



# GSEC Covid-19 Response Plan

The purpose of this GSEC COVID-19 response plan is to outline the risk mitigation strategies, policies, and procedures that GSEC will follow to attempt to reduce the exposure risks to COVID-19. Simply put, we cannot eliminate all the risks, but we can create as safe an operating environment as is physically possible given the new realities of COVID-19. This is an evolving plan that will change, as necessary.

## Staff Arrival Procedure

Staff is not allowed to come to work if they are ill. Before departing their home to come to work at GSEC, each staff member should assess their current health status using the screening questions outlined below.

- “Are you currently experiencing or have recently experienced any of the following symptoms?”
  - Fever or chills
  - Cough
  - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - Headache
  - New loss of taste or smell
  - Sore throat
  - Nausea or vomiting
  - Diarrhea
  - Overall, not feeling well
- If any answers are yes, then staff will need to immediately contact the Director to inform them that they are ill and they should not come into the center.
- Any staff member with a temperature of 100.4 or higher, or any other indication or symptom of illness, will be sent home.
- Staff have the option of wearing a face covering before entering the building and while they are in the building.

## Drop-off & Check-In Procedure

- Parents/Guardians are asked to arrive and be checked in by 8:30 am each day. Parents/Guardians will use their designated key fob to access the main building and the Education Center.

- Parents/Guardians are to take their child directly to their classroom. For families with more than one child attending care, please drop the youngest child off first and then the oldest.
- When arriving to the classroom, parents/guardians will knock on the door and wait for the teacher to answer the door. When the teacher answers the door, the child will go in the room. Parents are to immediately exit the building through the designated exit doors.
  - Two's parents/guardians will exit out the front/foyer doors.
  - Preschool & Pre-K parents/guardians will exit through the back door at the end of the hallway in the Education wing.
  - Parents/Guardians of children in both Two's and Preschool or Pre-K will exit through the back door at the end of the hallway in the Education wing.
- Parents/Guardians needing to drop-off after 9:30 am may call the center and staff member will assist you.
- Parents/Guardians are required to assess their child's current health status prior to arriving to care. The following questions should be used while assessing their child's current health status.
  - Is your child currently experiencing or has the child recently experienced any of the following symptoms?
    - Fever or chills
    - Cough
    - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
    - Headache
    - New loss of taste or smell
    - Sore throat
    - Nausea or vomiting
    - Diarrhea
    - Overall, not feeling well
  - If any answers are yes, then parents/guardians will need to immediately contact the Director to inform them that they are ill and they should not come to care.
- Parents/Guardians and children may choose to wear a mask or face covering to enter the building. Face-coverings are optional for staff, children, and parents/families.
- Each child shall take a hand sanitizing wipe and wash their hands before entering the center.

## **Children's Items and Storage of Items**

In the beginning of the school year, every child receives a GESC canvas tote bag. This bag is to be

used to transport children's belongings to and from the center. Every item, which is brought to the center, should be clearly labeled with the child's name. **All toys need to stay at home and will not be allowed in the center.** The following items should be brought to the center:

- Lunch or any other necessary food/drink.
- Diapers & wipes can come in their original packaging or in sealed plastic bags.
- Blankets should come in at the start of the week and will go home at the end of the week for cleaning.

All children will have a designated cubby in their classroom. Due to availability, some cubbies may need to be shared. When this happens, children's belongings will be separated by individual bins within the cubby. Each child will have their own hook, within the cubby, to hang their coat and GSEC tote.

## Pick-Up Procedures

- Parents/Guardians will use their designated key fob to access the main building and the Education Center.
- Parents/Guardians will go directly to their child's classroom. For families with more than one child attending care, please pick-up the youngest child first and then the oldest.
- When arriving to the classroom, parents/guardians will get their child's belongings (located on the outside wall of the classroom) and then knock on the door and wait for the teacher to answer the door. When the teacher answers the door, the teacher will get the child and bring them to the door. Parents are to immediately exit the building through the designated exit doors.
  - Two's parents/guardians will exit out the front/foyer doors.
  - Preschool & Pre-K parents/guardians will exit through the back door at the end of the hallway in the Education wing.
  - Parents/Guardians of children in both Two's and Preschool or Pre-K will exit through the back door at the end of the hallway in the Education wing.
- If a child is on the playground when the parents/guardians arrive, parents/guardians are to collect their child's belongings and then go to the playground to pick-up their child. Parents/Guardians shall walk out to the covered patio area of the playground and a teacher will bring their child to them.
- After the parents/guardians pick-up their child, they will exit the building immediately using the correct designated exit.

## Healthy Environment Precautions

- Cots are spaced out as much as possible and children are placed head to toe for naps.
- Parents are asked to provide a small washable laundry bag where their bedding can fit inside to store in the child's bin or cubby each day after use.
- Staff will disinfect high-touch surfaces, such as door handles, light switches, faucets, toilets seats and handles routinely with disinfectant wipes or bleach/water solution.
- HVAC has been cleaned and will be used as an enhancement to increase airflow.
- Every classroom has brand-new ceiling tiles that will be used to improve air circulation and provide healthier air to breath for every child and staff.
- Materials that cannot be washed, sanitized, or disinfected will not be used in the classrooms.
- Manipulatives are rotated to limit the number of manipulatives out at a time.
- Washable cushions and washable items will be used in soft areas. Items that cannot be wiped down or laundered will be prohibited.
- Only three children are allowed in a classroom center at a time.
- Classroom centers will be cleaned and disinfected on a weekly basis. Manipulatives that come in contact with bodily fluids will be cleaned immediately.
- A cleaning service will perform a thorough cleaning/sanitization at the end of each day of all center rooms and high-touch surfaces using an electrostatic sprayer.
- Teachers will use a bleach water or disinfectant solution, in addition to soap and water, to clean and disinfect toys throughout the day and at the end of the day.
- Staff will have access to hand sanitizer and disposable gloves. Staff will wear gloves while handling food, helping children with bathroom needs/diaper changes, while cleaning and disinfecting the room and items, and assisting children with bodily tasks (i.e., wiping noses, cleaning faces, cleaning any wounds).
- Staff will wash their hands and children's hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, particularly upon arrival, before and after eating, after diapering or using the toilet, after playing outdoors, and following any contact with bodily fluids.
- The wearing of masks/face-shields is optional for students and staff. Although mask wearing

is optional, parents will still have the choice if their child wears a mask or not. The staff at GSEC will make sure all parents' requests are honored.

- GSEC will continue to monitor the COVID-19 cases and the community level in Charles County. If at any time the levels are in the high range, masks will need to be worn by everyone who is inside the building. Notice will be given to all families if masks are required. The CDC recommends universal indoor masking during high community levels.
- Children who wear a face-shield or mask will remove it for eating, sleeping, and outside time (if the parent agrees to outside time).
- Children, who wear face coverings, must have their first names and initial of last name on them.
- All staff will wear gloves when diapering young children.
- In-person tours are available during the center's operational hours. Tours will be limited to classrooms with no students present, hallways, the playground, and common areas (Fellowship Hall, foyer).

## **Meal Preparation and Service Procedure**

- All surfaces are disinfected before meal preparation using EPA approved disinfectant products.
- All staff will wash their hands before and after meal preparation and feeding.
- Children do not share eating utensils.

## **Child Health Precautions**

- Parents will be encouraged to speak with their child's doctor about receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. The center highly recommends that all children receive the COVID-19 vaccination if recommended by their doctor.
- Staff has received education on COVID-19 symptoms as well as preventive measures to ward off the spread of COVID-19.
- Each child's belongings are separated and in individually labeled storage containers or are taken home each day to be cleaned.

- Adequate supplies are available to minimize sharing of high touch materials to the extent possible (artsupplies, equipment etc.) or are limited to use by one group of children at a time and cleaned and disinfected between uses.
- Children should not attend care if they are showing any signs or symptoms of illness or are not feeling well. Children are welcome to come to care if they are symptom free, without medication or medicine, for more than 24 hours.

## **Staff & Child Illness/Symptoms of COVID-19 Response Procedures**

- Staff, who experience the following symptoms, while in care, will need to go home.
  - Fever of 100.4 degrees or higher
  - Sore throat
  - Cough
  - Difficulty Breathing
  - Diarrhea
  - Vomiting
  - Headache
  - New loss of taste or smell
- Upon the onset of any of the above symptoms, the following procedures will occur:
  - The staff member will notify the Director immediately for her to secure coverage.
  - The staff member will leave the center and be advised by the Director to be evaluated by a doctor.
  - Please refer to the MDH/MSDE Guidance for COVID-19 Symptoms, Isolation, and Quarantine table for criterion of when to return to the center.
- Children, who experience the following symptoms, while in care, will need to be picked up from care.
  - Fever of 100.4 degrees or higher
  - Sore throat
  - Cough
  - Difficulty Breathing
  - Diarrhea
  - Vomiting
  - Headache
  - New loss of taste or smell
- Upon the onset of any of the above symptoms, the following procedures will occur:
  - The child is brought to the admin office by the Director or designated staff

member to isolate them from other children.

- The Director or designated staff member will notify the child’s emergency contact to pick up the child as soon as possible (within 2 hours).
  - Families must provide GSEC with the most up-to-date emergency contact information for their child(ren) and ensure at least 1 parent/guardian is always reasonably accessible and able to pick up the child(ren) in the event of illness.
- An illness report will be filled out by the Director or designated staff member. The report will be signed by parent, photocopied, and given to the parent. The parent keeps the original, along with the criterion to return to care (attached to illness report). The center keeps a copy for the child’s file.
- A child may return to care if the following criteria are met:

### MDH/MSDE Guidance for COVID-19 Symptoms, Isolation, and Quarantine

Staff or Student/Child with	Guidance for Management
COVID-19 symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Staff or student/child should not attend or work in a school or childcare setting</li> <li>● COVID-19 testing is recommended</li> <li>● If test is negative, may return when symptoms have improved, no fever for 24 hours without medication, and applicable criteria in the Communicable Diseases Summary have been met</li> </ul>
Positive test for COVID-19, regardless of symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Staff or student/child must stay home for 5 days from the start of symptoms or from the date of the positive test if no symptoms</li> <li>● After day 5, may return if symptoms have improved and no fever for at least 24 hours without medication</li> <li>● Upon return, must wear a mask for 5 additional days (except while eating, drinking, sleeping or outside)</li> <li>● If unable to wear a mask, may return if they have a negative test at day 5 or later; otherwise, they should remain at home for days 6 -10</li> </ul>
Close contact with someone with known or suspected COVID-19 but no symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Staff or student/child can continue to work in or attend school and childcare regardless of vaccination status</li> <li>● Those who can mask should do so for 10 days from the last day of exposure ● A test at 3-5 days after exposure is recommended, especially for those who cannot mask (ex. children under 2 years of age).</li> </ul>

- Staff and children awaiting test results are not allowed to return to care and should remain at home until results have been received. Staff and children will be re-admitted to the center when all test results are received with a negative result and the criterion to return to care has been met.

## **Staff and Children with a Positive COVID-19 Test Result (Isolation)**

All staff and children who test positive for COVID-19 will do the following:

- Contact the center administration to inform them of positive test result.
- Stay at home for 5 days from the date of the symptom onset, if symptomatic, or the date of the positive test, if asymptomatic.
  - Day 0 is considered the day symptoms started in symptomatic persons, or the day the person tested positive (based on the date of testing) if asymptomatic.
- After day 5 of quarantine, staff and children may return if they have been symptom free for more than 24 hours (without the help of any medication) AND must wear a well-fitting mask\* for an additional 5 days. KN95 masks are highly recommended when masks need to be worn.

\*Masks do not need to be worn in the center while staff and children are eating, drinking, sleeping, or outside.

## **Children and Staff in Classrooms with a Positive COVID-19 Test Result has Occurred**

- The Director will notify, via phone call and email, the students and staff that are in the classroom of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.
- Children and staff that have had close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 do not need to isolate or quarantine, regardless of vaccination status, if they stay asymptomatic.
  - A well-fitting mask will be worn by children and staff for 10 days (day 0 is last date of exposure). The center recommends KN95 masks to be worn; however, a well-fitting mask will be sufficient.
  - Children and staff will test on day 5. Rapid and home COVID-19 tests are acceptable testing options. If a PCR test is done, children or staff cannot return to the center until test results are received.



## Staff Health Precautions

- Staff will not come to work at the center if they are showing any signs or symptoms of illness. Staff will immediately notify the Director at the onset of signs or symptoms of illness.
- Staff will receive additional training and updates, as necessary.
- Staff will wash their hands immediately upon entering the program and just prior to leaving.

## Emergency Communication & Closure

- When GSEC is informed of a confirmed case of COVID-19, the Director will contact the local Health Department and notify the licensing specialist who will assist the program with any additional actions that may need to be taken.
- The Director and Admin will contact all families in the class indicating there is a positive case of COVID-19 in the classroom. The classroom will remain open and all staff and children, who are not positive for COVID-19, may continue to come to the center. Extra precautions will be implemented. Please refer to the *Children and Staff in Classrooms with a Positive COVID-19 Test Result has Occurred* section of these policies for more details.
- If it is determined by the local Health Department to close or suspend care, the following procedures will take place:
  - All children and their siblings in the program and staff, affected by a GSEC cohort/classroom closure will quarantine at home for 5 days (day 0 is the last day of exposure), regardless of vaccination status.
  - Children and staff will test on day 5. Rapid and home COVID-19 tests are acceptable testing options. If a PCR test is done, children or staff cannot return to the center until test results are received.
  - Children and staff may return to the center if a negative COVID-19 test result is received.
- The development of COVID-19 symptoms in the affected GSEC's children, parents, and staff will be monitored by the GSEC Director during quarantine as this may impact when the affected cohort/classroom can re-open and when a child or staff member may return to the program.
- The Director or Admin will contact the professional cleaning company about the affected classroom. The cleaning company will provide the additional disinfecting measures to thoroughly clean and disinfect the affected classroom.
- Prior to the children returning to the affected classroom, all materials (to include toys and furniture) will be thoroughly disinfected.

## Sources:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>
- Guidance to Support Safe In-Person Operations for PreK-12 Schools and Child Care Programs, as of 7/22/2022