

Policies and Procedures for Management of COVID-19
Hampshire Cooperative Nursery School &
Toddlers Morning Out, Inc.

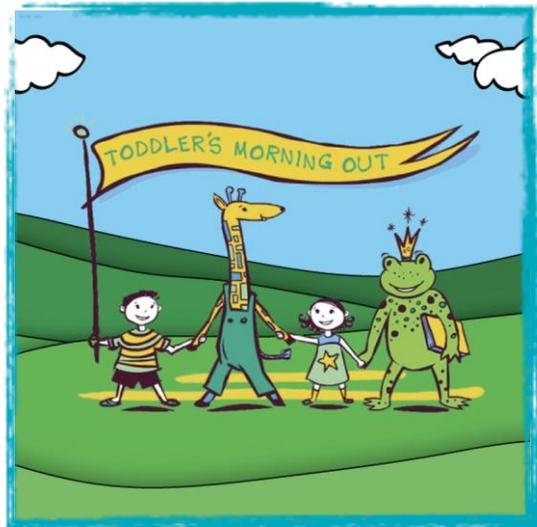


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Dear Parents, Guardians and Grandparents,

Thank you for your continued support and encouragement as we figure out what programming we will be able to provide that allows your children to stay healthy, enjoy being with their peers, and learn and developing in a safe and loving environment.

Every year, we tell parents that we view our school and families as one big family ~ we are in this together. We trust that you see HCNS as a community that supports you during your child's early years of education, and we value your input and collaboration. This sense of community could not be more important than it is this year. In taking this step back into school, you are trusting us to do everything we can to keep your child healthy (and happy, and curious, and confident--the list goes on!) and we are relying on all of you to help with that process.

Good communication between all of us will be key to having a successful year. There will be times when we will need to talk together to find the best solutions, and we welcome those conversations with you at any time.

We have gathered and combed through the most up-to-date information and science to help us make our decisions. It has not been an easy task, and it is one that we take very seriously. We are excited about the programming we have created, and we feel that we have developed solid protocols to provide a safe environment.

In the pages that follow, you will find suggestions of how to prepare your children, details of what we will be doing to keep the school clean, morning check-in routines, guidelines regarding when to keep your child home, and the protocols we will be following. Perhaps the most difficult part for us will be following and carrying through with the guidelines for when a child must stay home or be sent home midday. Please understand, these protocols are set to keep everyone ~ your child, your child's classmates, and the staff ~ as healthy as possible.

This document may change as the health situation evolves during the year, but it is meant to provide an orientation to the procedures that we will be following at HCNS. Please read all of the guidance, ask us questions, offer ideas--we are open to all of your thoughts. We know that settling in at the beginning of the year with this new routine will not be easy, so we also ask for your patience while we get up and running with the children.

Please do not hesitate to reach out with questions or concerns ~ we are in this together!

Sincerely,
~Meg~
Meg O'Leary
HCNS Director
director@hampshirecooperative.org
603-643-4640

Talking with your Children about School & Health

This resource is meant to help you and your family prepare for the upcoming school year. We are always available to talk about ideas and ways to frame some of the health issues this year. Always feel free to call and ask questions.

Getting Started

Talk with your child about how exciting it is to be returning to school or starting school for the first time. Highlight teachers and friends your child will see. Ask your child to talk about what kinds of activities and games they might do together.

Talking About COVID

Things will likely feel different for your child when starting school. For kids who are a little older, you can start by asking what they know about COVID and utilize that as a conversation starting point. If you are interested in talking about COVID with your child for the first time, here is an example of some age-appropriate language:

COVID/Coronavirus is a germ that can make our bodies sick. It can sometimes feel like a cold and can make people cough and get a fever. Grown-ups are working hard to help keep you and everybody else safe. There are some important jobs we can all do to help keep us all safe and healthy.

Hand Washing

Explain to your child, “We wash our hands to help stay healthy and safe.” Practice singing a 20-second song while washing hands at home. Allow your child to help choose the song. Talk about this being an important job they can do to help keep everyone healthy at school.

Coughs and Sneezes

Explain to your child, “When we need to cough or sneeze, we can use our elbow to catch it.” This can be turned into a “Germ Catcher” game — make it a fun game for your child to try to catch a sneeze or cough in the elbow and provide praise for being such a great germ catcher.

Preparing Your Child for Masks

Share with your child that they will see their teachers wearing masks that cover their nose and mouth. Explain why: “Your teachers will be wearing masks to help keep you and everyone else safe from germs.” As a parent, practice wearing a mask around your child. Demonstrate taking the mask on and off. This will show them that they can recognize the person behind the mask. Talk about ways we can tell when someone is smiling by looking at their eyes or using words to

share how we feel. Allow your child to play with masks at home, putting them on dolls and stuffed animals.

If your child will be wearing a mask at school, allow him/her to help select masks and decorate them if possible/interested. Kids are dealing with a loss of control, so choice-making whenever possible can be very helpful. If your child is having trouble adjusting to wearing a mask, practice having your child wear one for short stretches at home in a familiar setting (i.e., during story time or a favorite activity).

Validate and name your child's emotions when they are resistant. For example, "It's so frustrating we have to wear masks. I'm sad your teachers will have to wear masks too."

Rehearsing Drop-Off

Some children may struggle with their parents and caregivers no longer being able to come inside and help settle them into their classrooms. You may wish to practice the drop-off routine at home through play. For example, select small figurines to play the child, parent, and teacher (can include cars and school too). Act out the new routine, so your child can play through what to expect and process his/her feelings about it.

Leaving Comfort Items at Home

Many children are used to bringing a cherished blanket or stuffed animal along when they leave the house. They may find it difficult to no longer bring these items to school. Before school starts, you may wish to practice leaving your child's comfort item at home for short outings. Allow your child to help choose a special place where the item should wait or give it a special job while it stays at home. The item could also be left in your child's car seat to keep it warm and cozy. You might consider leaving a laminated picture of the item in your child's school cubby (teachers can help with this) or find a special substitute that can be easily cleaned (plastic animal, book with wipeable pages, washable stress ball to squeeze).

As your child adjusts to these new changes, encourage open communication. Ask your child what questions they have. What are you feeling confused or worried about? Use open-ended questions to help avoid simple Yes or No answers. Try your best to only answer the questions they ask.

Health Guidance

Starting with the basics, we would like to review the importance of hand washing and appropriate use of masks and related PPE. Hand washing is one of the best ways to protect yourself and your family from getting sick. Children will be assisted in following hand washing procedures. Hand washing stations will be available inside the classroom and at outdoor sinks on the playground.

Hand washing- Follow these 5 Steps (as per CDC guidance)

- Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
- Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice. The A, B, C song is great too!
- Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
- Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them
- At school, hand sanitizer will be available when access to sinks is limited (e.g., hikes and walks). Sanitize, with at least 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer approved for children, when soap and water is not available and in between washings, when hands are visibly clean. Children will wash hands whenever needed, but also with a focus on these transitions/times of the day:
 - When entering the playground/classroom after drop-off
 - Before and after snack
 - Before and after lunch bunch
 - Before and after diapering/using the potty
 - Before and after playing in the outdoor sandbox
 - After hikes and walks during the morning

Masks and PPE: Children enrolled at HCNS are expected to wear a mask at school. The only exception will be when they are outdoors and able to social distance, and of course during snack and lunch. Don't worry if your child is still struggling with the whole idea of keeping a mask on ~ it will be something that we will work with. Teachers will also be required to wear a mask, and an "over shirt" or change of clothes is required so that change out of clothing if it becomes soiled/contaminated during the morning. If you are concerned that your child, due to other health concerns, may be at higher risk of serious illness due to Covid or other illnesses, please contact your Director before the beginning of the school year so we may develop a plan together to support your child.

Health Procedures: Screening for Symptoms At TMO and HCNS, our recommended health guidance will apply to ***both your child who is attending and your entire family "unit" including parents and siblings***. If you are unsure about whether to send your child to school, PLEASE contact your Director in advance. It is much easier to have a conversation before leaving for school than during drop-off when other families are waiting to be checked in.

Please keep your child home if:

Your child (or a family member) has had a known or suspected exposure to COVID-19 within the past 14 days OR child has traveled outside of New England in the past two weeks OR your child (or a family member) has symptoms listed below. Guidance on state travel is likely to change during the year and will be updated accordingly. If you plan to travel or you expect to have visitors staying with you from other areas, the best plan is to communicate those plans to your teacher/Director for guidance. Some travel (e.g., day trips using your own vehicle for work while adhering to all COVID social-distancing guidance) may be permissible, but please check with us to confirm.

- Fever or chills - Temperature 100.4 or greater
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Please make sure you have a thermometer at home. Keep in mind that a temperature reading is only one piece of a COVID-19 health assessment. While a child's temperature may be in the normal range they may have other symptoms that warrant staying home and/or seeing a healthcare provider. A doctor's note will be required for returning to school. Please note that this requirement may be changed based on recommendations from the New Hampshire Department of Health.

Note: *Students with a confirmed diagnosis and a medical treatment plan for well controlled asthma or environmental allergies, who do not have a temperature may attend school with some expected mild coughing and clear nasal discharge. Please contact your Director to discuss and document pre-existing conditions. Documentation from your student's doctor should accompany this school documentation.*

When children are symptomatic

If your child becomes ill at school, there will be a designated, comfortable area outside of the classrooms (in the space immediately upon entering the front entrance) where an adult will wait with your child until an adult can arrive to pick them up. Your child will be given a mask to wear while waiting for a parent/caregiver. Staff will wear an N-95 mask, face shield and gloves while assisting an ill child. Children who develop any of the symptoms, listed above, must be picked up at school by parents or emergency contacts as soon as possible. If a child has been sent home due to illness we request that you contact your child's healthcare provider. If a child presents with symptoms during the school day and we determine the child needs to be sent home, parents will be advised to contact childcare/school placements of other siblings to inform and assess whether siblings of the ill student need to also be sent home.

If a staff member becomes ill at school, they will leave the school premises immediately (or be picked up as soon as possible if required). Staff will consult a health professional regarding symptoms and be in contact with their Director about next steps before returning to school.

When a child or teacher is being sent home with *possible* COVID symptoms, the class will go outdoors (if not already outdoors), or other location in inclement weather. The surfaces in the classroom will then be sanitized. Children may return to the classroom when the cleaning is complete.

If COVID-19 is *confirmed* in a child or teacher, TMO and HCNS will consult with local officials and follow protocols around communication, contact tracing, cleaning, and determining if and how long to close classrooms. AT ALL TIMES, confidentiality will be maintained. Teachers should neither confirm nor deny known identities to families who are inquiring.

As per CDC guidelines, If COVID-19 is confirmed in a child or teacher, classroom areas will not be used until cleaning and disinfecting has been performed. The current recommendation is to wait at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting. All cleaning and disinfection products will be stored securely away from children as per NH Child Care Licensing Guidelines.

Morning Check-in and Health Check:

Before Arrival: Please communicate any concerns about your child’s health BEFORE arriving for drop-off. If ANY members of your family are experiencing an elevated temperature or COVID-related symptoms, please keep your child at home and contact your Director. When in doubt, please give us a call. Please take your child’s temperature at home and review the laminated symptom checklist before leaving your home.

Unsure about school?

Please call:

TMO: Margaret Lukovits

603-208-7907 (call or text)

Email: toddlersmorningout@gmail.com

HCNS: Meg O’Leary

603-252-0454 (call or text)

Email: director@hampshirecooperative.org

Arrival to School:

- Please pull into the lot near the large HCNS/TMO sign near the Dartmouth Organic Farming area. You will see a large sign designating the drop-off area at the beginning of the year.
- Please note arrival times for your class. Each of the two classrooms will use a separate entrance into the classroom from the playground. We will check children in “caravan-style”. That is, the first car in line will stop—when it is your turn, you will be greeted by a teacher at your car. All adults should be wearing masks at drop-off.
- Temperature checks and a brief review of symptoms will be completed. Your child’s teacher will help gather your child and their backpack/coat and walk them to the entrance of the playground. There will be a teacher to assist with handwashing and getting settled upon arrival. As a parent, you certainly have the choice to accompany your child to the entrance to the playground along with the teacher as well.
- A reminder--there will be **NO entrance through the front door of the building.**
- We know there will be a few “bumps in the road” as our young kids settle into a new place, new teachers and a new routine. If your child needs some extra support, you may

choose to complete the temperature check-in & questions, then pull out of the parking lot, onto Rt 10, and then turn off and park on the grassy area just past the school (look for a sign in that location for parents needing to stay a bit longer...our "TLC" parking).

- Please pack only essentials at drop-off---outdoor gear and indoor slippers/slipper-socks. You may bring a lunchbox if your child is staying for lunch bunch. You may also bring a water bottle with the lunchbox, but we would like to avoid having loose water bottles during the morning--it is too easy to share! These items may be packed in a backpack that comes with your child in the morning and returns home at pick-up.

Our class times are as follows:

Full Day Class ~ Monday/Wednesday/Thursday 8:30 -2:30

3 Day AM ~ Monday/Wednesday/Thursday, 8:45-12:45, lunch bunch until 12:30

2 Day Enrichment: Tuesday/Friday, 8:30-11:30, lunch bunch until 12:15

Early Birds ~ Full Day Class/2 Day Enrichment 8:00-8:30...3 Day AM 8:15-8:45

(\$7.50/day billed monthly)

Late Arrival Given all of the increased procedures around drop-off, we ask that you arrive on time as much as possible. If you plan on attending, but will be late (more than 20 minutes) please text your Director so we can be ready when you arrive to do the screening/temperature check-in. DO NOT allow your child to enter the playground or classrooms without completing these procedures. If you expect to be very late, we would encourage you to hold off on coming that morning rather than transitioning your child into the class when the morning routine is already well underway. We know this can be a challenge with little ones and we appreciate all of your efforts to keep our morning drop-off going smoothly.

Pick-Up Please use the same "caravan style" parking in the organic farm parking lot. Teachers will bring children to you directly. All gear, including slippers and any artwork, will be sent home after each class.

Snacks & Lunch Bunch

Given the health concerns this year, in addition to ongoing vigilance around food sensitivities and allergies, we ask that you do not bring any food from home (aside from a lunchbox, if your child is staying for lunch). We will not be able to allow children to be finishing breakfast/snacks that they may have started eating in the car on the way in. Please send your child with a clearly labeled full water bottle.

We appreciate all of you who would like to help provide snacks for the children. We will (happily!) accept donations for snack purchases this year that will be stored at school.

Lunchboxes may be brought in for lunch bunch. Guidance on packing lunch boxes will be provided—please keep in mind that at this point we are able to have peanuts in the school, but this may change as we are sensitive to any new food allergies in the classroom.

We love celebrating birthdays, but we will not be able to serve any foods from home this year. We promise to find ways to help you celebrate your child's birthday and make it special at school. :-)

All lunch boxes will be stored out of reach of the children during the morning and will be sent home at the end of the day.

Classroom Materials Management

While this guidance is primarily a reference for our teachers, we would like parents to be aware of our procedures around materials in the classrooms, particularly given the young age of our children.

Supplies

Every child will have their own bin of materials that may rotate each week depending on the theme/activities that are planned. Sensory materials, like play dough, if used, will be provided in individual containers and not shared with other children. Play dough will be discarded after use. Bins will be labeled with children's names and pictures. Any materials touched by another child (which may happen with preschoolers!) will be cleaned by teachers.

Other Items

- "Soft" materials will be minimized in each classroom.
- Manipulatives will be provided in individual sets and will be cleaned daily
- Only hardcover books that can be wiped down will be accessed by children
- All dishes and cups used for snack/lunch bunch will be sanitized in a dishwasher at the end of the morning.
- Toys will be used that have hard surfaces that can be easily cleaned. Books used will be in "like-new" condition. Approved surfaces include plastic, metal, wood, rubber, vinyl. Chipped or cracked toys should not be used (per Dartmouth-Hitchcock Guidance on toy selection and cleaning procedures).
- Water tables and group sensory tables will not be used. Shared teaching materials will be limited to those that can be easily cleaned and disinfected at the end of the day or more often as needed. Sensory materials may be provided in individual containers/trays and then discarded.
- Indoor tables/chairs will be spaced to maximize distancing between children
- Disposable paper towels will be used
- As much as possible, materials not needed for the morning should be stored out of reach of children as much as possible (e.g., manipulatives, puzzles, etc.)
- The large rug cover in each classroom will be changed between classes by teachers, with a designated rug cover for each group of children.

Outdoor Materials

- Any toys/materials used outdoors will be sanitized at the end of the day, when visibly soiled, or if observed to be mouthed by a child.
- “High-touch” areas on the playground (e.g., swings, toys, trucks, etc.) will all be cleaned by teachers at the end of the morning.

Cleaning Supplies

Childcare facilities must have a Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for each chemical used in the facility. Directors will establish a folder/location for these. Only approved cleaners will be used and teachers will adhere to all recommended application procedures.

A designated bin for all toys that have been mouthed/soiled during the morning will be identified.

A checklist for cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting protocols will be posted. Staff will perform frequent cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces, including door handles, toys, surfaces, etc.

Cubbies

Each child will have a small cubby in the classroom and a coat hook to use for the day, however, we request that all belongings go home at the end of the morning. An exception to this will be a labeled bag with extra clothing that will be stored at school. As the weather becomes colder, a space for boots will be available.

Additional Staff Guidance

Outdoor Learning Philosophy

- Teachers will utilize outdoor space as much as is possible during the day for both play, learning activities and crafts, as well as snack and lunch bunch when possible.
- During inclement weather, ventilation will be optimized with open windows and an air purification system.
- If the weather forecast suggests that the morning will likely be fully indoors, parents will be informed by email by 7am that it will be an indoor day.

Daily Health Checks for Teachers

All teachers will check their temperature at home and review the symptom checklist. Upon arrival at school, teachers will, again, check their temperature using school provided no-touch thermometers. Assuming no elevated temperature and no positive responses to COVID screening questions, teachers may enter the building. Teachers are advised to contact their Director as soon as possible from home if they believe they are experiencing any of the COVID-related symptoms. If symptomatic, even if temperature is normal, staff will be asked to stay

home. In that case, designated support/substitute staff will be contacted and asked to follow the procedures outlined above regarding screening/temperature before arriving at school.

Masks During the Day: Staff may take mask breaks throughout the morning only when more than 6 feet away from other teachers and children. Along with masks, additional PPE will be available for all staff as required. Cloth masks (2-3 layer) may be used if washed daily. Disposable masks will be provided at school and discarded after use. N-95 masks, if preferred or required for health reasons will be available.

Teacher Workspace

When using the staff workroom tables, printer & supplies be aware of physical distancing and continue mask use. You should allow for 6 feet of distancing between colleagues. Teachers are responsible for sanitizing their own personal items and space, particularly if using the teacher workspace. Approved cleaners/wipes for routine cleaning and sanitizing will be provided. Teachers will be expected to perform routine “up-keep” cleaning during the morning as materials and space are used by the children.

Bathroom Use

Bathrooms will be cleaned by staff after each use by a child and at the end of the morning.

Visitors and Volunteers

It is vital that we limit the number of people in our building to just children and teachers. We understand with young children, especially at the beginning of the school year when children may worry about separation, that this can be difficult. We will work with each of you individually to come up with a plan that will make your child’s drop off as smooth as possible.

Providers necessary for special education or required support services, will be given access to a designated area and will need to complete the health questionnaire and temperature checks just as our staff will do. Outside support staff who are not TMO/HCNS teachers but are working with individual children in the classroom will also be expected to adhere to all guidance that is expected of regular staff.

We welcome parent volunteers and appreciate all of the effort from our parents in helping get the classrooms, inside and out, ready for the school year. We will provide a list of “jobs” during the year that can be completed when children are not in the building, with direction and guidance for your Directors.

We know that there are many uncertainties this year and we appreciate all of your input and support with our guidance. We are looking forward to the new school year with your children and expect smooth sailing for all. In addition to this written guidance, know that we are always available to walk you through each step of the way.

Sources/References:

State of NH Safer At Home Guidance for Child Care:

<https://www.COVIDguidance.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt381/files/inline-documents/2020-05/guidance-child-care.pdf>

CDC Guidelines: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html>

Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs <https://nrckids.org/files/CFOC4%20pdf-%20FINAL.pdf>

Good resource on handouts/hand washing stickers etc. <http://www.ncesd.org/for-principals/coronavirus-resources/>

COVID-19 Public Health Response Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Coronavirus Disease 2019

<https://waypointnh.org/> Formerly Child and Family Services of NH 800 640 6486

Upper Valley Strong (A collection of local resources covering a broad range of topics) uvstrong.org 14

Grafton County Parent-Child Center (855)393-1731 or (603) 578 1386
<http://nh.childcareaware.org/family-resource-centers/>

<https://www.chadkids.org/your-visit/information-about-covid-19>