



*"Giving all Galveston children the opportunity to soar"*

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# HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

## "PANDEMIC PLAN"

August 2021

In response to COVID-19, Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHS) provided specific Guidance to Childcare Facilities. Moody Early Childhood Center will operate based on best practices that are consistent with new requirements in accordance with state law, state disaster declaration, and federal guidance.

### BUILDING ACCESS

- Any person, except the following, are prohibited from accessing MECC without a scheduled appointment and health screening:
  - (1) staff;
  - (2) persons with legal authority to enter, including:
    - (a) law enforcement officers,
    - (b) HHSC Child Care Licensing staff, and
    - (c) Department of Family and Protective Services staff;
  - (3) professionals providing services to children;
  - (4) children enrolled at the operation; and
  - (5) parents or legal guardians who have children enrolled and present at the operation.
- Pickup and drop-off of children is required to take place outside of the operation, unless it has been determined that there is a legitimate need for the parent to enter an operation.
- Before allowing entry into the building, all individuals listed above will participate in a screening attestation which includes parents and staff completing Health Screening and submitting the answers and temperatures via Tadpoles, the student management system.
- Individuals not enrolled at MECC or on staff will be screened before entering the building, including answering screening questions and having their temperature taken.
- **Parents and Guardians: Masks and social distancing are strongly encouraged, both** while waiting for your child to be escorted into the building at the beginning of the school day and while awaiting your child to be brought out to you at the end of the school day.
- Thermometers will be available at the front entrance for parents to take their child's temperature.
- Upon a child's arrival, screeners will stand 3 to 6 feet away from the parent/guardian/child, verifying that parents have completed the Health Screening in Tadpoles and making a visual inspection for signs of illness such as flushed cheeks, rapid breathing or difficulty breathing, fatigue, or extreme fussiness before the child enters the building.

**NO EMPLOYEE OR CHILD WILL BE ALLOWED TO ENTER THE BUILDING WHO HAS HAD ANY OF THE FOLLOWING NEW OR WORSENING POTENTIAL SIGNS OR SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19 WITHIN THE PAST 24 HOURS OR EXPOSURE TO COVID-19:**

Please stay home and get tested if you are experiencing at least two of the following symptoms:

- Fever (measured 100.0 or higher or subjective)
- Chills
- Myalgia (muscle aches/achiness)
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Fatigue
- Congestion or runny nose

Please stay home and get tested if you are experiencing any one of the following symptoms:

- Cough
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath
- Difficulty breathing
- Loss of smell or taste

Other considerations:

- The individual has had close contact with someone with a lab-confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19
- The individual has travelled internationally to countries with widespread, sustained community transmission (if applicable);
- The individual has travelled domestically to any area deemed a national “hot spot” for COVID-19, as these areas **may** require a self-quarantine period when entering Texas (if applicable).

**ALL STAFF AND STUDENTS WILL WASH THEIR HANDS UPON ENTERING THE BUILDING.**

### **FACE COVERINGS**

The current recommendation of the Centers for Disease Control, Galveston County Health District, and the American Academy of Pediatrics is the use of properly worn masks covering both the mouth and the nose for everyone 2 years of age and older, including vaccinated individuals.

**For the health and safety of staff and students, MECC highly encourages masks to be worn on campus by staff, students, parents, and scheduled visitors.**

**Visitors who elect not to wear a mask will have appointments scheduled for after business hours.**

### **SOCIAL DISTANCING**

- Staff will comply with social distancing standards when walking the hallways, attending meetings in offices, taking breaks, and eating lunch in the cafeteria.
- Staff will be encouraged to comply with social distancing and wear facial protection in ALL public places.
- To assist students to maintain social distance, MECC will:

- (1) Keep each group of children in a separate room. Limit the mixing of children by staggering playground times and keeping groups separate for special activities such as art, music, and exercising.
- (2) Ensure that children's naptime cots (or cribs) are spaced out as much as possible, ideally 3 to 6 feet or more apart, and place children head to toe in order to further reduce the potential for viral spread.

## STUDENT PRACTICES

- Students will follow the dress code.
- Students will bring multiple changes of clothes to keep at the school.
- Students' hands will be washed upon entering the building.
- **No outside personal items** such as toys or blankets may be brought into the center, with the exception of items needed for diapering, food, bottles, and changes of clothing. We will begin transitioning out of sippy cups in the 12-17 month rooms. Sippy cups will not be allowed in older rooms.
- Class sizes will keep children in small groups, having no more than 10 individuals (including children and teachers) in an activity or room.
- Small groups will be kept together throughout the day and will only combine within the established "pods". In addition, we will maintain the same groups from day to day.
- Social distancing will be practiced by keeping a distance of six feet apart and not sharing items (pens, paper, electronics, etc.) as much as possible.
- Students will wash hands immediately following any interaction and shared items will be sanitized by staff.
- No large group activities will be held under any circumstances.
- Use of water tables and sensory tables will be limited, and children will wash their hands immediately after using these play stations.
- Time standing in lines will be minimized, keeping children from different classes at safe distances apart from each other.
- Activities that do not require close physical contact between multiple children will be planned.
- Distance between children during table work will be increased.
- Additional outside time will be incorporated into the day, weather permitting.
- Individual meals and snacks will be provided in each classroom to avoid congregating in large groups.
- Outdoor times will be staggered to limit interaction between classrooms.
- Children over 2 years of age may wear face coverings that parents provide.
- (MECC has cloth masks available for children over 2 years of age that will be kept on campus and laundered daily.)
- No outside food may be brought in to be shared with friends.

## HYGIENE AND CLEANING PRACTICES

- All children, staff, and volunteers should engage in hand hygiene at the following times:
  - Arrival to the facility and after breaks
  - Every half hour and after interactions
  - Before and after preparing food or drinks
  - Before and after eating or handling food, or feeding children
  - Before and after administering medication or medical ointment
  - Before and after diapering
  - After using the restroom or helping a child use the restroom
  - After coming in contact with any bodily fluid
  - After handling animals or cleaning up animal waste
  - After playing outdoors or in sand
  - After handling garbage
- Assist children with handwashing, including infants who cannot wash hands alone.
  - After assisting children with handwashing, staff will also wash their hands.
- Hands will be washed with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Children over 2 years old and staff may use hand sanitizer if hands are not visibly dirty or when soap and water

is not available.

- Staff will supervise children when they use hand sanitizer to prevent ingestion.
- Hand sanitizer will be stored out of reach of students.
- Students will be closely supervised to ensure that they do not ingest hand sanitizer.
- Students and staff will avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Children and adults will cough and sneeze into a tissue, then throw it into a trash receptacle immediately, or cough and sneeze into their upper shirt sleeve at the inner elbow, completely covering the mouth and nose.
  - All persons will wash their hands after coughing, sneezing, or blowing their nose.
- Classrooms, offices, and common areas will be wiped down with bleach water solution every hour, including frequently touched surfaces and objects.
  - Toys, doorknobs, handrails, faucets, electronic keyboards and touchscreens, tables, chairs, and cabinet edging are some of the items included in this procedure.
- Staff will be careful not to expose children in the near vicinity to cleaning and disinfecting materials.
- Toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized will not be used.
- Toys that children have placed in their mouths or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretions or excretions will be set aside until they are cleaned by a staff member by hand while wearing gloves.
  - Toys will be cleaned with water and detergent, rinsed, sanitized with an EPA-registered disinfectant, and air-dried or cleaned in a mechanical dishwasher.
- Machine washable cloth toys will be used by one individual at a time or will not be used at all.
  - These toys will be laundered before being used by another child.
- Toys will not be shared with other groups of infants or toddlers, unless they are washed and sanitized before being moved from one group to the other.
- Children's books, like other paper-based materials such as mail or envelopes, are not considered a high risk for transmission and do not need additional cleaning or disinfecting procedures.
- All bedding and highchair/swing/bouncy seat covers will be laundered every evening and returned to the classroom.
- In the evening, staff will clean toys by washing with soap and water, rinsing, spraying with bleach solution, rinsing again, and air drying.
- MECC will use products that are recommended by the CDC as effective against COVID-19.
- Classrooms will be disinfected every night after closing.
- Classrooms will be stocked each night to keep staff from possible cross-contamination of areas.

## **CARING FOR CHILDREN**

### **Diapering**

- MECC staff will follow the CDC safe diaper changing procedures.
- Procedures will be posted in all diaper changing areas.

Steps include:

- Wash child's hands and own hands
- Prepare (includes putting on gloves)
- Clean the child
- Remove trash (soiled diaper and wipes)
- Replace diaper
- Wash child's hands
- Clean up diapering station
- Wash own hands

After diapering, staff will wash their hands and the child's hands, then disinfect the diapering area with a 10% bleach water solution. If the surface is dirty, it will be cleaned with detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.

If reusable cloth diapers are used, they will not be rinsed or cleaned in the facility. The soiled cloth diaper and its contents (without emptying or rinsing) should be placed in a plastic bag or into a plastic lined, hands-free

covered diaper pail to give to parents/guardians or laundry service.

## **WASHING, FEEDING, OR HOLDING A CHILD**

It is important to comfort crying, sad, and/or anxious infants and toddlers, and they often need to be held.

To the extent possible, when washing, feeding, or holding very young children:

- Staff can protect themselves by wearing a smock, or long-sleeved shirt, and by wearing long hair up off the collar in a ponytail or other updo.
- Staff will keep changes of clothing onsite to change into if clothing gets soiled with a child's secretions.
- Staff will wash their hands, neck, and anywhere touched by a child's secretions.
- Staff will change the child's clothes if secretions are on the child's clothes.
- Staff should change their own clothes, smock, or button-down shirt if there are secretions on it, and wash their hands again.
- All contaminated clothing will be sealed in a plastic bag to be washed in a washing machine.
- Infants, toddlers, and caregivers will have multiple changes of clothes on hand in the childcare center.
- Staff will wash their hands before and after handling infant bottles prepared at home.
- Parents are responsible for preparing and providing all infant bottles their child will need for the day.
- Parents are responsible for washing bottles, nipples, and sippy cups every evening.
- All children will eat individually prepared meals in the classroom.
- Children's food and drinks brought from home for the day will be stored in their cubbies or another dedicated area and may not be shared.
- Food preparation will not be done by MECC staff.
- Sinks used in the classroom located by the changing stations are for washing hands and will not be used to wash serving utensils, bottles, sippy cups, etc.
- Children will wash hands prior to and immediately after eating.
- Staff will wash their hands before and after handling infant bottles or sippy cups, serving food, and after helping children to eat.

## **STAFF PRACTICES**

- All staff will follow the dress code
- All staff will undergo background and preservice training.
- Staff will participate in daily screening procedures and will comply with building access and illness procedures.
- Staff will have multiple changes of clothing onsite in their lockers.
- Staff will wash their hands upon entering the building.
- Staff who become symptomatic during the day will be promptly sent home and those who exhibit symptoms at night will notify the office as soon as possible and will stay at home until criteria for safe return is met.
- MECC will monitor the absenteeism of staff.
- MECC will hire staff members to assist in covering classrooms in the event of staff illness.

## **ACTIONS IF AN INDIVIDUAL WHO IS NOT FULLY VACCINATED HAS CLOSE CONTACT WITH A LAB-CONFIRMED POSITIVE COVID-19 CASE:**

If an individual has had close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed positive for COVID-19, they may return to work or school after all the following conditions are met:

- (1) Quarantine for 10 days from the time of close contact (last date of exposure = "Day Zero"; OR
- (2) Household exposures: Quarantine for 10 days from the positive individual's date of positive test or symptom onset, with a negative test result taken on Day 9 or later, returning on Day 11, if symptom free.

If unvaccinated staff members or parents believe that they or their children have had close contact with someone with COVID-19, but they are not currently symptomatic, those staff members, parents, and children should not go to work or school and should **avoid public places for 10 days**, as this would potentially expose others.

They should:

- Monitor their health and the child's health for potential COVID-19 symptoms during the 10 day quarantine period, which begins after the last day they were in close contact with the individual diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Refer to screening criteria when monitoring for potential COVID-19 symptoms.

**“CLOSE CONTACT” IS DEFINED AS:**

- (1) Being directly exposed to infectious secretions (ex. coughs, sneezes, nasal discharge); OR
- (2) Being within 6 feet for a total of approximately 15 minutes throughout the course of the day; AND
- (3) If the individual is symptomatic, this period includes from two days prior to their symptom onset through 10 days after symptom onset; OR
- (4) If the individual is asymptomatic, this period includes two days prior to their positive test result through 10 days after the positive test result.

**ACTIONS IF AN INDIVIDUAL WHO IS FULLY VACCINATED (STAFF MEMBER) HAS CLOSE CONTACT WITH AN INDIVIDUAL WITH LAB-CONFIRMED COVID-19**

Fully vaccinated staff members will quarantine for 5 days from exposure to the positive case, test on Day 5, and return on Day 6 with a negative test result, if symptom free.

**ACTIONS IF A CHILD, STAFF MEMBER, OR PARENT HAS SYMPTOMS SIMILAR TO OR TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19**

If a child or staff member develops potential symptoms of COVID-19 (symptoms listed in screening criteria) while at MECC:

- Immediately separate the individual from others until the ill individual can leave the facility.
  - (1) Administration or School Nurse must advise the employee or child's parent or caregiver to inform the facility immediately if the individual is diagnosed with COVID-19.
  - (2) MECC will utilize the CDC guidance for disinfection of the building if someone is sick.
  - (3) The isolation area in the facility will be cleaned and disinfected after the child has gone home.

**If MECC experiences a confirmed case of COVID-19 among our students or staff:**

MECC will ...

- (1) Follow the advice of local health officials
- (2) Notify parents of children at the facility of the situation and the facility's response
- (3) Communicate any updates with parents as advised by local health officials
- (4) Close off areas used by the person who is sick
- (5) Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the areas, if possible
- (6) Wait up to 24 hours or as long as possible to allow respiratory droplets to settle before cleaning and disinfecting
- (7) Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person who is sick - offices, bathrooms, and common areas, etc. [If more than 7 days have passed since the person who is sick visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection are not necessary. Continue routine cleaning and disinfection.]
- (8) Undergo a thorough cleaning and disinfection process and continue to monitor for ill individuals
- (9) Require the individual who tests positive to meet the criteria for safe return before entering the facility
- (10) Require those who are unvaccinated and have been in close contact with the COVID-19 positive

individual to quarantine for 10 days after their last day of exposure to the positive case. (The last date of exposure = “Day Zero”.)

If the positive individual is a household member, the quarantine period will be 10 days, making their return date on Day 11 from the positive household member’s positive test date or date of symptom onset. Requirements for return include: must have a negative COVID-19 test result on Day 9 or later, AND must be symptom free.

If an individual who has been identified as a close contact has tested positive for COVID-19 within the past three months, that individual is not required to quarantine, **unless they become symptomatic.** If the individual becomes symptomatic, they will follow the return after illness guidelines.

**Please note:**

- (1) If an individual is awaiting COVID-19 test results, they must remain quarantined, pending the results of the test and the associated instructions given by the medical professional evaluating the case.
- (2) Under certain circumstances COVID-19 testing will be required for students.
- (3) If an individual is sent home to quarantine due to exposure to a positive case, other household members will not be required to quarantine if they are asymptomatic, **unless** the individual sent home tests positive for COVID-19.

**RETURNING TO A CHILD CARE FACILITY AFTER LAB-CONFIRMED COVID-19 (WITH SYMPTOMS)**

If an individual has a lab-confirmed positive test for COVID-19 with symptoms, the individual may return after all the following conditions are met:

- (1)** At least 24 hours have passed since recovery:  
(Recovery is defined as resolution of fever without fever-reducing medications) **AND**,
- (2)** Improvement of symptoms (refer to the list of screening criteria) **AND**,
- (3)** At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.  
Example: If it is Day 10 after symptoms first appeared, but the individual has not yet recovered as defined above in #1 and #2, then exclusion continues.

**RETURNING TO A CHILD CARE FACILITY AFTER LAB-CONFIRMED COVID-19 (WITHOUT SYMPTOMS)**

If an individual has a lab-confirmed positive test for COVID-19 without symptoms, the individual may not return to campus until at least ten days have passed since the positive test.

**RETURNING TO A CHILD CARE FACILITY AFTER SIMILAR SYMPTOMS TO COVID-19 (WITHOUT MEDICAL EVALUATION)**

If an individual has symptoms consistent with COVID-19, but is not evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, the individual is assumed to have COVID-19, and the individual may not return to campus until completing the three-step set of criteria listed above.

**RETURNING TO A CHILD CARE FACILITY AFTER SIMILAR SYMPTOMS TO COVID-19 BEFORE COMPLETING THE ABOVE-MENTIONED ISOLATION PERIOD**

If an individual has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to work/school before completing the above self-isolation period, the individual must either:

- (1) Obtain a medical professional’s note clearing the individual for return based on an alternate diagnosis; **or**

(2) Obtain an acute infection test from an approved COVID-19 testing location that comes back negative for COVID-19.

Please note:

(1) Under certain circumstances, both a medical note and a COVID-19 test will be required.

(2) If a rapid test result is positive and you would like to confirm with a PCR test, this must be done within 24 hours of the rapid test for a negative PCR test to overrule the positive rapid test.