

BEPC Preschool COVID-19 Policy & Guidelines

Updated: **August 2024**

The BEPC Preschool Board meets monthly, or when necessary, to make decisions regarding rules, regulations, and potential closures. We rely on the latest information provided by the NC Department of Health and Human Safety and the Local Health Department to guide our decisions. Thank you!

* The CDC states that you can end isolation if your symptoms have improved for at least 24 hours or if you've been fever-free for at least 24 hours without using fever-reducing medications. The CDC also recommends taking enhanced precautions to reduce contagiousness

Avery County Health Department Update: (August 2024)

COVID-19 Protocols

Stay at home.

Staff and students who test positive for COVID-19 should stay at home and avoid contact with others until they have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication, and their symptoms are improving.

It is recommended, but not required, to practice additional precautions such as hand hygiene, mask usage, and distancing for an extra 5 days.



Doctor's Note

Parents may submit a doctor's note for student absences if the student was seen by a medical provider.

If a student tests positive at home and cannot obtain a doctor's note, parents may send a parent note instead.



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As the pandemic continues to evolve, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS) is applying the most effective and appropriate public health tools for the current phase of the pandemic. As the United States and North Carolina emerge from the latest surge, the COVID-19 landscape looks different today than it did two years ago or even two months ago. More has been learned about the virus and effective tools to reduce the risk to people. Based on the emerging science and evidence, NC DHHS is adapting its guidance to allow North Carolinians to get back to the people, experiences, and places they love.

Please adhere to the following guidelines as BEPC Preschool works diligently to keep our children and staff safe while upholding our commitment to creating a positive and nurturing learning environment for our students. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation as we work together through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Transmission and Symptoms: of COVID-19: COVID-19 is mostly spread by respiratory droplets released when people talk, cough or sneeze. Symptoms may appear 2-10 days after exposure to the virus. People with COVID-19 have reported a wide range of specific and non-specific symptoms of the illness.

People with these symptoms may have COVID-19. Individuals with the virus that causes COVID-19 may experience any, all, or none of these symptoms.

- Fever or chills (body temperature of 100.4F or higher is considered a fever)
- Shortness of breath and difficulty breathing
- New loss of taste or smell Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- New cough
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Diarrhea

Diagnosis: People who are presumed to have or are diagnosed with COVID-19 must stay home until they meet the criteria for return to childcare. Staying home when sick with COVID-19 is essential to keeping COVID-19 infections out of childcare settings and preventing spread to others.

- ▶ All rules and regulations have been adapted through the guidance of the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS). Updated *March 29th, 2022*.
- ▶ Please understand that this policy and guidelines are subject to change at any time.

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Monitoring for Symptoms at BEPC Preschool:

People with COVID-19 have reported a wide range of specific and non-specific symptoms. Regular screening for symptoms will be completed at the start of every day and monitored throughout the day to reduce exposure. If a child develops symptoms during the day, they will remain isolated under the supervision of an adult and return home safely as soon as possible.

BEPC Preschool is required to immediately notify our local health department of laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases among children and staff. If your child is experiencing symptoms, please follow the guidelines below before returning to preschool. All COVID-19 test results, negative or positive, should be reported to the Preschool Director so they can follow health department protocol with the preschool.

Closures due to COVID-19 Exposure:

There may be no need to close the preschool if the Local Health Department and BEPC Preschool Board determines that close contacts are excluded, child/teacher ratios are appropriate, and there is sufficient space to continue normal/daily operations. The LHD or BEPC Preschool Board may in some situations determine that closure of the preschool or a classroom is necessary; this will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Preventing Spread in the Preschool Setting:

We will only allow children and staff who are required for daily operations and enrolled in our preschool program inside the classrooms. Snack/lunch tables will be spread out in the King Fellowship Hall. We will limit nonessential visitors and activities for now. All staff members will have the option to wear a face covering during preschool hours. Bathrooms, classrooms, and snack/lunch areas will be cleaned/sanitized throughout the day and at the end of EVERY DAY! We will incorporate frequent handwashing and sanitation breaks into classroom activity. Toys and other items that cannot be easily cleaned will not be used. We will allow time in between activities for proper cleaning and disinfection of surfaces between class use (music room, bathrooms, playground). If a class has been exposed to a positive tested child, there will be an assessment as to whether the classroom will be shut down. BEPC Preschool will only use EPA-Registered cleaning products. Linens and towels used in the preschool setting will be replaced every day. It is up to each family to use their own judgement on what is best for them.

Please be respectful to everyone's health and safety. There will be no tuition refunds if you decide to keep your child at home. Please allow for 14-day notice if you decide to withdraw your child's enrollment from BEPC Preschool.

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Suggestions to Keep Everyone Safe & Healthy:

- Practice your W's every day; Wait 6 feet away from people, Wear a face covering in public areas or where you can't social distance, Wash your hand for 20 seconds frequently with warm water and soap.
- If your child is not feeling well and you are unsure of their health, keep them at home to monitor their symptoms.
- Keep your child's spare clothing in a sealed zip-lock bag labeled with their full name in their cubby.
- Sanitize or wash your and your child's hands upon arrival and departure of the preschool every day.

Testing:

Testing for individuals who have symptoms: Children and staff who have symptoms of COVID-19 should stay home and contact their healthcare provider or other available testing sites for diagnostic testing for COVID-19 and **care**.

Testing for individuals who have been exposed: Individuals who have been exposed to COVID-19 should get tested 5 days after the last exposure unless they had tested positive for COVID-19 with a viral test within the previous 90 days and subsequently recovered.

Monthly Tuition and Preschool Fees: All BEPC Preschool fees, registration fee and monthly tuition, will remain as stated to maintain preschool fees and staff salaries. No tuition breaks or discounts will be given due to vacation time, illness, or required quarantine or absence due to COVID-19.

Childcare programs are required to:

- Exclude children and adults from childcare facility who have tested positive for COVID-19.
- Immediately notify the local health department if they have reason to suspect that a person within the childcare facility has COVID-19.
- Exclude children if:
 - The child has a fever taken by any method, including at armpit or orally 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher.
 - Has two or more episodes of vomiting within a 12-hour period or has more than two stools above the child's normal pattern and diarrhea is not contained by a diaper or when toilet-trained children are having accidents.
 - Is unable to participate comfortably in activities.
 - Has symptoms that result in a need for care that is greater than the staff members can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.

****Students may return if fever free for 24-hours.**