RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN

FOR ZION LUTHERAN PRESCHOOL

Introduction:

Schools in our community were impacted in an unprecedented way by the emergence of the novel coronavirus (SARS-Co V-2), the causative agent of COVID-19. As we have moved through this pandemic, we have learned that children are less vulnerable to infection and are unlikely to become seriously ill with COVID-19. The profound negative impact of loss of in-person schooling on the well-being of children has been well documented and thus we are preparing for the return to school for the 2020-2021 school year.

However, we must be attentive that this public health crisis has not ended. Adults, particularly those who are older and those with underlying health conditions, are at increased risk of serious illness from COVID-19. Our schools need to be prepared to reduce the chance that anyone will acquire this infection during the school day and armed with a protocol to respond to a case of infection. Zion will adapt to new emerging information in order to create a safe and robust educational experience. Although planning for this “new normal” may create some inconveniences, if we work together as a community, we will help ensure that our students, staff and faculty will stay healthy and will reduce the chance of significant educational disruptions.

The following are procedures that Zion will implement to reduce the spread of the novel coronavirus:

**Social Distancing**

* Students and staff at Zion will not be required to practice social distancing as one of the biggest parts of preschool is learning to interact with peers and adults outside of the family.
* Students will remain with their own classmates during the morning session to reduce exposure to students outside of their classroom. Snack time, recess, and bathroom breaks will be staggered to keep children from being exposed to children outside of their classroom.
* Parents/guardians will not be permitted to enter the building unless they have business in the office. This will reduce the amount of people in the building.
* Health screening questions will be administered to anyone entering the building.
* Accurate records will be kept of individuals who enter the building in case an outbreak occurs to assist with contact tracing efforts.

**Screening-Staff**

* Health screenings will be implemented for all staff before reporting to work.
* Staff will administer a self-assessment before or when reporting to work. Questions on the self-assessment include the new onset of any of the following not explained by another known condition (note: the CDC may update symptoms at any time): fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea; Zion will consult with the Marion County Health Department regarding procedures for workforce tracing following a positive COVID-19 test by an employee, student or those who have come into contact with and individual testing positive for COVID-19.
* If a staff members answers “Yes” to any of the screening questions, they should not report to work.
* Random temperature checks may be used to reinforce the practice of self-screening.

**Screening – Students**

* Heath screenings will be implemented for all staff before reporting to school.
* Parents are asked to screen their children before sending them to school. If children exhibit a new onset of any of the following not explained by another known condition (note: the CDC may update symptoms at any time): fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taster or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea; Zion will consult with the Marion County Health Department regarding procedures for workforce tracing following a positive COVID-19 test by an employee, student or those who have come into contact with and individual testing positive for COVID-19.
* Students may have their temperatures taken as they enter the building. Parents/guardians may be asked to complete the screening questions for their own children. Note that only a minority of children who have COVID-19 will have a fever.

**When Someone Is Sick**

We have a culture of working or going to school when sick, and we need to change that culture by encouraging staff and students to stay home when sick. We must strive to keep sick people at home.

If someone exhibits signs of illness:

* Ill staff members will be sent home immediately. If a student is ill, the student will be isolated until arrangements can be made for the child to be picked up by a parent or guardian.
* Individuals are advised to contact a healthcare provider if they exhibit symptoms or answered “Yes” to any screening question. The healthcare provider will be able to determine whether the symptoms are a result of COVID-19 infection or if there are other health issues.
* Zion will follow the guidance of the Marion County Health Department regarding contact tracing, classroom or school closure, notification of community, sanitizing protocols, etc. if a case of COVID-19 is identified within the school.

**Face Masks (or Face Shields)**

* Zion will not require face masks to be worn by students. Staff will wear masks if required by health department.
* If parents would like their children to wear masks, staff will do their best to encourage them to do so.

**Gloves – Staff (gloves not necessary for students)**

* Gloves required for any staff member working with sick or suspected sick individuals. A fresh pair of gloves will be worn when working with each new individual. An individual should wash hands (or use hand sanitizer if soap and water is not readily available) before putting on gloves and then once again after removing gloves.

**Hand Washing – Staff and Students**

* Hand washing will be encouraged or the use of hand sanitizer upon entering the building, before eating, after eating, after restroom usage, before any group activities, and before boarding the school van.
* Hand washing will be encouraged any time the face/mouth are touched.

**Water Fountains – Staff and Students**

* Water fountains will available to refill water bottles or cups only.
* Individuals should not use the water fountains for direct consumption.
* Children are encouraged to bring personal water bottles from home clearly labeled with child’s name. Bottles should be sent home every day and washed.

**Restrooms**

* The number of individuals in the restrooms will be limited.
* A deep cleaning of the bathrooms will be administered at least once a day. High touch surfaces will be cleaned/wiped down throughout the day.

**Transportation**

* Seats will be assigned to reduce transmission and assist with contact tracing if necessary.
* The van will be sanitized daily.

**Cleaning and Disinfecting**

* Surfacing will be cleaned and disinfected per CDC guidance. These guidelines can be found at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).
* Routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces will be practiced.
  + More frequent cleaning and disinfection may be used based on level of use.
  + High-touch surfaces and objects (such as tables, doorknobs, light switches, desks, phones, keyboards, faucets, etc.) will be cleaned and disinfected regularly.
* EPA-registered household disinfectants, properly diluted bleach solutions, or alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol will be used daily.

**Color Code System**

Zion will be following the color code system set in place by the Palmyra Public School District. Due to the number of students at Zion who have siblings in the Palmyra School District, Zion will follow the Public School’s lead in shutting down and reopening the school building.

* Green: All staff/students will return to school using the regular school-year calendar continuing to follow public health guidelines by implementing safety measures. We are able to effectively manage any new cases of COVID-19 and the risk to staff and students remains low.
* Yellow: Low infection rates and lifted mitigation strategies would allow us to go back to school for in-person learning in August, but a higher infection rate forces us into virtual learning environment during the school year or a combination of virtual learning and in-person lessons.
* Red: Virtual learning will be made available to all students, no in-person learning will take place. Staff may or may not be allowed in the building.