

DISCOVERY WORLD DAYCARE PANDEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

With the COVID-19 global pandemic still ongoing, we feel it is important to clarify what Dr. Bonnie Henry has confirmed and encourages childcare centers to remain open.

Childcare programs in BC are licensed and regulated through the Ministry of Health, childcare licensing. As a result, DISCOVERY WORLD DAYCARE may be directed to close operations during a pandemic or other communicable disease outbreak. DISCOVERY WORLD DAYCARE will follow all directives provided from the Ministry of Health. The legal authority to close a childcare program for public health reasons falls under the purview of the local Medical Health Officer and the Provincial Health Officer and their decision overrules any decision to stay open that an individual daycare or parents may wish to make.

PROVISION OF CARE DUE TO STAFF ILLNESS:

Childcare ratios are required during operation, regardless of a pandemic or communicable disease outbreak. If 1 or more employees are unable to come into work or are in quarantine and ratio is not able to be met, DISCOVERY WORLD DAYCARE may require reduced operational hours or rotating days off between children. This decision would be made as required and will be communicated with parents through our Facebook Page – Discovery World Child Care Centre.

PROVISION OF CARE:

We are keeping children within their programs and do not combine at the end or beginning of the day. This ultimately limits the number of people outside of your household that your child is exposed to. Staff do have to move around within the daycare to cover breaks and shifts (wear mask if required) This is unavoidable as we need to stay within licensing regulations.

LIMIT INTERACTIONS:

Childcare settings can do the following to reduce the number of different interactions people have in a day:

- Reduce the time or mixing of age groups for the first and last half hour of the day.
- Limit the number of visitors to those providing care or supporting a child.
- Stagger pick-up and drop-off times, as well as break and snack/meal times.
- For larger facilities that have more than one care program, consider having smaller groups where possible. Staff scheduling should be arranged for staff to remain in the same group.

RESTRICT VISITORS AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE POLICY:

All outside access, besides our staff members and volunteers has been shut down.

ORDER TO SELF- ISOLATE:

If anyone in your household has been ordered to self-isolate, please give us a courtesy call. If your child has been ordered to self-isolate, you must follow the time line giving to you by our local health authority as to the duration of time your child must be away from the daycare. Please let us know if your child is away due to a self- isolation order.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL:

If your child has travelled outside of Canada and has returned, the child must stay at home for the duration of the mandatory time that the government currently has in place.

ILLNESS POLICY:

Our illness policy located in our PARENT HANDBOOK continues to apply during a pandemic or communicable disease outbreak, however, additional restrictions may apply, based on government / licensing officer directives. This may include, but is not limited to, extending our required at-home “symptom free” time period following any symptoms or requiring children with symptoms - *even if they are feeling well and have plenty of energy* - to remain at home

FOLLOW THE DAILY HEALTH CHECK EACH AND EVERY DAY

ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS:

If your child arrives at the daycare with any of the following symptoms or conditions you may be required to produce a doctor’s note. We reserve the right to deny care for your child if a staff member believes your child’s health and safety is at risk due to a current illness or symptom during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Symptoms or conditions added to our Illness Policy listed in Parent Handbook include:

- **Frequent sneezing**
- **Running nose**
- **Underlying breathing issues including Asthma**

Interior Health is providing further direction regarding COVID-19 response at daycares within the Interior Health region on a regular basis.

If your child displays any of the COVID-19 symptoms listed on the daily health check you will be denied care and told to seek medical advice immediately or dial 811.

The most important ways to prevent and control respiratory viruses, including COVID-19 are:

1. **Keeping children and staff who are ill with respiratory illness symptoms (fever, cough, fatigue, and/or muscle aches) away from the daycare**
2. **Practicing good respiratory etiquette (i.e. coughing/sneezing into a tissue or sleeve)**
3. **Providing readily accessible tissues** and waste receptacles
4. **Encouraging thorough hand washing.** Ensuring all sinks have soap and single use towels. Alcohol based hand sanitizers are at each entrance to ensure good hand hygiene. **Hand washing signage posted.**

Observed illness: If a child develops symptoms while in our care, we will promptly contact the parents to pick your child up and take them home until the symptoms pass and the required self-isolation period is over. When symptoms are present, parents should contact their child's physician and call 811. They will recommend if your child requires testing or further medical treatment.

CLEANING POLICY:

DISCOVERY WORLD DAYCARE has strengthened our cleaning and sanitizing measures. Cleaning and disinfecting objects and surfaces that are frequently touched by children or staff (SEE PANDEMIC DAILY CLEANING SCHEDULE) This will assist in the prevention and transmission of viruses from person to person through contaminated hands. Soft toys and hard-to-sanitize toys are being stored away.

CLEANING AND SANITIZATION PROCEDURES:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze
- Disposing of tissues appropriately.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth
- Maintain social distancing
- Follow the PANDEMIC DAILY CLEANING SCHEDULE for each program

ADDITIONAL CLEANING POLICY:

In the event of a pandemic or communicable disease outbreak, DISCOVERY WORLD DAYCARE, while in operation, will follow additional cleaning measures.

This includes:

- Using a Ministry of Health-approved sanitizing solution within the program under their provided guidelines, to sanitize the facility and all equipment. Information about approved sanitizing solutions can be found here [2019 Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) BC public health guidance for schools and childcare programs](#) page 10
- Increase handwashing and using social stories and direct teacher instruction with children to promote healthy handwashing habits

NO SHARING POLICY:

The practice of not sharing food or toys from home in the childcare setting supports the efforts of reducing virus transmission between students/children.

CHILDCARE FEES DURING A PANDEMIC:

There are no changes to our child-care fees during a pandemic. Fees are not being refunded due to illness, be it a child or a staff member.

DROP OFF AND PICK UP POLICY:

All families MUST follow procedures when dropping off and picking up your child/ren. It is so important we work together to keep our daycare as clean as possible. It will allow us to safely stay open and help to prevent any outside germs and viruses coming inside. We work **tirelessly** to sanitize and clean the daycare space and keep our staff and children healthy.

Procedures:

1. Access to the program rooms is limited access during a pandemic.
2. Sanitize your hands once you enter the daycare at one of our sanitization stations located at every programs entrance.
3. Please call the daycare (250-762-9508) to reach a staff member upon arrival if you have any questions or concerns before entering the childcare facility.
4. A staff member will meet you at the door or gate, please use social distancing and do your best to hand off your child to the caregiver with their lunch kit. Please only send necessities.
5. Please try to have an immediate family member dropping off and picking up your child/ren, residing at the same residence as the child.
6. Verbally let the staff member know that your child is clear from any symptoms listed on the DAILY HEALTH CHECK and is symptom free
7. If your child needs to be medicated with pain relievers for any reason they should not be at daycare and should stay home.

DO A DAILY HEALTH CHECK:

Daily health checks help make sure nobody comes to childcare when they are sick or required to self-isolate. Everyone should complete a daily health check before they enter a childcare setting. This includes staff, parents/caregivers and children.

- For **child care staff and operators**, a daily health check must be completed in line with the [Order on Workplace Safety](#). WorkSafeBC resources to support this can be found [here](#).
 - This can be used for other adults (including parents and caregivers) entering childcare facilities as well.
- For **children**, their parents/caregivers can use the [When to get tested for COVID-19](#) resource or the [BC Self-Assessment Tool](#).
 - Parents/caregivers can also encourage child(ren) to share when they are not feeling well.
- **Childcare operators** should regularly remind staff and parents/caregivers about their responsibility to do a daily health check before coming to childcare.

Find the latest information about COVID-19 at bccdc.ca/covid19. This includes [possible symptoms](#) and information about [COVID-19 in children](#).

INDIVIDUAL EXCLUSIONS:

If the Ministry of Health provides a regional or provincial quarantine recommendation for individuals - be it due to international travel, linked to potential exposures, or linked to individual symptoms, DISCOVERY WORLD DAYCARE will require all families and children to comply with this recommendation. In the event this occurs, the Ministry of Health will provide our childcare program with written information; this recommendation will be shared directly with families. These exclusions will apply equally to all children, families, and employees.

AUTHORIZED SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

A pandemic or localized communicable disease outbreak is subject to governance by official sources: our childcare licensing officers, the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Children and Families, and the Federal Government. While we appreciate that social media and news sources provide an extensive amount of information, we will respond to official, authorized sources of information only.

A NON-BIASED, INCLUSIVE APPROACH:

Fear-based responses in times of pandemic or communicable disease, have historically led to actions stemming from bias and self-protective measures. Not only can these measures lead to conflict between parents, childcare educators, and community members, but they can also lead to actions rooted in racism. DISCOVERY WORLD DAYCARE has an inclusive-based approach and

works to be a safe space for all families and children; we will not tolerate acts of racism or bigotry towards any parent, child, employee, or community member. Any such acts may be subject to an immediate dismissal from our daycare.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY:

Regular withdrawal notice is required during the pandemic. Parents must follow the Discovery World Daycare withdrawal policy listed in our Parent Handbook giving 30 days' notice whether your child attends or not under any circumstance.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING:

Childcare settings have enough space to support physical distancing. There is no need to reduce the number of children attending care at any given time.

Adults should practice physical distancing whenever possible.

- When **interacting with adults**, staff and other adults should reduce close, prolonged, face-to-face interactions. If physical distance can't be maintained, a mask should be worn.
- When **interacting with children**, staff and other adults should minimize unnecessary physical contact. Adults may choose to wear a mask when interacting closely with children, recognizing the importance of facial expressions and movements on children's learning and development.

Children are not expected to practice physical distancing. Contact between children is important to their emotional, physical, and developmental needs. Childcare settings should seek to reduce physical contact between children by:

- Using all of the space where available
- Organizing more activities that encourage individual play
- Encouraging children to keep their hands to themselves

HAND HYGIENE:

Cleaning hands regularly (called hand hygiene) helps reduce the spread of illness, including COVID-19. This can be washing hands with plain soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.

Read labels carefully as certain products should not be used on infants, children or by pregnant or breastfeeding staff.

Childcare settings should provide regular opportunities for staff and children to clean their hands, including:

- Before and after eating
- After using the toilet and/or changing diapers
- Before and after using shared toys or supplies (i.e. playground equipment, sand, etc.)

CLEANING:

Child care settings should be cleaned and disinfected based on BCCDC's guidance on [Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings](#), using a product from Health Canada's [hard-surface disinfectants](#).

This includes daily cleaning of the childCare space, with frequently touched surfaces (e.g. door knobs, light switches, toilet handles, etc.) cleaned twice a day. At least one of these cleanings should occur during hours of operation.

Surfaces should also be cleaned whenever they are visibly dirty.

Consider limiting the use of frequently-touched items that cannot be easily cleaned:

- Toys, manipulatives, and other items that are not easily cleaned (e.g. sand, foam, playdough, etc.) can continue being used if hand hygiene is practiced before and after use.
- There is no evidence that COVID-19 is transmitted via paper, books, or other paper-based products, and low risk of transmission for laminated or glossy paper-based products and items with plastic covers.
- Ask parents/caregivers to only bring comfort items (e.g. stuffed animals, blankets) if they are cleaned and laundered weekly and are not shared between children.

For sleeping items:

- Clean and disinfect cots, sleeping mats and cribs weekly if dedicated to a single child or between use if shared between multiple children. Clean and disinfect when visibly soiled. Clean and disinfect changing stations after each use.
- Bedding that touches a child's skin should be cleaned weekly if dedicated to a single child or between use if shared between multiple children.
- Keep each child's bedding separate, and consider storing in individually labeled bins, cubbies, or bags. Cots and mats should be labeled for each child.

VENTILATION AND AIR EXCHANGE:

In settings with mechanical heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, ensure they are working properly.

MASKS:

Non-medical masks and face coverings (masks) provide some protection to the wearer and to those around them.

Children may wear a mask based on personal or family choice. Infants under two years of age should not wear masks as it may make it difficult for them to breathe. Childcare staff should supervise and support children to ensure safe and proper use if masks are worn.

Staff and other adults should wear a mask when indoors and **interacting with other adults** except when:

- They can consistently maintain physical distance, or
- There is a barrier in place, or
- Eating and drinking

Masks may only provide limited protective value for adult-child interactions in childcare settings, as there are multiple effective health and safety measures in place and young children are less likely to be infected. Childcare staff and other adults may choose to wear a mask indoors when engaging in prolonged, close **interaction with children**. Careful consideration should be given to the potential impact of mask wearing on visual cueing and non-verbal communication with children, as these interactions play an important role in learning and development.

Masks are not needed for interactions between household members. Masks are not needed when urgent actions are required to support child safety.

Masks should not be used in place of other health and safety measures in childcare, like physical distancing.

Additional information on mask use is available from the [BCCDC](#) and [WorkSafeBC](#).

MEALS AND FOOD:

Childcare settings should continue to implement existing food safety practices. [FOODSAFE](#) Level 1 covers important food safety and worker safety information. It is a helpful resource for those seeking education and training on food safety practices.

In addition to existing food safety practices:

- Ensure food contact surfaces are sanitized or disinfected before and after use with [cleaners approved for food service](#).

- Ensure reusable utensils, dishware, and glasses are cleaned and sanitized after each use.
- Children and staff can bring and use their own reusable food and drink containers.
- Food and beverages should not be shared.

Childcare settings can continue to accept food donations and the delivery of meal programs, breakfast clubs, and other food access initiatives.

PRACTICE PERSONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY MEASURES:

Personal health and safety measures help keep the risk of COVID-19 in childcare settings low.

For **adults**, these include:

- Physical distancing: limit close contact with others and minimize close, prolonged, face-to-face interactions when possible. This is especially important when interacting with other adults.
- Frequent hand hygiene: washing your hands or using hand sanitizer often.
- Respiratory etiquette: covering your coughs and sneezes.
- Completing a daily health check and staying home when sick or required to self-isolate.

Children can be supported to practice personal health and safety measures at childcare:

- Organize activities that encourage individual play and more space between children and staff.
- Help children practice hand hygiene often, especially before and after using commonly touched surfaces (i.e. the bathroom, the playground, etc.).
- Help children practice respiratory etiquette, including sneezing/coughing into the elbow and throwing out used tissues right away.
- Encourage children to tell a staff member if they are not feeling well.

IF A STAFF MEMBER, CHILD, OR OTHER PERSON GETS SICK AT HOME:

They should stay home. Guidance on what to do next is available on the [When to get tested for COVID-19](#) resource or the [BC Self-Assessment Tool](#).

ANYONE WITH HEALTH-RELATED QUESTIONS CALL 8-1-1

IF A STAFF MEMBER, CHILD, OR OTHER PERSON DEVELOPS SYMPTOMS AT CHILDCARE:

- Separate them from others.
 - Ensure children are supervised. They do not need to be in a separate room, but should be at least 2 metres away from other children and staff.
- Contact the child's parent/caregiver to pick them up as soon as possible. Staff members should go home right away.
- Maintain a 2 metre distance from the person who is sick as much as possible.
 - If not possible, the person who is sick should wear a mask or use a tissue to cover their nose and mouth. The staff caring for the child should also wear a mask.
- Dispose of tissues used by the person who is sick as soon as possible and avoid coming in contact with any bodily fluids (e.g. mucous, saliva).
- Practice good hand hygiene.
- Clean and disinfect areas recently used by the person (e.g. specific areas of the centre, bathroom, common areas).

More information is available in the [Public Health Guidance for Child Care Settings](#).

RETURNING AFTER SICKNESS:

When a staff, child, or other person entering the setting can return to childcare depends on the type of symptoms they experienced.

- If based on their symptoms a test was not recommended, the person can return when their symptoms improve, and they feel well enough to participate in all activities.
- If based on their symptoms a test is recommended, the person must stay home until they receive their test result:
 - If the test is negative, they can return when symptoms improve, and they feel well enough.
 - If the test is positive, they must follow direction from public health to self-isolate and on when they can return.

IF SOMEONE WHO ATTENDED CHILD CARE TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19:

While COVID-19 is present in our communities, it will exist in some childcare settings. Nobody means to bring COVID-19 into a childcare setting.

If someone who attended childcare tests positive for COVID-19:

- Public health will respond and assess the situation. This includes determining if the person who tested positive may have been infectious (contagious) with COVID-19 while they attended childcare.
 - If they were infectious while they attended childcare, public health will notify everyone directly who may need to self-isolate.
 - Childcare operators and staff should not provide notifications about a person testing positive for COVID-19 unless asked by public health.
 - If they were not infectious while they attended childcare, there is no increased likelihood of catching COVID-19 to anyone else who attended while they were there. Public health will not contact the childcare setting.
- For more information see the close contacts page of the BCCDC website.

IF SOMEONE WHO ATTENDS CHILD CARE LIVES WITH SOMEONE WHO IS SICK:

Staff and children can attend child care if someone in their household is sick, as long as they don't have any symptoms of illness themselves, and the person who is sick is following the guidance available on the [When to get tested for COVID-19](#) resource or the [BC Self-Assessment Tool](#).

Children and staff who live with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 will be told by public health to self-isolate (even if they do not have symptoms), and when they may return to the childcare setting.

For more information on living with someone with COVID-19, visit the [BCCDC Self-Isolation page](#).

POSITIVE CASE AT CHILDCARE CENTER:

Public health follows up on every person who tests positive for COVID-19 as part of contact tracing. If the person who tested positive for COVID-19 attended childcare, public health will find out if they were able to spread COVID-19 while at childcare.

If they were able to spread COVID-19 when they attended child care, public health will determine if there are any [close contacts](#) who also attended at the same time. Close contacts are usually staff or other children who spent a lot of time around the person who tested positive.

Public health will tell staff and families if they or their child is a close contact through a phone call or letter. The name of the person who tested positive is not shared to protect their privacy.

If there are multiple people who test positive for COVID-19 who attended childcare, public health will investigate to determine the likelihood that COVID-19 spread at the facility. Because COVID-19 is present in our communities, sometimes there are multiple cases in a childcare facility, even though it did not spread there.

If it is determined that COVID-19 likely did spread at the facility, public health will work with the childcare operator to determine next steps.

Operators do not need to notify staff or families if a person who attended childcare tests positive for COVID-19, unless requested to do so by public health. Operators do not need to close their facility unless instructed to do so by a Medical Health Officer or licensing officer from the regional health authority.

MENTAL WELL-BEING:

With so much happening and uncertainty in daily life, it's normal for staff, children and parents to feel worried or overwhelmed. It's important for everyone to look after their mental health and well-being during COVID-19.

Child Health BC is a provincial organization supporting children's health. [Visit their website](#) for a list of mental health resources for parents and caregivers, children and staff. There are also resources on the [mental well-being](#) page of the BCCDC website.

At DISCOVERY WORLD DAYCARE we maintain the following protocols to keep everyone safe and healthy from any communicable illness such as COVID-19:

- We have signage posted at entry ways instructing anyone showing signs or symptoms, who is self-isolating, or who have travelled outside of the country in the past 14 days to not enter the building.
- Hand hygiene is practiced multiple times a day. Especially when entering the building. No one is permitted to enter without first sanitizing their hands.
- Hand sanitizers are placed throughout the building to be easily accessible.
- We have gloves and masks available for adult use, these are not recommended for children under the age of 2 years.
- We enforce a DAILY HEALTH CHECK for illness, for children, parents and staff.
- Whenever possible children are dropped off or picked up outside. Parents only enter the building when needed and will not enter the classrooms.
- Parents are not permitted to use the washroom, except for handwashing.
- Children and staff wear inside shoes to prevent germs from entering the classroom.
- We practice physical distancing with the parents within the hallways by separating our signing sheets and classroom entry doors. Parents always maintain a 2-meter distance between each other and staff. Signage is posted throughout the building.
- Our sign-in sheets are also used as contact tracing. Any other visitors are documented.
- Children are divided into smaller groups whenever possible.
- Children and staff are encouraged to spend as much time outside as possible. Adequate programming can still take place outside.

- We limit the number of toys in the classroom to maintain cleanliness. No group sensory items will be offered.
- Parents are instructed to limit the number of personal items their child brings to daycare and to keep all their items together in a backpack or cubby bin.
- Parents are instructed to regularly wash their child's lunch kit.
- Parents are not permitted to enter the building once our nightly cleaning routine begins.
- Staff will always use gloves when changing diapers, assisting in the washroom, and assisting with any bodily fluids, including wiping noses or tears.

RESOURCES:

COVID-19 is a new virus. It spreads by respiratory droplets from an infected person to others with whom they have close contact such as people who live in the same household or provide care.

Information about COVID-19, including advice and guidance to schools and childcare programs, is regularly updated on the BC Centre for Disease Control site. Information on COVID-19 and current recommendations from the health authority are found here:

[2019 Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) BC public health guidance for schools and childcare programs](#)

This Handbook has been composed from the following documents:

- [Discovery World Daycare Parent Handbook](#)
- [Order of the Provincial Health Officer](#)
- [CDC Public Health Guidance for Child Care Settings](#)
- [2019 Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) BC public health guidance for schools and childcare programs](#)
- [Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings](#)

Stay current about COVID-19 and Child Care Regulations

- [British Columbia Pandemic Provincial Coordination Plan](#)
- [BC Centre for Disease Control](#)
- [Government of BC – HealthLink BC](#)
- [Government of Canada](#)
- [Public Health Agency of Canada](#)
- [Office of the Provincial Health Officer](#)
- [WorkSafeBC](#)
- [Licensing Direct](#)

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