

# Valley Preschool COVID-19 Preparedness Plan

*Updated: 1/1/2022*

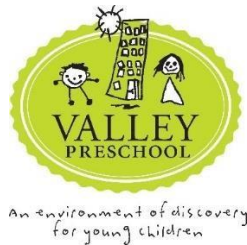
Here at Valley Preschool we would like to thank EVERYONE who works so hard to keep our littlest learners – and their families – healthy and safe during this pandemic. Efforts made daily to clean, disinfect, use personal protective equipment, and develop new routines have been the difference makers for our school community. A special THANK YOU goes to our teachers and staff who made, and continue to make, each school year a success.

Legislative changes have been made that will impact school communities throughout the state.

**From the Minnesota Department of Health, 7/7/21:** *In spring 2020, the Commissioner of Human Services temporarily modified certain requirements for licensed child care centers in order to provide centers with more flexibility to operate in a pandemic and focus on critical health and safety measures. On June 30, the Minnesota Legislature voted to end the state peacetime emergency effective Thursday, July 1, 2021, at 11:59 p.m. This means that some temporary modifications put in place during the COVID-19 peacetime emergency will be ending immediately while other modifications will end on August 30, 2021.*

The end of other modifications and requirements and how it impacts Valley:

- The requirement to develop and implement a COVID-19 preparedness plan ended on June 30, 2021. However, we believe our existing plan serves as a useful resource in the event a child or staff person tests positive for COVID-19, and therefore it will remain in effect.
- The requirement for child care settings to wear face coverings ended on June 30, 2021. Because children under age 5 are not yet eligible to be vaccinated, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) continue to **strongly recommend the use of face coverings in child care settings**. As a child care center, we have been asked to consider this recommendation. Based on the success of last year's use of face masks (and other protective gear worn by staff members), the decision to **use face masks for students attending Valley Preschool will remain in effect** when inside the school building during non-eating activities.



## COVID-19 Preparedness Plan for Valley Preschool

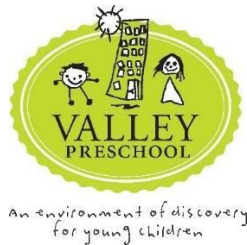
Valley Preschool is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our students, families, staff, guests, and visitors. To ensure we have a safe and healthy workplace, Valley Preschool has developed the following COVID-19 Preparedness Plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The school's director as well as all staff members are all responsible for implementing this plan. Our goal is to mitigate the potential for transmission of COVID-19 in our workplaces and communities, and that requires full cooperation among our workers and management. Only through this cooperative effort can we establish and maintain the safety and health of all persons in our workplaces.

The COVID-19 Preparedness Plan is administered by the Valley Preschool board of directors who maintains the overall authority and responsibility for the plan. However, management and staff are equally responsible for supporting, implementing, complying with and providing recommendations to further improve all aspects of this COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. Valley Preschool's director, Sarah Peterson, has our full support in enforcing the provisions of this plan.

Our teachers and staff are our most important assets. Valley Preschool is serious about safety and health and protecting our teachers and our families. Worker involvement is essential in developing and implementing a successful COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. We have involved our staff in this process by sharing plans designed with their safety in mind; asking for input in the form of suggestions and feedback at monthly meetings. As a result of both staff feedback and changing infection rates in the area, class schedules and staffing patterns have changed to reflect current needs. All VPS staff are aware that as developments present themselves, in terms of infection rates, recommendations from organizations such as the CDC and MDH, scheduling and staffing patterns could potentially change. In this event, the site director will share the any changes identified as needing to be changed and will educate and help implement any changes necessary.

Valley Preschool's COVID-19 Preparedness Plan follows the industry guidance developed by the state of Minnesota, which is based upon Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) guidelines for COVID-19, Minnesota Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MNOSHA) statutes, rules and standards, and Minnesota's relevant and current executive orders. It addresses:

- ensuring sick staff or students stay home and prompt identification & isolation of sick persons;
- social distancing – workers must be at least six-feet apart;
- worker hygiene and source controls;
- workplace building and ventilation protocol;
- workplace cleaning and disinfection protocol;
- drop-off, pick-up and delivery practices and protocol; and
- communications and training practices and protocol.



Valley Preschool has reviewed and incorporated the industry guidance applicable to our business provided by the state of Minnesota for the development of this plan, including the following industry guidance for schools and child care centers. Other conditions and circumstances included in the industry guidance and addressed in the plan that are specific to our business include:

- additional protections and protocols for customers, clients, guests and visitors;
- additional protections and protocols for personal protective equipment (PPE);
- additional protections and protocol for access and assignment;
- additional protections and protocol for sanitation and hygiene;
- additional protections and protocols for work clothes and handwashing;
- additional protections and protocol for distancing and barriers;
- additional protections and protocols for managing occupancy;
- additional protocols to limit face-to-face interaction;
- additional protections for receiving or exchanging payment; and
- additional protections and protocols for certain types of businesses within an industry.

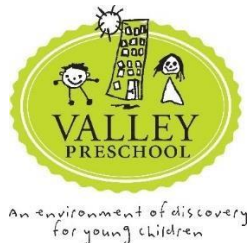
## **Ensuring sick staff members or students stay home and prompt identification and isolation of sick persons**

Teachers and staff have been informed of and encouraged to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. The following policies and procedures are being implemented to assess workers' health status prior to entering the workplace and for workers to report when they are sick or experiencing symptoms. All teachers and staff are asked and expected to self-monitor their health for symptoms related to COVID-19. While we will no longer require temperature checks prior to entering, we do require all staff to be paying close attention for signs of illness and taking temperatures when appropriate. All staff are expected to report if they were in a situation in which social distancing and/or face mask wearing within an inside space (outside of their home) for a period of greater than 15 minutes occurred. In addition, signs are posted on the outer doors of the school reminding all persons who enter to be conducting self-screening checks prior to entering school building.

If a staff member or student becomes sick or experiences symptoms while at home, they are encouraged to refer to the most up-to-date COVID-19 Decision Tree, found on the MDH website: <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/exguide.pdf> and reach out to their health care provider immediately to seek further guidance.

Any staff member who is ill enough to reach out to a health care professional is expected to then contact the school's director. Any staff member or student who becomes ill will not be permitted to return to school until they are fever free (without the use of a fever reducer) for at least 24 hours.

If a staff member becomes ill while at school, they will immediately report to their co-worker as well as to their supervisor (the school's director). The remaining staff members will fill in for the ill teacher and the teacher will be removed from the classroom and isolated in the staff room, located in the back of



the building. The ill staff member will then be asked to leave the school and contact his/her health care provider immediately. If the worker is too ill to drive, the director or a staff member not already in direct contact with students will use the Staff Emergency Contact Information form and begin reaching out to individuals listed. If the calling staff member is unable to reach a person listed as an emergency contact, and the ill staff member is too sick to be removed otherwise, emergency personnel will be called.

Valley Preschool has implemented leave policies that promote workers staying at home when they are sick, when household members are sick, or when required by a health care provider to isolate or quarantine themselves or a member of their household. Under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), any employee needing to miss work due to caring for an ill family member may take up to 12 weeks, unpaid, without risk of loss of employment. Valley Preschool encourages all staff members to stay home if they are feeling ill. Because our business is a preschool, the primary work (direct care of children) of a teacher or aide cannot be done remotely and therefore requires direct supervision and, consequently, a substitution of staff if a current staff member cannot be present.

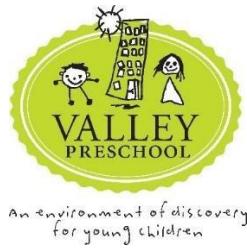
Valley Preschool has also implemented a policy for informing staff if they have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 at their workplace and requiring them to quarantine for the required amount of time. If a staff member of Valley Preschool has been exposed to a person with COVID-19 at school, the school's director will notify this individual and ask that he/she be quarantined according to the MDH's current recommendations. Any exposed staff member(s) will be encouraged to get tested for COVID-19 5-7 days after last date of exposure, and to report results to the school's director. Regardless of the test result, the exposed staff member(s) will need to quarantine for the recommended time; per current guidelines.

Valley Preschool is committed to protecting the privacy of all staff members. A policy has been implemented to protect the privacy of workers' health status and health information stating at no point in time will the health status or health information be shared with families and/or staff members.

The health information surrounding a staff member will be kept confidential and known only by key decision makers: health care providers and the school's director.

## **Ensuring sick, or exposed to close contacts, students stay home and prompt identification and isolation of sick persons**

Students who have not been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 who have come in close contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID, must stay home from school for the full quarantine period. For the most up-to-date guidance on quarantining check out the following link: <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/close.html#long>. If a family is wishing to have their child return to school prior to the 14 recommended quarantine period, they must be able to show proof of vaccination for all individuals who qualify for the vaccination (any person 5 years of age or older) AND proof of a **negative PCR test**, administered within 24 hours before the student is expected to return to the class. A negative rapid test will not qualify for return to school prior to the 14 day quarantine period.



If a student is tested for COVID-19 (s)he will not be permitted to return to school until the test results come back negative and/or they have quarantined for 14 days following a positive test results. Parents are encouraged to seek additional school attendance guidance at:

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/attendance.pdf>

If a student becomes ill while at school, the individuals listed on the student's Emergency Contact Information Form will be notified immediately. The child will be quarantined until carpool arrangements can be made and the child is safely returned to an authorized caregiver. The room in which the student is quarantined will become off-limits for a minimum of 24 hours. Any surfaces touched by the ill child will be disinfected using the 3-step process, standard at Valley Preschool. The room in which the ill child was quarantined will also be properly ventilated. Any staff member(s) attending to the ill child will wear PPE. Staff members are encouraged to have an additional set of clothing on hand. A staff member responsible for caring for a sick child while at school will be encouraged to take a saliva test. Testing codes are available for all staff members. The school's director will provide these to any staff member wishing to be tested.

Valley Preschool is committed to protecting the privacy of all staff members, students and their families. A policy has been implemented to protect the privacy of workers' and students' health status and health information stating at no point in time will the health status or health information be shared with families and/or staff members.

The health information surrounding a student will be kept confidential and known only by key decision makers: health care providers and the school's director.

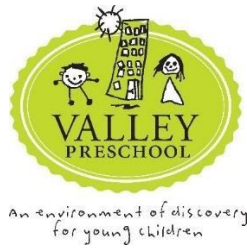
## **Social distancing – Teachers are encouraged to remain six-feet apart**

Social distancing of at least six feet will be implemented and maintained between staff and, when possible, between students in the school space through the following engineering and administrative controls:

Valley Preschool will stagger shifts to prevent more than two teachers in the school space at any given time. While outside, the teachers will divide the space to ensure overcrowding does not occur.

To help implement social distancing within the school building, the following caps will be placed on individual rooms during free explore and small group time: 10 student max in front room; 5 student max in art room; 5 student max in block room.

To avoid overcrowding in common areas, students' entry into the building will be staggered. Exiting the building will be staggered as well. All students will be placed in groups (pink, yellow, or blue) and will move through the space during small group time using these groupings. All staff will use personal protective equipment (PPE) while inside the school building and/or any time when in close contact with students and co-workers.



Each staff member will have access to individual office supplies such as pens, markers, staplers, etc. so they will not be shared. Other equipment such as tables, desks, workstations, machines or other personal work tools and equipment if used by more than one person, will be cleaned and disinfected between users.

Staff members will be informed to any changes of the policies through written communication, as well as verbal communication from the school's director. All staff will be encouraged to speak directly to school administration with any questions and concerns.

Valley Preschool will have on hand and provide any necessary recommended or required protective supplies, such as masks, nonmedical cloth face coverings, gloves, disinfectant and face shields for workers, and instruction about when and how they should be worn or used.

## **Worker hygiene and source controls**

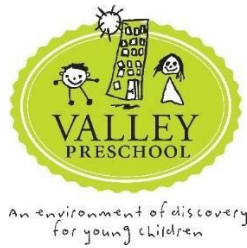
Basic infection prevention measures are being implemented within our school space at all times. Workers are instructed to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water frequently throughout the day, but especially at the beginning and end of their shift, prior to any mealtimes and after using the restroom. All staff, guests, and visitors to the school are required to wash or sanitize their hands prior to or immediately upon entering the facility.

Hand-sanitizer dispensers (that use sanitizers of greater than 60% alcohol) are at entrances and locations in the workplace so they can be used for hand hygiene in place of soap and water, as long as hands are not visibly soiled.

Workers are being instructed to cover their mouth and nose with their sleeve or a tissue when coughing or sneezing, and to avoid touching their face, particularly their mouth, nose and eyes, with their hands. Workers are expected to dispose of tissues in provided trash receptacles and wash or sanitize their hands immediately afterward. Respiratory etiquette will be demonstrated on posters and supported by making tissues and trash receptacles available to all workers and other persons entering the workplace. These instructions and reminders will be shared with all staff in a variety of ways, which include: through staff trainings and meetings; postings; and verbal reminders.

## **Workplace building and ventilation protocol**

Operation of the building in which the workplace is located, includes necessary sanitation, assessment and maintenance of building systems, including water, plumbing, electrical, heating, and ventilation systems. The maximum amount of fresh air is being brought into the workplace, air recirculation is being limited, and ventilation systems are being properly used and maintained. Steps are also being taken to minimize air flow blowing across people.



## **Workplace cleaning and disinfection protocol**

Regular practices of cleaning and disinfecting have been implemented, including a schedule for routine cleaning and disinfecting of work surfaces, equipment, tools and machinery, vehicles and areas in the work environment, including restrooms, break rooms, lunch rooms, meeting rooms, checkout stations, fitting rooms, and drop-off and pick-up locations. Frequent cleaning and disinfecting is being conducted of high-touch areas, including phones, keyboards, touch screens, controls, door handles, elevator panels, railings, copy machines, credit card readers, delivery equipment, etc.

Appropriate and effective cleaning and disinfecting supplies have been purchased and are available for use in accordance with product labels, safety data sheets and manufacturer specifications, and are being used with required personal protective equipment for the product. All surfaces are to be cleaned using the three-step cleaning procedures approved by licensing prior to and immediately following student use. Cleaning supplies include: soap solution; water rinse; and disinfectant in the form of bleach solution (following licensing-required concentrations). Training is provided to all staff on how to properly clean and disinfect, as well as to ensure their proper use of any required personal protective equipment.

## **Drop-off, pick-up and delivery practices and protocol**

Student drop-off will continue to be done in a car drop-off line. Pick-up will be conducted the same way. All students will enter using the same gate door, going the same direction. At the end of the day, students will be taken to their grown-ups using the same car line systems. All students will exit using the same gate; going the same direction, and will be escorted by a teacher.

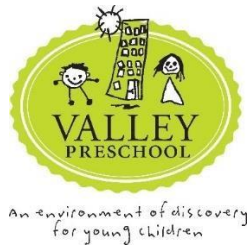
All deliveries to the school will be left outside; no access into the building by a delivery carrier is permitted.

## **Communications and training practices and protocol**

This COVID-19 Preparedness Plan was updated to reflect current recommendations and will be communicated both verbally and in written form to all staff members during in-service training sessions occurring in August of 2021, as part of the orientations prior to the start of school. All necessary training will be provided at this time. Additional communication and training will be ongoing by sharing through in-person training led by the school's director. Training will be provided to all workers who did not receive the initial training and prior to initial assignment or reassignment.

Instructions will be communicated to all workers, including employees and, if necessary, temporary workers about protections and protocols, including: 1) social distancing protocols and practices; 2) drop-off, pick-up, delivery and general in-store shopping; 3) practices for hygiene and respiratory etiquette; 4) recommendations or requirements regarding the use of masks, face-coverings and/or face-shields by staff, guests and visitors. All staff, guests and visitors will also be advised not to enter the workplace if they are experiencing symptoms or have contracted COVID-19.





Valley Preschool reserves the right to make changes to this COVID-19 Preparedness Plan at any point, due to changing situations resulting from infection rates within the school, community, county, and/or state and surrounding areas. Decisions will be made in the best interest of students, their families and the staff who serve our program.

Members of the school's board of directors and the school's director are expected to monitor how effective the program has been implemented. Using and obtaining up-to-date information from the CDC and MDH, the board of directors along with the school's director will closely monitor the effectiveness of the program and identify and challenges or deficiencies. Any procedural updates and/or modifications deemed necessary will be made and relayed to staff members immediately. All management and staff members are to take an active role and collaborate in carrying out the various aspects of this plan, and update the protections, protocols, work-practices and training as necessary. This COVID-19 Preparedness Plan has been certified by Valley Preschool management and the plan was posted on the school's website January, 2022, and a copies are readily available at the school. It will be updated as necessary by Sarah Peterson, Valley Preschool Director.

Certified by:

Sarah Peterson

June 29, 2020; *reviewed and updated January 2022*

Director, Valley Preschool