



COVID-19 SAFETY MANUAL

Rev. 1/3/21, Clarifications Issued 8/1/21

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COVID-19 Safety Manual

Premier Academy, Inc. has created the COVID-19 Safety Manual in response to the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 virus. It is our intention to create policies and procedures that keep safety at the forefront of our efforts.

Our program continues to follow DECAL's Bright from the Start Rules and Regulations for Childcare, as well as all other programming regulations (Partnerships, Funder Requests, etc.).

This manual addresses how the center has responded to COVID-19, as well as how we will operate while the virus remains a threat. This manual will be updated as new information, guidelines and directives are provided. We will operate under the policies and procedures contained in the COVID-19 Safety Manual until further notice.

Information contained in the manual has been organized by sections. You will find policies created for the following operational components of our agency:

- 1. Re-entry**

This section addresses the steps taken to ensure a successful re-entry.

- 2. Staff Health and Protection**

This section addresses the steps we will take to ensure the safety of all staff, including protective equipment required, safety checks as well as access to the facility.

- 3. Child Drop-Off & Pick-Up Procedures**

This section addresses the protocols to be used for child drop-off and pick-up, including staggered arrival and departure times and screening processes.

- 4. General Facility Health and Safety**

This section addresses the cleaning and sanitation of the facilities, including processes for limiting access to common areas. Sanitation schedules and additional resources utilized are outlined, as well.

- 5. Classroom Health and Safety**

This section describes the processes for keeping children healthy and safe while in their classroom. Policies have been created to address handwashing, cleaning and sanitation, as well as how to enforce social distancing amongst the children. Classroom design and rearrangement, as well as cleaning and sanitation schedules are outlined in this section, as well.

- 6. Playground Health and Safety**

This section describes how playground spaces will be utilized. Classroom playground schedules and cleaning & sanitation processes are outlined in this section

- 7. Administrative Procedures**

This section addresses the changes made to administrative operations, including enrollment processes, family support needs as well as technology enhancements that have been made

1. Re-entry

Reduced Operating Hours

- In order to greatly reduce the amount of contact between our staff, children and families, we will operate limited hours until a further assessment can be made on how to return to full operating capacity.
- The center will OPERATE between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. The center will be open prior to that time, to allow staff time to enter the building, be screened and ready to operate by 7:00 a.m.

Models

- Every family has the option of choosing one of the two models of operation: Traditional (Face to Face), or Virtual (online only)
- Families selecting the Virtual will enroll in **PAVES** (Premier Academy's Virtual Engagement Strategy). The PAVES manual is available on the website at www.premier-academy.org.

Cleaning/Sanitization

- Both facilities will be professionally cleaned and sanitized prior to staff returning from breaks.
- Breakrooms will be closed until further notice.
- Daily porters will be on site to clean and disinfect shared spaces and commonly used items (door knobs, etc.).
- Classrooms and facilities will be sanitized using a fogging system, nightly.

Training

- Prior to re-entry, ALL staff members will receive a copy of the COVID-19 Safety Plan. Staff members will review the contents thoroughly, offer feedback and sign to acknowledge.
- In the week prior to children returning, teachers will receive final copies of the COVID-19 Safety Plan and will be trained on all policies and procedures contained in the manual.

Protective Gear

- All staff members are required to wear appropriate protective coverings while inside the common spaces of our facility.
- Children are not required to wear masks and will not be provided masks by our agency. However, children may wear masks or other PPE, if brought from home.
- All staff members will be provided with 2 cloth face coverings, 1 face shield and disposable gloves.
- Disposable masks and gloves will be plentiful and available for any staff member who needs one.

2. Staff Health & Protection

Staff Health

- A daily health screening will be conducted on each staff member, upon arrival to work.
- Upon arrival, temperatures will be checked of all staff members reporting to work by a member of the Administrative Team.
- Staff with an elevated temperature will be referred to their primary care physician and a letter of clearance is required to return to work.

- If staff members remain home due to illness, a negative COVID test result must be submitted, prior to returning to work.
- Premier Academy may require COVID testing results of employees at various times. Premier Academy will provide testing on-site. Employees who choose to not be tested by Premier Academy agree to furnish a COVID test by an outside medical provider within the established time frame, provided to staff.
- Staff members are to speak with Center or Executive Leadership, confidentially, should they have any health issues which warrant concern.

Individual Staff Responsibilities

- All employees are expected to take ongoing actions to protect their health and the health of others.
- Should staff feel ill during the day, they must report this to their supervisor immediately. Center Leadership Teams will assist with creating an individualized plan to return to work, for ill staff members.
- Protective gloves and masks will be provided to all staff and required when inside the common areas of the facility.
- Staff members are required to speak with Center or Executive Leadership should they have knowledge of any potential exposure to the virus.
- Staff members are expected to follow the most stringent health and safety practices, outside of the center, as a way to mitigate transmission of COVID-19 in the childcare facility. Staff members should consider the health and safety of our children, families and co-workers at all times. Social distancing and enhanced hygiene continue to be the best defense for fighting COVID-19.

3. Child Drop-off & Pick-up Procedures

Parking

- Each center will have visible signs to indicate where parents are to park. Upon approaching the center, parents will follow the social distancing signs and decals.

Health Station

- Each center will have a health station outside of the front entrance, where temperature checks and health screenings/questionnaires are completed for the child and parent.
- A designated Administrative Team member, will be on site to take temperatures and conduct health screenings. Any staff who is also trained to conduct health screenings will receive training, orientation as well as necessary protective gear and equipment.
- Each center will have a designated space outside of the front entrance where temperature of parents and children will be checked at drop-off.
- All parents and children must have a temperature below 100 degrees. Should the parent or child have a temperature exceeding 100 degrees, or exhibit any general signs of illness, the child will not be served that day and the Executive Leadership Team will make determinations on when/if the child will be able to return to center, and what, if any, documentation is required for return.

Greeting Station

- Greeting stations will be set up outside of each facility's entrance.
- Each greeting station will be used for signing in and out.

- Staff members will either use electronic devices or manual forms to sign children in and out.
- Parents will sign their children in and out using the designated clipboard/binder.
- “Used” pens will be separated, cleaned and sanitized prior to being returned to the “Clean” bin.
- Sign in and out sheets will indicate the time that the child arrived.
- Greeters return sign in and out sheets to the front desk.
- Parents are not allowed beyond the greeting stations.
- Parents are not allowed into the facility unless given express consent by the Center Director or Executive Director.

Arrival

- Each classroom teacher will retrieve their children from the Greeting Station at their designated arrival time, or as called by Center Leadership. Teachers will be notified by either intercom or walkie-talkie when there is a need to retrieve children from the entrance.
- Infants will be transported to their classrooms in the bye-bye buggies. Parents will buckle their child in the seat belt and teachers will take their children directly to their classroom at the end of their designated arrival time.

Departure

- Teachers will return children to the Greeting Station for departure at their designated time, or as parents arrive.

4. General Facility Health & Safety

Facility Access

- Parents and visitors are not allowed inside the facility.
- Access to the facility will be limited to staff, therapists and approved regulation entities (DECAL, Head Start/Early Head Start, etc.).
- Access to the facility by any one not listed above must be approved by Center Leadership.

Programming

- The program will not implement any auxiliary programs at this time (summer camp, school-aged care, etc.).

General Facility Precautions

- Prior to the facility re-opening and prior to staff returning from extended breaks, each facility will be professionally cleaned and sanitized.
- Additional cleaning staff are on site throughout the day to disinfect all shared and multi-use spaces.
- All non-kitchen personnel are prohibited from entering the kitchen.
- All breakrooms are closed for socializing and gatherings.
- There will be no transporting of children for any purpose (field trips, etc.).

5. Classroom Health and Safety

Staffing

- Teachers will be restricted to their classroom only.
- Teachers will “self-cover” their classrooms for breaktimes. If ratios present a challenge, teachers are required to call the front desk to speak to a member of management, prior to leaving for break.

- In order to support staffing patterns, Premier Academy will hire site-specific substitutes to ensure adequate coverage, in the event that staff members are out.
- Substitutes will receive a COVID-manual, orientation and associated training. Substitutes are expected to follow the requirements outlined in this manual, as regular employees.

Ratios

- The program will continue to adhere to DECAL ratios.
- Classrooms will include the same children in the group each day, with the same childcare providers.

Safety Measures

- Classrooms will include the same children in the group each day and the same childcare providers.
- Group activities that may promote transmission will cease until further notice.
- As much as possible, the center will individualize classroom supplies and materials (crayons, markers, etc.) in order to prevent cross-contamination.
- The program will cease toothbrushing until further notice. Instead, oral hygiene supplies and materials will be provided to the families for home use.
- The mixing of groups will be limited by staggering playground times and keeping groups separate for special activities such as art, music, and exercise.
- All soiled clothes will be placed in a closed bag/container and returned to families at the end of the day.
- Parents will be limited to bringing a change of clothing for their child. Parents are asked to place their child's clothing in a gallon-size storage bag. Storage bags will also be available at the Greeting Station, daily.

Nap time

- Teachers will ensure that children's naptime mats (or cribs) are spaced out as much as possible, ideally 6 feet apart.
- Place children head to toe in order to further reduce the potential for viral spread.

Handwashing

- Follow proper hand hygiene guidance for adults and children such as washing hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (about as long as it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" twice).
- Hand sanitizing products with 60 % alcohol will be used in lieu of handwashing when outdoors and hands are washed upon returning indoors. Hand sanitizer must be stored out of reach of children when not in use. Hand sanitizer cannot be used for diapering or eating, preparing, or serving food.
- In addition to usual handwashing, make sure to wash hands: upon arrival in classroom in the morning, before and after eating meals and snacks, after blowing noses, coughing, or sneezing or when in contact with body fluids, after toileting or changing diapers.
- Teachers should assist children with avoiding touching eyes, nose, and mouths.
- Teachers should encourage children to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or an elbow.

- Teachers will wash the hands of children prior to returning them to the Greeting Station for departure.

Meals

- Meal-times serve as a “high-risk” activity for the transmission of COVID-19 in childcare settings. Once meals have been served, teachers are expected to sit in close proximity to the children to continue to supervise and support the health habits of the children and to eliminate choking possibilities.
- Kitchen staff will obtain their meal service numbers from the front desk’s sign in and sign out forms.
- All meals will be served in the classrooms. Serving utensils will be disposable, one- time usage.
- FAMILY STYLE DINING HAS BEEN SUSPENDED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.
- Kitchen staff will prepare individual plates for the children and teachers will serve children in the classroom.
- Kitchen staff will leave each classroom’s meal cart outside of their classroom and will not enter the classrooms.
- Teachers will return the cart to the outside of their classroom for retrieval from kitchen staff.

Instruction

- All classes will refrain from water play and sensory play such as rice, beans, sand, or playdough activities.
- Teachers will utilize this time to work with the children on safety practices. Classroom lessons will be designed to ensure that students know how they can keep themselves and their classmates safe.
- As much as possible, teachers will utilize the “One Primary Caregiver” model in their classrooms, to further socially distance.
- Teachers will develop lessons around supporting and nurturing relationships, as well as safety procedures. Lesson plans will be reviewed for necessary components.
- In the event that face to face instruction isn’t possible, virtual instruction will occur immediately, on the established virtual schedule. Refer to PAVES manual.

Cleaning & Sanitation

- Premier Academy is a 3-star Quality Rated center. This indicates that the organization has the capacity to successfully embed the most stringent cleaning and sanitation practices. Staff members will continue to utilize cleaning solutions and sanitation solutions as indicated in Caring for our Children for cleaning surfaces in the classrooms.
- Surfaces and objects that are frequently touched, especially toys and games must be cleaned between use. This includes cleaning objects/surfaces not ordinarily cleaned daily, such as doorknobs, light switches, classroom sink handles, countertops, crib rails, desks, chairs, tables, cubbies (Use this information to create a checklist).
- Toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized will be removed from the classroom and not used.
- Toys will be laundered daily.
- Toys will not be shared between classes.

- Teachers will keep a designated bin for separating mouthed toys and maintain awareness of children’s behaviors. When a child is finished with a mouthed toy, it will be removed, placed in a closed, toy bin that is inaccessible to other children, and washes hands. Clean and sanitize toys before returning to children’s area.
- Sheets and blankets will be laundered daily (infants/toddlers). Preschool/Pre-k sheets and blankets will be laundered twice weekly.
- Revised Laundry Schedules have been created, will be posted and will be adhered to by all staff members.

Child Exclusion

- Children who display signs and symptoms of illness will immediately be isolated in their classroom and parents will be called to come and retrieve their child immediately.
- Children will require a doctor’s notice in order to return to school if they are sent home for any illness. Doctor’s notices must be submitted to Center Leadership only. Center Leadership will notify parents of the return date for the child.

6. Playground Health & Safety

Cleaning and Sanitation

- All playgrounds will be professionally cleaned and sanitized prior to re-entry from extended breaks.
- Each teacher will be responsible for cleaning and sanitizing the outdoor equipment, prior to their class returning inside.
- Playground equipment will be professionally cleaned and sanitized on monthly basis.

Health & Safety

- One group of children is allowed on the playground at one time unless they are separated by fencing.
- A revised playground schedule has been created, posted and will be adhered to by all staff members.

7. Administrative Procedures

Policies

- It is necessary for parents and staff to adhere to the policies and procedures included in the manual. This protects the health and safety of our children, families and staff. Any derivation from this manual requires approval by EXECUTIVE Leadership.
- Parents will receive a copy of relevant policies and procedures, taken from this manual.

Communication

- Premier Academy staff limits face to face contact with parents in accordance with State, Federal and Local guidelines.
- Families will be able to contact the school via telephone, email, text or a virtual platform for community resources, parent meetings and programming needs.

- The Premier Academy website will also be a source for school information, notices and procedures.
- Additional electronic processes will be initiated for school forms and signatures.
- Payments will be made on-line through Pro-Care. We will also utilize ONECALL messaging system as a means of communication with staff and families.

Suspected/Confirmed Cases of COVID-19

- The newly created policies within this manual are designed to lessen the exposure of COVID-19 to staff and children. Social distancing, proper handwashing, and cleaning and sanitation should greatly reduce the likelihood of transmission.
- Should the center be informed of any suspected cases of COVID-19 being present in the facility, the Executive Leadership will consult with local health authorities to determine the best way to proceed.
- In the event a child or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, that classroom will be closed. The Executive Leadership Team will notify parents and teachers of that classroom. Families and staff will be advised to follow the guidance from the Department of Public Health, potentially, self-quarantining for 14 days.
- The organization will lean on our regulatory and health officials (Department of Public Health, DECAL, etc.) in order to help us implement the best and safest closure plan (partial or whole).
- Should the organization be forced to close (either partially or wholly), we will immediately implement our virtual instructional plan.
- Members of the Executive Team will send out relevant correspondence to all stakeholders.

Staff Commitment

- Premier Academy has a long-standing history of operating a high-quality program, with the highest-quality staff. We will maintain our commitment to excellence and quality by ensuring that staff are present daily and in the spirit of teamwork and with a commitment to ensuring that the program is adequately staffed to provide the best care, even individually to our children.
- Staff will be sensitive to the emotional needs of children, upon their return and support children through this re-adjustment period.
- Premier Academy, with the support of our partners, will ensure that the mental health needs of families and staff members are able to be addressed. Supports will be offered for staff, children and families.
- Staff are committed to continuing to provide the highest quality customer service possible, even though time and interaction is limited. We commit to ensuring that professionalism remains a cornerstone of our operations.

UPDATED
2021-2022
COVID-19
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- Staff will be sensitive to the emotional needs of children, upon their return and support children through this re-adjustment period, as well as through their developmental milestones.
- Premier Academy, with the support of our partners, will ensure that the mental health needs of families and staff members are able to be addressed. Supports will be offered for staff, children and families.
- Staff are committed to continuing to provide the highest quality customer service possible, even though time and interaction is limited. We commit to ensuring that professionalism remains a cornerstone of our operations.

_____ I have received Premier Academy’s REVISED and UPDATED COVID-19 Safety Manual.

_____ I have read and understand the Staff Commitment section of the manual and understand the information contained within the manual.

_____ I further agree to abide by the policies and procedures set forth in the COVID-19 Safety Manual.

Staff Name

Date

Staff Signature

Date

