

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS COVID-19 GUIDELINES- DROP-IN CLASSES

Irvine Nature Center believes strongly that children need time playing and exploring outdoors now more than ever as the world navigates the COVID-19 pandemic. We are committed to making our programs safe for children and staff and their families. To do so, we consult the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), and the Baltimore County Health Department (HD).

No list of restrictions, guidelines, or practices will remove 100% of the risk of exposure. However, all families and staff are crucial in keeping our community safe and reducing the risk of exposure through these policies and procedures.

OUTDOOR CLASSES

Nearly all activities will occur outdoors. In the event of thunder, lightning, strong winds that result in the closing of trails, or prolonged periods of torrential rain or excessive cold or hot temperatures, we will move class out of the elements into a conference room (Fern A). Please note that since we will still be outside on cold, hot, or rainy days as much as possible, please dress your child appropriately. If Irvine must cancel class due to a weather-related event, all participants will be refunded.

Whenever indoors, staff will do their best to distance students and windows will be kept ajar to increase air flow. A note about ventilation: in Fall 2020, Plasma Air Needlepoint Bipolar Ionizers were installed in Irvine's HVAC system to meet CDC guidelines and to provide a supply of sustainable, clean, uncontaminated air.

VACCINATION

Irvine Nature Center requires all staff and all ECE volunteers and interns to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Individuals with an approved medical or religious waiver can opt out of vaccination and instead submit weekly COVID-19 test results. At this time, all Irvine staff have been fully vaccinated.

There currently is no requirement for program participants or their caregivers to be vaccinated, but all participants 5yrs and up are strongly encouraged to get vaccinated. **If your child is fully vaccinated against COVID-19, it may result in less time in quarantine after an exposure or exclusion if someone at home is ill or exposed. Please see the following pages for details.** For information about where to get a vaccination, please visit the [Baltimore County Health Department website](#).

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

During all arrival and pick up times, all caregivers should do their best to keep a full 6' of social distance from individuals not in their household.

When you arrive at Irvine, please first pause at the gate house to let them know you are here for Bauer Explorers. A staff person at the kiosk stand at the head of the trail will conduct a quick health screening. After passing health screening, please walk your child down the path to the Glen outside the Woodland Garden. **Caregivers may not send students to the Glen unattended.** Caregivers may not linger in the Glen.

HEALTH AND EXCLUSION POLICY

Please note, if local COVID positivity or hospitalization rates rise, we may return to previous, stricter policies for exclusion. Due to the ability for vaccinated individuals to still transmit COVID-19, Irvine has adopted a stricter policy for vaccinated individuals than that suggested by health officials. Please see the following pages.

The very best thing you can do to ensure the health of other students and staff is to keep your child home if anyone in your household is unwell or was exposed to COVID. If your child will be absent due to any health reason, please let us know by emailing the Director of ECE and Stephanie Holzman.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS COVID-19 GUIDELINES- DROP-IN CLASSES

Individuals may NOT participate if	Until ...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> they or any household member tested positive for COVID-19 	quarantine is completed according to Health Department Guidelines.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> they had prolonged contact with an individual with confirmed COVID-19. CDC defines prolonged contact as w/in 6feet for at least 15 min. 	<p>*if vaccinated and able to consistently and properly mask, able to attend</p> <p>*if unvaccinated, a negative test result 5 days after exposure and wear a mask for 10 days, inside and out.</p> <p><i>Vaccinated participants are strongly encouraged to get a PCR test 5 days after an exposure.</i></p> <p>*Vaccinated staff will be permitted to return masked and MUST have a PCR test completed 5 days after exposure.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a household member has had prolonged contact with an individual with confirmed COVID-19. 	<p>*If the participant/staff is vaccinated: may attend class so long as the individual with known exposure is symptom free.</p> <p>*If the participant/staff is unvaccinated: after the exposed individual submits a negative COVID test conducted 72 hrs after exposure AND that individual completes the HD recommended quarantine AND that individual is symptom free.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> they exhibit any symptom below. <div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 5px; margin: 5px 0;"> <p style="text-align: center; color: green;">COVID-19 SYMPTOMS*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fever of 100.4 degrees+ Sore throat Cough Difficulty breathing Nausea or vomiting Diarrhea New onset of severe headache New loss of taste or smell </div> <p>*For chronic conditions such as asthma, symptoms should represent a change from baseline and a doctor's note must be supplied listing this as a previously diagnosed condition. For Preschool students, this must appear on the health intake form.</p>	<p>If no known exposure (one of the below)...</p> <p>A) a negative test result for the sick individual is issued AND symptoms have improved, no fever for 24hr w/out medication AND applicable criteria in the Communicable Criteria have been met.</p> <p>B) a doctor's note for the sick individual is provided documenting symptoms are due to specific alternative diagnosis AND other criteria listed in (A).</p> <p>C) at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared AND no fever for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication AND improvement of other symptoms.</p> <p>If known exposure (one of the below)...</p> <p>A) a negative test result is issued AND quarantine completed according to MDH and local guidance.</p> <p>B) a doctor's note is provided documenting symptoms are due to specific alternative diagnosis AND quarantine completed according to MDH and local guidance.</p> <p>C) at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared AND no fever for at least 24hrs w/o medication AND improvement of other symptoms AND quarantine completed according to MDH and local guidance.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A household member exhibits any of the symptoms above. 	<p>*If the participant/staff is vaccinated: may attend class so long as there is no known exposure and they themselves are symptom-free.</p> <p>*If the participant/staff is NOT vaccinated: see the box above.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They are awaiting test results due to symptoms or known exposure. 	negative test results are issued. (regardless of vaccination status)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A household member is awaiting results due to exposure/symptoms 	<p>*If the participant/staff is vaccinated: may attend.</p> <p>*If the participant/staff is NOT vaccinated: until negative results are given.</p>

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS COVID-19 GUIDELINES- DROP-IN CLASSES

If individuals have any of the following non-COVID related symptoms they may not attend:

- *Fever of 100 degrees or more
- *Unexplained rash (until cleared by a doctor)
- *Infectious pink eye (until cleared by doctor and on antibiotics for 24 hrs)
- *Head lice (until treated)
- *Green or yellow runny nose if paired with other symptoms

Individuals must be fever/vomiting/ diarrhea free for 24 hours w/out the aid of medication.

All tests must be PCR tests. Rapid tests will not be accepted.

Health Screenings

Every individual attending or working an ECE class must have a health screening and temperature check completed prior to joining the program or starting work. A staff person will conduct this screening at the head of the trail before you drop off your child. Health screening questions are based on the exclusion chart above. Any individual who fails the health screening will not be permitted to join the class.

When Symptoms Develop After Drop Off

If an individual develops symptoms consistent with a COVID-19- like illness or typical exclusionary symptoms during class, they will be sent home without exception. A child with symptoms will be isolated, but still under supervision until they are picked up. **Children must be picked up within 30 minutes if they are ill.**

Health Advisory Notification

All families must promptly inform the Director of Early Childhood Education if a student tests positive for COVID-19, is notified of an exposure, or develops any symptoms of COVID-19 with the 48 hours after attending a class. Failure to promptly inform the Director may result in the unintentional spread of disease and possible dismissal from future Irvine Programs.

When Irvine ECE is informed of a child or staff that developed a communicable disease or probable or confirmed COVID within 48 hours of attending class, Irvine will inform families in that child/staff's class. This communication will be provided so that parents can monitor their children for any symptoms and quarantine as needed. This communication will include guidance on quarantine, monitoring for symptoms, and when to be tested. You should also expect a call from HD contact tracers if there was a confirmed COVID case. During that time, it is imperative you keep the ECE director informed of the development of any symptoms. Please note, Irvine will abide by all privacy laws and not divulge the identity of sick individuals.

REVISED UNIVERSAL MASKING REQUIREMENT

As of March 12, Irvine Nature Center will lift its universal masking requirement **outdoors** as is in line with CDC, MSDE, and local health department guidelines. However, if our community level rises to high, we will re-institute a universal masking requirement outdoors.

Masks will still be required of all individuals exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19 for 10 days after their last exposure, regardless of vaccination status. If your child is unable to wear a mask after an exposure, they will be required to stay home for the full 10 days.

At this time, we will continue to mask whenever indoors, regardless of vaccination status. This includes bathroom trips, indoor class time due to inclement weather, and during Preschool drop off. **All individuals over 2yrs old must mask for these times.** We will re-evaluate indoor masking by the end of March.

All individuals and families may continue to wear masks as they are comfortable. Staff will attempt to encourage children to wear masks outdoors if parents request, but please understand this will not be fail proof and it will be extremely difficult for children to wear a mask if all the other children are not required to.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS COVID-19 GUIDELINES- DROP-IN CLASSES

Therefore, all students must have face coverings on hand daily. We recommend having at least 2 masks. Any type of cloth or disposable face covering will be accepted, however, please consider how difficult they are to put on. We request all student face coverings have elastic straps that do not require tying. If a child’s mask is on a tether, it must have an anti-choke mechanism on the back. We strongly encourage students to have a KN95 or KF94 mask on days we spend non-eating times indoors (inclement weather).

We understand masks can be uncomfortable and young children will need assistance and frequent opportunities for mask breaks. With proper coaching and encouragement most children can wear a facemask appropriately.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

ECE staff will do its best to create social distancing between students, however, strict social distancing limits children’s play and social development and therefore will not be expected. When children touch one another or share items, teachers will encourage children to do so in the safest way possible and instruct children to wash their hands after. There will be moments when people are close and staff will still physically comfort an upset child, assist with putting on and removing gear, etc. We will be the loving teachers we are and still have a developmentally appropriate and child-honoring practice.

HAND WASHING

All individuals must wash their hands frequently throughout the day and at the following times:

- Upon arrival (using hand washing stations in the class grove)
- Before and after putting on or assisting with a face covering
- After touching their face, preparing food, or eating
- After using the restroom and at appropriate transitions

When a sink and soap are not available, a hand sanitizer will be used. If water and soap are not available after eating, a handwipe will be used to remove food residue prior to using hand sanitizer.

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

ECE staff will follow CDC guidelines for appropriate cleaning and disinfection. When local infection rates have risen to the “high” level or after an illness in class, all surfaces and materials will be disinfected fully.

COMMUNICATION-Who to Contact

If you have questions or concerns about the class: Head of Homeschool programs, Stephanie Holzman

If you are unsure if your child should attend due to possible symptoms or a possible exposure: contact Katie directly. If you are leaving a voicemail please include your name, your child’s name, and your phone number.

If your child is going to be absent for any reason: email Stephanie Holzman and Katie Rooney.

For questions about payment or registration: contact Education Program Coordinator, Moriah Munsch.

If you are running late or an urgent matter arises during class: contact Stephanie Holzman.

Contact Information

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