

2021-22 Spring Garden Waldorf School COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan

Updated 2/15/22

Introduction

Spring Garden Waldorf School is offering in-person classes five days per week for the 2021-2022 school year. This plan has been developed to minimize the risks of direct infection and transmission of SARS-CoV-2 while prioritizing in person learning. This document was developed based on guidance from the CDC, Summit County Public Health, and the SGWS Health and Safety Advisory Committee. All SGWS faculty and administrative staff had an opportunity to participate in 2021-22 planning or provide input to this document. The mitigation strategies vary based on the level of spread in the local community. We have purposely created a plan that doesn't require families to adjust schedules or protocols on a weekly basis. School administration will monitor levels of COVID-19 in Summit County. Any changes to protocol will be implemented by faculty and staff. The virus, its impacts, and our response has evolved over the last 18 months and we can continue to expect changes in mitigations as new information becomes available or mandates are put in place from national, state, and local public health officials.

The following links contain the reference guidance documents from the CDC, Ohio Department of Health, and Summit County Public Health that were used in developing these guidelines.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html>

https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/wcm/connect/gov/60e5b378-149b-4731-af10-6fb048b14481/K-12+guidance+Final+07272021.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CONVERT_TO=url&CACHEID=ROOTWORLDSPACE.Z18_M1HGGIK0N0JO00QO9DDDDM3000-60e5b378-149b-4731-af10-6fb048b14481-nlob8dB

<https://www.scph.org/covid/resources-schools-day-cares>

The Health and Safety Plan addresses the following areas:

1. Daily Health Assessments/Symptom Monitoring
2. Illness and Absence
3. Quarantine and Isolation
4. Screening and Testing
5. Vaccination
6. Distancing
7. Cohorting

8. Face Masks - **Updated 9/3/21**
9. Increased Exhalation Activities
10. Field Trips
11. Ventilation
12. Personal Hygiene
13. Outdoor Learning
14. Shared Materials
15. Cleaning Protocols
16. Building Use and Access
17. Mental Health Considerations
18. Distance Learning

1. Daily Health Assessments/Symptom Monitoring at School

In order to prevent the spread of infection, students, teachers, and other employees who have signs or symptoms of COVID-19 or live with anyone who has been diagnosed with or is suspected of having COVID-19 should stay home. Furthermore, those same people should notify the school immediately upon learning that they have been exposed to COVID-19 in any other circumstance.

Following CDC and SCPH guidelines, parents/guardians are expected to screen their children for COVID-19 symptoms and check their child's temperature prior to coming to school each and every day. School personnel are expected to screen themselves for COVID-19 symptoms and check their own temperature prior to coming to work each and every day. Students and school personnel must remain at home if they experience any of the following symptoms:

- Fever above 100°F
- Cough (for students with chronic cough due to allergies or asthma, a change from usual)
- Difficulty breathing (for students with asthma, check for a change from their baseline breathing)
- New onset of severe headache
- Loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Vomiting or diarrhea

Parents/guardians should have a low threshold for keeping their child home from school if any of the above symptoms are present.

Teachers and staff will monitor students for symptoms of COVID-19 throughout the day. They will have a low threshold to request assessment for students who develop persistent symptoms while at school unless the symptoms can be clearly attributed to another non-infectious factor or illness. If a student displays COVID-19 symptoms then the teacher will contact the office and they will be assessed in a designated sick room appropriate for COVID-19 isolation. A parent/guardian will be called to pick up the student. While waiting to go home, ill students will wear a face mask and be cared for in the sick room monitored by school personnel utilizing

appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). The parent/guardian will be referred to seek advice from their child's healthcare provider (MD/DO, CNP, PA) and a written release will be required before returning to school. Students are also cleared to return to school with a negative FDA authorized COVID test, provided they have been symptom free for 24 hours.

Parents/guardians may obtain a test through their child's healthcare provider. SGWS also has test kits available on request for use at home. Please contact the school office if you need help getting your child tested.

SGWS employees displaying symptoms of COVID-19, unless clearly attributed to another non-infectious factor or illness, will be sent home immediately. Fully vaccinated SGWS employees do not need to quarantine or be restricted from work following an exposure as long as they are asymptomatic.

School administration will work with Summit County Public Health for any confirmed case of COVID-19 that was present on school grounds to receive guidance and recommendations on further action.

2. Illness and Absence

Staying home when sick with COVID-19 is essential to keep COVID-19 infections out of schools and prevent spread to others. Students, teachers, and staff who have symptoms of infectious illness, such as influenza (flu) or COVID-19, should stay home and be referred to their healthcare provider for testing and care, regardless of vaccination status.

Despite the strategies SGWS enacts to mitigate risk of transmission, they will not completely prevent an employee or student from contracting an illness. Many illnesses overlap with similar symptoms to COVID-19. Due to the wide range of possible symptoms, it is expected that there will be an increase in absences from school and work. SGWS is maintaining the requirement for parents/guardians to report the reason for all student absences from school.

1. Student absence must be reported to the school office by phone or email on the morning of the absence. Please include the reason for the absence. When appropriate, SCPH recommends that ill students seek the advice of a healthcare provider to rule out COVID-19. In order to return to school, students must provide either a release from a healthcare provider or the results of a negative FDA authorized COVID test, provided they have been symptom free for 24 hours. Parents/guardians may obtain a test through their child's healthcare provider. SGWS also has test kits available on request for use at home. Please contact the school office if you need help getting your child tested. The CDC recommends that fully vaccinated people should still get tested if experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.
2. All confirmed cases of COVID-19 must be reported to the school. In turn, SGWS Administration will work with SCPH to support contact tracing. We will follow the guidance of SCPH regarding exclusion from school for quarantine or isolation.

3. Employees are expected to follow the same guidance by SCPH detailed above. Reporting positive cases of COVID-19 in our school community:

Tracy Edwards, Director of Administration, is the primary point of contact for any COVID-19 concerns and will take questions and manage reporting to SCPH. If she is unavailable, please contact Jess Kreis, Administrative Assistant. SGWS acknowledges that an individual's personal health information is private and will be kept confidential except when mandatory reporting requires consultation with SCPH.

Students and SGWS employees who have been diagnosed with COVID-19, through a lab test or clinical examination, should notify Tracy Edwards (tedwards@sgws.org) no later than 24 hours after receiving a confirmed diagnosis.

3. Quarantine and Isolation Procedures

Quarantine is used to separate someone who might have been exposed to COVID-19 and may develop illness away from other people. Quarantine helps prevent spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they have the virus. Isolation is a strategy to prevent transmission of COVID-19 by separating people with COVID-19 from those who are not infected.

The CDC updated recommendations for both quarantine after exposure and isolation after testing positive in late December of 2021. The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and Summit County Public Health (SCPH) updated guidance to reflect these changes in January of 2022.

Based on these changes, grades and early childhood students and school employees, exposed to positive cases of COVID-19 may remain in school. These revised guidelines apply to all students and employees, regardless of vaccination status and if the exposure to the positive case occurred in or out of the school environment. While direct contacts may remain in school, they must test on day 5 after exposure, wear a mask for 10 days after their last date of exposure, monitor for symptoms of COVID-19, and isolate and test if they start to experience symptoms associated with COVID-19.

SGWS will notify families and employees when they are considered to be a close contact as a result of a school exposure and will provide tests for students and employees for testing on day 5 after exposure.

Students that test positive for COVID-19 will continue to isolate for 10 days after initial symptoms or the positive test.

Faculty that test positive will isolate for five days. If symptoms are improved and they are fever free for 24 hours, faculty/staff can return to school with a negative test on days 6-10 or after day 10 if well enough to return.

4. Screening and Testing

COVID-19 tests can be used to detect active infections using diagnostic antigen or molecular-based tests. Testing for active infection or for screening when community spread is substantial (orange) or high (red) is an important tool to fight the spread of SARS-COV-2.

SGWS has rapid antigen tests for home use. These tests are self-administered under the guidance of a telehealth professional. Parents/guardians, faculty, and staff may request a test from the school office. These tests can be used to test a symptomatic person or to test close contacts who have been exposed to someone with COVID-19.

5. Vaccination

Vaccination is the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. People who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 are at low risk of symptomatic or severe infection. A growing body of evidence suggests that people who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 are less likely to become infected and develop symptoms and are at substantially reduced risk from severe illness and death from COVID-19 compared with unvaccinated people.

SGWS encourages faculty, staff, and parents to learn about the COVID-19 vaccine.

6. Distancing

Guidance from CDC states that physical distancing between individuals of 3 feet or more is vital for slowing the spread of COVID-19. Our school is fortunate to have access to spaces to accommodate our classes and meet the 3 feet physical distancing recommendations.

Grades students within a cohort will not be required to maintain physical distance during outdoor recess. Additionally, when community transmission of the virus is substantial (orange) or high (red), grades students will be distanced by 6 ft when masks are removed for eating and drinking.

Early Childhood classes will follow the 3 feet distancing recommendation during snack, lunch, and rest time. However, maintaining physical distance during the remainder of the day for early childhood classes is not feasible without significant impact on the social, emotional, and mental health of the children.

7. Cohorting

Guidance from national and state organizations recommend cohorting of students to reduce risk of virus transmission to a larger portion of the school population. All classes from Early Childhood through Grade 8 will work and play in smaller cohort groups. Each cohort will have separate indoor and outdoor spaces that will be designated for use.

When community transmission of the virus is low (blue) or moderate (yellow), cohorts will consist of groups of four classes. When community transmission is substantial (orange) or high (red), cohorts will consist of groups of two classes.

8. Face Masks

Face masks decrease the risk of transmission of COVID-19 from infected individuals to others. The CDC recommends indoor masking for all individuals age 2 and older, including students, teachers, staff, and visitors, regardless of vaccination status. When community transmission is substantial (orange) to high (red), the CDC recommends using masks outdoors during activities that involve close contact.

The CDC recommends that the general population wear cloth face masks. The cloth face mask should fit snugly yet comfortably on the face, mask the nose, mouth and chin and reach from before the ear around to the other side of the face. Bandanas and neck gaiters have been shown to be ineffective at controlling droplet emission and should not be worn at school. Face masks with a translucent, plastic window that show a person's mouth are permitted. Face shields are intended to provide additional protection and are not effective as a replacement for cloth masks.

Parents and guardians should send their child to school with at least three clean labeled masks each day. The school has extra masks available for any student that needs one. It is important that masks fit well to be effective. Face masks should be washed regularly at home.

[Please watch our Facemask Fit, Policy and Procedure Video.](#)

Requirements:

1. Inside: SGWS will require masks for all students, staff, and visitors while in the school building, regardless of the level of spread in the community.
2. Outdoors: When community transmission levels are low (blue) or moderate (yellow), masks are encouraged for all. When community transmission levels are substantial (orange) or high (red), SGWS will require masks for all students, staff, and visitors.

Accommodations:

The CDC recognizes there are specific instances when wearing a mask may not be feasible. In these instances, they recommend considering adaptations and alternatives.

- A child under the age of 2 years;
- A person with a disability who cannot wear a mask, or cannot safely wear a mask, for reasons related to the disability;
- A person for whom wearing a mask would create a risk to workplace health, safety, or job duty as determined by the OSHA workplace risk assessment.

Please note the following:

- Beyond these categories, there are few medical conditions that are incompatible with mask wearing. Specifically, asthma, allergies, headaches and sinus infections are not a contraindication for using a face covering/mask.
- A *medically licensed doctor* must provide written and signed documentation of a disability or condition for any student or employee needing mask accommodations. Licensed medical doctors include Medical Doctors (MD) or Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine (DO). We will also accept documentation from an MD psychiatrist.

- We cannot honor philosophical or religious mask exemptions or accommodations.

Please know that we may not be able to safely serve students who need full exemptions. We will work with families and employees who provide written and signed documentation of disability -- from a medically licensed doctor -- to provide mask accommodations. Accommodations may include strategies such as additional mask breaks, increased peer distancing or curricular accommodations for increased exhalation activities.

9. Increased Exhalation Activities

The CDC recommends additional considerations for increased exhalation activities, such as gym, speech and choral work, use of wind instruments, and athletics. Additional mitigations for these activities include conducting class outside when possible, providing specialized masks and bell covers for singing and wind instruments for grades students.

10. Field Trips

Individual class field trips may be planned when community transmission is low (blue) to moderate (yellow). There will be no field trips planned when community transmission is substantial (orange) or high (red).

11. Ventilation

Air purifiers, equipped with HEPA 13 air filters, will remain on in each room when students and staff are present. The air purifiers recycle the air three to six times per hour. Air movers will be used in the gym to improve air ventilation.

12. Personal hygiene

Proper hand hygiene is one of the most effective strategies to prevent the spread of most respiratory viruses including COVID-19, particularly during the pre-symptomatic phase of illness.

Staff will instruct students to wash hands frequently and to practice proper respiratory etiquette.

Handwashing stations are in each classroom in addition to the bathrooms. Students and teachers should wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water. If hand washing is not available, SGWS has hand sanitizer available at all building entrances and available in each classroom. If using hand sanitizer, apply to hands and rub hands together for about 20 seconds and until dry.

13. Outdoor Learning

Classes will have assigned outdoor spaces for class time and recess. As needed, the outdoor spaces may rotate depending on class needs.

14. Shared materials

Faculty and staff will minimize the use of shared materials as much as possible in classrooms and offices. Teachers should reinforce “no sharing” of food. Faculty and staff will also streamline materials and equipment used in the classroom to reduce the need for cleaning. If there is a positive case of COVID-19 in the classroom, any common materials should be cleaned and sanitized.

15. Cleaning Protocols

Routine cleaning and disinfecting are key to maintaining a safe environment for faculty, students, and staff. Cleaning removes dirt and most germs and is usually done with soap and water. Disinfecting kills most germs, depending on the type of chemical, and only when the chemical product is used as directed on the label. Cleaning and disinfecting reduce the chance that faculty, students, and staff will come into contact with viruses on surfaces.

Daily Cleaning of the Building

The building is cleaned and disinfected after each school day by a cleaning service. The daily cleaning includes cleaning and disinfecting of bathrooms, high touch surfaces, cleaning of floors, and trash removal. Daily cleaning protocols can be found [here](#).

Special cleaning procedures

The Administrative Staff will clean and disinfect the designated sick room and PPE after each use following protocols recommended by CDC. Additionally, the cleaning service will follow CDC protocols to clean and disinfect areas of the building when there is a confirmed case of COVID-19. These special cleaning procedures can be found [here](#).

16. Building Use and Access

SGWS will continue to limit building access to the students, faculty, and staff that use it on a daily basis. Unfortunately, we are not able to return to unlimited parent access due to limited space and distance recommendations. Our plans for this year include opportunities for parents to participate in school and class events, but the scope of the events will be adjusted based on community spread of the virus. Parents, guardians, volunteers, contractors, service providers and guests will have access to the building when invited for planned events and activities. For other circumstances, please call the office. Meetings of teachers, administrators, parents/guardians, board members, and other school committees may be held in person provided school mitigations for masking and distancing are in place. All meetings and room use must be scheduled with the office to ensure there is adequate space.

All parents and other adult visitors to the building should be accompanied by a staff member and follow these guidelines:

- All guests and visitors should remain at home and not visit the school if they exhibit any symptoms of COVID-19: Fever above 100°F, cough, difficulty breathing, new onset of severe headache, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, vomiting or diarrhea.
- All visits should be planned in advance.
- Visitors must follow school mitigations for distancing and masking.
- Work days will be limited to parent or other adult volunteers. We request that students not participate in work days.

17. Emotional/Behavioral Health Considerations

It is well known that emotional, mental and behavioral health challenges have increased in children, adolescents and adults in the U.S. during the COVID-19 pandemic. We plan to engage the services of a mental health professional to provide support to individual students and classes and to serve as a resource to staff members.

Teachers and staff will continue to monitor for students who may be struggling emotionally, mentally, or behaviorally. They will bring those concerns to the student's parent/guardian and work together to determine the best action plan for the student. Parents and guardians should make teachers aware of any concerns.

18. Distance Learning

We are following CDC guidelines for operation and intend to offer in person learning to our students. We will continue to offer remote learning for grades classes and students who need to isolate. Early childhood families will be provided with a packet for at home learning during isolation. Decisions to quarantine a class will be made by the SGWS Administration working with guidance from Summit County Health Department. The decision to move to fully remote learning due to viral transmission concerns in our local and immediate school community will be made by the SGWS Board of Trustees based on a recommendation from SGWS Administration. School administration will keep abreast of trends in the school and greater community and be in consultation with Summit County Health Department and our Health and Safety Advisory Committee in making recommendations to the Board regarding school closure.