

**Building Blocks Preschool Parent Handbook**

**COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan**

***\*Subject to change based on Covid-19 Status***

**July 2020**

The health and safety of our children, staff, and families is paramount. The below-listed policies and protocols are designed to help parents understand their role and the school’s role in providing a safe and healthy school environment. These policies and protocols will generally be followed to the greatest extent practicable, will be adjusted as we continue to receive updated recommendations, and will supersede the policies listed in the School Handbook where applicable. Please read through the policies and protocols carefully and please keep a copy handy for review as necessary.

**1 | Texas Minimum Standard Health Protocols**

We will continue to operate within the guidelines of the Texas Minimum Standards for Licensed Child Care Providers, as we previously have done. The Texas Minimum Standards includes a checklist from the Governor’s Task Force to Open Texas, in which we have used to create these policies and protocols.

In addition, we will follow CDC Guidance for Child Care Programs that Remain Open for increased health and safety protocols. The areas of guidance the CDC and Texas Minimum Health Protocols addresses, and are specifically included in our school policies and procedures, are:

✓ Implement [social distancing strategies](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html#SocialDistancing)

✓ Intensify [cleaning and disinfecting efforts](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html#CleanDisinfect)

✓ Modify [drop-off and pick-up procedures](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html#pickup)

✓ Implement [screening procedures upon arrival](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html#ScreenChildren)

Building Blocks staff will take additional health and safety training related to COVID-19 through the Texas A&M Agrilife Extension. These trainings include:

✓ Providing High Quality Experiences during COVID-19 for Emergency Child Care Settings

✓ Special Considerations for Infection Control during COVID-19

**2 | Preventative Health Measures**

• **Preparing Supplies**

Building Blocks has purchased and/or ordered needed supplies, such as non-contact infrared thermometers, sanitizer, gloves, and masks.

• **Staying Home**

It is vital that you keep your child home if they are ill or acting in such a manner which you believe they are becoming ill. We encourage you to check your child’s temperature before leaving for school and for any symptoms associated with COVID-19 (described below). We will first rely on the social responsibility of each family to be as prudent as possible in sending their child to school only when healthy, but our second step is to screen each child and family upon drop-off. It is important for each family and staff member to be as vigilant as possible in monitoring for symptoms and communicating with the Building Blocks Office if or when they start to feel sick. A doctor’s note of clearance to return to school may be required. Please email (nancys@kellerumc.org) to communicate any concerns.

**• If a Child or Staff Member Is or Becomes Sick**

If a child or staff member should become ill while at school, a staff member will escort them to the quarantine isolation room located in the Building Blocks office. A parent will be called for the child to be picked up. To the extent possible, we encourage the designated parent or child caregiver, who normally drops-off/picks-up (more on this request below), be the person to pick up the ill child from school. Upon picking up, please call the Building Blocks office (817.431.5318) and a staff member will bring your child to you. An ill child must be picked-up within an hour of their first communication alert by one parent/caregiver. Additional cleaning and disinfecting will be completed of the affected classroom or space that an ill child or staff member has been present.

The children’s temperatures will be taken each school day before entering the building and once during the day to monitor the health of the children during the day.

• **If COVID-19 is Confirmed in a Child or Staff Member**

If your child, a member of your child’s household or person your child has close contact with (a nanny, etc.) is confirmed with COVID-19, you are required to inform via email Building Blocks (nancys@kellerumc.org) immediately and no later than 24 hours of the diagnosis.

If a child or staff member are diagnosed, Building Blocks will contact the Tarrant County Health Department and Child Care Licensing for guidance on how to respond.

Children or staff with new or worsening signs or symptoms of possible COVID-19 (see list under Screening below) may not return to school until the following criteria have been met:

✓ At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever reducing medications);

✓ The individual has improved respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, shortness of breath);

✓ At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared; and

✓ Has received a doctor’s note of clearance to resume participation at school.

**• Allergies**

Children or staff who show persistent signs of runny nose, coughing and other respiratory issues that may be due to seasonal allergies will be asked to obtain a doctor’s note of clearance to participate in school. This note will be dated, filed in the office, shared with your child’s classroom teachers, and kept for 2 months. If symptoms are persistent after two months, we will ask that you obtain another doctor’s note of clearance to continue participating in school. Please inform the school during the daily screening process about any allergy symptoms your child may be experiencing that day. ***Please do not give your child fever reducing medicine if they have an elevated temperature and send them to school.***

**• Group Events**

For the time being, Building Blocks will not hold group events. This includes any school-wide functions or any individual class parties where parents are invited.

**• Limiting Access to Building Blocks**

Building Blocks space is defined as the hallways, gym area and classrooms behind the doors in the Family Life Center of Keller UMC. We will be limiting the number of people allowed into the school in an attempt to minimize the exposure to any infectious disease. Only the following will be allowed to enter the school space:

✓ Building Blocks Staff (teachers and administrators);

✓ Persons with legal authority to enter, including law enforcement officers, Licensing staff, and Department of Family and Protective Services staff;

✓ Professionals providing services to children;

✓ Enrolled children (non-enrolled siblings or other children not allowed); and

✓ Parents who have children enrolled and present at the operation. Parents should only enter Building Blocks when necessary.

Tours of the program Building Blocks will not be conducted during school hours.

**3 | Social Distancing Strategies**

Since the grouping method allows for children within each group to intermingle, all participants, especially parents and staff, must be aware that their actions play a critical role in reducing the risk of infectious disease transmission in our school community. Staff and parents are asked to maintain at least 6 feet of separation from other individuals. If such distancing is not feasible, other measures such as face coverings, hand hygiene, cough etiquette, cleanliness and sanitation should be rigorously practiced.

• **Class Sizes and Classroom Space**

Building Blocks has always had small, individual class groupings which fall below even the new Modified Child Care Ratios listed in the Minimum Standard Health Protocols published by the Governor’s Task Force to Open Texas. The classes already meet in individual classrooms that do not share space with other groups, have the same children each class day which make for stable grouping, and have the same regular teachers. The classes will remain in their classrooms each school day, except for outside/gym playtime and Co-Curr classes. Toys and materials that cannot be easily cleaned and sanitized will not be used and extra rugs will be removed from the classrooms. In order to reduce sharing of materials, the children will have individual sets of crayons, markers and other art supplies, and class-shared sensory (water/sand) tables and bins will be limited to 2 students at a time with required hand washing/sanitation before and after use.

• **Outside/Gym Playtime**

We will stagger the outside/gym playtime, so each group will use the space individually. High-touched metal and plastic surfaces will be cleaned routinely.

• **Co-Curr Classes**

The Co-Curr teachers will wear a clear face shield/masks to help minimize the potential of spreading an infectious disease. Any materials will be disinfected before use with another class. Initially, we will have these teachers travel to individual classrooms instead of their designated co-curr room until routines and handwashing/sanitizing rituals are mastered.

• **Signage**

Building Blocks will have signage around school reminding persons to social distance as well as hand washing/hand sanitizing signs in designated areas.

**4 | Parent Drop-Off and Pick-Up Protocols**

• **Designated Parent/Caregiver**

It is recommended that one parent or caregiver be designated to drop-off and pick-up the child at school each day. If possible, older people such as grandparents or those that are immune-compromised should not be the designated person, because they are more at risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

• **Drop-Off Protocols**

✓ More details will be given about the dropping off process closer to the beginning of school.

✓ Each child will be screened before the child can be dropped-off for school. Please see details about the screening process below.

✓ Each parent or caregiver dropping off their child must wear a mask. It is at the parent’s discretion if they want their child to wear a mask during drop off/entering the building. Masks will remain with the parent.

✓ As recommended and to provide the best opportunity to socially distance, Building Blocks will have a drive through drop-off/pick up line. Details will be announced closer to the start of school.

✓ Late Drop-Off: It is essential for the efficiency of the drop-off process for parents and caregivers to be on time when dropping off; however, we understand there will be mornings when circumstances will delay your arrival at school. If you are late, please call the Building Blocks office (817.431.5318) so a staff member can check your child into school and escort them to his/her classroom.

• **Pick-Up Protocols**

✓ Each parent or caregiver picking up their child must wear a mask. It is at the parent’s discretion if they want their child to wear a mask for pick-up/leaving the school.

✓ As recommended and to provide the best opportunity to socially distance, Building Blocks will have a drive through pick up line. The schedule will be announced closer to the beginning of school.

✓ Late Pick-Up: Building Blocks will still be following the Late Pick-Up policy that is outlined in the Parent Handbook. Please call Building Blocks office at (817.431.5318) to let us know when you have arrived.

• **Communication**

✓ Since we will be limiting the regular face-to-face contact we normally have during the drop-off and pickup process; we will be utilizing a messaging app. Instructions will be coming soon as to which app we are using. This will be one of the main sources of direct parent/teacher communication in addition to our daily folders. The teacher will also be available for phone appointments to answer any questions or concerns you might have. We highly value clear and frequent communication with parents and teachers and will do our best in these new circumstances to maintain the level we are used to as a school.

**5 | Screening: Children, Parents, and Staff**

• **Who Will be Screened**

The following individuals are required to be screened every day before entering the facility:

✓ Building Blocks Staff;

✓ Staff that would be working in or around Building Blocks facility (e.g. janitors or KUMC ministers);

✓ Persons with legal authority to enter, including law enforcement officers, Licensing staff, and Department of Family and Protective Services staff;

✓ Professionals providing services to children;

✓ Enrolled children; and

✓ Parents who have children enrolled and present at the school. Parents will only enter the school when necessary.

• **Screening**

Upon dropping your child off, each person will be screened for the following:

✓ Temperature check: Using a non-contact infrared thermometer, each person’s temperature will be checked. For children, we will follow the requirement listed in the School Handbook; which is, if a child has a temperature of greater than 99.4° they may not attend school for at least 72 hours and must be fever free without fever reducing medication for at least 72 hours before returning to school.

✓ Symptoms of COVID-19 that will be monitored each school day include: cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, diarrhea, feeling feverish or measured temperature >99.4° Fahrenheit (for children), has had known contact with a person who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19.

✓ Review of a child’s close contacts and if any of them have a lab-confirmed case of COVID-19. If so, the child or staff member may not return to school until the end of the 14 day self-quarantine period from the last date of exposure (with an exception granted for health care workers and critical infrastructure workers.) If a parent believes that they or their child has had close contact to someone with COVID-19 but are not currently sick, they should monitor their health for the above symptoms during the 14 days after the last day they were in close contact with the individual with COVID-19.

✓ Please be familiar with Building Blocks Health/Illness policy listed in the School Handbook. We will be enforcing our policy of exclusion if your child has any of the listed symptoms. We appreciate your diligence and understanding when we must exclude a child because they have an illness symptom present.

• **Travel Alerts**

✓ Parents and children returning from travel to areas with community spread of COVID-19 must follow the guidelines they have received from local health officials.

✓ Please notify us of any international travel. Please stay up to date with the recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control – Travel information website.

**6 | Enhanced Cleaning and Disinfectant Measures**

• **Cleaning Products and Supplies**

✓ Building Blocks uses a hospital grade cleaner for cleaning and disinfecting, which is EPA approved for use against SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19). The staff will be trained how to use it effectively and safely. For instance, knowing how long the product must remain on the surface to be effective and using it safely around children.

✓ Keller UMC custodial staff will clean classrooms and disinfect each classroom at the end of each day after the children have left with their fogger.

✓ The classrooms will be supplied with disinfectant spray/wipes and hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol content. These items will only be handled by the staff and kept out of reach of children.

• **Cleaning and Sanitizing Toys, Materials and Surfaces**

✓ We will continue our practice of collecting toys throughout the school day that have been put in a child’s mouth (or that are otherwise contaminated) and place them in the “to be cleaned” bin to be sanitized at the end of the day.

✓ Staff will be cleaning and sanitizing other toys and surfaces frequently throughout the day.

✓Building Blocks will focus on the cleaning of the classrooms each school day. Staff will be focused on cleaning and sanitizing surfaces such as doorknobs, light switches, classroom sink handles, counter tops, toilet areas, tables, desks, chairs, cubbies, and high-touch areas on the playground.

✓ Restrooms will be cleaned at least three times a day.

**7| Caring for Preschoolers**

We realize the importance of comforting a child who is crying, sad and anxious. Teachers are required to wear a mask/face shield on the school premises and when performing any activity which would involve close contact to children/co-workers and where six feet apart is not feasible. They will also wash/sanitize their hands as well as the child’s hands as soon as possible.

All the staff will be required to bring a change of clothes to school each day so they can change into clean clothes, if or when needed. All families will be asked to provide at least two (2) extra changes of clothes for their child: 1 will be left at school and 1 will be left in their backpack/daily tote. Ziplock bags will be available for this purpose.

**8 | Healthy Hand Hygiene and Face Mask Wearing**

**• Handwashing: Frequency**

Handwashing is the number one method of stopping the spread of an infectious disease in a school community. Building Blocks has always placed high value on good handwashing practices, and we will be placing even more emphasis now. The teachers will be building lessons about handwashing into their daily curriculum so that the children can develop the healthy habit of frequent and correct handwashing. Children and staff will wash or sanitize their hands multiple times throughout the school day; including, but not limited to, upon entering school, after using the restroom, before and after eating, and after outside playtime.

Bottles of hand sanitizer and “touchless” stands of hand sanitizer will be spread out through the school and we encourage everyone to use some before entering the school.

• **Handwashing: Method**

When handwashing, the teachers will have the children wash with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and then use a paper towel to dry their hands. Building Blocks has “touchless” paper towel dispensers. If hands are not visibly dirty, alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol will be used if soap and water are not readily available.

• **Face Mask Wearing**

The staff will wear face masks/face shields at drop-off, pick-up and in between when necessary such as around other adults, in presence of children or going to the restroom. Students will not be required to wear a mask while in the school area after their daily health screening and entry into the school area. Parents may provide a mask for their child(ren) to wear at drop off and/or pick up. The mask will be handled by the parent and will stay in the parent’s possession. All other adults (parents, necessary visitors, etc.) in the preschool will be required to wear a mask unless otherwise unable to because of health reasons.

**9| Food Preparation and Serving**

• **Snacks** Food will not be served family-style. Snacks will be prepared for individual serving and, as always, they will be served in the child’s individual classroom. Staff will wear gloves when preparing and serving food to the children.

• **Lunch** Please reference the policy in the Parent Handbook for complete details about providing a lunch for your child. We are also asking that EACH serving container (top and bottom) be labeled with your child’s name or initials so they can be easily identified if separated from your child during lunchtime. Children should not bring food to share with others.

• **Water** Please provide a reusable water bottle which your child can use independently that is clean with fresh water for your child each school day. Clearly label the bottle with your child’s name in a manner that it will not rub or come off.

**10 | COVID-19 Financial Responsibility**

• Should the community be ordered to shelter-in-place and the school must close, the school will assess which one is more feasible: an online learning platform, a credit or a refund. Building Blocks will attempt to provide an age appropriate learning platform via a school app, email or maybe Zoom. We will assess how long we will extend an online platform. Please remember that Building Blocks is a non-profit school and our ability to provide programming is dependent on your monthly tuition.

• When school may resume, tuition will be reinstated (prorated accordingly) and due upon the first day back to school.

• Prolonged personal absence because of COVID-19 illness or related reasons (i.e. a child must quarantine with their household) will not be eligible for refunds or credits.

• If Building Blocks is advised by the local health authorities to close for a quarantine or if Building Blocks decides to close for 24 hours, the tuition for that period will not be eligible for a refund or credit. For any subsequent quarantine closures, specific to Building Blocks, families will be eligible for a credit for future tuition.

• Our withdrawal policy is listed in the Parent Handbook. It remains the same. We require 2 weeks written notice and payment of days that your child was enrolled even if they were not in attendance.

**11 | Covid-19 Health and Safety Plan Agreement**

The virus that causes COVID-19 can infect people of all ages. While the risk of serious illness or loss of life is greatest in those 65 years of age and older and/or are immune compromised, persons in every age group can get COVID-19 and some will have a severe illness.

We should all be thankful that, with rare exceptions, COVID-19 is not claiming the lives of our children. However, we can never forget that a child with a mild or even asymptomatic case of COVID-19 can spread that infection to others who may be far more vulnerable.

COVID-19 is spread from person to person through contact that is close enough to share droplets generated by coughing, sneezing, speaking and even just breathing. COVID-19 can also be spread by touching objects where contaminated droplets have landed. Because of this easy manner of transmission, an infant, child, or young person who is infected with COVID-19 can spread the infection to others they come in close contact with, such as members of their household, teachers, or other caregivers. We have learned that infected persons with mild or even no symptoms can spread COVID-19.

Building Blocks is a team of loving and professional caregivers, committed to implementing the above protocols. A disclosure form will be provided to you. By signing and returning form, you are agreeing, that you have received the above protocols, understand our COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan and agree to follow it. Please notify us in writing (nancys@kellerumc.org) if there is any change in your family’s health status.

We are looking forward to a great year! Thanks for entrusting your child(ren) with us!