

So how are we handling COVID? Last summer, I spent a lot of time working with The Department of health on safe practices for preschools. We did very well as a school last year and were not shut down nor did we have any outbreaks within a class. We will implement the same protocols this year. Those protocols are:

Temperature checks and health screening each morning at drop off for students

Classes will operate as cohorts, or pods, and will not interact with anyone outside their class.

Classes will be kept to 10 students, 12 for JK, with a teacher and assistant.

Classes will not share playground time with another class

Classes will go to the bathrooms as a class and the bathrooms will be cleaned between groups

Toys/supplies will not pass from class to class

Students will have their own art/supply kit and group items will be cleaned as used.

Student will social distance within the CDC guidelines

Classes will not be grouped together at any time

Each classroom will be cleaned before students arrive and throughout the day

Each classroom has an air purifier capable of filtering out COVID, as well as anything else

All cleaning protocols and chemicals are COVID approved

All staff will be masked and will not go into each other's rooms

Parents will drop off and pickup from outside the building to keep the school as clean as possible.

Anyone other than staff and students will not be allowed into the school during the school day

Now, many of you have asked whether the children will be required to wear masks. I have gotten emails from many of you who feel strongly about the mask issue, but half of you want the kids to all be masked and half of you don't. The fact is, we do not make the decision on masks. We are licensed through the Department of Social Services. We must follow their requirements, and they are under the Department of Education. Both those agencies follow the CDC and we must also follow mandates from the Governor. At this time, the Department of Social Services is requiring all STAFF in child care facilities to wear masks, but they are not requiring masks for students. This could change and if masks are required for students, we will have no choice but to follow those requirements and we will pass that information on to parents. If we refuse to comply, they will shut us down. If it is not required, we are not going to implement a mask

policy for all students. If you choose to send your child in a mask, that will be fine.

For those of you against the children wearing masks, I understand, but I may not have a choice. Last year we started our year without having children in masks but in December, a mask mandate came down from the governor. With all of our other protocols in place, we had done very well and felt we were providing a safe environment with little exposure. We took many mask breaks while sitting quietly and social distancing. We had breaks while outside and during lunch. If we must have the students in masks, we will make it as easy as possible on them. Last year, no families took their student out when the mask mandate went into affect and all the kids adjusted wonderfully. Our teachers were kind, caring and understanding and again, made it as easy as possible.