

After The Bell Inc.

COVID – 19 Protocol Guideline Policy

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Documentation links.....	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID – 19 Guidance for Child Care settings • Communicable Disease and Prevention and control 	
Preventing the Introduction of COVID – 19 into the Center.....	3
Public Health Measures at the center.....	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical distancing..... • Cohorting/grouping..... • Hygiene Practices..... • Environmental cleaning..... • Laundry..... • Outdoor Activities..... • Other considerations..... 	<p>4</p> <p>4</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p> <p>6</p> <p>6</p> <p>6</p>
Presentation of Symptoms while at the center.....	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff • Children 	
Outbreak Management.....	7
Personal Protective Equipment.....	7
Screening.....	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pick up/drop off procedure • Signing off on the self assessment 	
Conclusion.....	8

Introduction

After The Bell Inc. is committed to maintaining and adhering to the public health guidelines. Our top priority is the safety and wellbeing of the families that we serve and the children in our care. The focus of this document is to outline the information that After The Bell Inc. is putting in place to help control the spread of COVID-19. We aim to provide a warm, caring, healthy and safe environment for families, children and staff. Along with our policy and procedures, we will be following and using in conjunction with the COVID-19 Guidance for Child Care settings and the Guidelines for Communicable Disease Prevention and Control for Child Care Settings. The following information is specific to After The Bell Inc.

Documentation links

For the latest on COVID – 19 information can be found on the NS website - <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/>

COVID – 19 Guidance for Child Care settings -
<https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/COVID-19-Childcare-setting-guidance.pdf>

Communicable Disease and Prevention and control -
https://novascotia.ca/dhw/cdpc/documents/Guidelines_CDPC_Child_care_Setting.pdf

Preventing the Introduction of COVID – 19 into the Center

After The Bell Inc. encourages all those associated with the center to monitor when they or their child should stay home. If you respond YES to any of the following, you are to stay home and self isolate and not enter the child care center –

- Experiencing any symptoms suggestive of COVID-19
- Anyone who has traveled outside of NS within the last 14 days
- Anyone who has a close connection to someone who has a confirmed case of COVID-19
- Anyone who is waiting for test results to come back for COVID-19

If you have questions or concerns regarding any of the above items, please see the 811-assessment tool located online at <http://when-to-call-about-covid19.novascotia.ca/en>

Public Health Measures at the center

After The Bell Inc. recognizes the importance of the mental health and wellbeing of the children that we have in our care. As outlined in the COVID-19 Guidance for Child Care Settings the following link provides resources when caring for children - <https://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/the-2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19>. Our Staff are committed to being positive role models for children and maintaining familiar activities and routines where we can, and help minimize fear and anxiety by mindfully talking about COVID-19 in their presence.

Physical distancing

Physical distancing amongst children is not practical to maintain within After The Bell Inc. and marking's will be posted and placed throughout the center. Where possible we will have the following in place:

- Physical distancing will be maintained amongst staff.
- Parents are expected to adhere to the public health guidelines for social distancing
- Classrooms will be set up to support physical distancing as best we can
- Outdoor play – classrooms will not be outside together – only within their group
- Pick up and drop offs will be 1 parent only. (Please refer to the pick up/drop off section under screening for more details on what this will look like)
- Groups will maintain physical distancing of at least 2 meters from each other

Grouping

- Children and staff members will be assigned to each other.
- Each group will have their own space separate from the others.
- A log will be kept daily on the staff and children in each group.
- If siblings are in the same age group, they will be kept together
- After The Bell Inc will have a maximum group size of 10 children and we are aiming for 5 children per group depending on the need of care required. One staff will be assigned to one group and that will be their group for the month of June unless they are sick. (50% capacity). This will change as we can increase our numbers again.

Hygiene Practices

- All parents, children and staff will wash or sanitize their hands upon entering and leaving the center.
- If handwashing – a minimum of 20 seconds with soap and water.
- If sanitizing – minimum alcohol content of 60% required
- Handwashing for staff will happen frequently
 - When they arrive into the center and before they leave to go home
 - Before handling food

- Before and after eating
 - Sneezing and coughing into hands
 - After touching their own or a child's face
 - Before and after contact with bodily fluids – vomit, blood, runny noses, spit
 - Before and after handling garbage
 - After coming in from outside
- **Handwashing for children will happen frequently**
 - when they arrive at the center and before they go home
 - before and after eating
 - after toileting
 - after playing outside
 - after handling shared toys/items in the classroom
 - after sneezing or coughing into hands.
 - Encouraged to cough and sneeze into their elbow
 - Staff and children need to stay home if they are ill, even when symptoms are mild (Refer to the section presentation of symptoms while attending for more information)
 - Handwashing stations have been placed throughout the center as well as at major points of entrances in the building. Each group will have their own stations to avoid mixing with other groups of children.
 - Children will not be sharing any personal items
 - Avoid touching mouth nose and eyes
 - Refer to the posted hand washing signs for proper handwashing that are posted around the center
 - Wearing masks and gloves is not recommended for either the children or staff in the center. Both are provided to those staff who wish to use them and for when they have to be in close contact with a child who shows signs and symptoms while in our care (while waiting for a parent to arrive for pick up)

****After The Bell Inc. will be very strict with the health policies as laid out by Public Health and the Communicable disease and prevention protocols. ****

Environmental cleaning

Cleaning is used to remove visible dirt and grime, then followed by disinfecting to kill germs.

- All high traffic and touch areas will be fully wiped down on a rotating schedule 3 times daily. More frequent when needed (such as during drop off, pick up when areas are more in use)
- Shared items will be cleaned after each use
- Shared spaces (playground and activity room) will be cleaned and disinfected between groups using these areas)
- Washrooms will be cleaned after each use
- Children will be provided with individual sensory items (playdough, beads, water bins etc) so that they can still fully engage in that area of development.
- Dress up clothes and items that are hard to clean between uses will be removed from the classroom
- While the group is outside, a full clean and wipe down of the classroom will take place before the group returns back inside.
- After The Bell Inc. Hand sanitizer and handwashing stations that are Health Canada approved to fight COVID-19. These are the same cleaning products we have always used.
- The center will be fully cleaned and ready for opening the next day

Laundry

- Parents will be responsible for the laundering of their child's belongings. If clothes, etc get soiled at the center they will be bagged up and given to you at the end of the day. Clothes will be kept in children's individual cubbies..
- Center laundry will continue on the regular laundry schedule each week.

Outdoor Activities

- Groups will be outside as much as possible within the structure of the day, while also adhering to the UV index guidelines.
- Public Health measures will be carried into the outdoor space.
- Field trips to playgrounds and bus trips will not happen. We will take full advantage of our green space, nearby green spaces and walks around the neighbourhood as encouraged by Public Health
- Outdoor time will be scheduled for each group so that there is no over lap
- Toys will be disinfected between groups
- Handwashing stations will be taken outside
- Children will wash hands upon entering the center from outside.

Other considerations

- **Hours will be reduced from 8am to 5pm to ensure we have as many staff working as possible to avoid larger groupings.**
- After The Bell Inc. will make sure that there are enough toys and supplies available to encourage individual play
- Toys from home will not be permitted
- Staff will be serving the food during snacks. Family style dining and open snack will not be done during this time.
- Lunches must be brought from home. NO HEAT UPS please. Consider lunches your children can eat without assistance. Fruit cups are very hard for children to open – this is one example.

Presentation of Symptoms while attending the center

Children

- If a child becomes ill while in our care at the center, the parent will be notified and will be required to make arrange an immediate pick-up. The child will be removed from the classroom and stay with a staff member until the parent arrives. Parents are then asked to contact 8-1-1 for an assessment. If 2 meters of distance cannot be maintained with the staff person and the sick child, the staff member will be wearing a mask.
- Notify the center if your child has asthma, seasonal allergies or any other seasonal condition so that we can assess accordingly.
- If a child tests positive, public health will follow time and advise the center.

Staff

- Staff will not be working if they are showing symptoms.
- If they develop symptoms at work, they will notify their supervisor, wash their hands and contact 8-1-1. If 8-1-1 deems they do not need to be tested, they will return when symptoms resolve.
- If staff are tested, they need to wait for the results and if negative, can return to the center.
- If a staff tests positive, they will be followed by public health and advised by public health when they can return to work

It is very important that we all do our part in preventing the spread of the virus. **please note that if staff are out sick and substitutes are not available, spaces may be limited on those days**

Outbreak Management

If a case of COVID-19 is identified to be connected to the center, After The Bell Inc. will be provided with guidance from public health and provide all the necessary documentation requested. Only **1** confirmed case is considered an outbreak.

Public health actions may include but are not limited to the following –

- Tracing the actions and moves from the center and those involved.
- Requesting records kept
- Testing of staff, parents and children who may have been exposed to the positive case.
- Assessing need for closure of the center

Personal Protective Equipment

- Children are not required to wear face masks or other personal protective equipment while at the center.
- Staff are not required to wear masks while at the center, however will be provided if they so choose. Staff are encouraged to wear masks when in close proximity less than 2 meters. After The Bell Inc. is purchasing 2 fabric masks per staff member.
- It is important to respect individual's preference to wear or not wear a mask.
- If wearing a mask, hands are to be washed before placing the mask on, and then again when the mask is removed.
- Parents will not be required to wear masks as they will not be within the classrooms. Please refer to the screening section of this document.

Screening

After The Bell Inc. will have a procedure in place when you arrive and pick up at the center, and you will be required to sign off on the screening tool provided in the Appendix A: COVID-19 Guidance for Child Care Settings document.

Pick up/drop off procedure

Pick up and drop off will be organized and will be the “new normal”. The following procedure will be in place –

- Parents will do drop off and pick up at the center entrance **through the parking lot**. Parents will not be permitted past this point into the center. They are to remain on the landing at the top of the stairs. A staff will be waiting between 8am and 9am. No drop offs permitted after 9am – this staff will then required for cleaning and sanitizing play area. A staff will also be at the landing between 4pm and 5pm. If pick ups are required before 4pm arrangements must be made at morning drop off in writing.
- If you see another parent dropping off, please wait your turn outside before entering.
- There will be a table set up with the screening tool sign off sheet open to your page for signature. Please sanitize your hands before signing, this will be provided for you if you require it. If you have answered YES to any of the questions on the screening tool, you will not be permitted to stay at the center. If you have questions you are to call 8-1-1.
- While you are signing the document the staff member that has accepted you into the center, will get one of your child’s teachers, and allow them to come get him/her. Please do not be offended when this person exits the lobby area. They are maintaining social distancing so that your child can be taken to the classroom and make the transition as seamless as possible. You will not be required to undress or change shoes for your child, we will take care of all that for you.
- Once you have dropped your child and you have signed off on the document, please leave the parking lot. The next family can come in after.

The safety of the children, staff and families is top priority and by having this procedure minimizes movement within the center and the classrooms. Please account for extra drop off and pick up time. By using our center entrance, we also reduce our interactions with others at the churches main doors.

Signing off on the self assessment

After The Bell Inc. will be using the screening self assessment screening tool for children. Parents will be asked to sign off on the document daily before drop off.

Conclusion

As COVID-19 information and research evolves, so will the way that we operate After The Bell Inc. will stay up to date on all the current information, take direction from Public Health and adjust as we need. **We all have our part to do to help control the spread of the virus.** Your family's safety and health, as well as those in the center is of the highest priority for us After The Bell Inc.