

COVID-19 Policy

Policy Statement:

The Cooperative Nursery School of Almonte is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for children, families, and staff. Reasonable precautions will be taken to prevent the risk of communicable diseases within our program. This policy statement is broken down into the following categories:

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Purpose

To ensure that all employees, families, and other community members are aware of, and adhere to, the directives established by Leeds, Grenville, and Lanark Health Unit and Ministry of Education's Operational Guide During COVID-19 Outbreak, regarding the health and safety measures and communication plans for The Cooperative Nursery School of Almonte.

Application

This policy applies to all employees, students, community members, and any other persons engaged with The Cooperative Nursery School of Almonte

1. Procedures for Sanitization of space, toys and equipment:

1.a General Cleaning and Disinfecting Requirements:

Staff should refer to Public Health Ontario's [Environmental Cleaning fact sheet](#) and the Public Services Health and Safety Association's [Child Care Centre Employer Guideline](#) for information on cleaning. Staff and volunteers will keep a cleaning and disinfecting checklist to track cleaning schedules.

In general:

Cleaning:

- Use detergent and warm water to clean visibly soiled surfaces
- Rinse the surface with clean water (warm to tepid temperature preferred) to ensure detergent is removed
- Let the surface dry

Disinfecting:

- For general environmental disinfection of high touch surfaces, large toys and equipment that cannot be immersed, a disinfectant spray solution of 4tsp of bleach to a litre of water will be used, the contact time for disinfecting is **1 minute**

Air Circulation/Filtration:

- Staff will continue optimizing air quality in the classroom environment through improvements to ventilation and/or filtration, including opening windows at intervals for fresh air intake (where seasonally appropriate), and running the standalone HEPA-filter units while students are present in the space. These units will be maintained as required, including replacing filters as needed/indicated by the unit

1.b Cleaning and Disinfection frequency requirements:

Clean and disinfect frequencies for other surfaces and items:

Cleaning and disinfecting routines **must** be increased as the risk of environmental contamination is higher:

- **Tables and countertops:** used for food preparation and food service must be cleaned and disinfected before and after each use
- **Spills** must be cleaned and disinfected immediately

- **Handwash sinks:** staff and children washroom areas must be cleaned and disinfected at least two times per day and as often as necessary (e.g., when visibly dirty or contaminated with body fluids).
- **Floors:** cleaning and disinfecting must be performed as required, i.e., when spills occur, and at the end of the program.
- **High-touch surfaces:** any surfaces that have frequent contact with hands (e.g., light switches, shelving, containers, handrails, doorknobs, sinks, toilets etc.) should be cleaned at least twice per day and as often as necessary (e.g. when visibly dirty or contaminated with body fluids)
- **Other shared items:** (phones, IPADs, attendance binders etc.) these must be disinfected between users)

Clean and disinfect daily:

- Low-touch surfaces (any surfaces that has minimal contact with hands), must be cleaned and disinfected daily (e.g. Window ledges, doors, sides of furnishings etc.)
- Carpets are to be vacuumed daily

Clean and disinfect as required:

Blood/Bodily Fluid Spills: Using the steps below, the surface must be cleaned first then disinfected:

- 1 Isolate the area around the spill so that no other objects or individuals can be contaminated
- 2 Gather all supplies, perform hand hygiene, then put on single-use nitrile gloves
- 3 Scoop up the fluid with disposable paper towels, check the surrounding area for splash/splatter and dispose of in separate garbage bag
- 4 Clean the spill area with detergent, warm water, and single-use towels
- 5 Rinse to remove detergent residue with clean water and single-use towel
- 6 Discard used paper towels and gloves immediately in a tied plastic bag
- 7 Spray approved disinfectant in and around the spill area and allow the appropriate **1-minute** disinfecting contact time
- 8 A final rinse is required if children come into contact with the area
- 9 Remove gloves as directed and discard them immediately.

Equipment and Toy Usage and Restrictions:

Shared Objects

The risk associated with transmission with shared objects is considered low. Objects will continue to be washed daily and when needed however, focus will be made more on regular and proper hand hygiene as well as respiratory etiquette to reduce the risk of infection related to shared objects and equipment.

- Toys and equipment which are made of materials that can be cleaned and disinfected (e.g., avoid plush toys) will be used.
- Reduced clutter and limited toys to those that can be disinfected daily
- Mouthed toys will be cleaned and disinfected immediately after use.
- Prior to rotating toys and equipment, it will be cleaned and disinfected.

1.c Additional Infection Prevention and Control Practices for Hygiene Items

- For creams and lotions during diapering, hands are not to be put directly into lotion or cream bottles, instead use a tissue or single-use gloves.

1.d Cleaning and Disinfecting where Suspected case of Covid-19

If an individual is suspected of having Covid-19 in the childcare setting:

- Identify areas that may require cleaning plus disinfection (items used by the individual and all surfaces within 2 meters of the ill person) versus cleaning alone (such as a hallway or room where the individual has passed through).
- PPE should be used while cleaning and waste disposal.
- Use disposable cleaning equipment, such as disposable wipes, where possible.
- All items that cannot be cleaned (paper, books, cardboard puzzles) will be removed and stored in a sealed container for a minimum of 7 days

2. Use of Masks, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Hand Hygiene

2a. Use of Personal Protective Equipment

- All staff, students, parents, and visitors are not required to wear a mask, or eye protection while inside the school. However, individuals may choose to do so.
- In the event of an increase of illness in the program or at the discretion of the director the decision for all staff, visitors and volunteers may be implemented.

2b. Child Masking

- Masks are optional for children enrolled in the program. If a child chooses to wear a mask, parents/guardians are responsible for providing tight fitting, non-medical masks, or face coverings each day and a container/bag labeled with their name to store masks in when not in use. The child must be able to put on and remove the mask with little to no assistance.

2c. Replacing a Mask

Medical and non-medical masks should be replaced when they become damp or visibly soiled and/or if it has lost some of its integrity (damaged elastic).

- Non-Fitted N95 Masks for staff should be replaced:
 - o when it is no longer tolerated or accepted
 - o If the filtering part of the mask gets wet
 - o If it has lost some of its integrity (elastic or damaged filter)
 - o If there were potential infectious droplets expressed onto mask.

2d. Hand Washing

Appropriate hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette are among the most important protective strategies to prevent the spread of germs. Staff will implement strict hand washing practices. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers of 60% may be used if hand soap is not readily available. Hand washing with soap and water should be the first choice if available. Activities where hand washing should be implemented are included but not limited to:

- o Upon entering the program
 - o Before/After direct physical contact with children
 - o After each transition whenever possible
 - o After diapering a child, cleaning up messes or wiping a nose
 - o After toileting
 - o After sneezing or coughing
 - o After a child sneezes or coughs in proximity
 - o After taking out garbage
 - o After contact with blood/body fluids
 - o When hands are visibly soiled
 - o After using protective gloves
 - o After completion of work
 - o After cleaning
- Staff are trained and able to assist children on appropriate hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, including the use of alcohol-based hand rub and reinforcing its use.

 - Support or modifications will be provided to allow children with special needs to regularly perform hand hygiene as independently as possible.

Staff will use correct hand washing procedures as outlined below:

- 1 Use a hand wash sink supplied with hot and cold running water, paper towels, and liquid soap in a dispenser.
- 2 Use soap and water for soiled hands. Wet hands under running water.
- 3 Apply soap to palm of hand.
- 4 Use friction to clean between fingers, palms, backs of hands, wrists, forearms, under nails and base of thumbs for a minimum of 20 seconds.
- 5 Rinse under running water for a count of 5 seconds.
- 6 Dry with paper towel.
- 7 Turn taps off with paper towel.
- 8 Dispose of paper towel in an appropriate container.

Alcohol-based sanitizer 60% or more may be used following the procedure below:

Alcohol-based hand sanitizers should only be used if hands are not visibly soiled and if soap and water are not readily available.

- 1 Apply one to two pumps of hand sanitizer (about the size of a loonie) onto one palm. Rub your hand together. Clean all surfaces of your hands, concentrating on fingertips, between the fingers, nail beds, back of your hands and the base of your thumbs.
- 2 Continue rubbing hands until product is dry; this will take a minimum of 20 seconds if enough product is used.
- 3 If your hands look dirty and running water is not available, use a moistened towelette to remove dirt, followed by using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

2e. Disposable Glove Use

Staff will adhere to the following guidance on the use of disposable gloves:

- Wash hands before/after glove use.
- Gloves are intended for single use
- Gloves are to be stored in a cool, dry place.
- Follow recommendations of the manufacturer.
- Remove after use and dispose of in the garbage (never wash and reuse).
- Wash hands as indicated above after removal.

Note: Remove gloves from wrist and peel inside out prior to disposal.

3. Screening for Symptoms:

3a. Daily Self-Screening

- Parents are responsible for self-screen using provincial screening tool daily, prior to arriving at the Nursery School. Staff may ask parents at time of drop off if it has been completed. Daily records of screening results are currently not kept.
- Staff are responsible for daily self-screening and monitoring of symptoms prior to arrival.

Individuals who do not pass the screening may not be permitted to attend the program and may be required to stay home following provincial and local health unit guidelines.

See section below on Returning to School for rules on when an individual may return to the school following an illness or isolation.

Children with any communicable illness are not to enter the Nursery School while infectious. Staff, parents, and children must not attend the program if they are sick, even if symptoms resemble a mild cold.

It is important for everyone's safety that the daily self-screening is completed prior to the start of the day. If a child attends Nursery School and they should have failed the self-assessment, the Nursery School may, in its discretion, permanently remove the child from the program.

3b. Pre-existing Conditions

If a child or staff member has a pre-existing medical condition which may present as a symptom of COVID-19, such as seasonal allergies, prone to headaches etc, a medical note from a physician should be kept in the individual's file.

4. Pick Up and Drop off Procedure

4a. Daily Student Drop off

Parents/guardians will use the red doors for entering the building to bring their child downstairs. Teachers will greet students at the classroom door each morning at 9am.

- Staff may ensure that each parent/guardian has conducted the daily self-screening.
- Temperatures will no longer be taken and logged daily. The discretion to conduct temperature checks if a child is showing symptoms, may be used.
- Visual health checks will continue to be completed at least once daily and recorded.
- Families are requested to only have **one** parent or guardian drop off the child to avoid crowds (siblings are allowed).
- Personal belongings (e.g., backpack, clothing, etc.) need to be minimized. Any belongings that are brought need to be labeled and kept in the child's hook.

4b. Pickup Procedure

At the end of the school day at 11:30am Monday to Thursday & 1pm on Fridays the teachers will meet parents outside at the side red doors.

5. Attendance Record

- Daily attendance records and health checks are kept for all students at the Nursery School.

6. Becoming Ill while at Nursery School

Anyone who is symptomatic, does not pass screening, or has been advised to self-isolate by a public health unit is not permitted to attend the program and should stay home (this includes staff and students).

If an individual becomes ill while at the Nursery School:

- The ill individual will be separated from others if possible. A staff member will supervise the separated child.
- If tolerated, the ill individual should wear a medical mask.
- Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette should be practiced

- If the ill individual is a staff member, they must be separated from others and use proper hand hygiene and wear proper PPE until they are able to leave.
- Parents/guardians will be contacted to pick up any symptomatic children, in accordance with the COVID Response Protocol outlined in section 10 below.
- Anyone providing care to the ill individual should maintain as much physical distance as possible and wear a medical mask and eye protection. If physical distancing is not possible (e.g., child needs comfort) staff should consider adding additional PPE (e.g., gloves, gown).
- Cleaning of the area the separated individual was in and other areas where the ill individual was should be conducted as soon as reasonably possible after the ill person leaves (see above Cleaning section).
- Staff will advise the ill individual or their parent/guardian to use the online self-assessment tool and follow instructions which may include seeking medical advice or going for testing for COVID-19.
- Regular operations may continue unless directed otherwise by the local public health unit or by vote of executive members within 12-24 hours of incident.

7. Attendance of Sibling(s) of an ill Student

If a child develops COVID-19 symptoms or their self-screening indicates that they should stay home but their sibling(s) do not have symptoms, all household members **do** need to be isolated for at least 5 days and until the other child showing symptoms completes their 5-day isolation period. If another household member develops symptoms during that time the 5 days must restart. However, check with your local public health unit or call their hotline (1-866-236-0123) to see if those without symptoms should go to school.

8. Return to School after Illness or Isolation

An ill individual who has a known alternative diagnosis provided by a health care professional may return to childcare if they do not have a fever or cough and their symptoms have been improving for at least **24 hours** or at least **48 hours** for gastrointestinal symptoms.

Individuals do not require a medical note or proof of a negative test to return to the program. However, Staff and parents/guardians are expected to follow the advice of the Ministry of Education, the provincial guidelines, and the local public health unit on when returning to school after illness or isolation. Staff and parents/guardians are encouraged to call Lanark Leeds and Grenville Health Unit's schools and childcare hotline with any questions **1-866-236-0123**.

If the child has any of the Covid 19 symptoms, complete the provincial tool <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/> and follow the guidance given for isolation rules.

If the individual is 11 years old or younger or vaccinated with a booster, the isolation period is 5 days starting with day 0 being the day of symptoms or the day of the positive test. The

individual, including children, need to continue to wear a mask in public for an additional 5 days.

If the individual is unvaccinated, the isolation period is 10 days starting with day 0 being the day symptoms started or the day of the positive test.

8a. Return to Child Care

All individuals must follow the most current advice before returning to the Nursery School, using the provincial screening tool and any resources it recommends.

<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/>

- The advice of our local public health unit may differ from the general advice for the province contained in the screening tool. Staff and parents/guardians must follow the advice of the local public health unit. If staff or students live outside of the Lanark Leeds and Grenville Health Unit boundaries, they must also consult the advice of their local public health unit.

8b. Rapid antigen testing kits are tools that may be used for screening with or without symptoms being present. If an individual shows symptom that require testing families may be provided with a rapid antigen home kit, or the public health isolation guidelines must be followed. If an individual receives a positive result with a rapid antigen testing kit, they must isolate and should seek medical advice from a doctor or local public health and follow the provincial isolation rules.

If parents/guardians send their child back to school after illness or isolation against the current advice of the Ontario government and our local public health unit, their child may be permanently removed from the program.

9. Reporting of Confirmed Cases of COVID-19

- Currently positive Covid 19 cases do not need to be reported.
- The director may contact public health officials to help to determine if any additional steps are required, including but not limited to how to monitor for other possible infected staff and students and the possibility of closure of the Nursery School.
- While the Nursery School is no longer required to report a serious occurrence to the Ministry of Education for positive cases of Covid-19, if the local public health unit determines that a full or partial closure is required, a serious occurrence must be submitted under the “Unplanned Disruption of Services” category.
- The Director may inform staff and families if there is an exposure to a positive Covid-19 case, including the last date of attendance within a way that does not identify the individual.

10. Contacting Parents and Staff of Confirmed Cases of COVID-19

- The following protocol will be used to inform staff and families if there is an exposure to a positive COVID-19 case.

10a. Contacting Parents of individual(s) with suspected COVID-19 at while at School.

- The procedure outlined in Section 6 “Becoming Ill while at Nursery School” must be followed.
- Contact must be made with the Parents/guardians of the child who is showing symptoms of COVID-19 by **telephone** within **1 hour** of showing symptoms. In so doing, the following information must be conveyed:
 - o Details on when to pick-up the child and reminders about pick-up procedure
 - o Actions taken (isolation/separation and cleaning of areas involved),if applicable
 - o Record of date(s) and time(s) above actions were taken, if applicable
 - o Summary of symptoms associated to the suspected case
 - o Reminder of applicable isolation period, and symptoms to watch for

10b. Contacting All Parents/guardians regarding confirmed COVID-19

- Contact must be made by **email** with all Parents/guardians of students within **12 hours** of confirmation of positive COVID-19 case, which will include the following information while maintaining privacy and confidentiality (withholding all names):
 - Number of confirmed cases within the student body or staff
 - Reminder of symptoms to watch for
 - Details on when to pick-up children, if applicable, and reminders about pick-up procedure
 - Known details, if applicable, on the expected closure and/or isolation period
 - When to expect the next notification from the school, if applicable.

Note: The decision to contact all Parents/guardians of students enrolled will be made at the discretion of the Director and the executive members of the board, taking into consideration a variety of factors including but not limited to type of symptoms present, number of people affected, duration and recency of symptoms.

11.Outbreak Management

- An outbreak at the Nursery School may be declared by the local public health unit AND/OR at the discretion of the Director in consultation with the executive board.
- If in the event, the Nursery School has an overall absenteeism of 30% due to illness including all students and staff, the health unit will be contacted. A decision will be made in collaboration with the Director or Staff and the health unit whether a templated letter from the local medical officer of health with information on public health measures needs to be sent to families and staff.

Note: An “outbreak” may be defined in this context as either 30% absence of the total number of enrolled students and staff AND/OR as determined by the Director according to reporting of factors including absence of multiple individuals displaying 2 or more symptoms of COVID-19. If the local public health unit declares an outbreak, they may help to determine what happens next and may help to determine if the school needs to close and for how long.

12. Visitors/Parents

- We welcome visitors and parents back into the program and building.

13. Refunds due to Closure and Isolation

- If your child is absent due to illness, mandatory isolation, appointments or medical testing, the Nursery School will not provide a refund of tuition for missed days.
- If the Nursery School needs to close by order of the local public health unit and/or the Ministry of Education, tuition will not be refunded if the closure is less than 14 days. If the closure will be for longer than 14 days, the Executive Board will hold an emergency meeting to discuss any further decisions.

14. Encouraging Physical Distancing

- The Nursery School is committed to continuing to provide a welcoming and caring environment for all children.
- Play spaces may be set up to try to maintain physical distancing where possible.
- Children will be spread out into different areas, particularly at meal and dressing time when possible.

15. Food Provision

- Proper handwashing and hygiene will be practiced before and after food is prepared.
- Children will be spaced appropriately at snack to discourage accidental sharing and to maintain physical distancing when possible.
- Children and staff will wash their hands before eating.
- Children are not able to help prepare or serve snack. Staff will use utensils to serve snack on individual plates and cups.
- No items will be shared, such as dishes/utensils, serving utensils etc

16. Staff Scheduling to ensure safety

Scheduling:

- The Nursery School preschool program operates for 2.5hrs a day, with 3 teaching staff and 1 daily volunteer therefore staggered staffing times are not required at this time.
- The ratios set out by the CCEYA of 24 children plus staff for our program will be maintained.

Note: This does not include special needs resource staff on site, such as consultants or enhanced staff. (see below)

- All staff are trained on the health, safety, and operational measures prior to commencing every fall or prior to reopening in the event of a closure.

17. Provision of Special Needs Resources (SNR) Services

- In-person special needs services will continue where appropriate. Alternative modes of service delivery where in-person delivery is not possible will be explored.
- SNR staff (consultants and enhanced staff) do not count towards a cohort's total while on site (e.g: if they are not counted towards staff to child ratios, they are not included in the maximum capacity rules)
- All SNR staff must self-screen daily before entering the program, as per the protocol in the screening section.

18. Staff Training, Policy, and Procedure Review:

• Training on the most current health, safety and other operational guidelines are aligned from Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit, Ministry of Education including their resources.

• All training documents, policies and procedures will be reviewed and discussed with all staff annually or as required. The COVID-19 policy will be signed off by all staff annually, before reopening and any time where a change is made.

• Parents will be informed of all aspects of the COVID-19 Policy by email, accessible on our website and paper copies if required. Parents will need to sign a review form stating the Covid-19 Policy has been reviewed annually.

19. Executive Committee and Monthly Meetings

The monthly executive meetings are typically held the 2nd Tuesday of each month with all families welcome to attend to offer ideas and suggestions. Meetings are held in person with an option for those who would like to attend virtual.

20. Support for Covid 19 Vaccination

Covid 19 vaccines are not mandatory for staff and volunteers; however, it is encouraged that staff receive the vaccine if eligible and to consult with a doctor on individual health history and review any resources that are available to make an informed choice about each individual's personal health. The Cooperative Nursery School of Almonte supports staff in getting access to vaccination

• If necessary and able to accommodate paid time off maybe provided for staff to receive the vaccination. Other support will be provided if needed, with resources from the Leeds, Grenville & Lanark Health Unit as well as the Province of Ontario.

All employee and volunteers' vaccination status are personal and confidential and will not be shared with other staff or families of the Cooperative Nursery School of Almonte Inc. This follows as well in accordance with the Notice of Collection of Personal Information, which is reviewed annually.

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