



First Steps Preschool Epidemic/Pandemic Policies



First Steps Preschool is committed to carrying out best practices in order to provide a safe, healthy environment for all children, families, and staff at our school. The following policies and procedures will be put in place during an epidemic or pandemic. These policies are based on recommendations and guidelines from health officials and state licensing agencies during the COVID-19 pandemic but will apply in the event of any epidemic or pandemic that may occur. First Steps Preschool Board and administration will adjust the policies as needed to meet minimum requirements of all applicable authorities, and restrictive policies to protect the health and safety of all children, families, and staff while attending school.

Note: Despite all school precautions taken, children, families or staff could be exposed to any illness or disease. First Steps Preschool and Katy's First Baptist Church are not responsible for possible exposure or contracting any illness or disease and are released from any liability.

School Responsibilities and Precautions

Drop-Off/Pick-Up

- All students will be dropped off in a carpool line. Toddlers and Two's will be dropped off in front of the school under the awning. Three's, Four's, and Transition will be dropped off to the right of the school by the double doors under the cross. Staff will complete the screening process of each child as they come through the car rider line. All children and staff will go through a screening process before entering the building. Parents will only be allowed to enter the building when necessary and will go through the screening process. Parents will be required to wear a mask when entering the building. Everyone entering the building will immediately be directed to a handwashing sink.

Screening

- All children and staff will have a visual check for any signs of illness and will have their temperature checked before entering the school.
- Parents will be asked to verbally confirm that their child does not have a fever, symptoms of illness, and that they have not traveled to an area of high infection rates/internationally (at Director/Assistant Director's discretion) or been exposed to anyone diagnosed with a current epidemic/pandemic within the last 14 days.
- Any child or staff who has a temperature of 100.0 degrees or higher or shows any signs or symptoms of illness will be sent home and not allowed to return until they meet the requirements under Exclusion and Return Policies. These symptoms include:
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Fatigue
 - Chills
 - Muscle pain
 - Headache
 - Sore throat

- Loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Any other symptoms of new epidemics

Precaution Practices

- All staff will receive additional training on preventing the spread of contagious diseases.
- All staff will wear protective face covering as mandated by officials.
- First Steps Preschool will help children learn proper mouth covering when coughing or sneezing, proper handwashing procedures, and practice social distancing to the best of our ability.
- Children must have two complete changes of clothing at school to allow changes if any clothing becomes soiled with bodily secretions.
- All classes will maintain low ratios and will refrain from mixing with children from other classes as much as possible.
- There will be NO before/after care available.
- Specials classes (Music, Motor Skills, Spanish & Chapel) will be incorporated into the classroom, meaning your child will not be switching rooms for these activities.
- Children will not share food, drinks, clothing, or other personal items.
- No “show and tell” or other items from home will be allowed.
- Class parties and other school events may be canceled or postponed.
- Birthday celebrations will be postponed.
- First Steps Preschool will follow any additional mandatory requirements set by local or state officials during these times.
- Each class will have 2 outdoor playtimes

Disinfecting

- First Steps Preschool staff will increase the disinfection rate of high touch areas (such as doorknobs, light switches, classroom sink handles), bathrooms, and community use areas (between classes) throughout the day.
- Additional hand sanitizing stations have been added at all entrances.
- Staff will disinfect all toys with proper disinfecting solution at the end of the day.
- Staff will remove any item that a child places in their mouth until it is cleaned and properly disinfected.
- Soft items that cannot be sprayed with disinfectant will be removed from the room. (Ex. dress-up, stuffed animals, pillows, some sensory items, etc.)

Online Learning

- First Steps Preschool staff will continue to provide online learning for the children through social media during times of necessary school closures. Teachers may choose a variety of social media platforms including Kids Report, Facebook, Zoom calls, emails, etc. to reach out to children and families. Teachers will continue to provide online learning as long as the school remains in an active status and has plans to return to the classroom.

School Closures

- First Steps Preschool may be closed at any time due to the following scenarios:
 - A confirmed case of the illness/disease associated with the epidemic/pandemic or possible exposure within the school.

- Adequate staffing is not available to maintain minimum required ratios.
- A stay-at-home order issued by local officials.
- Katy ISD issued closure.

Parent Responsibilities

Illness Policy

- Parents must verbally acknowledge that their child is well and can pass the screening process each day before dropping their child off.
- Parents must keep their child home if they have a fever of 100.0 degrees or higher or have any other signs and symptoms of illness
- Ill children must be kept home until they complete the requirements for returning to school.
- Parents must notify the school of any illness in their child and/or household.
- Parents or another pick-up person must be available to pick-up an ill child from school within 30 minutes of a phone call.
- Any child, parent or staff that has close contact with someone that has symptoms or is diagnosed with an epidemic/pandemic illness must self-quarantine for 14 days and complete the requirements for returning.
- Any child or staff diagnosed with an epidemic/pandemic illness must have a doctor release or negative test to return to school.

Precautions

We ask that parent's partner with us to help their child know the following procedures in order to help prevent the spread of the pandemic/epidemic.

- Proper mouth covering when coughing and sneezing.
- Proper hand-washing procedures.

Parents may choose to have their child wear protective face covering. Parents must teach children proper use and removal of face covering.

Exclusion and Return Policies

Note: Please remember that these requirements are temporary and in place for times of possible epidemic/pandemic. When the health crisis has passed, First Steps Preschool will return to our normal illness and return policies. **In order to cover extra cleaning and protective equipment, First Steps will be applying a \$10 surcharge monthly for pandemic/epidemic situations.**

Ill Child or Staff

- The following steps will be taken if any child or staff develops symptoms of a current epidemic/pandemic illness or other possible illness while at school or away:
 - An employee will be sent home immediately.
 - A child will be isolated, and parents called.
 - All parents/staff of the classroom will be notified.
 - All areas where the ill child or staff had contact will be disinfected.
 - The classroom will be re-opened after it is disinfected.
 - The staff or child must be evaluated by a medical professional and notify the school of diagnosis – person may return to school if they do not test positive for an epidemic/pandemic and provide a medical release clearing them to return.

- All school families and staff will be notified if any person receives a positive diagnosis of a current epidemic/pandemic and the following steps will be taken:
 - Area where ill person had contact will be closed off
 - Windows will be opened to increase air circulation
 - Area will have deep cleaning and disinfecting
 - Local health officials will be notified, and the school will follow all their recommendations which could include closing the classroom or the whole school for a period and online learning will begin the day after the closure.
 - Classroom and/or school will be reopened as directed by local health officials.

Requirements for Returning to School

- In the case of a child or staff who was diagnosed with a current epidemic/pandemic, the individual may return to school when all four of the following criteria are met:
 - At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery (no fever without the use of medication); and
 - The individual has improvement in all signs and symptoms of illness; and
 - At least 14 days have passed since symptoms first appeared: and
 - The child or staff can provide a medical professional release or negative test clearing them to return to school

Exposure to Epidemic/Pandemic

- Children or staff who have known close contact to a person who has symptoms of or is confirmed to have a current epidemic/pandemic must self-quarantine for a period of 14 days.
- The individual must monitor their health for any signs or symptoms of the illness during the 14 day quarantine and follow the criteria for returning if any signs or symptoms appear.

I have read, understand, and agree to adhere to First Steps
Preschool's Epidemic/Pandemic policies as presented. Please
sign and return this page to First Steps office.

Child's name: _____

Parent's name: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____