

# COVID-19 POLICY

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WHERE *fun* AND *learning* HAPPEN



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This is Saugeen Shores Childcare Centre's policy. However, certain details may vary as per regional guidelines. Public health guidelines can change rapidly, and this policy will be updated as needed.

# COVID-19 PLAN

## Section 1: Introduction

As Saugeen Shores Childcare Centre relaxes its Covid restrictions as of March 21, 2022, we continue to reinforce our regular health and safety policies and have this COVID-19 plan in place to protect everyone at Saugeen Shores Childcare Centre. This plan discusses how to keep everyone safe, and how to respond if any staff and/or child/children are exposed to COVID-19 or have contracted Covid-19.

All employees are required to read and acknowledge all policies and procedures prior to their first day at work.

## Section 2: Health and Safety Requirements

SSCC is employing multiple strategies and a layering of controls to support healthier and safer environments for children and staff as detailed below. There is not one specific measure that will prevent COVID-19 transmission from occurring in childcare settings, but rather there are multiple structural and individual elements that contribute to making childcare spaces healthier and reduce the risk of infection to in-person attendees.

Each of the control measures listed below provides some benefit in reducing spread. However, it is the combination and consistent application of these layered controls as a bundle that are most effective for reducing disease spread in childcare.

### Working with Local Public Health

The Ministry recognizes that this may result in regional differences in these protocols but given the varied impact of COVID-19 in different communities, it is important to follow the advice of local public health officials to keep children and families safe in their respective communities.

We must follow the advice of the local public health unit when establishing health and safety protocols, including how to implement any provincial or local public health unit direction on health and safety guidance.



### Health and Safety Protocols

SSCC has policies and procedures outlining its health and safety protocols. These policies and procedures are consistent with any direction from local public health units and include information on how SSCC will operate to prevent and minimize the impact of COVID-19 in childcare settings, including, at a minimum, the following:

- how cleaning and disinfecting the space, toys and equipment will be conducted.
- how to report illness.
- how shifts will be scheduled, where applicable.
- how attendance records will be organized and maintained to facilitate contact tracing.
- a communication plan in the event of a case/outbreak.
- rescheduling of group events and/or in-person meetings; and parent drop off and pick up procedures.

Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA), employers must take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances to protect the health and safety of workers. This includes precautions to protect workers from exposure to infectious diseases.

### Section 3: Implementing Cleaning and Disinfecting Procedure

Ensure all current infection prevention and control practices are adhered to. This includes but is not limited to:

#### Disinfecting Class Material

- Provision of toys and equipment made of materials that can be cleaned and disinfected (e.g., avoid plush toys) should be provided as much as possible.
- Designated toys and equipment (e.g., balls, loose equipment) are encouraged for each group of children.
- If sensory materials (e.g., playdough, water, sand, etc.) are offered, emphasis should be placed on hand hygiene before and after the use of materials.
- Increasing the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting of objects, toys, and frequently touched surfaces.

#### Disinfecting Class Fixtures

- Frequently touched surfaces are disinfected, including doorknobs, light switches, toilet handles, and tabletops that must be disinfected at least twice a day, and before and after each snack and meal. Cleaning plus disinfection twice daily is suggested at a minimum. However, more frequent cleaning and disinfection may be necessary depending on the frequency of use and extent of soilage.



- Only using disinfectants that have a Drug Identification Number (DIN). High-level outbreak disinfectants provided by the school.
- Staff checking expiry dates of cleaning and disinfecting products, and always follow instructions.

### Ventilation

SSCC will continue to implement best practices and measures to optimize ventilation (see Public Health Ontario's guidance: [Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning \(HVAC\) Systems in Buildings and COVID-19 \(publichealthontario.ca\)](https://publichealthontario.ca)). Adequate ventilation should be provided by opening windows, moving activities outdoors when possible, and through mechanical ventilation including HVAC systems.

Heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning systems (HVACs) and their filters are designed to reduce airborne pollutants, including virus particles, when they circulate through the system.

- Ensuring HVAC systems are in good working condition.
- Keep areas near HVAC inlets and outlets clear.
- Arrange furniture away from air vents and high airflow areas.
- Avoid re-circulating air.

While ventilation is important, it must be used along with other public health measures. There is not one public health measure that can guarantee protection from COVID-19; multiple strategies are needed. Other measures include symptom screening and self-isolation for people with symptoms, practicing physical distancing,

### Cleaning Program for Shared Spaces and Objects

**Cleaning and disinfecting routines must be increased as the risk of contaminating the environment is higher.**

**Tables and Countertops:** used for food preparation and food service must be cleaned and disinfected before and after each use.

**Spills:** must be cleaned and disinfected immediately.

**Handwash Sinks:** staff and children's washroom areas must be cleaned and disinfected at least twice per day and as often as necessary (i.e., when visibly dirty or contaminated with body fluids).

**Floors:** cleaning and disinfecting must be performed as required (i.e., when spills occur, and throughout the day when rooms are available) e.g., during outdoor play.

**Outdoor Play Equipment:** must be disinfected at least twice daily before use, and as required (i.e., visibly dirty). Any outdoor play equipment that is used must be easy to clean and disinfect. Avoid usage of balls and other toys that require frequent sharing, disinfect riding toys between uses.



**High-Touch Surfaces:** any surfaces at your location that has frequent contact with hands (e.g., light switches, shelving, containers, handrails, doorknobs, telephones, sinks, toilets etc.). These surfaces should be cleaned at least twice per day and as often as necessary (i.e., when visibly dirty or contaminated with body fluids).

**Other Shared Items:** (e.g., phones, tablets, keyboards, attendance binders, etc.) these must be disinfected between users).

### Section 4: Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

**Washing hands and sanitizing surfaces are the most important things we can do now. Think about frequently touched surfaces, such as playground equipment, and have hand sanitizer nearby or wash hands after playtime.**

#### Maintaining Hand Hygiene

- Incorporating additional hand hygiene during daily routine.
- Staff will assist in children's handwashing to make sure it's done correctly.
- Performing proper hand hygiene.
- Incorporating additional hand hygiene opportunities into the daily schedule for staff and children. Wash with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, throughout the day and at the following times:
  - At the start of the day and before going home.
  - After using the washroom.
  - After a diaper change (both children and staff).
  - After using the playground.
  - Before preparing or handling food.
  - Before and after eating.
  - Before and after using sensory table.
  - After getting your hands dirty.
  - After wiping a nose or handling dirty tissue.
  - After cleaning duties.

#### Use of Personal Protective Equipment/ Rapid Antigen Test

SSCC will continue to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) for use by staff. A one-to-two-week supply will be maintained, at all times. Licensee will now be placing orders based on school need for PPE. Licensees will be able to order non-fitted tested n95 masks, surgical/medical masks, children's masks and face shields. Use this link [PPE Supply Portal](#) to order the Personal Protective Equipment or contact your program advisor if you have any questions about the ordering PPE.

Staff/providers and families can also access Rapid Antigen Tests through SSCC or by contacting community locations. Please see [COVID-19 rapid antigen test kit locator \(ontario.ca\)](#) for specific locations.



### Section 5: In-Program Considerations for Staff

#### Expectations for adults and staff at SSCC

In alignment with community masking requirements, masks will no longer be required for staff, providers or any other individual (including children) at the school or on transportation. Eye protection for staff will also no longer be required. As some children, staff/providers may choose to continue to wear masks or eye protection, the government will continue to provide free masks and eye protection. Licensees will be able to continue to receive these items through the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services.

In addition, we know that many children and staff may choose to continue to wear masks at times, or consistently. We encourage licensees to be respectful, welcoming, and be inclusive for all the personal practices. And must be able to communicate within their communities about SSCC families and staff post Covid preferences.

Teachers, Staff/ provider may wish to continue wearing a mask at times or consistently during

- Providing direct care (e.g. feeding, assisting a child with hand hygiene, diapering).
- Consoling an upset child.
- Assisting a child with dressing or changing clothes.
- Gloves must be worn when it is anticipated that hands will come into contact with mucous membranes, broken skin, tissue, blood, bodily fluids, secretions, excretions, contaminated equipment or environmental surfaces.
- During diaper change.
- All staff, visitors and volunteers are encouraged to wear medical masks while inside the school, including in hallways, kitchen, and staff rooms.
- When caring for a sick child or a child showing symptoms of illness.

#### Meals and Snack Times

- If meals or snacks are provided, ensure each child has their own individual meal or snack. Multi-use utensils must be sanitized.
- Food will be served on the plates provided for the children.
- Utensils will be used to serve food.
- While planning or involving children in food preparation activities. Follow regular food preparation guidelines.
- Reinforce no sharing policies and procedures. This includes the current practice of not sharing food, water bottles or other personal items.
- Family style meals are permitted to operate if food handlers use adequate food handling and safety practices.
- Ensure proper hand hygiene is practiced when staff are preparing food, and for all individuals before and after eating.



### **Adults and staff expectations for their room**

- All staff and management will be required to wash their hands immediately in the designated bathroom located on the main floor, prior to doing any work-related duties.
- It is mandatory that staff have an extra pair of indoor shoes to use during class time, they will be required to leave their indoor shoes at the centre.
- Cohorting and distancing will no longer be required for indoor or outdoor activities, but we encourage the licensee to continue cohorting in their rooms and distancing indoors.
- SSCC will continue to ensure ratios, group sizes, reduced ratios and mixed age groupings meet the requirements under the Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA), as well as any conditions set out on their license.

### **Equipment and Toy Usage and Restrictions**

- Licensees are encouraged to provide toys and equipment which are made of materials that can be cleaned and disinfected (e.g., avoid plush toys) as much as possible.
- Mouthed toys should be cleaned and disinfected immediately after the child is finished using them.
- If sensory materials (e.g., playdough, water, sand, etc.) are offered, emphasis should be placed on hand hygiene before and after the use of materials.
- Limit item sharing, and if items are being shared, remind children not to touch their faces and wash their hands after using these items. Limit shared teaching materials to those that can be easily cleaned and disinfected at the end of the day or more often as needed.

### **Field Trips**

- Field trips are permitted as per the Reopening Ontario Act. Ratios must be maintained as set out in the CCEYA.

### **Children and Staff Belongings**

Children must not share soothers, bottles, sippy cups, toothbrushes, facecloths, etc. Label these items with the child's name to discourage accidental sharing.

- Linens must be laundered between children and will be sent home weekly for washing.
- Any child's belonging such as water bottles or containers or any hard surface objects will be sanitized.
- All children should always have an extra set of clothes and a pair of indoor shoes at the centre.
- All soiled items such as undergarments, cot sheets and/or clothes must be placed in a bag tied up and given to the parent/guardian at the time of pick-up.





### Section 6: Symptom Screening for SSCC Staff, Children and Visitors

Daily confirmation of screening for children and staff/provider is no longer required by the province. However, it is a must that all individuals continue to self-screen every day before attending SSCC using either the [COVID-19 school and childcare screening tool](#), or a screening tool designated by the local public health unit. The screening tool has been updated to align with the updated [COVID-19 Integrated Testing & Case, Contact and Outbreak Management Interim Guidance: Omicron Surge \(gov.on.ca\)](#). Individual who does not pass the screening must not enter the school and follow the guidance provided in the screening tool.

SSCC management is expected to have a process in place to validate the daily self-screening of these individuals prior to or upon their arrival at the childcare premises.

All SSCC staff, students on educational placement, and visitors must self-screen.

#### Self-Screening for SSCC Students

Parents and guardians are to screen their children daily for symptoms of illness. The SSCC screening tool that is aligned with the provincial COVID-19 screening tool is available to support parents and guardians to meet this requirement.

No one (children, staff, or parents/guardians) will be permitted to enter Saugeen Shores Childcare Centre, if they are sick, even if symptoms resemble a mild cold. Symptoms that will cause exclusion include, but are not limited to, fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, runny nose, nasal congestion, headache, and/or a general feeling of being unwell.

#### Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures

SSCC can allow their parents to come in the school for their child's pick up and drop off, but it is encouraged to continue having all the pick-up and drop off done at the front door.

- Self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms and relevant exposure before entering school and to return home if ill.
- Entrances should have alcohol-based hand rub with a concentration of 60- 90% available with signage demonstrating appropriate use (see How to Wash Your Hands).
- Alcohol based hand rub should not be accessible to children (i.e., within their reach) and children should be supervised when using the hand rub.
- Report to the main office (or designated area) to sign-in (visitors only).
- Personal belongings should be labeled and kept in the child's cubby/designated area. (e.g., backpack, hats, and mittens, etc.). While appropriate clothing for the weather (e.g., jackets, hats, sunscreen) should continue to come with the child, other personal belongings (e.g., toys) should be minimized.



### **General Screening Requirements**

It is the responsibility of the SSCC management to ensure that all screening procedures are established and completed to ensure that no individual enters the premises unless they have completed the screening and the result of that screening has indicated that they are allowed to proceed.

SSCC should post signs at entrances to the childcare setting to remind staff, parents/caregivers, and visitors of screening requirements.

SSCC should make self-assessment tools available to staff to ensure awareness of possible symptoms of COVID-19.

Every person arriving at SSCC will be actively screened PRIOR to entering the school. The screening information must be documented using the three separate Logs: Staff, Children, Visitors.

### **Attendance Records**

Enhanced attendance reporting practices for children, SSCC staff and all other individuals entering the SSCC will be maintained. In addition to attendance records for all children receiving childcare, SSCC is responsible for maintaining daily records of anyone entering the facility.

- Records must be updated when a child, childcare provider or staff person is absent.
- SSCC will follow-up with all individuals to determine the reason for any unplanned absences, and determine if the absence is due to illness to note any symptoms (e.g. fever, sore throat, cough).
- Encourage parents/guardians of ill or unwell child or staff to seek COVID-19 testing by contacting the school or to call Telehealth or their primary care provider to determine if further care is required.
- Visitor record must be updated and include all individuals who enter the premises (e.g., parents and guardians dropping off children, cleaners, people doing maintenance work, people providing supports for children with special needs, those delivering food government agency employees (e.g. public health inspectors, fire inspectors).

### **Absence Reporting In case of Suspected Outbreak**

- To continue ongoing monitoring of COVID-19 impacts, school will continue to report absenteeism rates to public health units should they rise to a defined level (approximately 30% above their baseline).
- Under the CCEYA, licensees must ensure that a daily observation is made of each child receiving child care in each child care centre it operates before the child begins to associate with other children in order to detect possible symptoms of ill health.
- Licensees are also required to ensure that where a child receiving child care at a child care centre it operates appears to be ill, the child is separated from other children and the symptoms of the illness noted in the child's records.



- As a reminder, anyone who is sick or has any new or worsening symptoms of illness should stay home until their symptoms are improving for 48 hours and should seek assessment from their health care provider if needed.

### Section 7: Management of Children with Possible Covid-19

#### COVID-19 ISOLATION REQUIREMENTS FOR CASES AND CONTACTS

As per provincial guidance [COVID-19 Integrated Testing & Case, Contact and Outbreak Management Interim Guidance: Omicron Surge \(gov.on.ca\)](https://www.gov.on.ca/covid19/):

**Table 1: Isolation Requirements for Individuals with COVID-19 Symptoms**

Population	Isolation Period
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fully vaccinated individuals, or</li><li>• Child under 12 years of age</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 5 days after test date or symptom onset (whichever is earlier)</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Individuals 12 years of age and older and who are not fully vaccinated, or</li><li>• Immunocompromised individuals</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 10 days after test date or symptom onset (whichever is earlier)</li></ul>

#### Isolation Requirements for Asymptomatic Close Contacts

If you are **NOT symptomatic** and **DO NOT live** with a symptomatic individual or COVID-19 case, you are **not required** to isolate.

If you are **NOT symptomatic** and live with a symptomatic individual or COVID-19 case, you are **not** required to isolate if:

1. Household members are 18 years of age and older and have received a booster dose, OR
2. Household members are under 18 years of age and are [fully vaccinated](#), OR
3. Household members have previously tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days (RAT or PCR test)

**Even if not required to isolate based on the above criteria, household and non-household close contacts of a COVID-19 case or symptomatic individual, must self-monitor for 10 days (from last exposure) and wear a well-fitted mask in school.**

This includes avoiding activities such as high-contact sports and playing wind instruments where masking and/or physical distancing cannot be maintained.

- For children under 2 a well-fitted mask is not required. However, parents must monitor for symptoms for 10 days following last exposure.
- Children under 5 who are asymptomatic household contacts are required to stay home for 5 days.



### **Section 8: Travel**

Children returning from international travel must provide two negative Covid Antigen test result taken within 48 hours after their arrival. And require the parent / guardian to continue monitoring for signs and symptoms of Covid 19 for next 14 days.

Please refer to the Government of Canada Website [COVID-19: Travel, testing and borders - Travel.gc.ca](https://travel.gc.ca/covid-19) for requirements and exemptions regarding COVID-19 and travel.

### **Section 9: Vaccination**

COVID-19 vaccines are safe, effective and the best way to protect you and those around you from serious illness, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19. We ask that you continue this work and promote vaccination efforts for children, families, and staff/providers.