



## **COVID-19 Pandemic Plan for In-Person Instruction**

**January 2022**

Ascension Lutheran Preschool & Church is committed to the physical, mental, social-emotional and spiritual health and safety of our students, their families, and our staff. We are also committed to a successful school year.

### **Plan and Protocol Development**

We use several sources as we design our health and safety protocols. The CDC, the California Department of Health, the Department of Social Services, and the California Department of Education all put forth guidelines for childcare centers. We also consider advice from the American Academy of Pediatrics and our own Lutheran Schools-Pacific Southwest District. Finally, the L.A. County Health Department also has health orders and requirements. Ascension's plan is in compliance with these orders. In addition to the health and safety of our students, families and staff, our organization is also committed to a financially sound plan that includes advice from our insurance and legal advisors. Please note that all plans and protocols are subject to change as circumstances change.

### **Checklist for Physical Opening:**

- Local public health has classified Childcare as essential
- Adequate and ongoing supply of PPE and medical equipment for staff and students:
  - Face masks

- Gloves
- Touchless thermometers
- Adequate and ongoing sanitation/ventilation supplies
  - Sanitizer
  - Sinks, paper towels and soap
  - Disinfectant wipes
  - Rubbing alcohol
  - Bleach
  - Disinfectant spray
  - Air purifiers and/or fans for ventilation
- Plans/Protocols for health and safety of students/staff
  - These plans/protocols are based on information available at the time of writing and will likely be modified as we learn more about COVID-19, its mitigation and effects on children, and as state and county mandates change.

### **Arrival and departure of students:**

- We realize that some students are dropped off/picked up by grandparents, siblings, carpools, etc., therefore “parents” in the protocol below refers to whichever adult is in charge of the child for drop off/pick up.
- Parents will monitor students for signs of illness before bringing them to school in the morning. Students who show signs of COVID-19 illness should not come to school and should:
  - Seek advice from medical provider whether to take a COVID-19 test AND
  - Stay home and isolate using CDC guidelines: until receiving a negative test response AND 24 hours after symptoms resolve

OR

  - Stay home and isolate using CDC guidelines until:
    - 10 days since symptoms first appeared AND
    - Fever-free without medication for 24 hours AND
    - Symptoms have significantly improved

*\*If tested and a positive COVID-19 result is received please follow Public Health Officer orders and notify the center.*

## **Pre-drop-off**

Parents should apply masks and sunscreen to their child. All children are required to bring a mask daily, and wear the mask on campus.

**\*Students should wear upgraded masks which at minimum are well-fitting, non-cloth mask of multiple layers of non-woven material with a nose wire.**

## **Drop-off**

Drop-off is between 7:00 AM and 9:00 AM

- Parents will sign their child in, and wait **outside** the classroom door for a teacher. The teacher will conduct a “Wellness Check” which includes taking the students temperature, a visual check and a series of questions for the parent and child.

- If the answer is “YES” to any of the following questions the child will not be admitted to school and asked to follow CDC Guidelines regarding COVID-19.

### ■ Wellness Questions:

1. Within the past 24 hours have you, your child, or anyone in your household had COVID-19 symptoms or been exposed or in close contact to anyone with COVID-19 symptoms or a COVID-19 positive test?

*\* Close contact is defined by CDC as someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated. The World Health Organization (WHO) additionally includes persons with direct physical contact with a probable or confirmed case, direct care for a patient with probable or confirmed COVID-19 disease without using proper personal protective equipment, and other situations as indicated by local risk assessments.”*

2. Have you, your child, or anyone in your home had signs/symptoms of COVID-19 (full list below).

**\*If you arrive after 9:00 AM please check in with the office before going to your child’s classroom.**

- Once a student has been admitted to the classroom the student will place personal belongings in their cubby and wash or sanitize their hands before beginning their day.

## **Pick up**

Pick up is between 3:15 PM and 5:30 PM.

- Parents must sign children out

- If a parent needs to pick up earlier, he/she MUST tell the child's teacher the time of pick up in advance.

- If a parent arrives after 5:30 PM a late fee will be charged.

*\*Please note that this is a TEMPORARY plan and may require some adjustment. We realize that these procedures may add to time to your typical routines and we thank you in advance for your patience and cooperation.*

### **Daily and Ongoing Screening of Staff and Students:**

- Staff members and students will stay home if they show any symptoms of COVID19.
- Staff members will answer daily health questions, (including questions regarding cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, fever/chills and close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID19) and will check and report their temperature upon arrival. Staff members with temperatures higher than 99.9 will not be permitted to work.
- Staff members will take student temperatures and students with temperatures higher than 99.9 will not be admitted or sent home.
- Staff members and students who develop signs of illness during the school day will be isolated and asked to seek medical care and/or go home.

### **Staff/students who become sick or are exposed to COVID-19**

- Signs/symptoms of COVID19 (as defined by the CDC) include:
  - Headache
  - Fever or chills
  - New Cough
  - Congestion and/or runny nose
  - Nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea Congestion and/or runny nose
  - Muscle or body aches
  - Fatigue
  - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - New loss of taste or smell
- Students or staff members who demonstrate symptoms of illness while on campus will:

- Put on a surgical-grade face mask immediately (provided by the school)
- Be escorted to the isolation room where they will remain and be monitored until they can be transported home or to a healthcare facility.
- If signs/symptoms are severe, the school will:
  - Call 9-1-1 immediately, then
  - Notify family members
- Students and staff members who have been sent home or to a healthcare facility due to illness or who develop signs of illness at home must:
  - Seek advice from Medical Provider for further evaluation and possible COVID-19 testing
  - AND
  - Stay home per Medical Provider guidance or test negative using an FDA authorized test, and fever free without fever reducing medication for 24 hours and symptoms have improved.
  - OR
  - Tested Positive stay home and isolate until:
    - 10 days since symptoms first appeared AND
    - Fever-free without medication for 24 hours AND
    - Symptoms have significantly improved
- Students and staff members who test positive for COVID-19:
  - Must follow Home Isolation Instructions for COVID-19
  - Must alert the Preschool Office immediately: 310-214-3905 or 310-371-3531 or [preschool@ascensiontorrance.org](mailto:preschool@ascensiontorrance.org) or [schooloffice@ascensiontorrance.org](mailto:schooloffice@ascensiontorrance.org)
  - Should expect a follow-up call from the Health Department Case and Contact Investigation Program
  - May return to school/work
    - 10 days from symptom onset or negative test result (unless symptoms continue) AND
    - Fever-free without medication for 24 hours AND

- Symptoms have significantly improved.
- May seek advice from Medical Provider about the need for a second COVID-19 test
- If a student or staff member tests positive for COVID19, the school will:
  - Maintain staff/student confidentiality
  - Report the illness to the Los Angeles Public Health Department and the Department of Social Services and follow the department's guidance for next steps including but not limited to:
    - Asking the person affected to identify all individuals (students, teachers, families and other staff) who have been in close contact with the person for two days prior to the onset of symptoms to the present.
  - Report the illness (and subsequent negative test results, if applicable) to all Ascension families while maintaining confidentiality.
  - Contact staff and students in close contact with the individual regarding next steps utilizing the COVID-19 Template Notification Letter
  - Quarantine all close contacts for 10 days
  - Enforce anti-harassment and discrimination policies
  - Temporarily close rooms used by the individual with COVID-19 for disinfection
  - Advise staff members regarding sick leave, telework, disability, family leave options
- If there are two confirmed cases of COVID-19 on campus (students or staff) during a 14-day period, the school will assess whether the two cases have epidemiological links.
  - If no links exist, the school will continue with routine COVID-19 monitoring
  - If links do exist, the school will reinforce messages with students and staff about precautionary measures to prevent spread.
- If there are three or more COVID-19 cases during a 14-day period, the school will:
  - Determine if cases have epidemiological links.
  - Report the cluster to the Health Department within one business day
  - Complete the required reports for cases and contacts
  - Follow the Health Department's guidance for next steps.

*\*Students who have seasonal allergies will need to provide a doctor's note documenting the allergy and its accompanying symptoms.*

## **School Closure**

School Closures are determined by the risk to students, staff and families.

School closures due to exposures to students, staff and families will be evaluated and made collectively by the Preschool, Board of School Administration and the Church.

School closures due to COVID-19 cases are determined by the local health officer based on the number of cases and percentage of teacher/students/staff that have tested positive for COVID19.

## **Close contact with a person who tests positive for COVID19**

- “Close contact is defined by CDC as someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated. The World Health Organization (WHO) additionally includes persons with direct physical contact with a probable or confirmed case, direct care for a patient with probable or confirmed COVID-19 disease without using proper personal protective equipment, and other situations as indicated by local risk assessments.” In the home setting, this will include those living together in a home. In the school setting, this will likely mean a student’s classmates and teacher, but could include others.
- Students and staff members who have been in close contact with a person who tests positive must:
  - Stay home and quarantine for at least 5 FULL days, and even if symptoms do not develop get tested at least after 5 FULL days after you has close contact with someone with COVID-19
  - If the test result after 5 FULL days is negative, AND no symptoms are present quarantine may end and normal activities may resume on day 6. As long as a medical grade mask is worn at and watch for symptoms until 10 days after you last had contact with someone with COVID-19.
  - Expect a follow-up call from the Health Department Case and Contact Investigation Program.

*\*Note: Due to common cold & flu symptoms being so closely aligned with the Omicron variant of COVID-19 if a member of the household shows these symptoms the student must stay home for a minimum of 3-5 days, a negative COVID-19 test on day 3 and day 5 may be required to return to school. Any absence in excess of 3 days will require a doctor's note to return, or a negative COVID-19 test on day 5, or being out of school for 10 days & return on day 11 as long as no symptoms are present.*

## **Promoting healthy hygiene practices**

- All classroom sinks and staff/student restrooms will be equipped with soap and paper towels as well as trashcans.
- All classrooms, restrooms, offices and lunch areas will be equipped with hand sanitizer
- The school will instruct students and staff on proper handwashing protocols
- All staff and students will wash or sanitize their hands:
  - Upon arrival to the campus
  - After playing outside
  - After using a shared surface
  - Before and after using the restroom
  - After blowing nose, coughing or sneezing
  - Before and after eating
- All staff and students will use tissue to cover toilet handles for flushing

## **Intensified cleaning and disinfection**

- The following surfaces will be disinfected between shared uses and sanitized daily after hours with EPA approved protocols:
  - Desks or tables
  - Countertops
  - Chairs
  - Door handles
  - Restroom surfaces
  - Light switches
  - Classroom phones
  - Keyboards
  - Copy machines
- In the event of a reported case of COVID-19 on campus:
  - The room will be closed for 24 hours before cleaning



- All windows and doors will be opened for ventilation during the 24-hour period
- Physical distancing of staff and students
- In the classroom:
  - Student desks will be spaced 3-6 feet apart from each other and the teacher.
  - Extra furniture and tables will be removed from the classroom to allow as much physical distancing as feasible.
- Outdoors:
  - Teachers will utilize outdoor space for learning when it is practical to do so
  - Playground activities will be modified to promote physical distancing
  - Students will eat lunch physically-distanced outside with their class.
- Large group gatherings (chapel, assemblies) will be held outside and/or divided into smaller groups to promote physical distancing

## Face coverings

As of January 11, 2022 face masks are required (with some exceptions for those with breathing problems and children under 2) in Los Angeles County. The Los Angeles Department of Health has also released face mask requirements for in-person Early Childhood Education (Childcare). We acknowledge that face mask requirements can rob students of the normalized school experience they need for their mental and social health, and that it may be difficult for children and staff to wear face masks all day, especially outside or while physically active. Balancing all these realities will be our challenge to navigate together. Thus, our plan at this point is:

- School faculty and staff will wear surgical-grade face masks that comply with CDC guidelines while in the presence of students and/or staff members. In some cases, teachers may use face shields with tucked-in bottom drapes, especially when it is important for students to see teacher faces (i.e., when teaching phonological concepts., etc.) The school will provide face masks, but staff members may also provide their own. Staff members will replace their face coverings daily.
- All students should plan to bring two clean face masks with them each day. The school will also provide masks if students forget theirs at home.

***\*It is strongly recommended that students wear upgraded masks which at a minimum are well-fitting, non-cloth mask of multiple layers of non-woven material with a nose wire.***

o Students will wear face masks when inside. Students will not be required to wear face masks when learning/playing physically-distanced outside, when eating or when napping.

*\*Face masks are required for both indoor and crowded outdoor settings.*

o When a face mask is temporarily removed, it will be placed in child's personal cubby, lunch bag, desk, or individual bag

o Students who have breathing difficulties such as asthma may be excused from face covering requirements with written permission from doctor.

- Students and staff should follow CDC and Public Health guidelines for safe mask wearing

### **Hydration, snacks and lunches**

- Students should bring a refillable water bottle each day. Drinking fountains are closed.
- Students should bring snacks and lunches in a lunch container as usual.
- Students should not handle each other's lunch containers.
- Students may not share snacks or lunches.
- Students will eat physically-distanced from others outside with their classmates.
- If students forget their lunches, we will provide them with emergency lunches. To minimize unnecessary contact and traffic on campus, we will not call parents to bring forgotten lunches.

### **Ventilation of classrooms**

- Classrooms are equipped with HEPA Air Filters.

*(Note: HEPA filters do not eliminate COVID19, but filtering the air may help minimize spread.)*

- Classroom doors and windows will be left open when it is practical to do so.
- Classroom doors and windows will be open to ventilate the room when students are not present in the classroom

### **Use of outdoor spaces for learning and play**

- Ascension is blessed to be in Southern California and to have outdoor space to utilize for an "outdoor classroom." Teachers will utilize these outdoor spaces for instruction as much as practicable, in ways that do not interfere with students' learning.
- Classes will alternate play areas. Students will sanitize their hands before entering the playground equipment area. The playground will be sanitized each evening.

- Bleach water stations will be available on the rest of the playground for staff to sanitize outdoor toys

## **Visitors and Volunteers**

- Visitors to campus must be free from COVID-19 symptoms and wear a mask (ages 2 and up) at all times. If visitors do not have a mask, Ascension will provide one.
- Visitors should enter the school office for check-in.
- Visitors should sanitize their hands upon entering the school office.
- Visitors should fill out a questionnaire form and include name, phone number and email address.
- To minimize exposure during this unusual COVID-19 season, volunteers will be limited, and must meet CDC and Public Health Guidelines.
- Church or parent volunteers (gardening, etc.) will, remain physically distant from students and wear a surgical grade mask.

## **Final thoughts**

- Continuing in person learning involves moving forward in faith and acknowledging that there is some risk as soon as we leave the safety of our homes. No place of business, worship or education can guarantee 100% protection from COVID-19. But we can all do our part to minimize those risks and the spread of the disease.
- The Ascension Lutheran Preschool staff will do its best to keep kids safe at school, but we also know that kids are kids: masks are going to get dirty or fall off, kids are going to forget personal space “bubbles,” and some kids will wash their hands for less than the recommended 20 seconds. In fact, we are sure you have seen some of these same behaviors in your own home. Our goal is to promote and encourage the best and safest behavior possible in the school setting.
- The pandemic is a season and while life may never return to what it once was, we will get through this season together. Treat each other with patience, love and compassion.
- Face masks appear to be among the most divisive issues of this pandemic. We recognize that there are passionate opinions on both sides. Our goal is to obey the law as well as do what’s best for students and staff in light of the science of COVID-19 AND developmentally-appropriate best practices for children. We also believe face masks (and physical distancing) can represent an opportunity to put feet on our faith and “love our neighbors.”
- You can help your child ease into these new protocols and procedures by presenting them in a positive light and giving your child a chance to talk through and practice them.

● Unfortunately, during this pandemic season getting sick with even a simple cold is going to be very disruptive to your schedule and your child's education. You can help prevent this disruption by:

- Maintaining good sanitation and hygiene practices in your home
- Limiting your family's contact with others
- Avoiding travel to areas with high infection rates
- Wearing a mask and practicing physical distancing in public
- Getting a flu shot, and vaccinated when eligible

● Finally, and most importantly, a reminder from God's Word:

*"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble."*

*Psalm 46:1*

# Ascension Lutheran Preschool Financial Responsibility Agreement

	Possible Reasons for Preschool Shutdown	Financial Responsibility of Preschool Families	What Ascension Preschool will Provide for Students During Shutdown
1	Government mandated shelter-in-place (Up to 30 days- first instance)	Tuition will be collected in full during first 30-day shelter-in-place.	Teachers will provide weekly lesson plans with home activities through email and Zoom classes.
2	Government mandated extended shelter-in-place (up to 30 additional days- second instance)	Tuition will be 25% less during a second 30-day shelter-in-place	Teachers will provide weekly lesson plans with home activities through email and Zoom classes.
3	Government mandated extended shelter-in-place (up to 30 additional days- third instance)	Tuition will be 50% less during a third shelter-in-place	Teachers will provide weekly lesson plans with home activities through email and Zoom classes.
4	10 day shut down due to positive COVID-19 case in staff or student (one class or entire school- First instance)	Tuition will be collected in full during first 10-day shutdown for individual class affected or entire school.	Teachers will provide weekly lesson plans with home activities through email and Zoom classes.
5	10 day shut down due to positive COVID-19 case in staff or student (one class or entire school- second instance)	A 25% discount will be given to the second 10-day shutdown for individual class affected or entire school.	Teachers will provide weekly lesson plans with home activities through email and Zoom classes.
6	10 day shut down due to positive COVID-19 case in staff or student (one class or entire school- third instance)	A 50% discount will be given to the third 10-day shutdown for individual class affected or entire school.	Teachers will provide weekly lesson plans with home activities through email and Zoom classes.
7	Individual child required to quarantine due to child/family/household member exhibiting symptoms or testing positive for COVID-19	Tuition will be collected in full during quarantine for individual child affected.	Online lessons will not be provided for individual children in quarantine. The teacher's lesson plans will be shared with the family.
8	Individual child required to quarantine due to family travel	Tuition will be collected in full during quarantine for individual child due to family travel.	Online lessons will not be provided for individual children in quarantine. The teacher's lesson plans will be shared with the family.

*\*The table above is guidance due to the changing circumstances we live in. Each case is a unique situation that must be evaluated before a determination is made. We do not want COVID-19 to impact any family financially, and will evaluate each family's financial need. If your family is experiencing hardship due to COVID-19 please notify the preschool office.*

\*Withdrawal Policy: If at any time you want to withdraw your student from Ascension Lutheran Preschool a 30-day written notice of withdrawal is requested, and **a two-week notice is required**. Tuition is due in full if two-week notice is not provided.

\*Extended leaves (30 days or longer) are required to pay a \$100 per 30 day holding fee.

\*To serve our families, we will consider financial hardships due to COVID-19 on a case-by-case basis.