

The Merry Hearts Preschool

COVID-19 Policies/Acceptance Form

As we work through our preparations and plans for next school year we are focused on maintaining a preschool environment that is nurturing, enriching, fun and safe for your little ones! COVID-19 is still a real challenge and requires us to implement policies and procedures outside of the norm for this school year. The Merry Hearts Preschool is committed to meeting the significant impacts this crisis has on our children with love, compassion and understanding . We believe children are capable. We value play as both an opportunity for developmentally appropriate learning and processing the world. We will continue to structure our curriculum around these beliefs, while incorporating ongoing best health practices regarding COVID-19.

The following are the policies we will be putting in place towards this goal.:

Drop off / Pick Up

- Children in the **twos, threes and Pre-K classes** will use a drive thru drop off at an assigned entrance. Parents will not be able to enter the building with their child, teachers will greet children at the designated drop off spot. Parents of students in the **Ones class** will be able to walk in their child for the first weeks of school but will drop off at the door. No parents should enter the classrooms.
- Teachers will ask parents to verify each morning that their child does not have any symptoms of Covid-19 including cough, runny nose, fever, diaherra, and vomiting. The list of symptoms may change as the situation evolves.
- Teachers will take children inside at their designated time. Upon entering the building, teachers and all children will wash hands.
- Each class will be designated a pick up location. Teachers will walk children to the door or playground gate to meet their parents. Art work and other items to go home will be held thru the end of each week and sent home with children on Fridays.

Social Distancing/ Protective Gear

- Children WILL NOT be required to wear face masks. Students may wear face coverings if preferred. However, Merry Hearts staff will not be responsible to keep the face covering in place throughout the day.
- Fully vaccinated MHP staff may choose to but will not be required to wear face coverings when working in close contact with students and other staff. Any staff, substitutes or volunteers who are NOT fully vaccinated and will be working in close contact with students or other staff will be required to wear face coverings.
- Proper hand washing will be taught and encouraged throughout the school day. Children and staff will be required to wash hands more often including but not limited to: upon arrival, before and after handling food, before and after diapering, before and after using the bathroom or helping a child in the bathroom, after coming in contact with bodily fluid, after playing outside.

Touch free/automatic soap dispensers will be available at each hand washing station.

- Children will not bring book bags/backpacks to school with them. Each child should bring a change of clothing in a zip-locked bag that will be kept in the classroom. Children who require diapering supplies will keep those items stored at school as well.
- Any personal items for each child will be stored in their cubby, including outdoor gear, extra clothing and individual art supplies.
- We will do our best to limit the number of people that enter MHP and keep it to essential personnel only in the classroom until further notice.
- Meetings with the Program Director or Merry Hearts staff needs to be scheduled in advance. No walk-in meetings are allowed.

Cleaning Procedures

- Classrooms will be set up to ensure that everything can be easily cleaned.
- Classrooms will disinfect toys before sharing with another classroom.
- Heavy traffic items such as doorknobs will be cleaned multiple times throughout the day.
- Air purifiers will be in use in each classroom.

Keeping MHP Healthy

- A. MHP will follow NCDHHS quarantine and absence from school requirements. These are strict requirements and can lead to students missing several school days.
- B. Children showing ANY symptoms of illness, will not be permitted to attend MHP until all absence and return requirements have been completed.
- C. MHP staff will monitor children for signs of illness throughout the School day and will send children home immediately if the child appears ill or not acting as their usual self.
- D. MHP staff are not medical professionals and cannot be responsible for determining what an illness is or what a symptom means. Therefore, children with any symptoms will be sent home until they are feeling well or it is determined they do not have a contagious illness.
- F. MHP reserves the right to require a doctor's note before admittance back to MHP after illness, including COVID-19

Reporting and Notification

- A. MHP is required to notify the local health department of laboratory confirmed COVID-19 cases among children and staff (as required by NCGS130A-136).
- B. The local health department will assist to notify staff and families if an individual in the facility has tested positive for COVID-19. A public Health professional may contact parents if their child is identified as a close contact to the individual who tested positive.
- C. The notice to staff and families will maintain confidentiality in accordance with NCGS 130A-43 and all other state and federal laws.
- D. Close contact is identified as being within 6 feet, for 15 minutes or more, with a person with COVID-19.

Covid-19 Cases

- A. If a staff member or student has symptoms of COVID-19 and has not been tested **OR** has symptoms of COVID-19 and has been diagnosed with or tested positive for COVID-19.
- That person can return to MHP when they can answer yes to ALL three questions.
 - Has it been at least 14 days since symptoms first appeared?
 - Has it been at least 3 days since the person had a fever (without fever reducing medicine)?
 - Has it been at least 3 days without symptoms, including cough and shortness of breath?
- B. If a staff or student has not had symptoms of COVID-19 but has been diagnosed with COVID-19 based on a positive test.
- That person can return to MHP once 14 days has passed since the date of their first positive test.
 - However, if the person develops symptoms of COVID-19 after their positive test, they must be able to answer yes to ALL three questions listed above before returning to MHP.
- C. If a staff or student has been excluded because of COVID-19 symptoms but then tests negative for COVID-19.
- That person can return to MHP once they can answer yes to both questions.
 - Has it been at least 24 hours since the person had a fever without the use of fever reducing medicines?
 - Has the person felt well for at least the past 24 hours?
- D. If a staff or student has been determined to be in close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19.
- That person can return to MHP after completing at least 14 days of quarantine at home. The purpose of the quarantine is to determine if a person who has been exposed to someone with COVID-19 will get infected. They must complete the full 14 days of quarantine even if they test negative.
 - However, if the person tests positive or develops COVID-19 symptoms, return to MHP must follow the criteria above.

Closures

- A. MHP will follow NCDHHS closing guidelines. Therefore, due to the structure of our program...
- If a staff or student has COVID-19, the entire class and both teachers will likely be considered close contacts. Given that circumstance, that classroom will close for 14 days.
 - During individual classroom closures due to COVID-19, tuition remains the same.

Tuition Payments

- A. Closings
- During individual classroom or entire school closure due to COVID-19 cases at MHP, tuition remains the same.
 - If MHP closes due to a NC state mandate, that month's tuition will be due as long as we were in attendance for **ANY DAYS** of that month. If the closure extends into the following month, tuition will not be due until we reopen. If we reopen mid-month, tuition will be prorated.

As more information on COVID-19 becomes available, and as the CDC and NCDHHS provide further guidance for childcare centers, this policy may again be adjusted and updated.

- This Covid-19 Policy was approved and adopted by The Merry Hearts Preschool Board on July 14, 2021.

The Merry Hearts Preschool
COVID-19 Policies/Acceptance Form
2021/22

MHP is relying on parents/caregivers to follow this policy to keep their child, their child's classmates, the families and staff of MHP healthy. Therefore, parent:

- Agrees to follow this COVID-19 policy, CDC and NCDHHS guidelines
- Agrees to be flexible as information comes available causing changes to this policy.
- Agrees to keep child home when showing any signs of illness
- Agrees to quarantine the child for 14 days if exposed to COVID-19 or test positive for COVID-19.
- Agrees to provide a written withdrawal letter one month in advance of withdrawal from MHP and pay tuition for that month.

By signing below, I certify that I have read The Merry Hearts Preschool's COVID-19 policies for the 2021/22 school year. I agree to follow the policies as they apply to me. I further acknowledge that these policies are subject to change, and I agree to continue to follow the policies as outlined by the school.

Child's Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____