

In His Steps Academy

COVID-19 Response Plan

Updated: June 10, 2020

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The health and safety of our children, staff, and families is paramount. The below-listed policies and protocols are designed to help parents understand their role and the school's role in providing a safe and healthy school environment. These policies and protocols will generally be followed to the greatest extent practicable, will be adjusted as we continue to receive updated recommendations, and will supersede the policies listed in the School Handbook where applicable. **Please read through the policies and protocols carefully and please keep a copy handy for review as necessary. If you need an additional copy, please contact Luanne Coffee at lcffee@inhisstepsacademy.com.**

1 | Texas Minimum Standard Health Protocols

We will continue to operate within the guidelines of the Texas Minimum Standards for Licensed Child Care Providers, as we previously have done. The Texas Minimum Standards includes a checklist from the Governor's Strike Force to Open Texas, in which we have used to create these policies and protocols.

In addition, we will follow CDC Guidance for Child Care Programs that Remain Open for increased health and safety protocols. The areas of guidance the CDC and Texas Minimum Health Protocols addresses, and are specifically included in our School policies and procedures, are:

- ✓ Implement [social distancing strategies](#)
- ✓ Intensity [cleaning and disinfecting efforts](#)
- ✓ Modify [drop-off and pick-up procedures](#)
- ✓ Implement [screening procedures upon arrival](#)

School staff will take additional health and safety training related to COVID-19 through the Texas A&M AgrilLife Extension. These trainings include:

- ✓ Providing High Quality Experiences during COVID-19 for Emergency Child Care Settings
- ✓ Special Considerations for Infection Control during COVID-19

2 | Preventative Health Measures

- **Preparing Supplies**

IHSA has already begun purchasing and confirming the orders of needed supplies, such as non-contact infrared thermometers, gloves, and masks.

- **Staying Home**

It is vital that ***you keep your child home if they are ill or acting in such a manner which you believe they are becoming ill.*** We encourage you to check your child's temperature before leaving for school and for any symptoms associated with COVID-19 (described below). We will first rely on the social responsibility of each family to be as prudent as possible in sending their child to school only when healthy, but our second step is to screen each child and family upon drop-off. It is important for each family and staff member to be as vigilant as possible in monitoring for symptoms and communicating with the School Office if or when they start to feel sick. A doctor's note of clearance to return to school may be required. Please email (lcoffee@inhisstepsacademy.com) to communicate any concerns.

- **If a Child or Staff Member Is or Becomes Sick**

The School has a nurse on staff and is available to assist with any health concerns. If a child or staff member should become ill while at school, the nurse will escort them to the *quarantine isolation room*. As stated in our Health and Safety policy in our School Handbook, a parent will be called for the child to be picked up. To the extent possible, we encourage the designated parent or child caregiver, who normally drops-off/picks-up (more on this request below), be the person to pick up the ill child from school. An ill child must be picked-up within an hour of their first communication alert by one parent/caregiver. Additional cleaning and disinfecting will be completed of the effected classroom or space that an ill child or staff member has been present in.

The children's temperatures will be several times throughout each school day as a step in continuing to monitor the health of the children during the day.

- **If COVID-19 is Confirmed in a Child or Staff Member**

If your child, a member of your child's household or person your child has close contact with (a nanny, etc.) is confirmed with COVID-19, you are required to inform the School via email (lcoffee@inhisstepsacademy.com) ***immediately and no later than*** 24 hours of the diagnosis.

If a child or staff member are diagnosed, the School will contact the Brazoria County Health Department and Child Care Licensing for guidance on how to respond.

Children or staff with new or worsening signs or symptoms of possible COVID-19 (see list under Screening below) may not return to school until the following criteria have been met:

- ✓ At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications);
- ✓ The individual has improved respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, shortness of breath);
- ✓ At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared; and
- ✓ Has received a doctor's note of clearance to resume participation at the School.

- **Allergies and Teething**

Children or staff who show persistent signs of runny nose, coughing and other respiratory issues that may be due to seasonal allergies or teething will be asked to obtain a doctor's note of clearance to participate in school.

This note will be dated, filed in the office, shared with your child's classroom teachers, and kept for 2 months. *Please inform the school during the daily screening process about any allergy or teething symptoms your child may be experiencing that day. Please do not give your child fever reducing medicine if they have an elevated temperature and send them to school.*

- **Monitoring Absenteeism**

As we have in the past, the School will continue monitoring absenteeism each school day. The School Office accounts for each child's absence from school by contacting the parent if we have not heard why they are absent. We track the trends in absences for each class and the school overall.

- **Group Events**

For the time being, the School will not hold group events. This includes any school-wide functions or any individual class parties where parents are invited.

- **Limiting Access to the School**

The School space is defined as the hallways and classrooms, and school office areas. We will be limiting the number of people allowed into the school in attempt to minimize the exposure to any infectious disease. Only the following will be allowed to enter the School space:

- ✓ School Staff (teachers and administrators);
- ✓ Persons with legal authority to enter, including law enforcement officers, Licensing staff, and Department of Family and Protective Services staff;
- ✓ Professionals providing services to children;
- ✓ Enrolled children (non-enrolled siblings or other children not allowed); and
- ✓ Parents who have children enrolled and present at the operation. Parents should only enter the School when necessary.

Tours of the School program will not be conducted during school hours.

3 | Social Distancing Strategies

Since the grouping method allows for children within each group to intermingle, all stakeholders, especially parents and staff, must be aware that their actions play a critical role in reducing the risk of infectious disease transmission in our school community. Staff and parents are asked to maintain at least 6 feet of separation from other individuals. If such distancing is not feasible, other measures such as face coverings, hand hygiene, cough etiquette, cleanliness and sanitation should be rigorously practiced.

- ✓ **Class Sizes and Classroom Space**

The School will assure that it follows guidelines in the *new* Modified Child Care Ratios listed in the Minimum Standard Health Protocols published by the Governor's Task Force to Open Texas. We strive to have the same children each class day which makes for stable grouping, and have the same regular teachers. The classes will remain in their classrooms each school day, except for outside playtime. As possible, classroom arrangement will include additional tables so children can have better separation when doing table work or eating. Toys and materials that cannot be easily cleaned and sanitized will not be used and extra rugs, blankets, and pillows will be removed from the classrooms. In order to reduce sharing of materials, the children will have individual sets of crayons, markers and other art supplies, and we will not have class-shared sensory (water/sand) tables and bins.

- ✓ **Outside Playtime**

Infant classes will be taken on buggy rides around the FSBC facility and campus. Children in the 2 year-old and younger classes traditionally play on the playground. We will stagger the outside playtime, so each group will use the space individually. High-touched metal and plastic surfaces will be cleaned routinely. Each class will have

their own bag of outside play toys, such as balls, bubbles, hula hoops and activity mats, so that each group is not sharing these items.

✓ **“Specials” Classes**

The teachers for our “Specials” classes will visit each designated classroom so that the children are not traveling to a shared “Specials” classroom. The “Specials” teachers will wear a clear face shield to help minimize the potential of spreading an infectious disease. Any materials will be disinfected before use with another class.

✓ **Naptime**

Children’s nap mats will be spaced out, and as possible, at least 6 feet apart, and positioned head-to-toe to further reduce the potential of viral spread. As always, the mats are disinfected after each use. For cribs, there is a clear acrylic divider between each crib to further reduce the potential of viral spread and are disinfected after each use. A clean sheet, provided by the Day School, is used each school day.

Signage IHSA will have signage around the school reminding persons to social distance.

4 | Parent Drop-Off and Pick-Up Protocols

✓ **Designated Parent/Caregiver**

It is recommended that one parent or caregiver be designated to drop-off and pick-up the child at school each day. If possible, older people such as grandparents or those that are immune-compromised should not be the designated person, because they are more at risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

✓ **Drop-Off Protocols**

- ✓ Drop-Off of children will occur on the front porch beginning at 8:35am and will end at 9:10am.
- ✓ Check-in stations will be set-up for you to drop your child off then they will be escorted to his/her classroom and start the day by washing his/her hands.
- ✓ Check-In: The school will be using the check-in system from Procure. More details will be given about this process closer to the beginning of school.
- ✓ Each child and family be will screened before the child can be dropped-off for school. Please see details about the screening process below.
- ✓ Each parent or caregiver dropping off their child must wear a mask if regulations are in place requiring one. Children above age 2 are not required to wear a mask but are encouraged to do so if they are willing.
- ✓ In an attempt to help distance, please do not congregate during drop off. Four tables will be set up – one for each age group. Please take your child to their age group to check in and have a quick medical screening.
- ✓ Late Drop-Off: It is essential for the efficiency of the drop-off process for parents and caregivers to be on time when dropping off; however, we understand there will be mornings when an emergency will arise delaying your arrival at school. If you are late, please knock on the door of the Office, your child will be let in, and an administrator can check your child into school and escort them to his/her classroom.

✓ **Pick-Up Protocols**

- ✓ On the first day of camp/school you will be given a car dashboard tag that has your child(ren)’s name(s) on it. Please place it in center of the front window. (Windows are often reflective, please watch for the person in charge of calling out names. You may have to tilt the name card up against the window for them to be able to read it.)
- ✓ Pick up is at 2:00.

- ✓ If your last name starts with the letters A-M, you will come through line #1, N-Z will come through line #2. Drive around the **outside of the parking lot**, and up through the center to **exit** after you have your child. We will put them in the car, you can pull up then hop out to **secure** them. (Our staff is not allowed to buckle car seats!) **WE WILL NOT ALLOW PARENTS TO WALK UP TO PICK UP THEIR CHILD.**
- ✓ **Communication**
 - ✓ Since we will be losing the regular face-to-face contact we normally have during the drop-off and pick-up process, please be sure to read all correspondence and class newsletters. This will be the main source of direct parent/teacher communication. The teacher will also be available for phone appointments to answer any questions or concerns you might have. We highly value clear and frequent communication with parents and teachers and will do our best in these new circumstances to maintain the level we are used to as a school.

5 | Screening: Staff, Children and Parents

- **Who Will be Screened**

The following individuals are required to be screened every day before entering the facility:

- ✓ School Staff;
- ✓ FSBC Staff that would be working in or around the School facility (e.g. janitors or church staff);
- ✓ Persons with legal authority to enter, including law enforcement officers, Licensing staff, and Department of Family and Protective Services staff;
- ✓ Professionals providing services to children;
- ✓ Enrolled children; and
- ✓ Parents who have children enrolled and present at the school. Parents should only enter the School when necessary and at the approval of the Director or Assistant Director.

- **Screening**

Upon dropping your child off, each person will be screened for the following:

- ✓ Temperature check:

Using a non-contact infrared thermometer, each person's temperature will be checked. For children, we will follow the requirement listed in the School Handbook; which is, if a child has a temperature of 100.1* or higher they may not attend school for at least 72 hours and must be fever and medication free for at least 72 hours before returning to school. *In addition, if the **parent** or **caregiver** dropping the child off at school has a temperature of 100.4* or higher, the child may not attend school for at least 72 hours so the child can be monitored for any potential symptoms while at home.*
- ✓ Symptoms of COVID-19 that will be monitored each school day include:

Cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, repeating shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, diarrhea, feeling feverish or measured temperature >100.1* Fahrenheit (for children), has had known contact with a person is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19.
- ✓ Review of a child's close contacts and if any of them have a lab-confirmed case of COVID-19. If so, the child or staff member may not return to school until the end of the 14 day self-quarantine period from the last date of exposure (with an exception granted for health care workers and critical infrastructure workers.) If a parent believes that they or their child has had close contact to someone with COVID-19 but are not currently sick, they should monitor their health for the above symptoms during the 14 days after the last day they were in close contact with the individual with COVID-19.
- ✓ Please be familiar with the School's Health/Illness policy listed in the School Handbook. We will be enforcing our policy of exclusion if your child has any of the listed symptoms. We appreciate your

diligence and understanding when we must exclude a child because they have an illness symptom present.

- **Travel Alerts**

- ✓ If anyone in a child's household or a close personal contact (e.g. nanny) travels on an airplane, please notify the school in writing (lcoffee@inhisstepsacademy.com) so we can monitor for any possible development of symptoms. The parents should consider keeping their child home for 5 days as an added precaution to other families.
- ✓ Parents and children returning from travel to areas with community spread of COVID-19 must follow the guidelines they have received from the local health officials.
- ✓ Any parent returning from CDC Level 3 area or international travel area must notify the School in writing (lcoffee@inhisstepsacademy.com) and the child should be kept home for 7 days. Children and staff who have traveled to a CDC Level 3 area or international travel will be excluded for 14 days.
- ✓ A parent who travels to a CDC Level 3 area or international travel area and does not notify the School in writing may forfeit their child's spot in preschool, with no refunds or credits issued.
- ✓ If your family is traveling or one of the family travels for work, please stay up-to-date with the recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control – Travel information website.

6 | Enhanced Cleaning and Disinfectant Measures

- **Cleaning Products and Supplies**

- ✓ FSBC has UV light sanitizers that will completely disinfect an area in 15 minutes. These will be used when classes go outside for playground, and before and after school.
- ✓ The School uses Quat 44, which is EPA approved for use against SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19). The staff will be trained how to use it effectively and safely. For instance, knowing how long the product must remain on the surface to be effective and using it safely around children. Lysol spray, Clorox wipes and 409 are also used for cleaning and disinfecting
- ✓ We disinfect each classroom at the end of the day after the children have left. This involves a complete spraydown with Quat 44, a wipedown of all surfaces and toys, and Lysol spray. An oxidizing air purifier is run each evening and throughout the night to purify the air.
- ✓ FSBC is upgrading the HVAC system with MERV 13 filters to provide a more efficient air filtering system.
- ✓ The classrooms will be supplied with disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol content. These items will only be used by staff and kept out of reach of children.

- **Cleaning and Sanitizing Toys, Materials and Surfaces**

- ✓ We will continue our practice of collecting toys throughout the school day that have been put in a child's mouth (or that are otherwise contaminated) and place them in the "to be cleaned" bin to be sanitized at the end of the day.
- ✓ Staff will be cleaning and sanitizing other toys and surfaces frequently throughout the day.
- ✓ IHSA has designated a staff member that will focus on the School hallways and classrooms each school day. This person will be focused on cleaning and sanitizing surfaces such as doorknobs, light switches, classroom sink handles, counter tops, toilet areas, tables, desks, chairs, cubbies, and high-touch areas on the playground.
- ✓ Classroom restrooms will be cleaned at least three times a day.

- **Cleaning and Sanitizing Bedding and Comfort Items**

- ✓ All napmats will be sent home every other day for cleaning. Each napmat should be sent to school in a trashbag or plastic napmat cover. Any napmat not in a plastic cover will not be allowed in the school.

This is an added precaution, as virus cells can stay alive on fabric for several days, and secretions from the mouth and nose are likely transferred onto a child's blanket or napmat during naptime.

- ✓ If your child brings a teddy bear or stuffed animal as a comfort item – please work with us to assure that it stays clean. For your child's safety, and the safety of the other children in the classroom, we will try to only give them out during naptime, or times of stress. Comfort items are often held to the face and mouth, and become a walking DNA sample kit.

7 | Caring for Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers

- **Holding, feeding and helping**

The hardest part about social distancing is the thought that we will not be able to give the snuggles and hugs like we are used to. However, we know it is still important to comfort crying, sad and anxious children; so, in order to provide the safest environment possible for our children and staff, the teachers are allowed to wear face masks or shields, to the extent possible, when in close contact with the children. If a staff member is not able to wear a face covering, they will exercise the best respiratory practices, like covering their mouth if they have to cough, not talking directly in the child's face as much as possible, and washing their and the child's hands as soon as able.

- **Change of clothing**

With secretions remaining viable for a long period of time on clothing and material, IT IS ESSENTIAL that your child have multiple changes of clothing in their bag. Please make sure that each outfit is individually contained in a large ziplock bag so that we know it has been sanitized. If your child is teething, please send 4 or 5 clean shirts. We will be changing their shirt if it becomes even slightly damp from drool.

The staff in the 2-year-old and younger classes will wear their hair pulled back. All the staff will be required to bring a change of clothes to school each day so they can change into clean clothes, if or when needed.

8 | Healthy Hand Hygiene and Face Mask Wearing

- **Handwashing: Frequency**

Handwashing is the number one method of stopping the spread of an infectious disease in a school community. The School has always placed high value on good handwashing practices, and we will be placing even more emphasis now. The teachers will be building lessons about handwashing into their daily curriculum so that the children can develop the healthy habit of frequent and correct handwashing. Children and staff will wash or sanitize their hands multiple times throughout the school day; including, but not limited to, upon entering school, after using the restroom or diaper changing, before and after eating, and after outside playtime.

Bottles of hand sanitizer will be spread out through the IHSA campus and we encourage everyone to use some before entering the building.

- **Handwashing: Method**

When handwashing, the teachers will have the children wash with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and then use a paper towel to dry their hands. If hands are not visibly dirty, alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol will be used if soap and water are not readily available.

- **Face Mask Wearing**

The staff will wear face masks at drop-off, pick-up and in between to the extent possible. Children over 2 years-old will be encouraged and offered to wear one but will not be required, forced, or pressured to wear one.

Children under 2 years-old will not wear a mask due to the potential suffocation danger. All other adults (parents, necessary visitors, etc.) in the School will be required to wear a mask unless otherwise unable to because of health reasons.

9 | Food Preparation and Serving

- **Snacks**

Snacks will be prepared for individual serving and, as always, they will be served in the child's individual classroom. Staff will wear gloves when preparing and serving food to the children.

- **Lunch**

Please reference the policy in the School Handbook for complete details about providing a lunch for your child. We are also asking that EACH serving container (top and bottom) be labeled with your child's name or initials so they can be easily identified if separated from your child during lunchtime. Children should not bring food to share with others.

- **Water**

Please provide a water bottle that is clean with fresh water for your child each school day. Clearly label the bottle with your child's name in a manner that it will not rub or come off.

10 | Preparing Your Child to Return To/Start School

Many children have some form of separation anxiety when beginning school or being away for an extended break. After months of spending lots (and lots) of time with you during a period where there has been some level of stress and anxiety when outside interacting with other people, we expect that this may be a difficult transition. In late July you will receive a "Welcome to School" packet which will have resources for smoothly transitioning your child to preschool, have details about what your child will need to bring to school, etc.

We are planning to have our annual "Teacher Meet and Greet" on Thursday, August 20th. These meetings will be by appointment only for each family to come in individually to meet your child's teachers and see the classrooms.

11 | FaithSprings Baptist Church, Pearland Home School Academy

FSBC and the School have agreed to immediately notify one another if someone on either staff or an immediate constituent has contracted COVID-19 so that we can determine if there was any potential for cross contamination.

12 | Financial Responsibility Policy

The School Enrollment Agreement signed upon confirming their child's spot is still in effect. However, the following additions and changes to each family's financial responsibility is being added and shall be confirmed upon this document being signed by the parent who originally signed the School Enrollment Agreement.

- Should the community be ordered to shelter-in-place and the school must close, the first 30 days will not be eligible for a refund or credit. The School will immediately commence an online learning platform like what was established in March 2020. The online learning will conclude at the end of the first 30 days of shelter-in-place.
- When school resumes, tuition will be reinstated (prorated accordingly) and due upon the first day of back to school.
- Pro-longed personal absence because of COVID-19 illness or related reasons (i.e. a child must quarantine with their household) will not be eligible for refunds or credits.
- If the School is advised by the local health authorities to close for a quarantine or if In His Steps Academy decides to close for 24 hours, the tuition for that period will not be eligible for a refund or credit. For any subsequent quarantine closures, specific to the IHSA, families will be eligible for a credit for future tuition.
- Tuition is due monthly until all 10 payments have been made, making the last payment on May 1, 2021.
- The “Withdrawal Policy” listed in the School handbook remains the same.

13 | Covid-19 School Attendance Waiver

The virus that causes COVID-19 can infect people of all ages. While the risk of serious illness or loss of life is greatest in those 65 years of age and older and/or are immune compromised, persons in every age group can get COVID-19 and some will have a severe illness.

We should all be thankful that, with rare exceptions, COVID-19 is not claiming the lives of our children. However, we can never forget that a child with a mild or even asymptomatic case of COVID-19 can spread that infection to others who may be far more vulnerable.

COVID-19 is spread from person to person through contact that is close enough to share droplets generated by coughing, sneezing, speaking and even just breathing. COVID-19 can also be spread by touching objects where contaminated droplets have landed. Because of this easy manner of transmission, an infant, child, or young person who is infected with COVID-19 can spread the infection to others they come in close contact with, such as members of their household, teachers, or other caregivers. We have learned that infected persons with mild or even no symptoms can spread COVID-19.

These facts are vitally important when considering returning to In His Steps Academy’s School environment and should be considered by each parent before returning their children to our programs. FaithSprings Baptist Church, and In His Steps Academy are taking specific measures, as recommended by the CDC and Texas health authorities, to promote a safe environment, but each family has to understand the inherent risk of their child participating in any kind of group care. We do not expect young children to effectively social distance from other children in their small class. We expect that infants, toddlers, and preschool aged children will, for example, continue to play in proximity to one another, share toys, or touch surfaces that may not be sanitized. Young children also need help from their teacher that require close contact, for example, putting on clothing items, putting their lunchbox away, or need help with restroom and diapering needs. Young children may also seek, and emotionally benefit from, comfort when sad or anxious. While our staff will generally not initiate hugs, it is expected that children will need hugs at times, thus, there will be some physical contact between teacher and children. To the extent possible, the teachers will remain with the same groups of children. However, there will inevitably be times when, for example, the teacher needs to take a break or is out sick and another teacher will step in from another group to cover them.

All of these factors mean that while IHSA will take certain precautions recommended to combat the spread of COVID-19, these measures will differ from those suitable for other social, business and commercial settings that adults may be more familiar with.

Therefore, as a parent or guardian, I agree that I will monitor the health of my/our child(ren) and not send them to the IHSA program if my child(ren) are displaying any symptom of COVID. I agree not to send my child(ren) to the Program if my child (or any of his or her siblings), or any other member of our household or any other person with whom we have been in close contact, are showing symptoms of COVID-19. I agree to seek COVID testing promptly and report results to IHSA given the implications for other children, families, and staff. Likewise, I understand that parents or guardians should protect any vulnerable persons who are members of the same household or come into frequent, close contact with infants, and children who attend In His Steps Academy.

I understand that participating in In His Steps Academy or accessing our facilities could increase the risk of contracting COVID-19. FaithSprings Baptist Church can in no way assure, guarantee or warrant that COVID-19 infection will not occur though participation in our program or by accessing our facilities.

I understand that I may and should consult my family's health care providers about the risks of COVID-19 and participation In His Steps program and to do so as conditions surrounding COVID-19 change.

By signing below, I acknowledge receipt of the IHSA COVID-19 Response Plan and, particularly, this Covid-19 School Attendance Waiver (the "Waiver and Release").

I have read, understand, and agree to the above COVID-19 Response Plan and the Release and Waiver contained in the Covid-19 School Attendance Waiver.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Today's Date

Parent/Guardian Name

Names and ages of child(ren) attending: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN #2 (IF APPLICABLE)

Parent/Guardian Signature

Today's Date

Parent/Guardian Name