitor cases, complete contact tracing and close any classroom(s) if we feel necessary or worst case implement a center-wide closure if deemed necessary.

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## **Fees**

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Fees are still required to be paid on the first day of each month for that entire month, including any inclement weather days, statutory holidays, vacation days and sick days. In addition, the Ministry of Education has confirmed that parent fees will continue to be charged for COVID-19 related absences (i.e., isolation period due to a suspected or confirmed case/illness). Please note that to-date there is no refunds/credits provided for any room closures or center-wide closures.