

RESPONSE TO COVID-19 – CURRENT POLICY GUIDELINES – updated 8.12.20**GraceWay Children Academy**

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At GraceWay Children Academy our commitment to the health, safety, and well-being of our staff, children, and families we serve is top priority. We are committed now more than ever to meeting those standards in a beneficial way as we navigate through this evolving crisis.

All staff and administration have been trained and familiarized themselves with current CDC guidelines and practices. These guidelines will be put into practice as we deal with the impact of COVID-19. CDC guidelines will be used in conjunction with all laws and policies currently in place for childcare programs. GCA understands the importance of working with childcare licensing and accreditation bodies (OCDEL & DHS), health officials, and other community partners to determine the most appropriate plans and action. This document **was modified as a continuum of our COVID-19 emergency operations plan and tailored guidance to effectively meet our families childcare needs.**

GraceWay Children Academy strives to communicate openly with the families we serve as your childcare provider. If at any time you have a question or concern, please reach out to Ashley or Janessa directly.

Guidance and information are still evolving and could change with little, to no notice. **This revised version, released on Wednesday, August 12, 2020, includes updated information and corrections to the original policies. These updates and corrections are provided in blue text throughout the contents of the document.**

Thank you in advance for taking the time to read and comply with this document and its contents. Compliance will allow us to remain operational and meet our standards to the commitment of health, safety, and well-being of our staff, children, and families we serve. It will allow us to navigate through this pandemic as smoothly as possible during this time.

Please take note there will be confirmation page at the end to sign and return to Ashley or Janessa **as verification of receiving and following all updated information. Please return the signed confirmation page no later than close of business, Friday, August 14, 2020.**

Below is an outline of the contents of this document:

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Introduction

New Operating Hours: 7:30am – 5:30pm

*As of when the center reopened on June 1, 2020.

Modified Operating Hours: 7:00am – 5:30pm

*These hours are effective Monday, August 24, 2020 in conjunction with the GCA school year.

*Continuation of modified hours will still allow for deep cleaning of the center to take place each evening.

First Day of the GCA school year: Monday, August 24, 2020

General Reminders

- Please make sure your child has a minimum of three extra pairs of clothes at the center (shirt, shorts/pants, underwear, socks) and one pair of extra shoes.
- When we reopen, we will be entering the summer months, please be sure to send your child with labeled sunscreen. Spray sunscreen is preferred.
- Water bottles are discouraged. Disposable, single-use cups, will be available for use between mealtimes and after outside play, or as needed throughout the day.
- Items from home are highly discouraged during this time.
- Please remember the importance of labeling everything.
- New drop-off and pick-up procedures will likely add time to your routine in the morning or in the afternoon. Please be patient with us as we accept and retrieve your child(ren).
- [Fall/school year](#) classroom placements will be made available to parents next week. These assignments will start [in conjunction with our center school year](#). Please keep in mind there are still certain requirements in place for your child to transition smoothly. If you have a concern about any requirements for your child, please reach out to Ashley or Janessa directly.
- [If your child is enrolled in our full-day kindergarten, half-day kindergarten, or before/after school program](#) more detailed information will be available by Friday outlining what types of care are included with your enrollment.

General Preparedness and Planning

GraceWay Children Academy is committed to preventing the spread of COVID-19 to the best of our ability. We are planning ahead to ensure adequate supplies to support hand hygiene and routine cleaning of objects and surfaces. In this section you will find outlined the steps staff are taking in response to this pandemic. This response comes from most recent information available per the CDC, as of [July 23, 2020](#).

Everyday Preventative Actions:

- Hand washing with soap and water is preferred practice. If soap and water are not readily available, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer will be used.
- Hands will be washed if they are visibly dirty or soiled.
- Hand sanitizer use will always be supervised.
- Frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected multiple times throughout the day.
- Coughs and sneezes will be covered.
- Staff will cover their mouths and noses with a cloth face covering as the day allows.
- Face coverings will not be used on babies or children under two because of danger of suffocation.

Requiring Sick Children and Staff to Stay Home:

- We will communicate to parents the importance of keeping children home when they are sick.
- We will communicate with staff the importance of being vigilant for symptoms and staying in touch with administration if or when they start to feel sick.
- Procedures have been established to ensure children and staff who come to the center sick or become sick while at the center are sent home as soon as possible.
- Sick children or staff will be kept separate from well children and staff until they can be sent home.
- Sick staff members or children will not return to the center for work or care until they have met the criteria to discontinue home isolation.

Having a Plan if Someone is or Becomes Sick:

- An isolation room has been identified that can be used to isolate a sick child.
- GCA is ready to follow all CDC guidance on how to disinfect the facility if someone is sick.
- If a sick child has been isolated in the facility surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected in the isolation room after the sick child has gone home.
- A phased crisis management plan has been developed if COVID-19 is confirmed in a child or staffmember.

All previously scheduled events will be postponed or canceled, as warranted, until further notice. GCA is following all current guidance about gathering and events. We plan to limit nonessential visitors to the center.

New COVID-19 Procedures

Social Distancing

- When possible, childcare classes will contain the same children and caregiver each day.
- When possible, we will limit the mixing of children – such as staggering playground and shared space times, mealtimes, nap times, and combined age groups. Please understand if you are dropping your child off before 8:30am there is a possibility that he or she may interact or with other children who are not typically in their class. Like many other centers we do not open all areas immediately upon opening for the day. Likewise, please understand if you are picking your child up after 4pm there is a possibility that he or she may interact with other children who are not typically in their class. Children may need to be shifted within reason to accommodate teacher shifts.
- All cribs and nap mats/cots will be spaced out as far as possible in respect to each classroom's physical limitations. All children will be placed on their mats head to toe to further reduce the potential for viral spread.
- We will limit the presence of volunteers in the classroom for activities and have cancelled or postponed special events.
- Essential visitors will be allowed entry to the center in compliance with all guidelines as outlined regarding a staff member. Essential visitors are defined as: licensing representatives, CACFP representatives, CPS (if needed), emergency personnel (if needed), support staff and therapists.
- We will rearrange seating at circle time or at the table to maximize the space between children. Ideally, keeping at least one seat space open between each child when they are in proximity. Carpet markings and folding tables will be utilized as needed.

Parent Drop-off and Pick-up

- In an effort to minimize exposure, we will be accepting and releasing children at the main entry door. Parent access to the building will be limited. A staff member will receive your child(ren) from you in the morning at the door. In the afternoon we are asking you come to the door or call ahead so we are aware of who you are picking up, then a staff member will retrieve your child(ren) for you and bring them to you at the door.
- Hand hygiene stations will be set up at the entrance of the center, so that children and staff can clean their hands upon entering the facility.
- We ask that you practice social distancing and wear a face covering if there are families dropping off and picking up at the same time.
- Please be patient as these new procedures for drop-off and pick-up may add time to your typical routine.
- When signing your child(ren) in or out, your signature confirms that you are disclosing all information with the center about possible exposure or actively attempting to limit exposure for your child.
- From the hours of 7:00am – 9am and 3pm – 5:30pm, phone communication may not be the most effective due to the volume of families dropping off or picking up. If you call the center phone number and no one answers, please call back. Our land lines are not cordless, and phones cannot be taken outside with us as we receive and release children. Email may be the best option, as they are accessible on our cell phones and will allow us to provide a faster reply.
- By signing your child in each morning, you are confirming that no one in your household is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and you have not been exposed.

Health Screenings

- Anyone entering the building for work or for care will receive a daily health check, this include essential visitors. A staff member or child must be free of fever or any other signs of illness. If a fever above 100.4°F is present or there are any signs of illness present that staff member or child will not be admitted to the facility.
- A staff member will check the temperature of the child or any other person entering the building.
- A quick health questionnaire will be completed verbally and a visual inspection of the child for signs of illness which could include: flushed cheeks, rapid breathing or difficulty breathing (without physical activity), fatigue, extreme fussiness, and/or a cough (particularly a dry cough) to confirm the child is not experiencing any signs of illness.

- Daily Health Questionnaire
 - Has your child experienced any of the following symptoms: cough, fever, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, nausea, vomiting, and/or diarrhea?
 - Has your child or anyone in your household been sick or had a fever in last 24 hours?
 - Has your child or anyone your child has come in contact with been exposed, or possibly exposed, to COVID-19?
- Health of staff members and children will be monitored throughout the day and if suspected changes occur, that staff member or child will be sent home as soon as possible.

Items from Home & Naptime

- We are asking that you refrain from bringing extra items from home to the center such as – toys, extra loveys, additional nap items, water bottles, etc. Each day your child is provided with educational, stimulating toys. We know children often find comfort in special objects your child is still able to bring a blanket, special soft toy, or stuffed animal for rest time. Please do not allow your child bring toys and belongings from home, as bringing a treasured object to the center can create tension between children and each child's personal storage space is limited. It can also be distressing for children and staff when items from home are lost or misplaced. We cannot assume responsibility for loss of or damage to personal belongings.
- Disposable cups will be available to give children access to water between mealtimes.
- Nap items should be limited to the minimum needed to help your child rest comfortably. A sheet/blanket are necessary; but if your child wants to bring a pillow and a blanket, please assist in helping them choice just one comfort/lovey item. Please keep in mind that any items brought into the center for nap will remain at the center until the end of the week. They will no longer be sent home daily. All bedding will be kept separate and stored in individually labeled bags. Cribs, cots, and mats are labeled for use specifically for each child.
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Well-Child/Illness Policy

- Until concerns of COVID-19 exposure and symptoms pass, we will be sending children home for the following reasons:
 - A fever greater than 100.4°F
 - Any present cough
 - Any present mucus or discharge
 - Shortness of breath or respiratory distress (without physical activity)
 - An acute change in behavior which could include lethargy/lack of responsiveness, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, quick spreading rash/hives, or any other health situation that requires care greater than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children and staff.
 - All other health concerns, previously stated in our well-child policy: vomiting, diarrhea, earache, rash, sore throat, head lice, eye discharge.
- If your child develops a fever or symptoms of illness while in care you will have 30 minutes from the time you were notified to come pick them up.
- If your child has a fever and is showing symptoms of COVID-19 you will be required to keep them out of care and follow the CDC's guidance on when to discontinue home isolation.
- As a general guideline, we are asking parents to keep their child(ren) home for a timeframe for 3 days to monitor any developing symptoms and ensure the child(ren) are fever free without the help of fever reducing medication.
- Your child will need a clean bill of health from his/her healthcare provider before returning to the center.
- Please do not question the decision to send your child home. It is at the discretion of the teacher and center's administration whether the child is to be sent home. These decisions will be made with an abundance of caution. They are also made carefully, on an individual basis.
- Criteria on managing disease in schools and exclusion from illness is being mirrored from current CDC guidance, along with PA Code on Caring for our Children.

- Any communicable diseases or illness must be reported to administration. Administration will then notify all families through a contagious announcement. Contagious announcements are anonymous only the communicable disease/illness and age group will be outlined.

Restricted Travel Areas

- In accordance with the Governor’s guidance on travel, it is recommended that you stay home for 14 days upon returning to Pennsylvania if you have traveled or plan to travel to an area where there are high amounts of COVID-19 cases.
- Travel increases the chances of getting and spreading COVID-19. You may feel well and not have any symptoms, but you can still spread COVID-19 to others.
- The following states are included in the 14 day quarantine recommendation: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, and Wisconsin. Please watch the Department of Health website for any states or areas that may be added to this list.
- We are strongly suggesting you share your family’s travel plans beforehand to make appropriate determinations on a case by case basis.

Cleaning & Disinfecting

- We have developed a daily schedule for cleaning and disinfecting. All cleaning will be done to meet DHS regulations and current CDC guidance.
- Staff members will have time scheduled into their day to routinely clean frequently touched surfaces and items such as: doorknobs, light switches, sink handles, cribs/mats/cots, countertops, bathrooms, tables, chairs, toys, games, playground structures, etc.
- All classrooms and bathrooms will be cleaned and disinfected before opening and again after closing each day.
- Soapy water bins will be made available in classrooms for toys that have been contaminated by body secretions and excretions, they will clearly be labeled for “soiled toys”. Toys that need cleaned will be set aside.
- Toys that cannot be cleaned or sanitized daily will not be used. They will be put away until further notice.
- We will use bedding that can be washed only. After each use your child’s bedding will be bagged, individually until nap the next day. Send your child a labeled bag to store his/her nap items in each day. Please keep in mind, nap items will continue to go home on Friday to be laundered and cleaned for the next week.
- The playground will be cleaned after each use. Each classroom will follow a schedule for when they are able to take advantage of gross motor play. A transition time between classrooms will be built-in to allow for cleaning and disinfecting.

Masks

- Childcare staff are required to wear cloth face coverings. Children 2 years old and older are required to wear a face covering as described in the *Order of the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Health Requiring Universal Face Coverings*.
- Parents will also be required to wear a face covering during drop-off or pick-up, unless you fit one of the exceptions included in Section 3 of the *Order*.
- Masks are recommended and encouraged for all children ages two and up, unless signed refusal documentation is on file.
- Staff will wear masks during the day.
- Masks will not be worn for active play, nap, or mealtimes.
- Masks will be available for any staff member who needs one.

Hand Hygiene

- All staff and children will use hand sanitizer upon arrival, before entering the facility. Handwashing will take place with soap and water immediately upon entering the classroom.
- Handwashing for children and staff will take place at these times:

- Before/After preparing food or drinks
- Before/After handling food or feeding children
- Before/After diapering and/or toileting
- After coming into contact with bodily fluid
- After playing outdoors
- After handling garbage
- All children will be supervised when using hand sanitizer to prevent ingestion.
- Staff will assist children and infants who cannot wash their hands alone.
- Children and staff will wash their hands each hour as recommended by CDC.

Mealtimes & Food Preparation

- The cafeteria will no longer be used for [large group meals](#).
- Meals will take place for [a limited number of individual classrooms](#) in the cafeteria as numbers to keep group sizes low allow. If it becomes not feasible meals will be moved to the classroom to limit exposure and help with social distancing.
- Ideally children will sit one seat apart while eating, [keeping increased space between classes](#).
- Food preparation will not be done by the same staff member who diapers children.
- Sinks used for food preparation will not be used for any other purposes.
- Staff will wash hands prior to and immediately after eating.
- Staff will wash their hands before preparing food and after helping children eat.

Shared Playground & Multi-purpose Spaces

- Playtimes will be staggered for each individual classroom.
- Cleaning and disinfecting of all playground equipment will take place between each use.
- Each classroom will have their own bin of toys to use on the playground.
- The use of the indoor playroom and dance studio will be limited. Toys will not be available all at once, to ensure all items are cleaned and disinfected between each use.
- Materials like crayons, markers, paint brushes, etc. will no longer be shared between children. Each child will have their own labeled container of supplies to use throughout the day. Materials will be cleaned after use.

Vulnerable & High-risk Groups

- Staff who are categorized as vulnerable or high-risk have been given the opportunity to self-quarantine and have been encouraged to discuss the risks with their healthcare provider before returning to work.
- If you have a child with an underlying health condition, we feel it would be best practice for you to talk to your child's healthcare provider and discuss the risks before making the decision to return to group care.
- For children who have underlying health conditions, we will require an action plan outlined for us to follow while your child is in care (for example: Asthma Action Plan).

Health & Safety Education

- We passionately believe that reintroducing topics like handwashing, wearing masks, and social distancing to children will make the changes to their routine easier to understand.
- Health and Safety Education will be implemented into classroom lesson plans. Some topics may include:
 - Why do we wear masks?
 - Who should wear a mask?
 - [Proper mask hygiene](#)
 - [Importance of wearing a mask](#)
 - Handwashing and songs to make handwashing fun
 - Covering your cough or sneeze
 - Germs
 - Healthy habits
 - Books about what is taking place from a child's perspective

Phased Program Response to COVID-19 Reports

Phase 1 – Possible Exposure

If possible exposure to COVID-19 is confirmed in a child or staff member:

- Child or staff member will be placed in an isolation room away from others in the center. All belongings to that person will be gathered and bagged.
- Child or staff member will be required to leave the center and not return until a confirmation of a negative test is received.
- All areas used by the person who is sick will be closed off.
- Outside doors and windows will be opened as applicable to increase air circulation in the areas.
- All areas used by the person who is sick, such as: classrooms, offices, bathroom, and common areas will be cleaned and disinfected.
- Contact DHS and appropriate health personnel to report the possible exposure. We will stay in contact with them based upon the results of the test.
- If more than 7 days have passed since the person who is sick visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary.
 - Continuation of routine cleaning and disinfection will still take place.

Phase 2 – Confirmed Case of COVID-19

If a confirmed case of COVID-19 is discovered in a child or staff member:

- The center would implement a short-term closure procedure regardless of community spread if an infected person has been in the school building.
 - Upon learning of a COVID-19 case in someone who has been in the center, we will immediately notify local health officials. These officials will help administrators determine a course of action for the center.
 - Students and most staff would be dismissed for 2-5 days. This initial short-term closure allows time for the local health officials to gain a better understanding of the COVID-19 situation impacting the center. This will allow the center, with the help of local officials, to determine the appropriate next steps, including whether an extended closure is needed to stop or slow further spread of COVID-19.
 - We will close off areas used by the individuals with COVID-19 and wait if practical before beginning cleaning and disinfection to minimize potential for exposure to respiratory droplets. Outside doors and windows will be opened as applicable to increase air circulation in the areas.
 - Designated staff will clean and disinfect all areas used by the ill person(s), focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces.
 - Administrators will seek guidance from local health officials to determine when students and staff should return to the center and what additional steps are needed.

In addition, children and staff who are well but are taking care of or sharing a home with someone with a case of COVID-19 should follow instructions from local health officials to determine when to return to the center.

Tuition

This process of working through the pandemic has been a learning experience for us as administration. We are all experiencing the impact of the pandemic. As a result, we have planned a tuition approach that will act as a model for any future situations and aligns with our current parent handbook. All parents are expected to pay for their child's tuition every week. You will be required to pay the full week's tuition fee each week your child is enrolled for care, regardless of the number of days your child physically attends. Please keep in mind that regardless of whether or not your child is here we continue to pay our staff and fixed business expenses. By investing in the center, you increase the odds that GCA will continually be there to meet your family's childcare needs.

We understand that this may become burdensome for families who may not be able to receive care now, or in the future. GCA does not want a family to sacrifice their financial security over temporary setbacks if care can no longer be afforded. We have been working hard on a way to best meet the needs of each family in our center and understand unique situations will arise and encourage you to reach out to Ashley or Janessa directly to find the best solution for your family.

GCA fully understands how essential our services are for the families enrolled in care. Our commitment will always be focused on the families and children we service. If at any time meeting in person poses too much of a risk to the health, safety, and well-being of our children and staff, GCA is focused on providing valuable support to our families whether they are attending in person or staying involved at home. Support will be provided through remote learning sessions, age-appropriate activities, and encouraging messages to families while they manage schedules with children at home. These decisions will be based on guidance and orders from our governing bodies.

Confirmation Page – updated 8.12.20

Child(ren)'s Name(s): _____

Family COVID-19 Policy Guidelines Agreement

I have read and understand the GraceWay Children Academy COVID-19 Policy Guidelines. I agree to abide by them, along with the below stated expectations. I understand that all policies are subject to change based on information available. I understand that if the information on the policy is unclear to me or not listed within this guidance, it is my responsibility to contact the center regarding such policy.

Expectations

We are continuing to ask every parent or visitor refrain from entering our building unless there is an emergency. Upon entry staff and children are expected to immediately wash their hands or use hand sanitizer. We will also be monitoring and addressing any issues of health that might arise during the day. Please read and review the new requirements that we are requesting you, as well as our staff, and policies to follow in order to help us continue to keep the health, safety, and well-being of our staff and children top priority.

Please pay special attention to the below highlighted guidance:

- Use proper handwashing hygiene practices.
- Universal face coverings will be enforced, where applicable, while in care and during drop-off and pick-up proceedings.
- Stay home if you have any symptoms of illness.
- Restrict travel from anywhere other than home or daycare for your child, when possible. If you chose to travel, please stay informed with Pennsylvania's current travel restrictions and recommendations.
- Report any known possible exposure (whether testing or pending testing results) of COVID-19 directly or indirectly by your child or any immediate family member of that child.

Disclosure & Compliance

If it is discovered that you are not in compliance with these new procedures and/or you have withheld information that would compromise the health, safety, and well-being of our center you will be asked to stay out of care and out of the facility for a minimum of 14 days to ensure you were not exposed to COVID-19 and have since exposed staff and/or the children in care at the center.

Depending on the extent of non-compliance or severity of information withheld, said actions could result in termination of care.

For us to continue to offer care under the Governor's orders and CDC guidance, as well as comply will all in-place DHS health and safety rules and regulations information stated in the contents of these policy guidelines is critical for us to enforce.

(Parent/Guardian Signature #1)

(Date)

(Parent/Guardian Signature #2)

(Date)

Please return this signed confirmation page to Ashley or Janessa prior to or at close of business on Friday, August 14, 2020. Thank you.