

Episcopal Diocese of NC
Children, Youth, and Schools COVID Guidelines
May 10, 2022

Please keep in mind that children under 5 are **NOT** able to be vaccinated. Please consider their health and safety when making your plans, especially when large groups will be gathered.

People who are not [up to date](#) on their COVID-19 vaccines and children under 5 years old who are not able to get a COVID-19 vaccine should continue taking [steps to prevent getting sick](#)

We recognize that the preschools, children's programs, and youth programs in our Diocese serve a wide variety of needs. Some programs may choose to adopt stricter safety procedures, especially those programs that offer supplemental or part-time care. The following guidelines are considered minimums and best practices to be used by all.

BEST PRACTICES

In view of the fact that vaccination is currently the leading public health prevention strategy against COVID-19, and that those under 5 years of age are not currently eligible to receive the vaccination, we consider the list below to be best practices that each and every program should use, regardless of the level of community spread of COVID-19 or any other respiratory illness.

- Participants, staff and all volunteers should monitor themselves and refrain from participating in in-person activities if they have any signs and/or symptoms of COVID-19, or may have had a possible exposure
- Children who show symptoms of COVID-19 during the school day should be isolated in a designated area with one staff member supervising; a parent/guardian must pick up the child ASAP. A secondary staff person should regularly check in to ensure Safe Church Policies are upheld.
- Check ventilation systems to ensure that air conditioning systems work, with clean filters.
- Install a 4-inch to 6-inch thick HEPA filter with a Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value (MERV) rating of 11 to 13 to improve air quality without impeding airflow through a non-HEPA system.
- Utilize outdoor spaces as much as possible.
- Use floor markers and other methods to encourage physical distancing in the classroom and shared spaces.
- Provide hand sanitizer throughout the building. Practice good hand hygiene, including frequent, careful hand washing/sanitizing. Have everyone wash their hands at the beginning of the school day or at the beginning of any program/event.
- All toys, surfaces, door handles and other surfaces that are frequently touched should be sanitized regularly
- [Refer to diocesan regathering plan for safety protocols for choirs and singing activities](#) (page 5).

- [Stay informed about COVID rates in your community, by quickly accessing your County's COVID-19 Community Level through the CDC](#)
- [Watch health indicators and take note when numbers begin to rise.](#)
- [Use helpful information on the NC DHHS Dashboard](#)
- [As recommended by the CDC, unvaccinated individuals should stay at least 6 feet away from other people](#), especially if they are at [higher risk of getting very sick](#) with COVID-19.

COVID-19 Community Level	Schools/Preschools	Congregational Children's Programming	Youth Ministry
Low	<p>MASKING Optional, but recommended for those who are unvaccinated</p> <p>HAND WASHING Encourage handwashing and the use of sanitizer</p> <p>COHORTS and VISITORS No restrictions on visitors</p> <p>DROP-OFF/PICK-UP Children and youth are allowed to interact without restriction No restrictions for drop-off and pick-up times</p> <p>CLEANING All toys, surfaces, door handles and other surfaces that are frequently touched should be sanitized regularly</p> <p>VACCINATION Encourage vaccination. It is currently the leading public health prevention strategy.</p>		
COVID-19 Community Level	Schools and Preschools	Congregational Children's Programming	Youth Ministry
Medium	<p>MASKING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strongly recommended indoors for all 2 years & older • Not required outdoors while physical distancing • Strongly recommended outdoors when in close proximity 	<p>MASKING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strongly recommended indoors for all 2 years & older • Not required outdoors while physical distancing • Strongly recommended outdoors when in close proximity 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider masks with clear panels or face shields for teachers during circle time <p>HAND WASHING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have everyone wash their hands at the beginning of the school day. • Encourage regular hand washing and sanitizer <p>COHORTS AND VISITORS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit interaction between classes • Limit shared materials • Limit guests, visitors, parents & others <p>DROP-OFF/PICK-UP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stagger drop-off/pick-up to ensure physical distancing • Include Community Covenants with daily home screening for COVID-19 & other infectious diseases <p>CLEANING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove toys and other items that are difficult to sanitize • Sensory toys are allowable, consider how often they are cleaned or switched out <p>ADDITIONAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open windows/doors if 	<p>HAND WASHING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have everyone wash their hands prior to beginning • Encourage regular hand washing and sanitizer <p>COHORTS AND VISITORS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit interaction between classes • Limit shared materials • Limit guests, visitors, parents & others <p>DROP-OFF/PICK-UP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stagger drop-off/pick-up to ensure physical distancing • Include Community Covenants with daily home screening for COVID-19 & other infectious diseases <p>CLEANING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sanitize spaces and high touch areas after each use • Remove toys and other items that are difficult to sanitize • Sensory toys are allowable, consider how often they are cleaned or switched out <p>ADDITIONAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open windows/doors if possible when not dangerous for children
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	<p>possible when not dangerous for children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food servers must wear a CFC and gloves <p>VACCINATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may choose to require proof of vaccination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food servers must wear a CFC and gloves • Event pre-registration is recommended when County transmission rates are categorized as Medium and High by the CDC. <p>VACCINATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may choose to require proof of vaccination
High	<p>MASKING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required indoors for all 2 years & older (regardless of vaccination status) • Strongly recommended outdoors during crowded gatherings & activities that involve sustained close contact <p>HAND WASHING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone must wash their hands at the beginning of the school day • Plan regular hand washing and sanitizer throughout the day <p>COHORTS AND VISITORS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain classroom cohorts with no interaction between groups • Keep a listing of all persons who participate with the group for contact tracing • No classroom access for guests, 	<p>MASKING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required indoors for all 2 years & older (regardless of vaccination status) • Required outdoors during crowded gatherings & activities that involve sustained close contact • Strongly recommended outdoors during play/physical exertion <p>HAND WASHING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone must wash their hands when dropped off or prior to beginning an activity • Allow for regular hand washing and sanitizer throughout the program or event <p>COHORTS AND VISITORS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain classroom cohorts with no interaction between groups • Keep a listing of all persons who participate with the group for contact tracing • No access for guests, visitors, parents & others • Indoor spaces should allow for physical distancing of 6 feet • Use of outdoor space is strongly recommended • It is strongly recommended that hybrid options be made available

	<p>visitors, parents & others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is strongly recommended that visitors are limited to prevent spread and outside infection <p>DROP-OFF/PICK-UP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools may choose to have a staff person conduct health screenings for each child before they enter • Stagger drop-off/pick-up to ensure physical distancing • Include Community Covenants with daily home screening for COVID-19 & other infectious diseases <p>CLEANING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All toys, surfaces, door handles, etc. must be frequently sanitized • All surfaces should be sanitized after use <p>ADDITIONAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor spaces should be utilized as frequently as possible • When food is served it must be handled by a minimum number of people who are masked and wear gloves • Children should be 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overnight events are prohibited <p>DROP-OFF/PICK-UP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may choose to have someone conduct health screenings for each child before they enter • Stagger drop-off/pick-up times or have children and youth enter through different entry points to ensure physical distancing • Ask families to do at-home screening for COVID-19 & other infectious diseases <p>CLEANING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All toys, surfaces, door handles, etc. must be frequently sanitized • All surfaces should be sanitized after use <p>ADDITIONAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor spaces should be utilized as frequently as possible • No food should be served • Event pre-registration is recommended when County transmission rates are categorized as Medium and High by the CDC.
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	<p>physically distanced while eating</p> <p>VACCINATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• You may choose to require proof of vaccination or ask employees to undergo weekly COVID testing• The PCR test is the standard• Weekly testing on Wed/Thurs is ideal• At home testing is not acceptable	<p>VACCINATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• You may choose to require proof of vaccination or ask employees to undergo weekly COVID testing• The PCR test is the standard• Weekly testing on Wed/Thurs is ideal• At home testing is not acceptable
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