

March 17, 2020

HEOSC PANDEMIC POLICY

Child care programs in BC are licensed and regulated through the Ministry of Health, child care licensing. As a result, HEOSC may be directed by a child care licensing officer to close operations during a pandemic or other communicable disease outbreak. HEOSC will follow all directives provided from the Ministry of Health. The legal authority to close a child care program for public health reasons falls under the purview of the local VIHA Medical Health Officer and the Provincial Health Officer and their decision overrules any decision to stay open that an individual daycare or parents may wish to make.

When HEOSC reopens child care ratios are required during operation, regardless of a pandemic or communicable disease outbreak. In the event that enough employees are unable to come into work or are in a quarantine and ratio is not able to be met, HEOSC may require reduced operational hours or rotating days off between children. This decision would be made as required, and would be communicated with parents in writing, via email.

Health and wellness policy

HEOSC's health and wellness policy continues to apply during a pandemic or communicable disease outbreak, however, additional restrictions may apply, based on government / licensing officer directives. This may include, but is not limited to, extending our required at-home "symptom free" time period following any symptoms or requiring children with symptoms - *even if they are feeling well and have plenty of energy* - to remain at home. Any temporary changes to our health and wellness policy during a pandemic / outbreak will be communicated in writing, via email, and will link to the authorized source of information that our temporary change is based on.

Additional cleaning

In the event of a pandemic or communicable disease outbreak, HEOSC, while in operation, will follow additional cleaning measures. This includes:

- Using a Ministry of Health-approved sanitizing solution within the program twice a day, to sanitize the facility and all equipment. Information about approved sanitizing solutions can be found here [2019 Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) BC public health guidance for schools and childcare programs](#) (page 10)
- Any food provided by our program will be served directly to children rather than a family-style or buffet style snack or meal service
- Increasing handwashing and using social stories and direct teacher instruction with children to promote healthy handwashing habits

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Fees during pandemic / communicable disease closures

In the event of a long term closure due to a pandemic or communicable disease outbreak fees are eliminated. This will be evaluated on a case by case basis by the HEOSC Board of Directors. HEOSC will continue contact with families as this situation unfolds.

Fee reductions such as the CCFRI or ACCB are provided through MCFD, and may or may not be provided during required pandemic or communicable disease closures. Parents may directly contact the MCFD office at 1 888 338-6622, to discuss MCFD's policy regarding CCFRI or ACCB payments; this decision is outside of HEOSC' authority.

Individual exclusions

In the event that the Ministry of Health provides a regional or provincial quarantine recommendation for individuals - be it due to international travel, linked to potential exposures, or linked to individual symptoms, HEOSC will require all families and children to comply with this recommendation. In the event this occurs, the Ministry of Health will provide our child care program with written information; this recommendation will be shared directly with families. These exclusions will apply equally to all children, families and employees.

Authorized sources of information

A pandemic or localized communicable disease outbreak is subject to governance by official sources: our child care licensing officers, the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Children and Families, and the federal government. While we appreciate that social media and news sources provide an extensive amount of information, we will respond to official, authorized sources of information only.

A non-biased, inclusive approach

Fear-based responses in times of pandemic or communicable disease, have historically led to actions stemming from bias and self-protective measures. Not only can these measures lead to conflict between parents, child care educators, and community members, but they can also lead to actions rooted in racism. HEOSC has an inclusive-based approach and works to be a safe space for all families and children; we will not tolerate acts of racism or bigotry towards any parent, child, employee, or community member. Any such acts may be subject to an immediate dismissal from our program.

Covid19

Information about COVID-19, including advice and guidance to schools, is regularly updated on the BC Centre for Disease Control site. Information on Covid2019 and current recommendations from the health authority are found here:

[2019 Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) BC public health guidance for schools and childcare programs](#)

The provincial pandemic plan can be found here:

[British Columbia Pandemic Provincial Coordination Plan](#)

Thank you for your understanding and support during these challenging times. HEOSC are dedicated to continuing to take proactive measures to ensure the health and safety of our amazing community.

If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to let me know.

Thank you,

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