



## COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan (School Year)

June 16, 2020 / Revised August 26, 2020

At St. Gerard Child Care, we have always prioritized the health and safety of the children in our care. With the spread of COVID-19, health and safety protocols are necessary to ensure children, families, and staff members are as safe as possible. This COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan is based on requirements/guidelines issued by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA). Additionally, our St. Gerard School Phase 4 Reopening Plan was taken into account to ensure consistency throughout. All St. Gerard School Reopening Plan protocols will be followed within our child care facility unless they differ in this document. Changes to this plan may be made at any time as authorities at the federal, state and local levels update these requirements/guidelines, or as we deem necessary as long as any changes fall within the requirements provided for us. Families will be provided updated information via email, through posted announcements at the center, and in the child care section of the school website at [stgerardlansing.org](http://stgerardlansing.org) any time a change occurs.

### OVERVIEW

All child care providers **must develop and implement a COVID-19 preparedness and response plan** consistent with LARA guidelines. Our plan includes:

- How St. Gerard Child Care will monitor symptoms of COVID-19.
- How St. Gerard Child Care will practice social distancing, as developmentally appropriate.
- How St. Gerard Child Care will ensure hygiene (including regular cleaning and disinfecting).
- How St. Gerard Child Care will use safety equipment (including PPE, when appropriate).
- Communication protocol for families to report symptoms or a positive test and policies on when children will or will not be able to attend care.
- Quarantine procedure in case of symptoms or confirmed cases on-site.
- How to maintain required staff to child ratios in the event that a staff member(s) becomes ill.

## COVID-19 SYMPTOMS MONITORING & QUARANTINE PROCEDURES

It is crucial that families and St. Gerard staff partner to share the responsibility of monitoring COVID-19 symptoms. Open communication and transparency will go a long way in keeping us all safe and healthy.

- Families are required to carefully monitor their children's health and screen daily for symptoms of COVID-19. Staff are required to self-monitor for temperature and screen daily for symptoms of COVID-19 before coming to child care as well. Students and staff with a temperature of 100.0 or above, or that may be experiencing any of the listed symptoms below that are new, worsening, or unexplained must not come to child care as they may have COVID-19:

Fever (100.0 or above) or chills	New loss of taste or smell
Cough	Sore throat
Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing	Congestion or runny nose
Fatigue	Nausea or vomiting
Muscle or body aches	Diarrhea
Headache	Rash

- Families and staff will report possible illness as soon as possible, by phone and/or email, if a student or staff member is experiencing symptoms or has tested positive for COVID-19 AND refrain from entering the building. Families and staff should contact their primary care physician for guidance.
- If a child or staff member has a fever of 100.0 or above, exhibits multiple symptoms of COVID-19 (that are new, worsening, or unexplained), or if we suspect exposure, he/she will not be permitted to enter the child care center until he/she:
  - has been fever-free for at least 72 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication AND
  - other symptoms have improved AND
  - at least 10 days have passed since his/her symptoms first appeared

\*\*In some instances, guidance from the health department may be used to determine the next course of action.

- Individuals exposed to COVID-19 are not permitted to enter the child care center until we receive guidance from the health department and/or child care licensing. To be considered exposed to COVID-19, you need to have prolonged close contact with a person who has the virus. Close contact includes living in the same household, caring for a sick person with the virus, being within 6 feet of a sick person with the virus for at least 15 continuous minutes, or being in direct contact with secretion from someone who is sick.
- If a child or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, we will contact the health department and child care licensing for further guidance. The resulting course of action will be determined by the guidance we receive. Ultimately, individual child care classrooms or the full child care center could be closed for a period of time.
- Staff will monitor children throughout the day and monitor temperatures when children appear ill or "not themselves." Children showing Covid-19 symptoms that are new, worsening or unexplained will be separated from the group and their families will be contacted for **prompt pick up**. If a parent/guardian cannot be reached or does not arrive within 30 minutes of being contacted (sooner is preferred if

possible), an emergency contact person will be called to pick up. Families should contact their primary care physician for further guidance.

- Families are encouraged to have back-up child care plans in case their children become ill or are required to self-quarantine for possible COVID-19.

#### **Quarantine Space:**

- The designated school quarantine space and/or the child care office will be used as quarantine spaces for child care, but an alternate space may be used if needed. If the weather is appropriate, outdoors may be utilized for quarantine. Any space utilized for quarantine will be sanitized afterwards.
- If a child becomes ill, he/she will be accompanied by one of our staff members to our quarantine space and wait with the child until he/she is picked up.
- If symptoms become present in staff members while on-site, he/she will be required to leave immediately (or go to our quarantine space if he/she is not well enough to leave on their own or need to wait for a ride) and follow up with his/her medical provider for further guidance.

#### **At drop off/pick up:**

- Families should stand at least 6 feet apart from other families while waiting to drop off or pick up children.
- Children and adults should wear a face mask at drop off and pick up.
- When dropping children off at care, families will ring the door buzzer and wait to be greeted by a staff member. Children being dropped off at care will have their temperature checked, using a touchless forehead thermometer. Adults will be asked if they or their children have experienced any COVID-19 symptoms (listed prior) in the past 72 hours. Children will be visually checked for signs of flushed cheeks, rapid or difficulty breathing (without recent physical activity), fatigue or extreme fussiness before entering the building. A staff member will accompany children to their child care classroom as family members/guests will not enter the building during drop off and pick up.
- All individuals entering our child care facility will be required to use hand-sanitizer (in some instances, soap and water) before entering, whether they are coming from outside or from within the school building.
- Children coming to child care directly from school will be visually checked for illness, and if deemed necessary, have their temperature taken (only if child looks or is acting unwell).
- At pick up, families will ring the door buzzer so that children can be escorted to the child care entrance for pick up.
- Families whose children are assigned to the Majella Room or Youth Center for after school care are asked to go directly to those spaces when picking up their children. Knock on the door so that staff are able to greet you at the door. Key cards for the Majella Room will no longer be provided for families.
- If a family member needs to enter our child care facility for a specific reason (i.e. meet with a caregiver or director regarding his/her child), that individual may do so, but must wear a face mask, have his/her temperature tested and go through our COVID-19 screening. If weather permits, discussions/meetings between staff and parents/guardians will be held outside.

### **When Staff Arrive:**

- Temperature checks will be performed when staff arrive. A touchless forehead thermometer will be used for scanning. Staff will be screened for COVID-19 symptoms and will be required to complete a COVID-19 questionnaire at arrival each day.
- Staff arriving with a fever of 100.0 F or above or are experiencing COVID-19 related symptoms that are new, worsening or unexplained will be sent home.

**Children with pre-existing health conditions:** For the safety of their children, families are required to provide information regarding pre-existing health conditions when enrolling in our child care program. This information is shared with our child care staff to ensure the utmost safety for children in our care. We will continue to follow any health care plans that were already in place for children with underlying health conditions, as well as any new ones that are communicated to us by families. We will contact families whose children have pre-existing health conditions if we deem it necessary. We also encourage families to contact us if they have any questions or concerns regarding their child's health care plan.

### **DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE SOCIAL DISTANCING PRACTICES**

Social interaction opportunities are imperative to the growth and development of children of all ages. We will therefore strive to balance such opportunities with implementing safe social distancing practices.

- When arriving at the building, families should keep 6 feet apart from other families while waiting to be checked in and not congregate.
- Every effort will be made to keep low classroom sizes, preferably at 12-15 children in attendance per classroom, but it could be more. Enrollment will be limited to keep group sizes down. In the instance that our region moves to phase 3 or lower, group sizes will be lowered.
- Every effort will be made to keep the same group of children and staff together when possible. Various classroom groups may span a wider range of ages so as to keep group sizes to a minimum.
- Staff members will stay with their assigned group throughout their shift when possible.
- Outdoor play structures may be used occasionally, but only when we have the opportunity to specifically sanitize the structures for child care use. Groups will be assigned a designated outdoor play area each day and will not be permitted to mix with other groups.
- Two children are permitted in the restroom at a time. Staff will monitor the hallway to assist children that need to be in the hallway, use the restroom, greet families at the child care entrance, prepare snacks, and ensure classrooms have the materials and supplies that they need. This will help minimize contact in the hallway.
- Any equipment that is shared between classes will be sanitized before another group uses the equipment.
- Only one individual group will be permitted to use a common use space at a time. This space and any equipment that is used will be sanitized before another group is to gain access.

- Classroom furniture and supplies will be arranged to limit contact (i.e. greater distance between chairs, controlled flow of movement throughout the classroom, controlled access to supplies, etc.). Children within a classroom will be permitted to interact with one another, but on a limited basis so as to practice social distancing. Items used by children will be strategically sanitized throughout the day. Hard to sanitize items will be removed from the classrooms.
- Classes will eat snacks and meals in their own rooms or outside as much as possible.
- In lieu of water fountains not being available for use, disposable cups will be available for use by children for drinking water, but children are strongly encouraged to bring their own water bottles. Water bottles must be labeled and taken home each day to wash.
- To limit contact, staff will document children's arrival and departure times on the sign in/out form daily. Families will be provided with a document (may be in digital or paper form) at a later date to confirm that their children were in attendance at the stated dates and times.
- St. Gerard Child Care will not take children for off-site activities until further notice, but creative use of our outdoor school/parish campus will be utilized to allow for greater variety within our program.
- Children will no longer be permitted to change from school uniforms to street clothes after school until further notice.
- Bringing items from home is one way of transmitting the virus. Therefore, items from home will be limited.
  - Children may bring a backpack for the purposes of storing their school supplies, lunchbox, water bottle and an extra set of clothes.
  - Preschool children may bring a small blanket and stuffed animal for the purpose of rest time. Families also need to provide a fitted crib sheet for their preschooler's rest cot (we will not be providing bedrolls at this time due to their bulkiness) and a pull-string sack to place these items in for when they are not in use. These items must be taken home at least weekly to wash. Children will not be permitted to use these items outside of rest time (one exception may be the stuffed animal that is brought for rest time, as preschool children may need it for comfort on occasion).
  - Children are not permitted to bring toys or games to play with while in attendance; with the exception of school-age children bringing books to read (are not allowed to share with others) and homework. Time will be provided for homework each day for children in grades 2 and up.
  - Children are not permitted to bring in communal snacks of any kind, including birthday treats. Child care provides a healthy snack for children that are in attendance at 8:30 AM and 2:30/2:45 PM each day.

## PROPER HYGIENE PRACTICES

Regular handwashing and disinfecting are key to limiting the spread of germs. Staff will work closely with children to ensure that they are washing properly as well as do so themselves.

- **Handwashing:** Children and staff will be required to wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds, multiple times throughout the day. Children will wash their hands when coming to child care after school, before/after lunch or snack, after playing outside, or when deemed necessary by staff. At minimum, children will wash their hands every two hours. While soap and water are best, hand sanitizer will be stationed in each classroom and strategically around the center for use as well.
  - While the school is asking families to provide personal hand sanitizer for their children, this is not required for child care as children will have the opportunity to wash their hands with soap and water strategically throughout the day and hand-sanitizing stations will be available throughout our child care facility.
- **Cleaning and Disinfecting:** During the day, a sanitizing solution will be used for the purpose of disinfecting surfaces, materials and equipment (i.e. toys, classroom supplies, athletic equipment, sinks, doorknobs, tabletops, countertops, classroom toys/supplies, light switches, phones, and other highly-touched surfaces, etc.). High touch areas will be sanitized every 4 hours. Soap and water will be used prior to sanitizing if visible debris is present and before/after a table or countertop is used for a meal or snack. Additional deep cleaning and sanitizing will be conducted by our custodial staff after closing each evening.

## USE OF SAFETY EQUIPMENT

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is necessary in many settings to keep people safe. Child care providers do not need to wear N95 or surgical masks, smocks or face shields; however other protective equipment such as gloves (when appropriate) and cloth masks are needed.

- **Face coverings for Staff members:** Staff will be provided with cloth face masks, which must be worn throughout the day and washed from day to day, but may be removed for the purpose of eating and getting drinks. Staff may also remove their face mask when outdoors, but only when social distancing can be maintained.
- **Face coverings for children:** School-age children (K-8) will be required to wear a face mask when attending child care. The only exception is when eating/drinking or when outside as long as social distancing is being maintained. Preschool children will be required to wear a face mask when transitioning to and from preschool upstairs, when in the child care hallway/restrooms or any other common use areas, but not when in the classroom. They may also remove their mask when outside, as long as social distancing is being maintained. Every effort will be made to keep children outside as much as possible. A clean face mask needs to be provided by families each day. We encourage families to provide a second face mask in case the first gets dirty. Face masks that families provide for children must be easily removable by children.
  - Families are encouraged to send more than 1 mask each day in case a mask becomes soiled and needs to be exchanged for a fresh one. We recommend that preschool-age children keep an extra mask in their extra clothes bag that is kept at the center.

- **Gloves:** Staff will be provided with both food service and medical gloves for the purpose of handling food and contaminants, assisting a child with a restroom issue, general cleaning/sanitizing, and when tending to an injury.

## PROACTIVE COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

St. Gerard Child Care staff will actively contact families to determine when children will return to care and communicate new policies and procedures, primarily through email, but by phone or in-person when needed.

St. Gerard Child Care will reach out to families that have not been in care to:

- Determine when they will return to care.
- Discuss concerns or questions families have about returning to child care and how we can address them together.
- Discuss any health concerns/conditions which may make their child at higher risk for complications if exposed to COVID-19.

St. Gerard Child Care would like to remind families that immunocompromised children and children with chronic respiratory conditions should only return to child care under the direction of their primary care provider.

These protocols, as they pertain to COVID-19, will be provided to families prior to children returning to care. They will be emailed to enrolled families, posted at the center, and placed on our child care website. All other policies and procedures that do not necessarily pertain to COVID-19 will remain in place.

St. Gerard Child Care reserves the right to make changes to these protocols at any time, as we progress through this pandemic, but we will continue to move forward cautiously. Any changes will be emailed to families, posted at the center and placed on our child care website when they occur.

## SUPPORT CHILDREN'S SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL NEEDS

Child care providers should provide families and staff with resources to prepare for the transition back to child care. Children should be prepared for the return to child care by parents and their child care provider. The following resources have been provided by LARA so as to share with families.

- Crisis Parent and Caregiver Guide, from the Michigan Children's Trust Fund  
[https://www.michigan.gov/documents/ctf/CTF\\_Parent\\_Guide\\_687268\\_7.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/ctf/CTF_Parent_Guide_687268_7.pdf)
- Talking with Children about COVID-19, from the CDC  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/talking-with-children.htm>
- Helping Young Children Through COVID-19, from Zero to Thrive (includes Arabic and Spanish translations)  
<https://zerotothrive.org/covid-19/covid-19-kids/>
- Georgie and the Giant Germ, from Zero to Thrive and Tender Press Books  
<https://tenderpressbooks.com/georgie-%26-the-giant-germ>

## **MAINTAINING STAFF TO CHILD RATIOS IN THE EVENT THAT STAFF MEMBER(S) BECOMES ILL**

We will provide an adequate number of staff in an effort to keep group sizes of 12-15, but group sizes may be slightly higher. This includes staff whose primary role is to supervise children within the classroom as well as those who will be available in a supporting role inside or outside the classroom. In the event that a staff member or multiple staff members are out ill, supporting staff may be required to move to a supervising role. While staff schedules will generally be consistent, they will be updated weekly to ensure that we meet the needs of the number of children in attendance each week. In the event that a number of staff are out ill, we reserve the right to close the center down for a period of time until we are able to ensure that we have the capacity to be open.

Enrollment will be limited to ensure that we are able to properly staff our center so as to meet the health, safety, and emotional needs of children in our care.

## **STAFF TRAINING**

St. Gerard administration will train staff on our new health and safety protocols as they pertain to COVID-19 prior to opening for children or when newly hired. This includes all protocols stated in this document as well as how COVID-19 is transmitted, the distance the virus can travel, and how long the virus remains viable in the air and on surfaces.

## **CHILD CARE IF SCHOOL MOVES TO REMOTE LEARNING ONLY**

In the event that St. Gerard School fully transitions to remote learning, the current plan is for child care to be available for preschool-age children that are enrolled in child care at that time. Ultimately, this is dependent on what phase our region is in as we may still choose to close if we feel it is unsafe for children and staff to stay open. Once care for preschool children stabilizes, further steps may be taken to open up child care for school-age children, with priority given to siblings of preschool children already attending. In all instances, Child Care will be provided for current St. Gerard child care families before being opened up to other St. Gerard School Families.

If care is opened up to school-age children, there shall be no expectation of our child care staff becoming instructors for children. Rather, space and time will be provided for children to work on their schoolwork while in attendance. Additionally, technology is not guaranteed for children to work on their schoolwork, but the possibility of using school Chromebooks is being explored.