

Dear Parents,

Thank you for registering your child to join us at Bethel Lutheran Preschool this year! Within this document you will find an updated outline of the changes and plans made for this preschool year due to the COVID-19 virus. ***These policies and guidelines remain in effect for the 2020-2021 preschool year until further notice, including in situations where they conflict with 2020-2021 Preschool Handbook.***

As always, we frame our plans in alignment with Bethel Lutheran Ministries and our purpose to fulfill our mission, which is:

We, as believers and disciples of Jesus Christ and members of His Body here at Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church and School, in response to His Commissions to make disciples of all peoples and in awareness of our unique, collective gifts, clearly see the mission before us to worship - to grow - to serve.

Bethel Lutheran School offers a Christian education for the whole child. Students in the school find identity, purpose, and power for their lives by living in God's grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. The education is well rounded and provides *spiritual instruction, intellectual achievement, social interaction, emotional development, physical education, and aesthetic experiences.*

This plan was created in a rapidly changing environment. It does not constitute a contract or guarantee that each item will be fulfilled as currently written. The school board retains the right to make necessary changes at any time.

**Our approach to open has been framed by many documents including:**

- ISBE/IDPH – *Starting the 2020 – 2021 School Year*; June 23, 2020
- American Academy of Pediatrics – *COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-entry*; June 25, 2020
- DCFS – *Restore Illinois Licensed Day Care Guidance*; June 24, 2020

**Background information:**

- Policies should be practical, feasible, and appropriate for children's and adolescent's developmental stages.
- COVID-19 appears to behave differently in children and adolescents than other common respiratory viruses, such as influenza, on which much of the current guidance regarding school closures is based.
- Although children and adolescents play a major role in amplifying influenza outbreaks, to date, this does not appear to be the case with COVID-19.
- Evidence indicates that children and adolescents are less likely to be symptomatic and less likely to have severe disease resulting from COVID-19 infection.
- Children may be less likely to become infected and to spread infection.
- Children should wear face coverings when harms (increasing hand-mouth/nose contact) do not outweigh benefits (potential COVID-19 risk reduction).
- COVID-19 policies are intended to mitigate, not eliminate, risk.
- No single action or set of actions will eliminate the risk of COVID-19 transmission, but implementation of several coordinated interventions can greatly reduce that risk.

**Opening approach for the 2020-2021 preschool year:**

- We will be open every day with full classroom attendance.
- A waiver will be required to allow attendance of your student.
- School start and end times will remain the same.
- Parents/guardians must wear masks at all times while in the building.
- Parents/guardians may not enter classrooms, with limited exceptions.
- Use of masks on school grounds for students and staff:
  - Masks are not required once students enter the classrooms.
  - Masks are required to be worn by all individuals at all times in the indoor common areas, including at times of drop off and pick up of students.
  - All masks should be clearly labeled with each student's name.
- With full attendance, social distancing of preschoolers and teachers will not be possible.
- We will be practicing “podding,” which means keeping the classes as separate as possible throughout the day.
  - Preschoolers will be able to utilize the outdoor/playground areas and music/gross motor areas outside of their classrooms, but will be kept in class pods, properly distanced at all times from students in other classes

**Drop off & pick up of preschool students:**

- All preschoolers should be dropped off and picked up via the back (preschool) entry doors only. The breezeway doors connecting to the grade school will remain locked.
  - Late arrivals please call the school at 309-266-6592, and we will have someone meet you at the back (preschool) doors.
- The indoor entryway at the preschool entrance will not be accessible prior to the inner doors being opened, as social distancing will be difficult or impossible in that area. Parents and students are asked to wait to enter the building until the inner doors are open (8:35 and 11:15 a.m., 12:20 and 3:00 p.m.).
- Drop off and pick up of students will take place at the classroom door.
  - All parents/guardians must wear masks at all times in the building during drop off and pick up.
  - All students must wear masks at drop off until temperatures have been checked and they have entered the classroom. At that time, students may remove their masks and place them in their designated paper bags for storage until needed again.
- Parents/guardians may not enter classrooms, with limited exceptions.

**Cleaning:**

- Classroom use will be limited to one class of students per day, with enhanced cleaning and sanitizing procedures in place before and after student attendance.
- Classrooms will be cleaned and disinfected every day after the end of the school day, and doors will be locked with no admittance except for our janitorial service.
- High-touch surfaces in the classrooms will be cleaned throughout the day as needed.
- Hand sanitizer stations will be located outside of every classroom and will be used upon first entry to the classroom daily.
- Bathrooms will be cleaned three times per day, in the mornings before school, immediately following the lunch/break period, and at the end of the school day.
- We will take measures to increase airflow in the building and within classrooms.

**Playground/outdoor space use:**

- Enforcing physical distancing in an outside playground is not reasonable.
- Emphasis will be placed on podding students and limiting the size of groups participating in playground time.
- Playground equipment will be used by one class at a time, scheduled and rotated among the classes.

**Snacks, lunches, and classroom treats:**

- All students will wash hands or use hand sanitizer before and after eating.
  - Full-day students that eat lunch at school will eat in their classrooms.
  - Outdoor spaces will be utilized when possible.
- All snacks will be provided by the preschool, via our contracted food service provider.
  - For students that have allergies and/or dietary preferences that make it necessary to bring in their own snacks, please plan to bring commercially pre-packaged items, or talk with your classroom teacher if not possible.
  - We still want to encourage students to celebrate birthdays and special events with treats if desired; until further notice, all treats must be commercially pre-packaged items.
- For full-day students, lunches may be brought from home or purchased from our hot lunch program.
  - When possible, send food items that children are able to handle/open on their own to reduce the need for teachers to help and touch the food packages.

**Chapel services:**

- Monthly chapel services will be scheduled within the preschool wing.
- We are exploring multiple services per month so that all students can attend chapel.

**Preschool programs, gatherings, and field trips:**

- With the exception of religious gatherings, we will follow the numeric attendance guidelines of the Restore Illinois phase currently assigned to our region:
  - Preschool Christmas and closing programs may be postponed or cancelled.
  - Planned field trips and visits may be postponed or cancelled.

**Distance/remote learning:**

- We have learned that distance/remote learning is not ideal at the preschool level.
- Any days missed after the first 3 school days cancelled due to weather or illness will be added to the school year as emergency make-up days, for a total of up to 3 weeks (December 11-17, May 14-27).
- Any days missed in excess of the 3 emergency make-up weeks will be considered irretrievable, and tuition will be refunded on a prorated basis.

**Extended care:**

- Extended care will be offered to our 4s and 5s preschool students at the school through the Tazewell County Health Department.
  - Care is offered starting at 7:00 a.m. before school and ending at 6:00 p.m. after school; cost is \$8 per morning and \$9 per afternoon.
- Students will be kept in the grade school commons for the extended care program.
- Students will be separated by class at tables according to grade level.
- As per school policy and TCHD rules, masks must be worn the entire time students are in extended care.

**Temperature checks and wellness:**

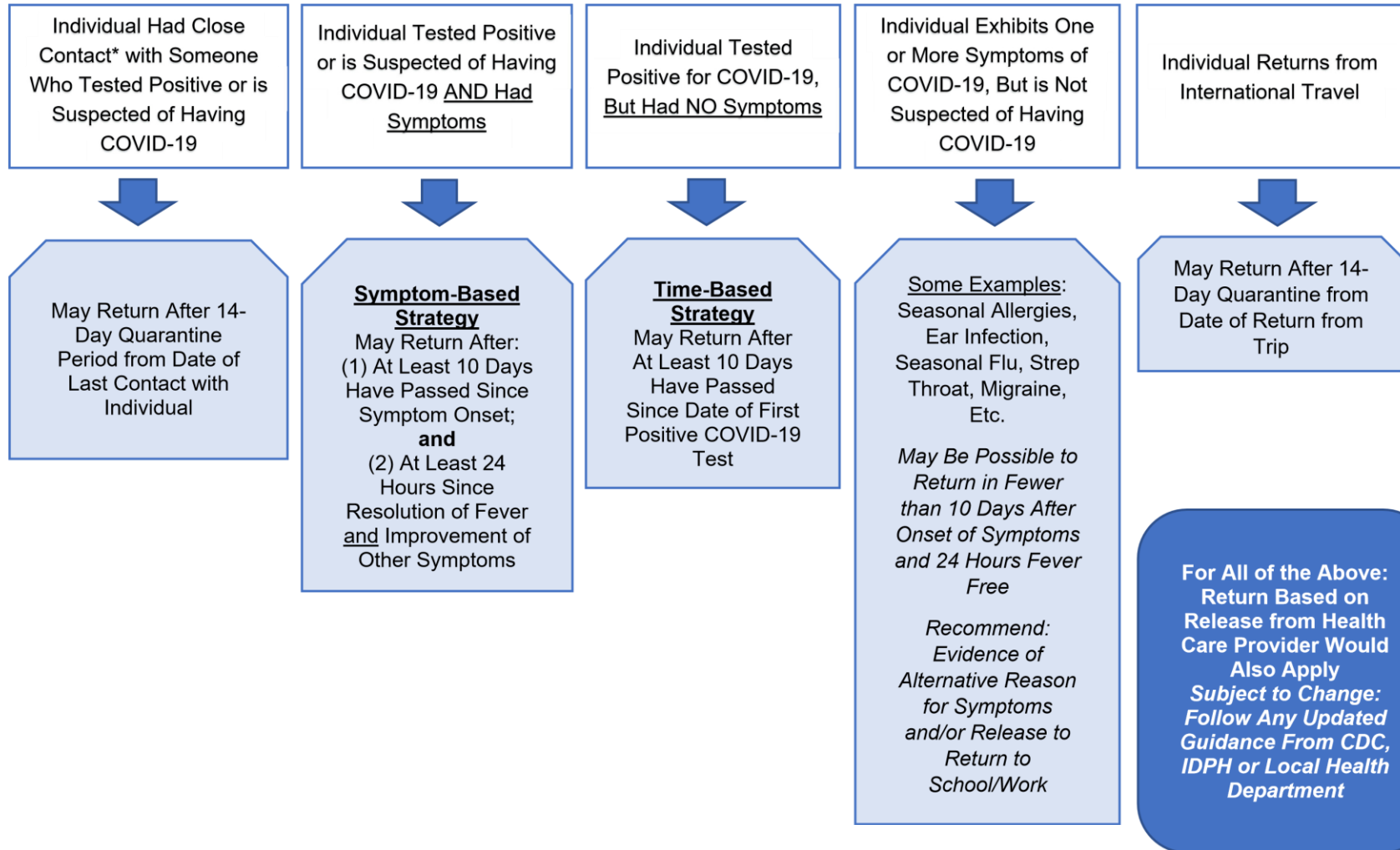
- All staff will have temperature taken daily upon arrival.
- Self-certification for students will be part of the waiver to be signed by parents before students attend school.
- Teachers will take the temperature of every student prior to entry into the classroom.
  - Students will not be allowed into their classrooms until temperature has been taken.
  - Students displaying a temperature of 100.4 or above will be invited to wait in the preschool office with their parent/guardian for 15 minutes.
  - Temperature will be retaken after 15 minutes has elapsed; if temperature has decreased below 100.4, the student will be allowed into the classroom and may remove their mask once inside.
  - If temperature has not decreased, the student will be sent home with their parent/guardian.
  - Anyone (students and teachers) displaying a fever of 100.4 or above must stay home.
  - Anyone (students and teachers) that develops a fever of 100.4 or above will be sent home immediately.
  - Anyone who has exhibited a fever may not return to preschool until a minimum of 24 hours have passed since the resolution of the fever, without the use of medication.
  - We retain the right to evaluate all situations on a case-by-case basis and to send students home.

**Returning to preschool after a COVID-19 related absence:**

For our policy on returning to school after a COVID-19 related absence, please review the following flowchart based on CDC principles.

# RETURN TO SCHOOL/WORK FLOWCHART FOLLOWING A COVID-19 RELATED ABSENCE

Revised August 3, 2020



**What counts as close contact?**

- You were within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more
- You provided care at home to someone who is sick with COVID-19
- You had direct physical contact with the person (hugged or kissed them)
- You shared eating or drinking utensils
- They sneezed, coughed, or somehow got respiratory droplets on you