**The Congregational Church in South Glastonbury**

**South Church Preschool**

**30 High Street**

**South Glastonbury, CT  06073**

August 22, 2023

**RE: South Church Preschool – 2023-24 Health protocols**

Dear Parents:

As we emerge from the pandemic, we wanted to reinforce the health protocols that will be in place at the Preschool this school year. Consistent with our approach during the pandemic, our goal is to keep our students and staff healthy to enable learning and socialization skills so critical at this formative stage in your children’s lives.

Below is a summary of the policies that will be in place for the 2023-24 school year:

* **Vaccinations**- COVID-19 vaccines are not a requirement to attend the Preschool but are now available to everyone 6 months of age or older as an individual choice.
* **HEPA Filters** – HEPA filters will continue to be in place in each classroom as an additional means to filter out contaminants.
* **Masks** – Mask wearing will be optional for both students and staff. However, we reserve the right to implement mandatory masking at our center **IF** we begin to have large outbreaks of COVID-19 at the preschool. Please note that our staff will not be checking, reminding, or managing mask wearing. We ask parents to discuss their expectations for school mask wearing with their children. We continue to have masks available for those that need them.
* **COVID incidents** – We request your notification to the head teacher should your child test positive for COVID-19. Please follow good health policy by isolating those who test positive to help control the spread of this virus. We will continue to follow CDC guidance that people diagnosed with COVID-19 undergo isolation for at least 5 days. Day 0 is the day when symptoms began, or the day of the positive test for those who are symptom free without the use of fever-reducing medications. After 5 days of isolation, students and staff may return to school if they are fever free for at least 24 hours and other symptoms are improving. Returning students and staff will be required to wear masks for the next 5 days.
* **Other** **Illness Considerations (Fever etc.) –** For the health and well-being of all students and staff in our center, **if a student is not feeling well, please keep them at home and consider testing them for COVID-19**. The following guidelines which are included in our Program Guide will be carefully and strictly followed:
	+ Our center has adopted a **48 hour** stay at home policy for any child who has had a fever and/or has been on medication. The student must be fever free and Tylenol free for 48 hours **before** returning to school.
	+ Children who have a fever (temperature of 100 degrees or higher), should not come to school. If they arrive with a temperature of 100, they will be sent home whether or not there are any signs of illness.
	+ A child cannot be on any kind of cold or cough medication while in school, unless the symptoms are related to allergies or a chronic condition. A note from their physician can make an exception as appropriate.
	+ Children who have signs and symptoms of illness, such as a constant cough, sniffles, red eyes, sore throat, headache, abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and/or consistent lethargic behavior at school (with or without fever) should **not** come to school, and will be sent home by teachers if any of these symptoms are present during the day.
	+ Children diagnosed with a bacterial infection (throat, eye, ear, etc.) should not be brought to school unless they have been on antibiotics for 48 hours
* **Class closure** - We **will not** close the classroom if a child tests positive for COVID-19. Instead, we will work with the parents of the impacted child as to when they can return to school following CDC guidance as noted earlier under COVID-19 incidents. We will continue to notify parents when we are aware that a student has tested positive for COVID-19.
* **Other mitigation strategies** – Teaching students good hand washing and ensuring that practice is followed by everyone in our center will continue to be our focus to maintain good health. The Preschool classrooms will continue to be cleaned daily following current CDC guidelines. In addition, the teachers will be cleaning all hard surfaces frequently during the day.
* **Snack policy** – Parents are asked to provide their own snack each day for their child. These snacks will still need to be peanut and tree nut free. Always read the labels to ensure that the product is not only nut free, but has **not** been processed in a factory that produces nut products. Students will be spaced and monitored at all times while eating at the tables. We will still have a snack helper roster so students can help the teachers by passing out napkins, cups and plates when necessary and will lead our blessing on their special day. The teachers will be providing you with a healthy snack idea list to help with acceptable choices. If a classroom has a dairy CONTACT allergy, then the Head Teacher may have a few further restrictions on what parents in that classroom can send in for their child. Children will be required to wash their hands before and after snack time. Although we cannot guarantee that your child will not come into contact with their allergen while at school, we do work to reduce the risk and have a plan in place if contact occurs. Finally, we will continue to be mindful of the spacing of children at snack and lunch times given the number of students in a given class to the best of our ability to do so.

Your assistance in following good health practices will help us all mitigate illness and ensures that your children have every opportunity to engage in a learning opportunity that will enrich his/her early childhood development that enables them to flourish.

Thank you for all your support and understanding during these challenging times. Stay safe and be well.

Sincerely,

 

Matthew G. MacEwen, Chair

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Cc: Stephanie Letizia, Director

 Stephanie Murtha, Assistant Director

 Preschool Staff