

South Coast Head Start

COVID-19 Mitigation Policy

South Coast Head Start is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all enrolled participants, their families and our staff. Our goal is to mitigate the potential for transmission of COVID-19 in our workplaces, and that requires full cooperation among enrolled participants, their families and our staff.

This policy is based on information from the Oregon Early Learning Division, Oregon Health Authority, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the American Academy of Pediatrics, and additional information from “Caring for Our Children” related to COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidance.

COVID-19 Community Levels and Associated Prevention Strategies

SCHS will monitor and follow the CDC’s COVID-19 Community Levels when making decisions on which prevention strategies to use based on whether the community is classified as Low, Medium or High. Recommendations outlined for the COVID-19 Community Levels are the same for ECE programs as for the community. Centers will follow the recommendations based on the COVID-19 Community Level of the County in which the center is located.

COVID-19 Community Level Communication Chain

The current Community Level will be communicated to staff and families on a weekly basis. When site staff are notified the Community Level has changed, they will notify families of the change.

- Staff members will be notified via work email.
- Participants will be notified by staff.
- The Community Level signs posted in each center will be updated.

When the COVID-19 Community Level indicates an increase, or an outbreak is identified in collaboration with the local health department, additional layered prevention strategies in the categories listed below will be implemented.

- Hand Hygiene
- Masking
- Physical Distancing
- Ventilation
- Cleaning and Disinfecting
- Daily Health Screening
- Vaccinations

Hand Hygiene

Handwashing shall occur regularly and as specified in the [Hand Washing policy](#) (located on SharePoint).

Hand Sanitizer for those over the age of 2 will be used in accordance with the Office of Childcare's licensing rules. Hand sanitizing wipes shall be used on children under the age of 2, and on busses as outlined in the [Hand Washing policy](#) (located on SharePoint).

Masking

Masking requirements are based on CDC Community Levels and can be found on the [SCHS COVID-19 Guidance Overview](#) (located on SharePoint).

Masking is always welcome at any Community Level.

Masks are provided to staff, volunteers, and children over the age of 2, when requested or required.

Per parent request, staff will assist children over the age of 2 in wearing masks appropriately.

Physical Distancing

When community levels are higher, SCHS will limit visitors in our buildings in an effort limit possible exposure to the staff and children we serve. Specific Guidance regarding parent and volunteer access in our buildings during the different CDC Community Levels can be found on the [SCHS COVID-19 Guidance Overview](#) (located on SharePoint). Drop off and pick up procedures are detailed on [Drop off and Pick up Guidance](#) (located on SharePoint).

Ventilation

Each class will be equipped with either site wide HVAC systems or portable air cleaners.

Sites will look for ways to increase ventilation when possible including opening windows in the class or on the bus, ensuring restroom exhaust fans are on while class is operating, and planning more outdoor activities.

Cleaning and Disinfection

All facilities are cleaned and disinfected on a regular basis per the SCHS Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting Schedule (located on SharePoint). Additional guidance can be found regarding cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting indoor areas, toys, and how to prepare cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting solutions (located in the Health section of Staff Notebook on SharePoint.)

Daily Health Screening

Health screening for all individuals **upon** entering the building is required regardless of CDC Community Level. This can be accomplished by self-report and signature attesting that the screening was passed, or by staff led questioning.

See current South Coast Head Start COVID-19 Daily Health Screening for Enrolled Children, Staff, and Visitors (located on SharePoint) for guidance.

Exclusion

Exclusion from the program of any individual will be determined by the current SCHS COVID-19 Exclusion Summary and Group Participation Guidelines (located on SharePoint) which meet or exceed the rules adopted by the Oregon Health Authority under OAR 333, Division 19 9 (OAR 333-019-0010). Individuals should be observant throughout the day for changes in health status.

Area Managers/Site Supervisors are responsible to ensure all exclusions are reported to the Health Services Coordinator daily.

Illness Isolation Area

Each site must have a designated Illness Isolation Area where they can separate an Individual from others.

- Individuals must utilize this room while waiting to determine if they should go home following the follow current SCHS COVID-19 Exclusion Summary and Group Participation Guidelines.
- After each use, the Illness Isolation area should be cleaned and sanitized/disinfected following current protocols.

Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 Within the Facility

- If anyone who has entered the facility is diagnosed with COVID-19, report to the Area Manager and Health Services Coordinator.
- Report to the Area Manager and the Health Services Coordinator ***ANY cluster of illness, not just COVID-19 among the facility's staff or attendees.***
- Staff will be notified, and exposure letters will be given to families to inform them if they have been exposed to COVID-19 while at our facility.

Illness Reporting

The Health Services Coordinator is the designated COVID-19 Point of Contact to facilitate communication, maintain healthy operations, and respond to COVID-19 questions from state or local public health authorities, state or local regulatory agencies, families, and staff.

The Health Services Coordinator will report elevated levels of absenteeism due to respiratory illness in our facilities to the County Public Health. SCHS will end program activities if cases warrant, and it is recommended by the Oregon Health Authority or Local Public Health Authority.

Vaccinations

SCHS strongly encourages eligible staff and children to stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations. Vaccine education materials and availability will be provided to staff and enrolled participants annually, and staff will provide support in obtaining vaccines as needed.

All staff, contractors and volunteers who are in classrooms or working directly with children other than their own shall be fully vaccinated for COVID-19, except those who have an approved exemption on file with the ORCCA HR department.

Those who are granted an exemption will undergo weekly testing for current COVID-19 infection.

Considerations for Prioritizing Strategies

SCHS will consider local context when selecting strategies to prioritize for implementation. Additional factors to consider include:

- Age of population served: Layered prevention strategies that are most suitable for young children will be given special consideration.
- Children with disabilities: Reasonable modifications and accommodations, when necessary, will be provided to ensure equal access to in-person learning for children with disabilities.

- People at risk of getting very sick: Children and staff who are at risk for getting very sick with COVID-19 or who have family members at risk for getting very sick will be provided additional protections to ensure they can remain safely in the classroom.
- Equity: Care will be taken so that decisions related to layered prevention strategies and learning options do not disproportionately affect any group of people.
- Availability of resources: Availability of resources, such as funding, personnel, or testing materials, will be considered when prioritizing strategies.