

# Aspire Academy Pandemic Policy

ASPIRE EARLY LEARNING ACADEMY LLC

## *Childcare is a critical part of the public health emergency response team*

### Introduction

Professionals have confirmed that viruses mainly spread from person-to-person as a result of the following:

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks.
- Droplets that can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
- Some recent studies have suggested that covid may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms.

Knowing these facts, Aspire Early Learning Academy, LLC (AELA) has implemented many new safety measures for families, children, and employees to follow so that we are an important part of reducing the spread and keeping everyone as healthy as possible.

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### Social Distancing Strategies

AELA employees and families will work with the local health officials to determine a set of strategies appropriate for AELA. We will use preparedness strategies and consider the following social distancing strategies that may/may not be implemented at some point of time during the pandemic:

- If possible, include the same group each day, and the same childcare providers should remain with the same group most of the day.
- Cancel or postpone all special events such as festivals, holiday events, and special performances.
- Consider whether to alter or halt daily group activities that may promote transmission.
  - Keep children of different ages separate rooms, when possible.
  - Limit the mixing of children, such as staggering playground times and keeping groups separate for special activities.
- Directors and teachers will meet parents and guardians at the door for pick-up and drop-off. Children and employees are to immediately wash hands upon entering the building, upon enter/leaving classrooms, and immediately before leaving the building. Parents and other adults are not allowed to enter the building. If there is an urgent need for an adult to enter, other than an employee, the adult must wear a mask and can not interact with children other than his/her own child.

### Guidelines for onset of illness at Aspire Early Learning Academy

#### Child

- If a child becomes ill during the day. The teacher will remove the child to a separate room and keep the child comfortable until the family can arrive.
- The Designee will immediately call the child's family and request an immediate pick up. Parents/guardians are required to pick-up within one hour.
- Children are not allowed to return to AELA until a negative covid test is provided to AELA or the child has quarantined for 14 days. The negative test must be dated 5 days or more after the onset of the first covid symptom. Exposed families will be notified immediately. The Academy will not be able to release any personal information to families, for example: age, employee, or student.

## Employee

- Employees who appear to have symptoms upon arrival at work or who becomes ill during the day should immediately be sent home.
- If an employee is confirmed to have covid (or any contagious illness), all families and employees will be notified immediately of the possible exposure. Confidentiality is required by the DHEC and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The Academy will not be able to release any personal information to families, for example: age, employee, or student.
- The employee must be tested, quarantine, and self-monitor for symptoms (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath).
- Employees are not allowed to return to AELA until a negative test is provided, the non-vaccinated employee has quarantined for 14 days, and/or the vaccinated employee have quarantined for 10 days.

## Guidelines for onset of illness while at home

### Child

- If a child becomes sick at home with any symptoms, cough, fever, muscle aches, generally not feeling well, we ask that you keep your child at home and notify your Academy Director.
- If covid symptoms are present, or any contagious virus, please phone your child's pediatrician and seek guidance immediately. Continue to keep your Academy Director informed so that AELA will know how to proceed with our next steps of notifying families, employee, DHEC, and DSS.

### Adults

- Most people with COVID-19 have mild illness and can recover at home without medical care. Do not leave your home, except to get medical care. Do not visit public areas, stay home.
- Stay in touch with your physician if needed.
- As much as possible, you will need to stay away from others. You should stay in a specific "sick room" if possible, and away from other people and pets in your home. Use a separate bathroom, if available.
- If you develop emergency warning signs for covid get medical attention immediately. Emergency warning signs include but are not limited to:
  - Trouble breathing
  - Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
  - New confusion or inability to arouse
  - Bluish lips or face
- Children may not return to the Academy if a family member at home test positive for covid and/or displaying covid symptoms.

### Family member

- If caring for a sick household member, follow recommended precautions and monitor your own health
- Have the person stay in one room, away from other people, including yourself, as much as possible.
  - If possible, have them use a separate bathroom.
  - Avoid sharing personal household items, like dishes, towels, and bedding
  - Have them wear a cloth face covering (that covers their nose and mouth) when they are around people, including you.
  - If the sick person cannot wear a cloth face covering, you should wear one while in the same room with them.
  - If the sick person needs to be around others (within the home, in a vehicle, or doctor's office), they should wear a cloth face covering that covers their mouth and nose.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after interacting with the sick person. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Every day, clean all surfaces that are touched often, like counters, tabletops, and doorknobs
  - Use household cleaning sprays or wipes according to the label instructions.
- Wash laundry thoroughly.
  - If laundry is soiled, wear disposable gloves and keep the soiled items away from your body while laundering. Wash your hands immediately after removing gloves.
- Avoid having any unnecessary visitors.
- For any additional questions about their care, contact their healthcare provider or state/local health department.

### Keep surfaces disinfected

- Avoid sharing personal items
- Monitor for emergency signs, prevent the spread of germs, treat symptoms, and carefully consider when to end home isolation.

### Children/Employees who have had close contact with a person with symptoms or diagnosed with COVID-19

- Children who have symptoms should stay home.
- Employees who have symptoms (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath) should notify their supervisor and stay home.
- Sick employees should follow [CDC-recommended steps](#). Employees should not return to work until the criteria to discontinue home isolation are met, in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments.
- Employees who are well but who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 should notify their supervisor, stay home, and follow CDC recommended precautions.
- If an employee is confirmed to have covid, AELA will inform fellow employees of their possible exposure to at the workplace but maintain confidentiality as required by DSS, DHEC, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Fellow employees should then self-monitor for symptoms (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath).
- Employees should not return to work until the criteria to end home isolation is met as instructed in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments.
- Vaccinated employees who have been exposed are not required to quarantine according to the CDC and DHEC guidelines. However, they are required to wear a mask after known exposure for 10 days (5 days if tested negative on the 5<sup>th</sup> day or after).

### If Aspire Early Learning Academy has a case of Covid-19

- AELA will notify families and employees of the exposure by email.
- AELA will report the confirmed case(s) to the DHEC and DSS, and follow their guidelines.
- Determine if the child/employee attended/worked at the Academy while symptomatic or during the 2 days before symptoms began.
- Close off areas used by the exposed individuals.
- Exclude the children or employee who are determined to have had close contact with the affected child/employee for up to 14 days after the last day they had contact with the person.
- Wait as long as practical before beginning cleaning and disinfection to minimize potential for exposure to respiratory droplets.
  - Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.
  - Clean and disinfect all areas used by the sick person, such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment like tablets, touch screens, keyboards, and remote controls.

- If more than 5 days since the sick person visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary. –
- Continue routine cleaning and disinfection
  - When cleaning
    - Wear disposable gloves for all tasks in the cleaning process, including handling trash.
    - Additional personal protective equipment (PPE) might be required based on the cleaning/disinfectant products being used and whether there is a risk of splash.
    - Gloves and gowns should be removed carefully to avoid contamination of the wearer and the surrounding area.
    - Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds. Always wash immediately after removing gloves and after contact with a sick person.

## Dismissal of students and employees for five to 10 days

If we receive confirmed notification of at least one positive test result for a classroom: we will close the classroom and/or preschool for a minimum of 5 days (including Saturday & Sunday).

Each case/notification will be reviewed on a case-by-case situation upon discussion with DHEC.

- Families will always be notified by email and children/employees in the respective classes/Academy will be dismissed for a minimum of five days (including weekends and holidays).
- Children can return with a negative test and/or no symptoms for a minimum of 72 hours after the 5-day period.
- Local health officials' recommendations for the scope and duration of school dismissals will be made on a case-by-case basis using the most up-to-date information about covid and the specific cases in the community.
- Local health officials discourage employees, students, and their families from gathering or socializing anywhere. This includes group childcare arrangements, as well as gathering at places like a friend's house, a favorite restaurant, or the local shopping mall.

## Health Screening of Children/Employees

All children and employees are required to be screened for any observable illness, including cough or respiratory distress, and to confirm temperature below 100 degrees to attend AELA.

### Child

- Proper hand hygiene.
- Employees will wear a mask and gloves while conducting health checks on children.
- Check each child's temperature upon arrival. Children/employees will be required to be picked up for a fever that is 100 degrees or higher.
- Thermometer must be disinfected before and after use of checking child's temperature.
- When performing a temperature check on multiple individuals, ensure that a clean pair of gloves is used for everyone and that the thermometer has been thoroughly cleaned in between each check.
- Employees can protect themselves by wearing an over-large button-down, long sleeved shirt and by wearing long hair up off the collar in a ponytail or other updo.
- Employees should wash their hands, neck, and anywhere touched by a child's secretions.
- Employees should change the child's clothes if secretions are on the child's clothes. They should change the button-down shirt, if there are secretions on it, and wash their hands again.
- Contaminated clothes should be placed in a plastic bag and sealed off. Infants, toddlers, and their providers should have multiple changes of clothes on hand in the childcare center.

## Employees

- Employees should expect to arrive at least 5-10 minutes early than their scheduled shift
- Employees should either have their own thermometer from home, or use AELA thermometer, depending on supply and demand issues
- Clean and sanitize thermometer and return to assigned area

## During the day- prevention of Covid-19

### Arrival of children

- Curb side drop off and pick up is mandatory and will be strictly enforced. All parties should limit direct contact between parents and employees and adhere to social distancing recommendation.
- All Children two and up are highly recommended to wear a mask to the Academy. If there is an exposure, mask will be required for the first five days upon returning after the 5-day quarantine period.
- If possible, older people such as grandparents or those with serious underlying medical conditions should not pick up children, because they are more at risk for severe illness from covid.
- A designated employee will sign child in/out each day.
- We will check each child's temperature upon arrival each day. A fever is considered 100 degrees or higher.
- Parents must also agree to notify the Academy if there are any changes in their child's health throughout the week.
- Employees will take child's lunch from family and put into the refrigerator (if applicable).

### Arrival of Employees

- Bring into the Academy as little as possible. It is highly recommended that large number of personal items are left in your personal vehicle.
- Employees are highly recommended to wear a mask all day.
- Employees are required to wash hands immediately upon entering the building.
- Designee will take temperatures upon arrival.
- Wash hands upon arrival to your classroom

### Departure of children

- During the pandemic, we will have curb side pick-up/drop-off.
  - Upon arrival into the parking lot, the family may phone the center and notify the employee of arrival. The family may also ring the bell and step aside.
  - The employee will wash hands and gather the child's items.
  - The employee will have the child to wash his/her hands.
  - Employees will bring the child and belongings to the door
  - We request that only one parent patiently approach the door at a time during pick-up.
  - The employee will wash hands upon returning to the classroom.

### Departure of Employees

Once all children have departed, the Academy is to be cleaned and sanitized.

- Use a glove to remove garbage and take to the dumpster.
- Wash hands
- Take all belongings home each day
- Wash cloth mask daily with soap, hot water and disinfect in bleach and water, and dry. Throw away disposable mask.

## Day-to-day Operations

- All children's blankets and extra clothes are to stay at the center to reduce the transmission of Covid-19 from home to school. On Fridays, all belongs are to go home to be washed.
- At nap time, ensure that children's cots (or cribs) are spaced out as much as possible, ideally 6 feet apart. Continue to practice head-to-toe to further reduce the potential for viral spread.
- Children's books, like other paper-based materials such as mail or envelopes, are not considered as a high risk for transmission and do not need additional cleaning or disinfection procedures. Employees are required to lightly spray down the classroom with bleach/disinfectant throughout the day
- Employees are to bleach/disinfect the tables before and after each meal session.
- No touch trashcans in classrooms instead of cans that require a hand to touch.

## Midday cleaning

- Clean the area or item with soap and water or another detergent if it is dirty. Then, use disinfectant to sanitize.
- Follow the instructions on the label to ensure safe and effective use of the product.
- Use precautions such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.

## Soft surface Cleaning

For soft surfaces such as carpeted floor, rugs, and drapes

- Clean the surface using soap and water or with cleaners appropriate for use on these surfaces when needed.
- Launder items (if possible) according to the manufacturer's instructions. Use the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely or
- Disinfect with an EPA-registered disinfectant.

## Electronics

For electronics, such as tablets, touch screens, keyboards, and remote controls

- Follow manufacturer's instruction for cleaning and disinfecting.
- Use alcohol-based wipes or sprays containing at least 70% alcohol daily. Dry surface thoroughly.

## Laundry

For clothing, towels, linens, and other items

- Launder items according to the manufacturer's instructions. Use the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely.
- Wear disposable gloves always, especially when handling dirty laundry from a person who is sick.
- Dirty laundry from a person who is sick cannot be washed with other people's items.
- Do not shake dirty laundry.
- Clean and disinfect clothes hampers according to guidance above for surfaces.
- Remove gloves, and wash hands right away.

## Clean and Sanitize Toys

- Toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized should not be used.
- Toys that children have placed in their mouths or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretions or excretions should be set aside until they are cleaned by hand by a person wearing gloves. Clean with water and detergent, rinse, sanitize with an EPA-registered disinfectant, rinse again, and air-dry.
- Be extra mindful of items that are more likely to be placed in a child's mouth, like play food, dishes, and utensils.
- Machine washable cloth toys are not to be used during Covid-19.
- Do not share toys with other groups of infants or toddlers.
- Set aside toys that need to be cleaned. Place in a dish pan with soapy water or put in a separate container marked for "soiled toys." Keep dish pan and water out of reach from children to prevent risk of drowning.

Washing with soapy water is the ideal method for cleaning. Try to have enough toys so that the toys can be rotated through cleanings.

- Children's books, like other paper-based materials such as mail or envelopes, are not considered a high risk for transmission and do not need additional cleaning or disinfection procedures.

## Washing, Feeding, or Holding a Child

It is important to comfort crying, sad, and/or anxious children. To the extent possible, when washing, feeding, or holding young children:

- Employees can protect themselves by wearing an over-large button-down, long sleeved shirt and by wearing long hair up off the collar in a ponytail or other updo.
- Employees should wash their hands, neck, and anywhere touched by a child's secretions, including tears.
- Employees should change the child's clothes if secretions are on the child's clothes. They should change the button-down shirt, if there are secretions on it, and wash their hands again.
- Contaminated clothes should be placed in a plastic bag or washed in a washing machine.
- All children and employees should have multiple changes of clothes on hand at the Academy.
- Employees should wash their hands before and after handling infant bottles. Bottles, bottle caps, nipples, and other equipment used for bottle-feeding should be thoroughly cleaned after each by washing with a bottlebrush, soap, and water. Families will need to provide a bottle brush for their infant to only be used with their infant's bottles.

## Hand washing

All children, employees, and volunteers should engage in hand hygiene at the following times

- Arrival to the facility 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
- After diapering
- After using the toilet or helping a child use the bathroom
- After coming in contact with bodily fluid
- After playing outdoors or in sand
- After handling garbage
- After blowing one's nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After using the restroom
- Before coming in contact with any child
- After touching or cleaning surfaces that may be contaminated
- After using shared equipment like toys, computer keyboards, mouse, scissors, pens. etc
- All employees and children must adhere to regular hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
  - Turn water on and wet hands, remove from water
  - Add soap to hands and create friction to make bubbles
  - Scrub for 20 seconds, sing Happy Birthday or ABC's
  - Employees member should use a scrub brush under nails
  - Rinse hands under running water
  - Dry hands with single use paper towels
  - Turn off faucet with paper towels

## Alcohol based sanitizers

Use of an alcohol-based hand sanitizer should only be practiced when soap and water method is not available. If a child needs to use alcohol-based sanitizer, an adult/employee must be physically present to observe and guide child in proper use.

## Respiratory Hygiene

- All employees should cough and sneezes with tissues or the corner of the elbow
- Encourage children when appropriate to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or the corner of the elbow
- Dispose of soiled tissues immediately after use

## Eliminating transmission points

- Frequent cleaning of all touch points.
- Secure all secondary doors and access points to minimize incidental contact.
- Use disposable wipes on commonly used surfaces (for example, doorknobs, keyboards, remote controls, desks, other work tools and equipment).
- Employees should not share phones, desks, or other work tools and equipment, when possible. If shared, clean and disinfect equipment before and after use.
- Employees should clean their personal workspace at the beginning and the end of every shift.
- If a sick employee is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, follow the CDC cleaning and disinfection recommendations.

## Essential functions and reliance that the community may need us for our services

- AELA will identify alternate supply chains for critical goods and services. Some good and services may be in higher demand or unavailable. If for some reason there is not adequate PPE for a childcare center, cleaning supplies, paper supplies, the director will request donations from enrolled family members.
  - Currently, the best defense to covid is hand washing therefore, using gloves all day everyday could become the false security therefore gloved hands will be reserve for the following times
    - Universal Precautions
    - Diaper changing
    - Nose blowing
    - Garbage removal
- The Director or her designee will refrain from allowing non-employed adults into the building during operating hours. The only exceptions are physical therapist, DSS, DHEC, and/or fire and safety personnel.
  - AELA procedure for these persons to enter the building
    - Visitors conducting business must wear a mask
    - Director or her designee will take visitors temperature
    - The visitor will complete a questionnaire form
    - Visitors will not interact with children or be in the same common area with children.

## Center Family/Employees Communication Plan

Communication is important for all center employees and families. Regular communication will continue through email from the owner or designee.

## Determine how AELA will operate if absenteeism spikes amongst employees

While assuring that the same employee will remain with the same children over the course of the day it is understandable that absenteeism may occur as an employee may become sick or have to stay home to care for sick family members. AELA will monitor and respond to absenteeism at the workplace to provide consistency for families and children. It is possible that if there is a lack of adequate supervision, AELA may have to close until the Academy is able to provide adequate supervision for children. It is recommended that all families prepare a back-up plan.

It is the goal of AELA to not close the entire building going forward. However, considering our small group settings, exposure may impact the entire building.

## Tuition charges and payments during COVID-19 Pandemic

**REVISED 1/1/2021:** Aspire Early Learning Academy's normal tuition policy will remain the same during the pandemic. Families will be responsible for the full weekly tuition if your child attends at least one day. If your child is absent the entire week and/or if the Academy closes for an entire week, families will only be responsible for ½ of their normal weekly tuition rate. All active children at the time of closing will have a spot available upon reopening unless the family notifies the Academy in writing of removal.

Tuition payments are due each Monday of the week in which you are receiving service. If payment is not received, services will be denied for the following week. The Academy does not issue refunds for registration fees, tuition payments, and reservation fees.

If your family will be absent an entire week, you will be responsible for the reservation fee of ½ of your normal weekly tuition rate to hold a spot for your child at the Academy. There is not a maximum number of weeks for reservation fees. If your family misses two weeks of reservation fee payments, your family will be disenrolled.

Families who withdraw or are disenrolled, will be returned to the waiting list upon request to re-enroll. A new registration fee and new enrollment paperwork will be required before returning to the Academy.

Families should refer to the Parent Handbook that is located on the website ([www.AspireEarlyLearningAcademy.com](http://www.AspireEarlyLearningAcademy.com)) for additional information on tuition charges and payments.

## Acceptance of covid's risk of exposure, and Aspire Early Learning Academy's policy and procedures for families and employees

Families and employees are responsible for reading and fully understanding the COVID-19 Pandemic Policy for Aspire Early Learning Academy, LLC.

This policy may be changed at any time. If changes occur, a revised policy will be posted on the Academy's website ([www.AspireEarlyLearningAcademy.com](http://www.AspireEarlyLearningAcademy.com)).

Parents: I understand the risk that is involved with allowing my child to attend preschool with his/her teachers and peers.

Employees: I understand the risk involved with working in an environment with young children and co-workers.

By continuing my enrollment at AELA, I understand that this policy will also support a future pandemic case that our country/state may face under the ordinances set by the governing agencies.

By continuing our enrollment at AELA, I understand that the safety, health and the well-being of children, families, and employees rely on my due diligence to adhere to the COVID-19 Pandemic Policy and ordinances set by governing agencies.

---- End of Pandemic Policy ----