

Dear Parents,

Thank you for registering your child to join us at Bethel Lutheran Preschool this year. Our school board met on July 13, and we wanted to provide you with an update regarding our progress toward opening. The environment in which we live continues to change daily, and some things have changed since our last communication.

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 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.
- Temperature and wellness checks:
 - 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 upon entry to the classroom.
 - Late arrivals will be checked in the entry foyer.
 - 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 cannot 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.
- 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.
- Playgrounds:
 - 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/meals:
 - 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.
- Chapel services:
 - Chapel services will be scheduled within the preschool wing.
 - We are exploring multiple services per month so that all students can attend chapel.
- With the exception of religious gatherings, we will follow the numeric attendance guidelines of the Restore Illinois phase currently assigned to our region:

- Exceptions will be made for parents dropping off or picking up students before and after school.
- Preschool Christmas and closing programs may be postponed or cancelled.
- Planned field trips and visits may be postponed or cancelled.
- The class of any student or teacher diagnosed with COVID-19 will be closed for a minimum of 2 days so that direct/intensive cleaning of room can take place.
- 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.
- 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.
- We will take measures to increase airflow in the building and within classrooms.
- Distance/remote learning:
 - We have learned that distance/remote learning is not effective 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.
 - 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.

Items still under review:

- Specific guidelines for drop off and pick up times
- Availability and structure of before-care and after-care

As the situation and circumstances continue to evolve, we will make updates to these and other items as needed to meet the needs of our students, teachers, and parents. These updates could happen at any time before or during the school year. Any changes will be communicated promptly to ensure you understand how this continues to evolve.