



## COVID 19 PANDEMIC PLAN

In response to COVID-19, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Texas Education Agency (TEA), and Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHS) provided specific Guidance to Childcare Facilities. St. John Early Childhood Center (SJECC) will operate based on best practices that are consistent with new requirements in accordance with state law, state disaster declaration, and federal guidance.

### BUILDING ACCESS

- Any person, except the following, are prohibited from accessing SJECC: staff, persons with legal authority to enter, including law enforcement officers, HHSC Child Care Licensing staff, and Department of Family and Protective Services staff; professionals providing services to children; children enrolled at the operation.
- Pickup and drop-off of children is required to take place outside of the operation, unless it is determined that there is a legitimate need for the parent to enter an operation.
- Before allowing entry into the building, all individuals listed above will be screened which includes taking the temperature of each person upon arrival at SJECC each day and participating in answering the questions below. Social distancing will be applied while screening. Persons will be denied entry who meet any of the following criteria.
  - Any of the following new or worsening signs or symptoms of possible COVID-19:
    - Feeling feverish or a measured temperature great than or equal to 100.0 degrees F
    - Cough
    - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
    - Chills
    - Shaking or exaggerated shivering
    - Muscle Pain or body aches
    - Fatigue
    - Headache
    - Sore throat
    - Loss of taste or smell
    - Congestion or runny nose
    - Nausea or vomiting
    - Diarrhea
  - In the previous 14 days has had contact with someone with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, under investigation for COVID-19, or is ill with a respiratory illness.
    - Close contact is defined as:
      - Being directly exposed to infectious secretions (e.g., being coughed on); or
      - Being within 6 feet for a cumulative duration of 15 minutes; however, additional factors like case/contact masking (i.e., both the infectious individual and the potential close contact have been consistently and properly masked), ventilation, presence of dividers, and case symptomology may affect this determination.

- Either (a) or (b) defines close contact if it occurred during the infectious period of the case, defined as two days prior to symptom onset to 10 days after symptom onset. In the case of asymptomatic individuals who are lab-confirmed with COVID-19, the infectious period is defined as two days prior to the confirming lab test and continuing for 10 days following the confirming lab test.
- In the previous 14 days has travelled internationally to countries with widespread, sustained community transmission.
- In the previous 14 days has travelled domestically to any area recognized and proclaimed as a national COVID-19 “hot spot” by governing authorities, as these areas require a 14-day self-quarantine when entering Texas.

## **SOCIAL DISTANCING**

- Staff will comply with social distancing standards as they wait to be screened for entry into the school building, while taking restroom breaks, while gathering supplies from the workroom and while using the appliances in the workroom to prepare their lunch.
- Staff will comply with social distancing standards and wear a mask, or a face shield, covering the nose and mouth, at all times while on the St. John campus, with the exception of eating lunch. *Exceptions to wearing a mask or face shield at all times may be deemed necessary in our 18 months and 2s classrooms, in order for staff to communicate with young students that have a limited vocabulary.*
  - Staff assisting with drop-off and pick-up will also wear gloves and sanitize gloves between family units.
- Children are not required to wear masks, as this is not age appropriate.
- Staff will not enter classrooms to which they are not assigned, but rather stay at the doorway to communicate with the classroom teacher and/or teaching assistant.
- To minimize risk for students, SJECC will:
  - Keep each group of children in a separate room during the school day.
  - Limit the mixing of children, such as staggering playground times.
  - Limit special activities – Music & Motor Skills, Art, Library, Spanish, Special Interest Teaching classes, etc. – depending on the severity of the outbreak. The instruction for these classes may be taught through a Zoom meeting in each classroom.
  - Ensure that children’s naptime mats are spaced out as much as possible, ideally 6 feet apart. Place children head to toe, in order to further reduce the potential for viral spread.
  - Minimize the number of children that will be grouped together in our Morning and Afternoon Stay ‘N’ Play classes.
  - Guidelines specify that during the pandemic crisis, after-school programs be suspended. (Precious Dancers, Soccer Tots, Li’l Sluggers, Reading Genesis, etc.)

## **STUDENT PRACTICES**

- **All** belongings being transported to and from school – mat cover, lunch box, water bottle, extra clothes, classroom folder – **MUST** be placed in a zipped backpack for drop-off and pick-up. If the lunch box snaps to the outside of the backpack, it may be carried in that way, as long as it remains a single unit.
- Children will be kept in small groups throughout the day.
- Classes will be kept separate throughout the school day, and we will minimize combining Stay “N” Play classes in the morning and afternoon. No large group activities under any circumstances.
- Staff will maintain the same students in each class from day to day.

- Students will not share classroom items – paper, crayons, markers, etc.
- Staff will minimize the use of water tables and sensory tables.
- Staff will minimize students standing in lines, keeping children socially distanced.
- Staff will plan activities that do not require close physical contact between multiple children.
- Student seat spacing will be maximized as much as possible during table work.
- Students will continue to eat individual meals and snacks provided by their family during the school day.
- Students in our Stay 'N' Play programs will be offered an individual snack provided by the school.
- Students may not bring outside food to be shared with friends.
- Class outdoor times will be staggered to limit interaction between classrooms.

## **HYGIENE AND CLEANING PRACTICES**

- All children and staff should engage in hand hygiene at the following times:
  - Arrival to the facility and after breaks.
  - Immediately following any interaction or after using classroom toys and play stations.
  - Before and after assisting children with handwashing.
  - Before and after eating or handling food or helping children with their lunch/snack items.
  - Before and after administering medication or medical ointment.
  - Before and after diapering.
  - After using the toilet or helping a child use the bathroom.
  - After having contact with bodily fluid.
  - After playing outdoors.
  - After handling garbage.
- Hands will be washed with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Children over 2 years old and staff may use hand sanitizer if hands are not visibly dirty when soap and water is not available – on the playground, before entering the building, or after time spent in shared spaces without running water.
  - Hand sanitizer stations are available at drop-off/pick-up stations and encouraged to be used by all staff and students during drop-off.
  - Staff will supervise children when they use hand sanitizer to prevent ingestion.
  - Hand sanitizer stations will not be used in any classroom.
- Students and staff will avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Children and adults will cough and sneeze into a tissue, then throw it into a trash receptacle immediately, or cough and sneeze into their upper shirt sleeve at the inner elbow, completely covering the mouth and nose.
  - All persons will wash their hands after coughing, sneezing, or blowing their nose.
- Staff will clean classrooms with a disinfectant three times a day – upon arrival, mid-day, and upon leaving. Toys, doorknobs, tables, chairs, electronic keyboards, cabinets, and shelves are some of the items included in this procedure. Disinfectants will be allowed to air dry.
- Every evening after closing, staff will disinfect common areas and frequently touched surfaces used by staff in the school – workroom, library, SonShine Room, doorknobs, light switches, etc.
- SJECC will use products that are recommended by the CDC as effective against COVID-19.
- Staff will be careful not to expose children in the near vicinity to cleaning and disinfecting materials, especially during the mid-day cleaning.
- Toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized will not be used.

- Toys that children have placed in their mouths or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretions or excretions will be set aside until they are cleaned by a staff member by hand while wearing gloves. Toys will be cleaned with water and detergent, rinsed, sanitized, and air-dried.
- Machine washable cloth toys will be used by one individual at a time or will not be used at all. These toys will be laundered before being used by another child.
- Staff will ensure that toys will not be shared with other groups of infants or toddlers, unless they are washed and sanitized before being moved from one group to the other.
- Children's books, like other paper-based materials such as mail or envelopes, are not considered a high risk for transmission and do not need additional cleaning or disinfecting procedures.
- Staff will place all bedding in a child's backpack at the end of the day. Please launder these items every evening before returning them in the child's backpack the following day.

## **CARING FOR CHILDREN**

- Diapering
  - When diapering a child, staff will wash their hands and the child's hands before they begin.
  - SJECC staff will follow the CDC and Texas Department of HHSC safe diaper changing procedures. Steps include:
    - Prepare (includes putting on gloves)
    - Clean the child
    - Remove trash (soiled diapers and wipes)
    - Replace diaper
    - Wash child's hands
    - Clean up diapering station
    - Wash own hands
  - After diapering, staff will wash their hands and the child's hands, wash the diapering area with soap and water, and then sanitize the diapering area with an approved sanitizer.
  - If reusable cloth diapers are used, they will not be rinsed or cleaned in the facility. The soiled cloth diaper and its contents (without emptying or rinsing) should be placed in a plastic bag or into a plastic-lined, hands-free covered diaper pail to give to parents/guardians.

## **WASHING, FEEDING, OR HOLDING A CHILD**

- It is important to comfort crying, sad, and/or anxious toddlers, and they often need to be held. To the extent possible, when washing, helping to feed, or holding very young children:
  - Staff can protect themselves by wearing long hair up off the collar in a ponytail or other updo.
  - Staff will wash their hands, neck, and anywhere touched by a child's secretions.
  - Staff will change the child's clothes if secretions are on the child's clothes. It is recommended that all children have at least one change of clothes to be sent to school in a labeled Ziploc bag which will be kept in the classroom, and younger children should have multiple changes of clothes.
  - It is recommended that staff have a change of clothes on hand in the childcare center. SJECC will provide a clean school shirt to staff if they need to change their shirt because there are secretions on it and they don't have an extra change of clothes with them, and staff will wash their hands again.
  - Contaminated clothes will be placed in a plastic bag and sent home to be washed.

## STAFF PRACTICES

- All staff will undergo background and preservice training, including special training hours on COVID-19, as mandated by the CDC.
- Staff will participate in daily screening procedures and will comply with building access and illness procedures.
- Staff who exhibit COVID-19 symptoms outside of the workday will stay at home. Staff who become symptomatic while at work, will be removed immediately from the area/classroom and sent home.
- Returning to work will require a doctor's note clearing them to return, and **24 hours** of being symptom free. Continued symptoms will result in testing for COVID-19, and negative test results or clearance from the doctor before they will be allowed to return to work.
- SJECC will monitor the absenteeism of staff.
- SJECC will provide staff members to assist in covering classrooms in the event of staff illness.

## SCHOOL/CLASSROOM/ADMINISTRATIVE CLOSURES

- SJECC anticipates there will be occasions when the Health Department recommends the closure of a classroom(s), or the entire school. Upon any positive test result of any staff, parent, or child, we must follow the recommendations of the local Health Department, in conjunction with the Texas Department of Health and Human Services.
  - SJECC will notify parents as soon as a recommendation is made by the local Health Department and the TDHHS. *We cannot give you complete and accurate information until these departments respond to us, so please be patient as wait times are high.*
  - SJECC will NOT reveal names of positive COVID-19 test patients in accordance with the Health Insurance Privacy and Portability Act (HIPPA) and with the Federal Education Regulatory Privacy Act (FERPA), but SJECC administrators will notify families at the facility of the situation and the facility's response, as well as communicating any updates regularly with parents.
  - Families with children or staff that risk direct exposure with someone who is COVID-19 positive, will be notified by phone.
- Administrative Closure – in the event that due to COVID-19 or other external factors we are not able to care properly for a classroom or classrooms in a safe and professional manner, we will notify families of the affected classroom/school closure promptly.
- ***St. John ECC will remain open during local school district closures due to COVID-19, as SJECC is considered an essential business. Exceptions to this policy would come about if SJECC is ordered to be closed by state officials or the Texas Department of Health and Human Services.***
- SJECC recommends you have a plan for alternate childcare in the event of a school or classroom closure.

## REFUNDS – PANDEMIC POLICY

- Registration Fees are non-refundable. As soon as the registration process is complete, SJECC uses the monies collected to:
  - purchase the supplies necessary for our staff to provide your child a meaningful experience in the classroom.
  - Prepare/maintain our facilities – inside and outside – to ensure the children have a clean, safe, and engaging environment for learning.
  - pay staff members' salaries for setting up accounts, completing paperwork required by state licensing, providing copies for each child's folder, staff training hours required by state licensing, and the like.
- Tuition
  - Should SJECC need to close for Pandemic reasons, for less than two weeks during the month, full tuition will be due. By doing this, we will be able to continue to pay our staff to insure we maintain a highly qualified staff. If the center is closed two weeks or longer, 50% of tuition will be due.
  - Parents may give written notice to withdraw from the program if they feel it is in the best interest of their family. A Withdrawal fee of 50% of the tuition will be due upon notice. When you choose to withdraw from the program, there are no guarantees for available spaces in the program, should you choose to re-enroll.
  - Absentee credit – If your child is absent for three consecutive days due to a COVID-19 illness of the child, or of a person who lives in the same household, or of a classroom closure, you may request an absent credit equal to one half tuition for the days absent. **Parents must request an absent credit in writing by email to the director, Tiffany Bunker at [tbunker@stjohn.tv](mailto:tbunker@stjohn.tv). Absent credits are not automatically given when the child is absent.** Absentee credits are not valid in cases when the entire school is closed due to COVID-19 circumstances. (see first bullet point under "Refunds – Tuition".)
  - Tuition refunds are considered on a case by case basis and must be approved by St. John.

## ACTIONS TO CONSIDER FOR AN ASYMPTOMATIC CHILD, STAFF, OR PARENT WHO HAS HAD CONTACT WITH A POSSIBLE COVID-19 PATIENT.

- If staff members or parents believe that they or their child had close contact with someone confirmed to have the COVID-19 virus, they will self-quarantine and monitor their health and the child's health for any of the symptoms *after the last day there were in close contact* with the patient for the time periods specified below:
  - If the person was not tested and has reported no symptoms, quarantine may end after 10 days.
  - If the person has reported no symptoms and has a negative test result, quarantine may end after 7 days.

## ACTIONS TO TAKE IF A CHILD, STAFF, OR PARENT TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19 BUT DO NOT HAVE ANY SYMPTOMS

- **Isolation** may be discontinued when at least 10 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test and they have had no subsequent illness.

- For 3 days following discontinuation of isolation, these persons should continue to limit contact (stay 6' away from others) and limit potential of dispersal of respiratory secretions by wearing a covering for their nose and mouth whenever that are in setting where others are present.
- Continue to monitor health for any symptoms to complete the 14-day quarantine. Contact your doctor for further instructions.

### **ACTIONS TO CONSIDER IF A CHILD, STAFF, OR PARENT HAS SIMILAR SYMPTOMS, DEVELOPS OR TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID-19**

If a child or staff member develops symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough, shortness of breath, etc.) while at SJECC:

- Immediately separate the individual from all others until the ill individual can leave the facility.
  - Individual will be moved to an isolation area immediately.
  - Administration must advise the employee or the child's parent or caregiver to inform the facility immediately if the individual is diagnosed with COVID-19.
  - SJECC will utilize the CDC guidance on how to disinfect the building or facility if someone is sick.
  - The isolation area in the facility will be cleaned and disinfected after the child or employee has gone home.
- If SJECC experiences a confirmed case of COVID-19 among our students or staff, SJECC will follow the advice of the local health officials.
  - SJECC will...
    - Close off areas used by the person who is sick.
    - Open outside doors to increase air circulation in the areas.
    - Wait up to 24 hours, or as long as possible, before cleaning or disinfecting to allow respiratory droplets to settle before cleaning and disinfecting.
    - Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person who is sick, such as bathrooms, offices, and common areas.
  - If more than seven days have passed since the person who is sick visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection are not necessary.
  - Continue routine cleaning and disinfection.
  - Symptom-free children and staff should not attend or work at another facility, as this would potentially expose others.
  - SJECC will continue to monitor for ill individuals.
- For any of these circumstances, SJECC administrators will notify parents of other children at the facility of the situation and the facility's response, as well as communicating any updates regularly with parents.
- The individual must not enter the facility for at least seven days after the onset of the first symptoms.

### **RETURNING TO A CHILD CARE FACILITY AFTER COVID-19 OR SIMILAR SYMPTOMS**

If individuals had COVID-19 symptoms and were under isolation, the individual may return under the following conditions:

- At least one day (**24 hours**) have passed *since recovery* defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications; **and**
- Improvement in respiratory symptoms (i.e., cough, shortness of breath); **and**
- At least ten days have passed *since symptoms first appeared*; **and**
- Individual provides notice from Harris County Public Health (HCPH) department of release from Isolation and clearance to return to normal activities **or** providing a release from their personal doctor.

Our goal at SJECC is to keep our staff, families, and children safe. **Please notify us immediately if anyone in your household has had direct exposure to a COVID-19 patient or develops symptoms of COVID-19.** We ask that staff and families stay home should this occur, until such time as testing can be performed and test results received, or you have been released by your personal doctor.

We want to protect all our children, families, and staff. We have you in our hearts and prayers and thank you for your understanding.