

# Muppets Co-operative Preschool Inc.



*Learning through play and exploration*

## **Operations and Protocols during COVID-19**

*Revised date: February 2022*

## COVID-19 Operations and Protocols

Welcome to Muppets Cooperative Preschool. This document provides information regarding our amended operations and outlines the additional health and safety procedures we have in place during this unprecedented time. These policies and procedures are developed in accordance with Public Health and Ministry of Education recommendations.

The health and safety of our staff and students as we return to school is our top priority. At the same time, we strive to continue offering children a nurturing, inviting and engaging environment - one suited to the children's needs and development.

All policies and procedures will be reviewed and signed off by all staff and parents/guardians prior to starting school. As updates and changes happen, parents and staff will be notified of these changes.

*Please refer to the Parent Handbook "Red Book" (on website) <http://www.muppetspreschool.ca/registration.php> for matters not related to Modified Operations during COVID-19.*

### Arrival & Dismissal Procedures

Arrival and Dismissal of children will occur outside the school.

It is mandatory for all adults and school age children while on school (Church) property to wear a mask during drop off and pick up. Please limit the drop off and pick up to one person if possible. Family members are not currently permitted inside the school (Church) premises, unless approved by the Supervisor. As per Appleby United Church procedures, all adults entering the premises must provide proof of vaccination against COVID-19.

#### **Arrival**

Screening will be conducted for all staff and children arriving at the school. Screeners will take appropriate precautions such as the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

- Families will be provided with a 15 minute time period for arrival. Please arrive within this 15 minute period to assist us with physical distancing. The screening will take place between 9:15am – 9:30am.
- Families will be sent information via email regarding screening questions. Hard copies will be provided at the school daily. The screening process is **mandatory** and all questions need to be recorded and submitted each time your child comes to school. **Please note:** the screening questions still apply on days the child does not attend school (i.e. on a weekend your child has a fever they will still need to follow Public Health rules)

**Muppets will be using the Ontario School and Child Care screening tool. <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/>. Upon completing the tool, the results **MUST** be emailed to: [muppetscovidscreen@gmail.com](mailto:muppetscovidscreen@gmail.com) for the school to keep documentation of all results of every person who enters the premises.**

- A staff member will ask if you have completed the mandatory screening questions upon arrival. If you have not done so, you will be asked to step aside and answer them before the next step.
- Parents or guardians will bring the child to the double doors that enter into the gym (Hall) on Spruce Avenue.
- Parents and guardians are asked to remain at least 2 metres (6 feet) apart while waiting for a staff member to assist them.

## **Staff Screening**

Staff members will undergo screening measures prior to entrance in the school. Entry will be denied to staff/children exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19.

Staff members will complete <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/> daily. Staff members who pass screening must use alcohol-based (60-90%) hand rub prior to entering the premises. Staff members will sanitize their personal belongings (purse, water bottle) upon entry to school premises.

## **Children's Screening**

Parents / Guardians will complete <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/> daily on behalf of their child. Children who pass screening must use alcohol-based (60-90%) hand rub prior to entering the premises.

## **Dismissal**

- Families will be provided with a 15 minute time period for dismissal. Please arrive within this 15 minute period to assist us with physical distancing. Dismissal time is 12:15pm – 12:30pm.
- Parents and guardians are asked to wait outdoors, keeping a distance of 2 metres (6 feet) from other parents, as a staff member dismisses each child.

## **Enhanced Attendance Reporting Practice** *(For children, staff and all other individuals entering the school)*

- Maintain daily attendance records of all individuals entering the school. Records will include the following information: name, contact information, date and time of arrival and departure, reason for visit and screening results
- Records will be updated when a child or staff member is absent
- Muppets will follow up with individuals to determine the reason for unplanned absences and this information will be recorded and kept on file
- Monitor attendance records for patterns and trends
- Attendance records will always be available on-site

## **Daily Life at School**

Despite the restrictions and policies in place for the health and safety of the children, we still aim to create an environment that is joyful, nurturing and engaging and that allows for freedom whenever possible.

## **Activities & Materials**

The main aspects of our play-based approach remain: Muppets fosters opportunities for children to explore, think creatively, problem solve and make decisions. We are doing our due diligence of research, readings, and discussions with professionals to ensure that the essence of our curriculum and philosophy is still felt throughout the school.

Materials and activities that cannot be readily disinfected have been removed from the classrooms. Modifications are in place with some activities so that children may continue to use them safely. Individual baskets of high use items such as pencils, scissors and crayons have been prepared for each child. Sensory items such as playdoh and sand will also be labelled for each individual child. Items that are not easily cleaned (ie: books) will be used on a rotational basis and placed in the backroom for one week before next use.

## **Snack Time**

All our meals are prepared in our on-site kitchen. Snacks will be individually portioned and served by a trained staff member. Children will not be sharing utensils, condiments, or food with others. Children will be assigned a consistent area for snacks. Families are not allowed to provide snacks from home. These areas will be disinfected before and after use.

## **Classrooms**

Physical distancing is encouraged with smaller groups in each space at a time. At this time, Muppets is limiting registration to 16 children, but still using both Big (licensed for 16 children) and Small (licensed for 8 children) classrooms.

## **Staff**

### **Training**

Our staff are all trained to respond during emergencies with CPR-C and First Aid training along with policies in place in the event of fire, lockdown, etc.

Additional training for all staff - administration, teachers, assistant, and screening staff:

- In-house training to review new enhanced COVID-19 related health and safety policies and procedures.

These additional training sessions covered the following topics:

- Proper use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including the proper use of face masks/eye protection and gloves as well as the appropriate times at which to use them
- Self-monitoring
- Screening procedures
- Symptoms arising while at work
- Hand hygiene
- Cleaning, sanitization and disinfection
- Social distancing for children
- Possible curriculum changes and changes to the physical environment

### **Staff Shifts/Schedules**

- Due to restrictions on movement, the class will stay as one group (cohort). All Staff members (including supply staff) will be required to wear masks and shields/goggles in the classroom at all times. The Friday class will be made up of a maximum of 8 children who are already attending the 3 morning program.
- Hours for Staff are 8.45am-1.45pm on the days specified in individual contracts.
- Cleaning and disinfecting of the toys/classroom will be done in the afternoons after the morning class is dismissed.

### **Communication with Families/Group Events**

Given that in-person communication must be limited at this time, we will rely on email and phone communication. The Program Support Staff will communicate any information to the teachers at time of child's arrival (ie: if the parent shared how the child slept, toileted, ate, etc.). The daily logs will be available to view via Google Drive for families to view the classroom activities.

When further communication may be necessary, we will offer the use of video-conferencing (Zoom) instead.

We know that regular communication with our families is essential and we will do our best to maintain this connection via technology. In the interest of reducing infection, we will be putting in place the following guidelines:

- All large group meetings/events will be suspended, held outdoors or virtually
- Required meetings will be conducted via Zoom as much as possible
- Any in person meetings conducted inside requires people to wear non-medical mask
- Only staff members, essential board members, required visitors (ie: Public Health, Ministry of Education program advisor, Quality First advisor), and children enrolled will be permitted to enter the preschool

### **Continuation of Service**

If the school is mandated to close for the health and safety of the community, an assessment and response will be formulated as appropriate.

- All families and staff will be contacted via email regarding the closure and any pertinent information
- Refunds will be determined as per Halton Region/Ministry of Education guidelines

### **Covid-19 Immunization Disclosure Policy**

Muppets recognizes the importance of immunization of individuals regularly interacting and providing services to children due to the nature of their work and potential for exposure in the community. This policy aims to protect the child care program's population including children, staff, volunteers, students on educational placements and any person providing child care or other services to a child in care.

The Immunization Disclosure Policy will apply to the following groups of individuals, except where the individual works remotely and does not involve in-person interactions:

- Employees of the licensee
- Volunteers
- Students on an educational placement
- Any licensee who regularly interacts with children, staff or providers
- Any person who provides child care or other services to a child who receives child care (ie: resource consultant)

### **Policy**

Under the direction of The Chief Medical Officer of Health all individuals covered by this policy MUST provide the following:

1. Proof of all required doses of a COVID-19 vaccine approved by the World Health Organization.

### **Exclusion Policy**

### **Purpose**

To ensure that all staff are aware of and adhere to the directive established by Halton Region Public Health, and Children's Services Division regarding the exclusion of sick staff and/or children attending Muppets.

## Procedure

**Note: Children and staff must not attend the program if they are sick, even if symptoms resemble a mild cold.** As required by the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 (CCEYA), child care employees must separate children of ill health and contact parents/guardians to pick up their child immediately.

When children are ill and/or exhibit COVID-19 related symptoms, staff will ensure the following:

- The ill or symptomatic child will be separated into the designated exclusion room (supervisor's office) or separated area in the classroom (small room) and be removed from other children to be monitored by a staff until parent/guardian pick up.
- Symptoms of illness will be recorded in the child's file and in a daily log as per the CCEYA.
- The parent/guardian of the ill child will be notified to pick up their child immediately; or
- If it appears that the child requires immediate medical attention, the child will be taken to the hospital by ambulance and examined by a legally qualified medical practitioner or a nurse registered under the Health Disciplines Act. R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 262, s. 34 (3).

## When to Exclude

Staff and children should be excluded when there are signs and/or symptoms that are greater than normal, or if a child is unable to participate in regular programming because of illness.

- Fever
- Cough that is new or worsening
- Shortness of breath
- Sore throat
- Difficulty swallowing
- Loss of taste or smell
- Digestive issues (nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain)
- Runny, stuffy or congested nose (not related to seasonal allergies or other known condition)
- Extreme tiredness that is unusual
- Headache that is unusual or long lasting
- Chills
- Pink eye
- For young children and infants: sluggishness or lack of appetite

## How to Exclude

Staff, home child care providers, parents/guardians and children who are symptomatic or have been advised to self-isolate by their local public health unit must not attend the program.

- Immediately isolate any child or staff who becomes ill with symptoms of COVID-19 from the rest of their group, in a designated room or space with hand washing supplies or alcohol based (60-90%) hand rub.
- If the child appears sick or feverish, a temperature check is recommended with using the least intrusive method (i.e. non-contact thermometer) and ensure the person using the thermometer is wearing a surgical/procedure mask and eye protection.
- Place a non-medical mask on children older than two years (if tolerated) and ensure proper use.
- Notify parents/guardians or emergency contacts to pick up the ill child as soon as possible and supervise while waiting to be picked up.

- Supervising staff must maintain physical distancing as best as possible and wear personal protective equipment as noted above.
- Require staff who become ill at work to immediately go home.
- Direct the staff or parent/guardian of the ill child to see their primary health care provider for assessment or use a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) and to self-isolate at home until their result is available.
- Those who test negative for COVID-19 must test negative on 2 consecutive RAT 24- 48 hours apart after the symptoms improve.
- Those who test positive for COVID-19 must be excluded from the program for 5 days after the onset of symptoms, or for 5 days from the date of testing if no symptoms, and/or clearance has been received from the local public health unit.
- Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area if it can be done safely.
- Clean and disinfect the designated room or space immediately after the ill child or staff member goes home and items that cannot be cleaned (paper, books, cardboard puzzles) should be removed and stored for a minimum of 7 days.
- Testing of asymptomatic persons should only be performed as per provincial testing guidance.
- Asymptomatic individuals awaiting results may not need to be excluded and should follow the advice of Public Health.
- Ensure that staff and children exposed to a person who has confirmed COVID-19 are excluded from the child care setting for 5 days and that they self-isolate at home for 5 days and monitor for symptoms.

### **Reporting**

Muppets requests that parents, staff and volunteers report to the school a positive RAT or PCR case of COVID-19. The supervisor will notify all families of the positive RAT case. The supervisor will report 30% or more absenteeism rate to Halton Public Health and follow their direction at that time.

### **Testing for COVID-19**

- Symptomatic staff and children should use RAT provided by the school (each family has been provided with a minimum of 2 RAT).
- Testing of an asymptomatic person should only be performed as directed by Halton Region Public Health as part of outbreak management.
- Those who test negative for COVID-19 must have 2 consecutive negative RAT 24 hours apart and be excluded until 24 hours after symptom resolution.
- Those individuals who test positive for COVID-19 must be excluded from the child care centre for 5 days after the onset of symptoms.
- Any Staff who test positive for COVID-19 must inform their supervisor of the positive test result.
- Outbreaks should be declared in collaboration with the child care centre and Halton Region Public Health.

**Halton Public Health reporting contacts: Call 311 or email [publichealthemergencychildcare@halton.ca](mailto:publichealthemergencychildcare@halton.ca)**

### **Sanitary Health and Safety**

#### **Review**

This policy and procedure will be reviewed and signed off by all staff on a yearly basis.

#### **Policy**

Muppets Co-operative Preschool is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for children, families and employees. We will take every reasonable precaution to prevent the risk of communicable diseases.

## **Definitions**

*Cleaning*: refers to the physical removal of foreign material (i.e. dust, soil) and organic material (i.e., blood, secretions, microorganisms). Cleaning removes, rather than kills microorganisms. Warm water, detergent and mechanical action (i.e. wiping) is required to clean surfaces. Rinsing with clean water is required to complete the cleaning process to ensure the detergent film is removed.

*Disinfecting*: describes a process completed after cleaning in which a chemical solution (i.e. 1:9 ratio of bleach and water solution) is used to kill most diseases causing microorganisms. In order to be effective disinfectants must be left on a surface for a period of time. Contact times are generally prescribed by the product manufacturer. Any items children may come into contact with require a final rinse after the required contact time is observed.

## **Procedure**

All products including cleaning agents and disinfectants must be out of reach of children, labelled, and must have Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)

### *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*

Staff are to use a 1:9 bleach and water solution (prepared daily) or a disinfectant with a DIN number.

- For general environmental disinfection of high touch surfaces, large toys and equipment that cannot be immersed in a disinfectant solution, use a wet cloth soaked in a 1:9 bleach and water solution – the contact time for disinfecting is one minute
- For all other toy cleaning and disinfecting first clean toys in a detergent and water solution, rinse in clean water followed by soaking in a 1:9 bleach and water solution with a contact time for disinfecting is one minute, then air dry toys

## **Cleaning and Disinfection Frequency Requirements**

- A cleaning and disinfecting log should be tracked and demonstrate cleaning schedules.
- Toys and classrooms will be cleaned daily.

### **Clean and Disinfect upon ENTRY to Child Care (for Staff)**

- Any hard surfaces such as water bottles, travel mugs, cell phones, lunch containers.

### **Clean and Disinfect Frequencies for Other Surfaces and Items**

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

### Cleaning and Disinfecting Toys

- Most toys will be sanitized daily with 1:9 bleach and water solution.
- The Dishwasher/Santizer will be used in Appleby United Church Kitchen when deemed necessary.
- Mouthed toys will be placed in a basket and disinfected properly before being returned to the classroom.
- Group sensory play will be suspended at this time, instead each child will have a labelled individual sensory bin.

#### Clean and Disinfect Daily

- Low-touch surfaces (any surface s at your location that has minimal contact with hands) must be cleaned and disinfected daily (i.e. window ledges, doors, sides of furnishings etc.)
- Carpets are to be vacuumed daily. Steamed cleaned at a minimum once a year.

#### 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/humans can be contaminated.
2. Gather all supplies, perform hand hygiene, then put on single-use 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 1:9 bleach and water solution in and around the spill area and allow the appropriate one 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.
10. Perform hand hygiene as directed.

#### **Notes:**

- If the spill includes broken glass, ensure a brush and dustpan is used to pick it up and discard. Disinfect the brush and dustpan after use; NEVER use your hands to clean up the glass.
- If the spill occurs on a carpet, follow the above steps along with steam cleaning the carpet.

### **Hand Hygiene Policy and Procedures**

#### **Policy**

Muppets Co-operative Preschool is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for children, families and employees. We will take every reasonable precaution to prevent the risk of communicable diseases.

## Definitions

'*Hand Hygiene*' is a general term referring to any action of hand cleaning. Hand hygiene relates to the removal of visible soil and removal or killing of transient microorganisms from the hands. Hand hygiene may be accomplished using soap and running water or a hand sanitizer (60 - 90% alcohol based). Hand washing with soap and running water must be performed when hands are visibly soiled.

## Procedure

Hands carry and spread germs. Touching your eyes, nose, mouth or sneezing or coughing into your hands may provide an opportunity for germs to get into your body or spread to others. Keeping your hands clean through good hygiene practice is one of the most important steps to avoid getting sick and spreading germs.

Ensure that employees staff and children are always practicing good hand hygiene when hands are visibly dirty and/or after:

- Sneezing, coughing, or blowing your nose
- Using the washroom
- Handling garbage
- Handling uncooked/raw foods
- Outdoor play
- Toileting/diapering routine
- Handling soiled laundry or dishes
- Handling soiled toys or other items
- Coming into contact with bodily fluids
- Coming into contact with any soiled/mouthed items
- Gardening
- Touching commonly touched surfaces

Hands should be cleaned using soap and water or hand sanitizer before and after:

- Preparing, handling, serving and eating food
- Handling animals
- Touching a cut or open sore
- Changing diapers
- Glove use
- Before and after giving medication
- Communal sensory play activity

When hands are visibly soiled, follow these steps for cleaning hands:

- Wet hands
- Apply soap
- Lather for at least 20 seconds and rub between fingers, back of hands, fingertips, under nails
- Rinse well under running water
- Dry hands well with paper towel or hot air blower
- Turn taps off with paper towel, if available

When hands are not visibly soiled, follow these steps for cleaning hands:

- Apply hand sanitizer (60-90% alcohol-based)
- Rub hands together for at least 15 seconds
- Work sanitizer between fingers, back of hands, fingertips, and under nails.
- Rub hands until dry

### **Hand Sanitizing Information**

When your hands are not visibly dirty, a 60-90% alcohol based hand sanitizer can be used. Hand sanitizers can only be used on children who are over the age of two and must always be used under adult supervision. Adults must ensure that the product has completely evaporated from the child's hands before allowing the child to continue their activity. Please ensure that written parent consent is obtained before applying hand sanitizer to any child.

### **Hand Hygiene Monitoring**

To ensure that employees are using proper hand hygiene methods, supervisor will review hand hygiene practices on a regular basis and provide feedback to employees as required.

### **Glove Use**

Gloves shall be worn when it is anticipated that hands will come into contact with mucous membranes, broken skin, tissue, blood, bodily fluids, secretions, excretions, contaminated equipment or environmental surfaces. Gloves are single use only.

### **Gloves and Hand Hygiene**

Hand hygiene shall be practiced before applying and after removing gloves. Gloves shall be removed and discarded after each use.

To reduce hand irritation related to gloves:

- Wear gloves for as short as time as possible
- Ensure that hands are clean and dry before wearing gloves
- Ensure gloves are intact, clean and dry inside
- Gloves are single use only, and must be task specific such as nitrile gloves for diaper changes

### **Gloves when Cleaning/Disinfecting**

Employees must wear gloves when immersing toys in diluted disinfectant when toy washing.

### **Covering Your Cough Procedure**

Germs, such as influenza and cold viruses, are spread by coughing and/or sneezing. When you cough or sneeze on your hands, your hands carry and spread these germs.

Attempt to keep your distance (preferably more than 2 metres/6 feet) from people who are coughing or sneezing. Follow these steps to stop the spread of germs:

- If you have a tissue, cover your mouth and nose when you cough, sneeze or blow your nose
- Put used tissue in the garbage

- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your sleeve, not in your hands
- Clean your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer (60-90% alcohol based) regularly and after using a tissue on yourself or others

### **Additional Resources and Information**

Halton Region Official COVID-19 website

<https://www.halton.ca/For-Residents/Immunizations-Preventable-Disease/Diseases-Infections/New-Coronavirus/COVID-19-School-Information>

Public Health Ontario

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/diseases-and-conditions/infectious-diseases/respiratory-diseases/novel-coronavirus>

[Operational Guidance during COVID-19 Outbreak \(Ministry of Education\)](#)

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/child-care-guide-child-care.pdf>