



*Will Smith*



# **Covid-19 Preparedness and Response Plan**

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## INTRODUCTION

Will Smith Zoo School's (WSZS) research-based curriculum delivers a developmentally appropriate early childhood education with nature at its core. This year, the focus on nature and time spent outdoors is especially critical as families seek socially, emotionally, and physically healthy environments for their preschoolers. The following plan outlines the recommended practices and strategies WSZS uses to protect the health of our children, staff, and families while at the same time ensuring that children are engaged in meaningful interactions and dynamic environments. Covid-19 Preparedness and Response should be read in conjunction with the family handbook and other essential documentation our Admissions Team will be sharing with you. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

**Please note: This is a living document and may be updated periodically to reflect new knowledge and/or new protocols.**

## REGULATING AGENCIES

*Covid-19 Preparedness and Response* is in accordance with following recommended guidelines and policies from the following governing agencies of Will Smith Zoo School (WSZS); San Antonio Zoo, Texas Department of Health and Human Safety (TDHHS), Center for Disease Control (CDC) and National Association for Educating Young Children (NAEYC).

## **PREVENTATIVE MEASURES**

### **We will use the following strategies in our classrooms and facilities to minimize the spread of illness:**

1. As a nature-based program, we are used to spending as much time outdoors as possible. We will continue this practice which guarantees ample space and materials.
2. Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increasing circulation of outdoor air as much as possible (e.g., keeping windows and doors open to the extent that this does not pose safety risks).
3. The drinking fountain will be closed and drinking water will be available in labeled, individual water bottles from home.
4. Outside visitors will be prohibited from entering the campus. The following individuals will have access to WSZS:
  - Operation staff, person with legal authority to enter, including law enforcement officers, licensing staff, and Department of Family and Protective Services staff, professionals providing services to children, children enrolled at the school, and families who have children enrolled and present at school.
5. Ensure all children and caregivers have multiple changes of clothing available to change any soiled clothing. If clothing becomes soiled with bodily secretions, you must:
  - Place contaminated clothing in a sealed, plastic bag to be sent home with the child or caregiver, or wash in a washing machine at the facility.
  - Not allow a child to wear another child's clothing.
6. WSZS buses will continue to adhere to hygiene, cleaning, and disinfection recommendations from the CDC and the Texas State Department of Health and Safety and will continue to document the scope of cleaning and disinfection.
7. "Family style" food serving will not be permitted at this time. When handling food, staff members must wear gloves and follow proper hand-washing guidelines before and after snack distribution.
8. Staff will ensure that naptime mats are spaced out as much as possible, ideally six feet apart. The mats will be disinfected daily. Blankets are stored in individual, labeled boxes, during the week and sent home on Thursdays/Fridays to be disinfected for the new week.

## FACE COVERINGS

WSZS, and our governing bodies, acknowledge the importance of face coverings and recognizes the challenge of this protective measure for children under the age of 10 in an all-day setting. Therefore, face coverings are **not required for WSZS students**. However, in accordance with TDHHS and San Antonio Zoo policy, face coverings will be required for all adults in all indoor common spaces. Face shields are optional at the discretion of each staff member but may not replace a face mask. Family members and staff members are required to wear cloth face coverings during Outdoor drop off and pick up.

1. Recognizing the importance of seeing full faces in the role of social-emotional development in early childhood, teachers will be allowed to show their whole faces when working outdoors with children.
2. If a parent would like their child to wear a mask at WSZS, we will support the request and will help the child remember to remain masked in all indoor space.

## HAND WASHING

WSZS staff will reinforce regular health and safety practices with children and staff and continue to comply with licensing regulations and CDC hand washing guidelines as follows:

1. Staff and children will wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
2. Soap and water are the best option, especially if hands are visibly dirty. If hands are not visibly dirty, alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol can be used if soap and water are not readily available. Staff and children should cover all surfaces of their hands with hand sanitizer, rubbing them together until they feel dry.
3. Staff should assist children with hand washing and use of hand sanitizer to ensure proper use and prevent ingestion.
4. Staff and children (with frequent reminders and support) will cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve and wash hands immediately after.
5. Wearing gloves does not replace appropriate hand hygiene.
6. Hand hygiene is especially important after blowing one's nose, going to the bathroom, before eating or preparing food, or helping children do any of these actions.
7. Keeping cleaning products secure and out of reach of children, avoiding use near children, and ensuring proper ventilation during use to prevent inhalation of toxic fumes.

## USE OF GLOVES

Staff will wear gloves in a manner consistent with existing licensing rules (for example, gloves should be worn when handling contaminants, cleaning, or when serving food). Staff members should wash hands before putting gloves on and immediately after gloves are removed. Gloves are not recommended for broader use and do not replace hand washing.

## CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

**WSZS staff will engage in the following cleaning and disinfecting practices in accordance with CDC recommendations:**

1. Cleaning/disinfecting of high-touch surfaces (e.g., sinks, toilets, light switches, doorknobs, counter and tabletops, chairs) between classes daily.
2. Cleaning/disinfecting of outdoor items such as toys, tables, and benches between classes.
3. Using a schedule for regular cleaning and disinfecting tasks.
4. Ensuring staff wear disposable gloves, when available, to perform cleaning, disinfecting, laundry, and trash pick-up, followed by hand washing.
5. Cleaning dirty surfaces using detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.

At this time, we will make the following changes to managing the toys and materials in our classrooms:

1. Toys will be washed and sanitized between use by different classes.
2. We will select indoor toys and objects which can be easily cleaned or sanitized between use.
3. Outdoor toys will be selected that can easily be cleaned and sanitized. They will be cleaned and sanitized between classes.
4. Natural materials will be removed from play if visibly contaminated.
5. Soiled toys will be set aside out of reach of children until they can be cleaned.

## ITEMS BROUGHT FROM HOME

During this time, we will limit the number of items brought into the facility to reduce the possibility of transmission. **We ask that families refrain from bringing comfort items** (stuffed animals, pillows, loveys, toys) from home. However, we recognize that placing limits on children's comfort items may increase stress for children as they may be especially needed during this time of transition. Preschool teachers are prepared to provide school-based comfort items.

## DROP OFF/PICK UP PROCEDURES

**To reduce the interaction between adults, and the potential for exposure, WSZS Staff will implement the following drop-off and pick-up procedures.**

### **Morning Drop-Off (8:00-9:15 AM)**

**Extended Care Families (8:00-8:45 AM)**

**Non-Extended Care Families (8:45-9:15 AM)**

1. Families must arrive during their window to ensure the availability of staff to support the transition.
2. Families will have the opportunity to use curbside drop-off or walk their child to the classroom door. To the extent possible, parents will be asked to keep 6 feet of distance between themselves and the teacher. At this time, parents may not accompany children into the class space.
3. Masks must be worn by **all adults** (parents and teachers) during drop off and pick up.
4. The teacher or teacher assistant will initial the sign-in clipboard with the time of drop-off.
5. Staff members will have each child wash their hands with soap and water upon arrival in the classroom.

### **Afternoon Pick-Up**

**Non-Extended Care Families (1:40-2:15 PM)**

**Extended Care Families (2:30-5:30 PM)**

1. Families will have the opportunity to use either curbside pick-up or walk onto campus and pick up their child at the classroom door or Front Porch. To the extent possible, parents will be asked to keep 6 feet of distance between themselves and the teacher. At this time, parents may enter the class space.
2. Staff members will remain with the students and initial the sign-out clipboard with the time of pick-up.

## **RESPONDING TO COVID-19 SYMPTOMS DURING CARE**

### **A PRESCHOOLER**

If a child develops a temperature above 100.4 degrees and/or symptoms such as persistent cough, difficulty breathing, chills, diarrhea, or vomiting, they will be sent home immediately with the recommendation to contact their primary care physician/medical provider. Parents will be contacted for a prompt pick-up and the child will be isolated from other children. They will be accompanied by a staff member until pick up can take place. A form will be sent home to the family of a sick child with listed criteria determining when to discontinue home isolation and return to school.

- **If a student becomes ill with COVID-19, or shows signs and symptoms of COVID-19, and a sibling attends the school, BOTH students will be sent home, and BOTH are unable return until cleared by a physician.**

### **A STAFF MEMBER**

If a staff member develops a temperature above 100.4 degrees and/or symptoms such as persistent cough, difficulty breathing, chills, diarrhea, or vomiting, they will be sent home immediately with the recommendation to contact their primary care physician/medical provider.

## **REPORTING EXPOSURE**

If a child, staff member, family member, or visitor to our program tests positive for Covid-19, we will contact our local health department and licensing consultant. We will communicate COVID-19 exposure as directed by the local health department and our licensing consultant. As with all communicable disease notifications, we will respect the privacy of individuals and not share the health information of a specific person.

## **CONFIRMED CASES**

If a confirmed case has entered the building(s) of WSZS:

1. Once learning of a COVID-19 diagnosis of someone who has been on campus, WSZS is to notify TDHSS licensing and local health officials.
2. Contact tracing will be conducted to determine whether children will need to be quarantined.
3. A school wide health alert will be sent to all families within the program.

4. We will close-off areas used by the person who is sick, open outside doors and windows to increase circulation in the areas.
5. We will clean and disinfect all areas used by the person such as office, bathrooms, classrooms, common areas, etc.
6. WSZS will continue to adhere to hygiene, cleaning, and disinfection recommendations from the CDC and the Texas State Department of Health and Safety and will continue to document the scope of cleaning and disinfection.
7. If a family member, who is diagnosed with a lab confirmed case, has been in close contact with a student, that student is not to return to school until the end of a 10-day self-quarantine with an official notification of doctor's clearance.

## **RETURNING TO THE PROGRAM**

If a staff member or child was diagnosed with COVID-19, they may return to the program when **all three of the following criteria** have been met:

- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
- At least 24 hours have passed without a fever without the use of fever-reducing medications.
- Other symptoms have improved.

If a staff member or child only has a single symptom, they may return to the program when the symptom has improved and/or it has been attributed to another cause (such as allergies) by a medical professional.

## **Communicating with Families & Staff**

WSZS will actively communicate with staff and families to determine when they will return to work/care if they have been out, discuss concerns or questions, share new policies and expectations, and confidentially discuss any extenuating circumstances that have emerged and/or any health concerns/conditions that may elevate risk for complications if exposed to COVID-19.

The Preschool Director, Rachel Buck, along with the administrative team, will manage communications with families in addition to the child's teaching team, who will establish regular communications with each family.

When there is a confirmed COVID-19 case at on campus, WSZS will work directly with San Antonio Metro Health for reporting and contact tracing related to the individual involved. All decisions to quarantine classrooms and identify close

contacts, as well as cleaning and closure instructions, will be dependent on each investigation and advice from Metro Health.

More specifically, here are the steps WSZS will take to communicate with families and the school community:

- One-to-one communications will take place when students or adults indicates or exhibits symptoms of illness of any kind.
- The WSZS leadership team will communicate directly with the family when a case is probable and when a case is confirmed. WSZS will collect information about close contacts to share with the Metro Health contact tracing team and communicate with families to keep them informed.
- Close contacts will be notified by the WSZS leadership team and asked to isolate at home for 10 days.
- An email titled "Health Alert" will be sent to the full community providing information about the positive case as well as steps already taken, including classroom closure, contact tracing, and isolation.

## **Training Staff**

Staff will continue to train, implementing best practices related to mitigating the spread of COVID-19 in preschool. As new information is received, policies and procedures may be updated.

## **Supporting Children's Social-Emotional Needs**

Staff and families will partner to support both the physical and emotional needs of our WSZS children during this time. We anticipate that children may experience a wide range of feelings. We acknowledge that staff and families may need some new tools in their toolkit to assist with emotional regulation and we will work together to support all caregivers.