

Prairie Pals Covid-19 Frequently Asked Questions

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General Questions:

How does Prairie Pals make decisions regarding coronavirus?

We are working closely with and evaluating the recommendations from the Kendall County Health Department, the Department of Children & Family Services, the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control to adapt and respond to their latest guidance and direction.

Kendall County Health Department (KCHD): <http://www.kendallhealth.org/>
IL Department of Children & Family Services (DCFS): <https://www2.illinois.gov/dcfs/>
Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH): <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/>
Center for Disease Control (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/>

Updated: 8/22/20: As a center, we are licensed by DCFS and are required to follow their standards in our daily operations. They have provided the following link to the Governor's Restore Illinois as a guideline for enhanced Covid protocols and we are using this additional resource in guiding our decisions at Prairie Pals. The most updated version of their guidance can be referenced at the following link:

https://www2.illinois.gov/dcfs/brighterfutures/healthy/Documents/Day_Care_Guidance.pdf

We are also being asked to follow the IDPH exclusion guidance for determining when a child should stay home from preschool or childcare and advise on medical follow up.

You can view the most current IDPH exclusion guidance at the following link:
<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/IDPH-COVID19-Exclusion-Decison-Tree.pdf>

How are you keeping children safe and healthy in the center?

We're partnering with the local health department and closely monitoring the latest updates from the CDC to ensure we're following their guidance on the most up-to-date recommendations.

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of everyone in our community, we're being vigilant about enforcing Illinois Department of Public Health Exclusion Guidance linked above in Question 1. While we realize this may be a burden, staying home when sick is one of the best ways to keep illness from spreading.

Updated 6/22/20: In addition to the above, we have received guidance from the KCHD and DCFS regarding some new health check-in procedures.

Each family and staff member will be emailed an electronic Return to Prairie Pals Health Questionnaire two weeks prior to their return date. This form is provided to us by the KCHD and must be on file before any child or staff member will be allowed to return.

We will also be implementing new daily health check requirements into our drop-off procedures. Drop-off, pick-up and daily child health checks for Childcare will happen outside each Childcare classroom door. There will be social distancing marks outside of each classroom to help families maintain appropriate distance. Parents, guardians and those authorized to drop-off / pick-up will NOT be permitted into the classrooms.

Drop-off, pick-up and daily child health checks for Preschool will happen in the carline.

Staff temperatures will be taken each day upon arrival.

Will face coverings be required?

Updated 8/22/20: The state continues to modify their stance regarding face coverings for children in day care and early learning environments, and we will continue to adapt to meet the guidelines and standards as necessary. As a program, we are encouraging students to wear face coverings. Masks have been proven as an effective means of reducing the spread of germs and illness, and we are committed to keeping our students and staff as safe as possible when left in our care. That being said, we recognize that not all children can adequately manage a face covering. We are following the Governor's Restore Illinois Guidelines (most current guidance is referenced above in Question 1) and are monitoring face coverings as tolerated by the child.

Updated 6/22/20:

Children: Face coverings will not be required for children. When possible and at the parent or guardian's discretion, children 2 years old and older who can safely and appropriately wear, remove and tolerate them, may wear face coverings. Face coverings must be provided by the family if you choose for your child to wear one. You may want to send an extra in the backpack along with the child's extra change of clothes.

If the child isn't able to meet the expectation of managing the face covering on their own or if the face covering is causing the child to touch their face more frequently than without it, the face covering will be deemed inappropriate. If the child is refusing to wear the provided mask, the staff will not force compliance.

Face coverings will NOT be worn while eating, drinking, sleeping or resting on cots. Face coverings will also NOT be worn during outdoor large motor play or when children are able to be physically distanced in the classroom.

Staff: Staff members will wear face coverings when physical distancing from families and/or the children in our care isn't possible per the CDC guidelines.

Parents / Guardians / Authorized Drop-off & Pick-Up People: All parents / guardians / authorized drop-off and pick-up persons MUST wear a face covering during drop-off and pick-up procedures; this includes individuals in the Preschool carline.

Original Response: At this time, we have not received updated standards from our licensing representative at DCFS regarding changes to existing daily operations and

policies. As guidelines are established and communicated to us, we will refine our re-opening plans and communicate that information to our families. Please check back to this FAQ document, as well; we will update and expand upon specific questions as we are given additional guidance.

Will Preschool classes be running and what will that look like?

We anticipate that Preschool classes will be running this Fall, as scheduled. The circumstances surrounding the re-opening of businesses, childcare centers and schools alike are evolving day by day. As we receive guidance from our DCFS Representative with any policies or procedures that may require us to implement change to our operations, we will communicate those to our families.

Updated 8/14/2020: Oswego School District 308 has decided to open with remote classes only for the beginning of the school year. Is Prairie Pals Preschool following the district's remote-only decision?

Per the email communication that was sent on July 27, we plan to return to Preschool on time as scheduled, and to continue in-person classes regardless of the school district's decisions regarding remote learning. Our program operates with significantly lower head counts than any of the local school buildings and we are taking all necessary precautions to keep our students, staff and families safe and healthy while giving our young learners the best opportunity for social and academic growth.

Where can I find the most up to date information on the center and Covid-19?

We will utilize this FAQ document to update information as new questions arise. We'll also send information via the Sandbox system and email when we have specific directions to communicate to our families. You can also utilize the links provided at the beginning of this document to reference the sources and agencies that are providing guidance to us in our decision making process.

Update 8/14/2020: If you are not receiving our email communications, please be sure to check your junk / spam folder as we have had issues with our communications being flagged as spam in the past. You may need to mark one of our messages as "safe" or add our contact information into your email contacts to prevent that from continuing.

Illness & Illness Related Building Closures:

What are your criteria for closing the center?

We continue to closely monitor and follow the guidance of the KCHD and the CDC. Any decision to close the center would be made in partnership with the local health department. If a case of Covid-19 is found at the center, we would communicate with the KCHD and follow their lead on closure recommendations.

How likely is it that the center would temporarily close due to a case of Covid-19?

Due to the many unknown factors and evolving circumstances, we cannot determine the likelihood of a center closure. We continue to closely monitor and follow the guidance of the KCHD and the CDC. Any decision to close would be made in partnership with the

health department. If a center closure is required, we will keep families updated with frequent correspondence via Sandbox.

How would we be notified about closures and reopening?

We will communicate closures and reopenings via our Sandbox student management system. It is essential that all families have up to date contact information in the Sandbox system so you don't miss these important communications. There is also a Sandbox Parent App available for download on your mobile devices for ease of access.

Will I be charged tuition if my child doesn't attend?

We understand the hardship any building closure imposes on our families who rely on us for childcare and preschool. We rely on tuition income to meet our required expenses for the building and personnel in order to keep our facility open and running to serve you beyond any short-term closure due to an unforeseen illness outbreak. We are hoping to mitigate any closures to the best of our ability by following the guidelines being established to safely re-open and asking for the partnership of our families and staff to help prevent illness from coming into the facility. In the event that we do need to close under the advisement of the health department, we have established the following tuition guidelines.

For Childcare:

Updated 8/22/20: In the event of any short-term building closure: One-half of your normal childcare tuition will be due for up to 2 weeks. For any closure that extends beyond that time-frame, we will work with and follow the guidelines established by state and local directives. No tuition credits will be given for partial week closures.

In the event that the building is open, but you choose not to send your child due to coronavirus concerns: your childcare tuition will be due according to your tuition agreement.

In the event that the building is open, but your child is sick and required to stay home: per our standard policy as outlined in the Prairie Pals Handbook, your childcare tuition will be due according to your tuition agreement.

For Preschool:

In the event of any short-term building closure: preschool tuition will be due as scheduled and no credits will be applied for missed days. The preschool program has created an e-learning plan that will be implemented in these circumstances. Your child's teacher will communicate classroom curriculum via Sandbox and provide you with the opportunity to continue learning from home during any days missed. For any closure that extends beyond a 2 week time-frame, we will work with and follow the guidelines established by state and local directives.

In the event that the building is open, but you choose not to send your child due to coronavirus concerns: your preschool tuition will be due as scheduled and no credits will be applied for missed days.

In the event that the building is open, but your child is sick and required to stay home: per our standard policy as outlined in the Prairie Pals Handbook, your preschool tuition will be due as scheduled and no credits will be applied for missed days.

What if a child or teacher shows symptoms associated with coronavirus while they are at the center?

Updated 8/22/20: If a child or teacher begins to show symptoms of coronavirus or any other illness, we will reference the most current IDPH exclusion document linked in question 1. If the symptomatic individual is able to provide an alternate diagnosis from a doctor, they can return after being fever & symptom-free for 24 hours without medication. If the symptomatic individual isn't confirmed to have an alternate diagnosis and there is no clinical testing for Covid, the individual will need to stay home for 10 days from the onset of fever or other symptoms AND be fever and symptom free for 24 hours prior to return.

What happens if a teacher or staff member believes they have had direct exposure with a confirmed case in the community?

In this instance, we will work with the teacher or staff member to gather details and then work with the KCHD on guidance. If the employee confirms they've had close contact exposure to a confirmed case, we will follow the KCHD guidance and the teacher or staff member must stay home in self-isolation for a period of 14 days. We will welcome them back to our center at the end of 14 days if they haven't experienced any symptoms. If they do experience symptoms, they'll need to notify us and get medical clearance before coming back.

Do you reserve the spots for families that have been isolated based on recommendation of my physician or the health department?

If the absence from the center is a recommendation or requirement from your physician or the health department, we will work with families to hold their spots as long as possible.

Center Reopening:

My child is returning to Prairie Pals soon. Are there things I can be doing at home to help prevent the spread of illness for when my child returns?

Original Response: We see our center as a safe and clean environment for children to learn and grow, and we need your partnership. There are many self-care practices that we teach and implement in our center that you can help reinforce at home. For example, encouraging good hand washing practices and respiratory etiquette when coughing or sneezing, or practicing independence when wiping your child's nose. The ability to manage these small things independently goes a long way to help prevent the spread of illness in a classroom setting.

Updated 8/22/20: Per the revised state guidelines, we are encouraging children to wear face coverings if they can manage them. Please work with your child on their ability to manage putting it on and removing it independently.

Original Response: Some procedures and schedules may look a little different when you return to the center. Please talk to your children and use positive and encouraging words to let them know that we're excited to have them back at Prairie Pals even if things aren't exactly the same as when they left.

Are you hiring a professional cleaning service to clean the center? Are you doing a deep clean?

Prairie Pals retains a professional cleaning service that provides routine and seasonal deep cleaning at our facility. Since the building has been closed to students since mid-March, we are doing a complete carpet cleaning and a deep clean of the facility prior to re-opening.

Once re-opened, we will continue with diligently cleaning and disinfecting the center throughout the day, as well as practicing the self-care and hygiene etiquette referenced above. These are the most effective methods outlined by the CDC in the prevention of spreading illness. We're working closely with the local health department to determine when an additional deep clean is recommended. In the event an individual in the center has confirmed direct exposure to a confirmed case, is being tested for, or has been confirmed having Covid-19, we would ensure a deep clean takes place prior to the return of any employee, child or family.