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**COVID-19 Policies**

In addition to our regular illness policies, with the introduction of COVID-19, the following additions will also need to be implemented (per mandates provided by Jefferson County Public Health). Any child or staff member who has any of the following symptoms is to isolate, at home, for at least 10 days from the start of when symptoms appear: a fever of 100 degrees or above, a cough, or shortness of breath. If you choose to visit a doctor, and they provide documentation stating that your child is determined to not be displaying COVID-related illness, we can provide that to the health department to determine if return to care sooner may be granted. However, please note that there have been recent cases of COVID tests returning negative when testing earlier on in illnesses, and then later testing positive, so it is recommended that children or staff who are still displaying symptoms 72 hours later be tested again. For this reason, children and staff must be free of cough (or their cough has greatly improved), fever, and shortness of breath for a minimum of 72 hours before they can return to SSLC.

Furthermore, we have received additional information from the health department regarding COVID-19 isolation and quarantine. If anyone is exposed to someone who is suspected of having COVID-19, and the suspected person is awaiting a test, it is best practice for that family and/or staff member to isolate until the results return. If the test returns as positive, then the exposed individuals must quarantine for a minimum of 14 days from the last date of exposure. This presents a unique challenge in our setting, and we have gathered guidance from the health department on what to do if a staff member or child tests positive. In this case, the classroom where the child or staff member works may need to isolate for a minimum of 10 days, depending on the circumstances, exposure, and the determinations from counseling with our health department representative. At minimum, the center will need to close for at least 24 hours for disinfecting and deep cleaning.

The policies regarding quarantine, exposure, etc are the reason for the shortened business hours. In an attempt to decrease exposure center-wide, we are directed to maintain cohorts of children and staff, so we are no longer able to combine children and stagger our staff in and out, in the same manner as we were previously able to. We do hope that someday soon, we can begin to return to normal operating procedures, and will definitely jump on the opportunity to do so when that day comes!

In order to continue to try to prevent the spread of COVID-19, we do depend on your communication. Please be sure to let us know if there are any possible exposures, family members with illness, etc. Thank you for helping us, as we all try to work together to keep each other safe!