

Discovery Child Care COVID-19 Response Plan

Approved Date: July 2/20

Revision Date: July 30/20, Aug 18/20, Aug 23/20, Aug 26/20, Sept 9/20, Oct 13/20, Nov 9/20, Dec 30/20, Jan 11/21

Revision Date: Feb 22/21

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the preventive and response measures that will be implemented during Discovery's re-opening and recovery with health and safety measures and response to protect children and staff from and minimizing the impact of infection and illness.

All staff and families (current and new) will be given a copy of this policy to read, acknowledge and confirm that they have read by email. Parents will also be given a physical copy on their first day during the initial screening. All Staff will receive training prior to reopening and accepting children into care and anytime this policy is updated.

MAXIMUM GROUP SIZE/RATIO/STAFFING

As of Sept 1/20, child care settings may return to maximum group sizes as set out under the CCEYA (Child Care & Early Years Act). Staff are not included in the maximum group size, but should be assigned to a specific group where possible. Children are permitted to attend on a part time basis, and as with children attending full time, should be included in one group and should not mix with other groups.

- Staff & children should be assigned to a specific group.
- Each group should stay together and not mix with other groups.
- Staff assigned to a group should remain with that group at all times except for breaks.
- Staff in classrooms should not be covering off lunches or breaks for staff in other classrooms.
- Staff may not work at another child care location (including babysitting/nanny).
- Supervisors and/or designates should limit their movement between groups.
- Supply/replacement staff should be assigned to a specific group so as to limit staff interaction with multiple groups of children.
- While field placement students are permitted, at this time, Discovery will not be hosting field placement students until further notice.
- Ratios will be maintained as set out under the CCEYA
- One teacher from the child's group will be assigned to meet them at the entry and escort to their assigned room. Walkie-talkies will be used.
- There will be no mixing of groups when ratios are lower (e.g. before/after work day).
- Food handlers will not be providing care to children, even for breaks/lunches.
- Each group will have the required number of qualified staff as set out in the CCEYA
- Staff should also maintain physical distancing in staff rooms, offices etc.

Hours of Operation:

7:30 am to 5:30 pm Monday to Friday

Drop off and Pick up: Mask is required for all adults (covering nose & mouth)

Drop off A screener will be available between 7:30am-9am with physical distancing markings to identify the 2 metres between persons waiting.

- **Please be prepared for a delay in drop off** daily as all children need to be screened properly before being admitted to the centre.
- Please ensure that you are supervising your child while waiting and that they are not mixing with other children. Ensure that you & your children maintain the 2 metre distance between families.
- Ensure that your child is dressed and ready for outdoor play based on the weather. We are starting our days outside in all weather:
- **Please take your child's temperature prior to drop off and complete the online screening tool daily.**
- If you want to drop off after 9am, please call the centre so we know to meet you at the screening point.
- **All children need to be dropped off by 11am each day. Children will not be accepted into care after that time.** Children in the toddler and preschool rooms cannot be picked up between 12pm-2:30pm as it is very disruptive to their sleep time and we are at reduced staffing at that time, making it difficult for us to get your child for you.

Pick up: Please come to the screening area to pick up your child. Please be prepared to show photo I.D. We will bring your child out to you at the end of the day. Ensure that you maintain the 2 metre distance between families. Please remember to turn your car off while you are waiting. We do not allow idling in the parking lot. We are also a smoke free environment and no smoking is allowed even while in your car. Thank you.

There will be no non-essential visitors/parents/guardians permitted in the building.

Active Screening Procedures

All individuals including children attending the centre, staff, and essential visitors (i.e. Ministry staff) will be screened by Discovery staff **before** entering the child care setting, including daily temperature checks. Contact information such as date/time of visit, name, and phone number are required for all essential visitors. A designated screener will be set up outside of the child care centre.

The following must be followed daily PRIOR to arrival at the centre:

- The designated screener will be wearing PPE (mask & face shield) if physical distancing is not possible.
- Daily screening will be done electronically (via online form available on our website) prior to arrival at the centre. Link can be found here: <https://form.jotform.com/210525642294251>
- Staff and parents/guardians will need to check their own or children's temperature daily before coming to the child care setting to ensure you are not arriving at the centre with a temperature.
- Screening questions will be completed daily for all staff & children (Including if any fever-reducing medication has been administered within the past 24 hours)

As of February 12, the Ministry of Health has issued updated guidance to public health units regarding COVID-19 variants of concern (COVID-19 Variant of Concern: Case, Contact and Outbreak Management Interim Guidance, Version 2.0 – February 12, 2021), requiring all household contacts of symptomatic individuals to quarantine.

Everyone in the household must stay home if your child or anyone else has COVID-19 symptoms until one of the following occurs:

1. The child or person with symptoms is tested for COVID-19 and test results are negative and symptom free for one full day; OR
2. An alternate diagnosis is given by a healthcare provider for the person who has symptoms

If the person with symptoms in the household does NOT get tested, everyone in the household MUST stay home for:

1. 14 days from the last contact with the person with symptoms (if they can self-isolate away from the rest of the household); OR
2. 24 days from the start of the sick person's symptoms (if they cannot self-isolate away from the rest of the household)

Entry will be denied to any person who meets the following criteria:

- Fever and/or chills (temperature of 37.8C/100F or higher)
- new or worsening cough, barking cough, making a whistling noise when breathing (croup)
- shortness of breath
- sore throat
- difficulty swallowing
- Runny, stuffy or congested nose (not related to season allergies or other known causes or conditions)
- Lost sense of taste or smell
- Pink eye (irritated, itchy or painful eye that may have crusting or discharge)
- Headache that's unusual or long lasting
- Nausea/vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Sore muscles (long lasting or unusual)
- Extreme tiredness that is unusual (fatigue, lack of energy)
- For young children and infants: sluggish or lack of appetite
- Any person in the household of the child or staff member who is currently sick with COVID-19 symptoms; OR
- Any person in the household of the child or staff member who has been in close physical contact* with someone who tested positive for COVID-19, is currently sick with new COVID-19 Symptoms; returned from outside Canada in the last 2 weeks with new COVID-19 symptoms, OR
- Anyone who has travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days.
- Anyone who has been given fever reducing medication in the last 24 hours for any reason (Tylenol, Advil, Belladonna, Motrin etc) as this can mask Covid-19 symptoms

**Note: Close physical contact means being less than 2 metres away from someone for over 15 minutes without appropriate PPE or living in the same home.*

- Pick-up and drop-off of children will happen outside the child care setting. Designated teachers from the child's classroom will bring the child to and from their room. Parents/guardians will need to let us know what regular drop off and pick up times will be.
- Children will be directed to clean their hands upon entry into the centre and/or room.

Management of Ill Children: Specific guidance for staff/children/visitors experiencing symptoms: **All children/staff & essential visitors who have any of the above noted symptoms persisting for more than a few hours, and for whom the symptom(s) is new and not related to seasonal allergies or pre-existing medical conditions, must stay home from the centre. Please see chart for testing and exclusion requirements. Any rostered siblings of children who are ill are also required to be excluded until test results are known.**

Staff/families must complete the "Attestation Form to Return to Child Care" prior to returning to the centre after any illness. The link can be found on our website and here: <https://form.jotform.com/203005564522041>

On occasion, a parent/guardian or staff may feel there is another explanation for the new symptom(s) requiring medical assessment rather than a COVID-19 test. In that case, they should contact their health care provider as usual. Some COVID-19 assessment centres will also do a medical assessment in addition to COVID-19 testing. If the health care provider makes an alternative diagnosis and determines that the condition is not COVID-19, they may indicate that the individual can return to the centre when free of symptoms for 24 hours. Medical notes or proof of negative tests should not be required for staff or children to return to the centre. **As per Discovery Illness Policy, we still require a doctor's notes stating "not contagious" for symptomatic children to return to the centre.**

Note: In the absence of testing or an alternative diagnosis, and with the mild and/or fairly brief duration of symptoms often seen with COVID-19, SMDHU is recommending ill individuals self-isolate for 10 days from symptom onset (even if symptoms resolve). It is difficult for a health care provider to rule out COVID-19 without a test, if there is not a clear alternative diagnosis.

Where there is sufficient concern that an individual may have COVID-19 (e.g. centre is informed by a parent/guardian that a child has been diagnosed with COVID-19) the centre should report this to SMDHU immediately. However, individual reports of children/staff ill with symptoms compatible with COVID-19 is no longer required. Note: SMDHU also receives lab reports directly on all positive COVID-19 cases.

Communication with Staff and Parents/Guardians

- ❑ Parents/guardians will be made aware of the facilities COVID-19 Plan and the importance of adhering to self-monitoring of COVID-19 symptoms including temperature taking and hand hygiene prior to bringing their child to centre.
- ❑ COVID-19 specific information will be available to staff and parents/guardians upon request (e.g., COVID-19 fact sheets, hand hygiene, physical distancing, self-monitoring).
- ❑ Updated training will be offered to all staff on current health & safety measures in place according to the Operational Guidance as well as those in place by the local Public Health Unit.
- ❑ A copy of this Guidance Document can be found on our website:
<https://www.discoverychild.on.ca/our-families/covid-response-plan/>

Isolation of Ill Children

Children and staff who start to show symptoms of COVID-19 will be promptly separated from others, into a designated room if possible, while waiting to be picked up by a parent or guardian. All siblings of an ill child or children of an ill staff member will also be sent home immediately.

- ❑ Provide the sick child with a surgical/procedural mask if tolerable and above the age of 2.
- ❑ Where possible, anyone who is providing care to the child should maintain a distance of 2 metres.
- ❑ If appropriate PPE is not worn, staff providing direct care for the ill child may need to be off for 14 days.
- ❑ Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette should be practiced while the child is waiting to be picked up.
- ❑ Thermometers must not be used between children/staff without single-use protective covers or disinfection between uses.
- ❑ Once the child and siblings (if applicable) has been picked up, clean and disinfect the isolation room/area.
- ❑ Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to bring the child (and siblings if applicable) for testing at a local assessment centre..
- ❑ The illness will be recorded on the surveillance line list. A Serious Occurrence will be filed on the CCLS site for the Ministry of Education for all confirmed and/or suspected cases of COVID-19

Testing Recommendations for Parents/Guardians

- ❑ Parents/Guardians should follow the testing recommendations as per the Ontario self-assessment tool or SMDHU resource.
- ❑ If parents/guardians choose not to test their child, there is a 10 day exclusion requirement from onset of symptoms OR the child may return to care if an alternative diagnosis has been made by the health care provider and the child has been symptom free for 1 full day with no medication (if applicable)
- ❑ SMDHU will clearly communicate testing recommendations to parents when an outbreak has been declared.

Case & OUTBREAK MANAGEMENT

We will record individual illnesses on the SMDHU surveillance line list. Any increase over the baseline for illness within the centre will be reported to the health unit.

- ❑ Management of an individual case/outbreak in a child care centre will be based on an individual risk assessment by SMDHU at the time, and informed by the Ministry of Health's COVID 19 Guidance: School Outbreak Management.
- ❑ Control measures could include:
 - ❑ Identification and exclusion (if applicable) of contacts
 - ❑ Exclusion of case's cohort (e.g. classroom) or multiple cohorts as needed for various lengths of time
 - ❑ Recommendations for increasing environmental cleaning and further limiting of activities
 - ❑ Recommendations for testing of contacts (staff and children), including those with no symptoms
 - ❑ Enhanced surveillance recommendations

For the purposes of COVID-19, one (1) confirmed COVID-19 case who attended/worked at centre during their period of communicability will equal a COVID-19 child care outbreak.

ROUTINE PRACTICES

Encouraging hand hygiene

Hand washing with soap and water is still the single most effective way to reduce the spread of illness.

- ❑ All staff are responsible to ensure their classrooms are well-stocked with hand washing supplies at all times (i.e., soap, paper towels and, if needed, 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer). Staff are to let the office know when we begin to run low on supplies (Do NOT wait until we have run out!)
- ❑ Children forget about proper hand washing so practice often and teach them to wash their hands properly in a fun and relaxed way. Signage should be available to demonstrate the steps of hand hygiene. Monitor them to ensure that they are washing thoroughly.
- ❑ When sinks for hand washing are not available, you may use alcohol-based hand rubs (ABHR) containing at least 60% alcohol. Know that this is not very effective when a child's hands are quite soiled. Ensure to keep ABHR out of the reach of children.
- ❑ **Children & staff must wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap & warm water:** before & after meals and snacks, after using the washroom, after diaper changes (children too), before and after any sensory play, after handing garbage, when hands are obviously soiled and when returning from outside.

Respiratory etiquette

Respiratory etiquette in child care settings includes covering the mouth and nose during coughing or sneezing with a tissue or a flexed elbow, and disposing of used tissues in a plastic-lined waste container, followed by hand hygiene. This should be reviewed with all children and staff regularly. Signage should be posted to remind children and staff.

Use of Masks & Personal Protective Equipment

- ❑ All adults in the child care centre are required to wear medical masks and eye protection (i.e. face shield or goggles) while inside in the child care premises, including hallways. Masks should be replaced when damp.
- ❑ All children in grades 4 and above are required to wear a non-medical or cloth mask while inside in the child care premises, including hallways. All younger children (grades 3 and below) are encouraged but not required to wear a non-medical mask or face covering while inside a child care setting including hallways.

- ❑ Parents/guardians are responsible for providing their child(ren) with a non-medical mask(s) each day and should be reminded that if children are wearing masks, they will require a way to store their mask when not in use..
- ❑ The use of masks is not required outdoors for adults or children if physical distancing of at least 2 metres can be maintained between individuals.
- ❑ Reasonable exceptions to the requirement to wear masks are expected to be put in place by licensees. Exceptions to wearing masks indoors could include circumstances where a physical distance of at least 2 metres can be maintained between individuals, situations where a child cannot tolerate wearing a mask, reasonable exceptions for medical conditions etc. Requirements and exceptions related to masks will be documented.
- ❑ Masks are not recommended for children under the age of two.
- ❑ When wearing a medical mask, staff must wash their hands before putting on the mask and before and after removing the mask. Masks must be changed if punctured, damaged or become moist. Refer to Public Health Ontario Resources for how to properly wear and take off masks and eye protection:
<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/ipac/ppe-recommended-steps>

ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANING & DISINFECTION

We are just learning about how long the virus causing COVID-19 lives on surfaces, but early evidence suggests it can live on objects and surfaces from a few hours to days. Regular cleaning and disinfecting of objects and high-touch surfaces is important to help to prevent the transmission of viruses from contaminated objects and surfaces.

- ❑ Any toys & equipment that cannot be easily cleaned and disinfected are to be removed. (i.e. plush toys, dress up clothes etc.)
- ❑ Staff are to increase the daily cleaning/disinfection of toys & equipment in the classroom. When a child is through with playing with items, they will be placed in a designated bin marked “to be cleaned” and will be cleaned and sanitized and let to air dry (as per sanitary practices)
- ❑ Frequently touched surfaces including door knobs, light switches, toilet handles, glass on doors and tabletops, must be disinfected at least twice a day.
- ❑ Mouthed toys must be cleaned and disinfected immediately as per normal processes.
- ❑ We will continue to use Clean & Green #7 Disinfectant from Swish. Concentration will be checked daily.
- ❑ Cots and cribs should be disinfected weekly. Linens must be laundered weekly. Cleaning/disinfecting of the cot only needs to be done daily on the areas of it that are not covered by bedding and then at the end of the week the entire cot should be cleaned/disinfected when the bedding has been pulled off.
- ❑ Clean high-touch electronic devices (i.e., keyboards, tablets, and smartboards) with 70% alcohol (i.e., alcohol prep wipes) making sure your wipe has a contact time of at least 1 minute.

Programming

- ❑ There will be designated toys and equipment for each group of children.
- ❑ Staff will provide enough materials to encourage individual play.
- ❑ Do not use water or sensory tables.
- ❑ Any sensory/natural play items used must be new every day, provided for single use and dedicated per child. Please discard all items during or at the end of day.
- ❑ Offer toys that can be easily cleaned (i.e., no dress-up clothes or stuffed animals).

- ❑ A planned program must happen every day. The majority of our day will be spent outside as per Discovery Program Statement.
- ❑ Outdoor area will have materials & equipment that are easy to clean & disinfect. Each group will have their own outdoor bins to use.

Space Set-Up & PHYSICAL DISTANCING

- ❑ Understandably, physical distancing is challenging in a child care setting.
- ❑ Each group of children must have their own assigned indoor space, separated from all other groups by a physical barrier.
- ❑ When in the same common space (e.g. entrances, hallways) physical distancing of at least 2 metres must be maintained between different groups and should be encourage where possible between children within the same group by:
 - ❑ Spreading children out into different areas, particularly at meal and dressing time
 - ❑ Incorporating more individual activities or activities that encourage more space between children; and
 - ❑ Using visual cues to promote physical distancing
- ❑ In shared outdoor space, a distance of at least 2 metres must be maintained between groups and any other individuals outside of the group at all times.
- ❑ Increase the distance between cots, if possible. If space is tight, place children head-to-toe or toe-to-toe.
- ❑ Avoid close greetings like hugs or handshakes.
- ❑ Help children to learn about distancing by creating games. For example, put on some music and have children spread their arms side to side and spin around slowly trying not to touch their friends.
- ❑ Set up regular activities outside such as snack time, planned program experiences, etc..
- ❑ Set up mini environments within your facility to reduce the number of children in a group, for example set up 2 or 3 craft areas for different learning experiences..
- ❑ Increase the space between children during activities such as snack and lunch by moving or separating tables and chairs so they are farther apart.
- ❑ Recognizing that physical distancing is difficult with small children and infants, additional suggestions include
 - ❑ Planning activities that do not involve shared objects or toys
 - ❑ When possible, moving activities outside to allow for more space; and
 - ❑ Avoiding singing activities indoors.
- ❑ Conversations with parents/guardians will take place over the phone or on Zoom rather than face to face if at all possible.

ITEMS FROM HOME

- Sippy cups, bottles and pacifiers should be brought from home, labelled and left at centre with the centre taking responsibility for cleaning and disinfection.
- No books or toys from home are allowed into the centre at this time.
- Children must not share soothers, bottles, sippy cups, toothbrushes, facecloths, etc.

FOOD SERVICE

- Discovery will maintain compliance with [Ontario Regulation 493/17 Food Premises](#).
- Reinforce “no food or drink sharing” with children.
- Meals should be served in individual portions to the children. Teachers are responsible for serving the children. Utensils should be used to serve food.
- There should be no items shared (i.e. serving spoons or salt shaker)
- Children may not participate in food preparation or serving.
- Proper hand hygiene must be practiced when staff are preparing food and for all individuals before & after eating.
- Where possible, children should practice physical distancing while eating.

PROVIDE REASSURANCE, GOOD LISTENING AND MAINTAIN ROUTINES

Children hear and take in a lot of the talk that is going on around them, especially as they get older.

- Reassure children about their personal safety and health. Tell children that it is okay to be concerned and there is a lot we can do to stay safe and healthy. Make sure the information is suitable for their age level.
- Let them know they can ask questions. Answer questions honestly but make sure that the information is suitable for their age level.
- Maintain familiar activities and routines, as possible, as it can reinforce the sense of security of children. At the same time, build in physical distancing strategies into your play and activities.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY

- Child care centres must have written measures and procedures for worker safety, including measures and procedures for infection prevention and control. Detailed guidelines for COVID-19 are available on the Ministry of Health COVID-19 website.
- If a child care worker has symptoms consistent with COVID-19, the child care worker should consider testing. SMDHU will follow-up with the staff member and advise the centre on next steps including the exclusion of the employee and, if applicable, their cohort. If COVID-19 testing is done and is negative, they can return to work 24 hours after their symptoms have resolved. The SMDHU will need to approve the return to work for any child care worker suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19..
- Child care workers should report to the Director of Child Care prior to return to work.
- If the care provider's illness is determined to be work-related: In accordance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act and its regulations, an employer must provide a written notice within four days of being advised that a worker has an occupational illness, including an occupationally-acquired infection to the:
 - Ministry of Labour;
 - Health and safety representative

SERIOUS OCCURRENCE REPORTING: Effective Nov 9/20,

- Only where a child, staff, student, has a confirmed case of COVID-19 (i.e positive COVID-19 test result), licensees must:
 - Report this as a serious occurrence to the Ministry of Education
 - Report to the local public health unit and provide any materials to support case management and contact tracing and other activities in accordance with all applicable legislation, including the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.
- Public health officials will determine any additional steps required, including but not limited to how to monitor for other possible infected staff and children and the declaration of an outbreak and closure of rooms and/or the entire centre.
- While licensees are no longer required to report a serious occurrence for suspected cases; if the local public health unit determines that a full or partial closure is required (i.e., program room or entire child care centre must remain closed for a period of time), a serious occurrence report must be submitted under the "Unplanned Disruption of Service" category. Please also note there are requirements of employers to let workers know if they may have been exposed in the workplace.

NOTICE OF RISK

When children from multiple families attend a single childcare centre, there is an increased risk of the COVID-19 virus coming into the centre. Children who are infected with the COVID-19 virus are more likely than adults to have very mild infections or to have no symptoms at all, but these children can still transmit the infection to other children and to adults in the centre. This means that children can bring home an infection acquired in the centre and put other persons at risk. This childcare centre has a screening process to help detect infections when there are symptoms; however, this screening process will not detect infected children or adults who do not have symptoms at the time of screening. The risk of serious COVID-19 infection increases with age.