

***Administrative Offices***

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**Date:** July 14, 2020

**To:** Parents and Families

**From:**  Lake Ryan Gemzik, Chief Administrative Officer

**Mask Guidelines for Enrolled Children During COVID-19**

Good Morning Parents,

As most of you have been made aware, DHS and CDC guidelines are requiring any children 2 years old and above to wear a mask while in childcare or school.  We will be implementing this guideline in our classrooms as of Monday July 20th to give parents time to purchase masks for their children and give our teachers a chance to talk with the children about wearing their masks in school.

Please read over the following procedures for providing your child’s mask each day:

* + **Wear your mask to school each morning**
    - We are asking families to please send your child in already wearing their mask for the day. Please ensure your child’s mask is clean, fits properly, and is dry.
  + **Wear your mask home each night**
    - Your child will wear their mask home each night. You may remove the mask when you get to the car. We want to ensure masks are not lost in transit so your child will wear it home at pick up time.
  + **Wash your mask each night**
    - You may choose to send you child in a cloth mask or a paper mask. If choosing a cloth mask, please wash the mask and let it air dry completely each night. ***Always wear a fresh, clean mask to school.***
  + **Send in one back up mask**
    - Please send a back up mask to keep in your child’s cubby incase your child’s mask becomes wet, soiled, or damaged.

We are implementing guidelines so parents and teachers know how we will work with children and their masks.  Masks will not be on during nap time, during lunch or snack times, and depending on temperatures and activities outside, they may or may not wear masks.  Also if your child has any medical condition or you are concerned with their ability to handle a mask, please let us know.  There are provisions and/or exemptions in these cases.

Our teachers will ensure that the wearing of masks is handled in a positive and supportive manner. A child will never be scolded or made to feel upset if they aren’t wearing their mask or they are struggling with it. We do understand that this will take time for the children to adjust to wearing the mask. We will work with them and help them understand that masks keep us safe from germs that can make us sick. Please realize, that if your child is having a hard time with their mask, we may need to remove it so they can play more comfortably. Also, if a child’s mask gets wet or soiled, it will be removed for safety and their back up mask will be used. If both masks are unsafe for your child, we will remove it for the day.

We do understand and recognize some of the concerns parents are having with the mask protocol.  As a community, every agency and provider's only goal is to do all we can to help minimize risks to our children and our teachers in a school environment.  We want to continue providing childcare services throughout this pandemic, however, the threat of an outbreak is always there.  Again, everyone's hope is only to create an environment that is as safe as possible.

Just as a reminder, here are a few of the procedures we have implemented to minimize the risk of exposure to the virus and maintain our childcare services as consistently as possible for our families.

* Drop Off and Pick Up Check In Stations
* Masks for teachers and students
* Constant handwashing at key times throughout the day
* Stringent disinfection procedures
* School shoes
* Small classroom group sizes (between 8-12 Toddlers/Preschool and 10-17 PreK Prep/Prek/School Age students per classroom)
* Grouping by age and not mixing age groups together
* COVID-19 Response Plan shared with families

Please see the image below with information on ways to talk about masks with your children.   If you need resources on where to purchase a child's mask, please let us know.  Most stores such as Target, Old Navy, and Amazon are selling children’s masks. Please note, homemade cloth masks are acceptable.

COVID-19 has presented us with unique situations that we must consider how to respond to. We are navigating the best we can to keep up with the daily developments of operating a business during a pandemic.  Please know that everything we implement is to create an environment that minimizes the risk of the virus in our classroom environment. ***In order for us to continue providing childcare, we need the support of everyone in our community to do what it takes to protect our center and our students.***

Thank you for your open communication and your attentiveness to this and thank you for your commitment to helping us keep everyone safe and healthy. As always I am available for questions via email at [lgemzik@buildingblockslearningcenter.com](mailto:lgemzik@buildingblockslearningcenter.com).

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