



Apple Orchard School

2020-2021

PARENT HANDBOOK COVID ADDENDUM & HEALTH GUIDELINES

Any topic highlighted in yellow in our primary Parent Handbook has a specific COVID-19 related change you will find updated in this addendum.

(Updated as of August 21, 2020)

Dear Apple Orchard Families,

Here is our new Parent Handbook COVID-19 Addendum and Health and Safety Guidelines based on the new minimum standards set out by our EEC licensing board. We ask you to take some time to review it and if you have any questions, we will be happy to address them by email or phone.

But first we want to THANK YOU for your patience, encouragement, and continued support. During the past three months, we have been so humbled and grateful for the support from our families, staff, and service providers. It is directly because of your support that Apple Orchard is able to re-open. Our educators are ready to get back to what they love to do - teaching your children. They have worked very hard to maintain involvement through at-home learning and we look forward to seeing the children back on the farm.

As the months progress, we will be keeping an eye on the information and changing standards required by the state and keep you updated. In response to favorable trends in virus transmission, we have been advised by EEC that they do anticipate being able to return some of the square footage and group size restrictions (which is lowering our capacity) to previous levels.

Although you probably have been trying to protect your children from the stress of disrupted routines, not seeing friends and family, and your own worry about health and world events, this crisis has taken a toll on children. It is important you know that as much as we are focusing on the physical health and safety of your child, we are also dedicated to their emotional health and well-being.

While we will work hard to sanitize, disinfect, wash hands, and keep COVID-19 out of our program, we will not forget that your child has masterpieces to be painted, friends old and new to play with, towers to build, balls to kick, and a childhood to live. We are here to help your child learn, grow, and thrive.

September 10th can't come soon enough! We are so excited to have a building full of the sounds of children again. Thank you for your support, your patience, and your trust in us to teach your children.

The Apple Orchard Administration

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Introduction

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. The rapid global spread of COVID-19 has been classified as a global pandemic and many places, including Massachusetts, are taking steps to protect communities and slow the rate of transmission.

This COVID-19 safety plan is required by the state of Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care. It has been developed by following the recommendations of, and the guidance by, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Massachusetts EEC, and local boards of health.

Apple Orchard is committed to doing our best to safeguard the health and safety of children, staff, and families. We are also committed to communicating with you as transparently as possible. As more information and health conditions evolve and additional guidance is issued by local, state, and federal authorities, we will continue to keep you informed.

Disclaimer

The COVID-19 pandemic is an ongoing, rapidly developing challenge. Apple Orchard requests all staff members and families monitor publicly available information and follow federal, state, and local health organization guidance and mandates. This plan is demonstrating our best efforts to increase health safety at our school.

Given the nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly with respect to transmission by asymptomatic carriers, we can't guarantee an environment free of COVID-19 or any other virus or disease. Despite our best efforts in following all applicable guidance, a parent, child, family member, or staff member of Apple Orchard may be infected, with or without their knowledge, and may be unaware that they carry a virus putting others at risk of contracting COVID-19 or another disease. Also, COVID-19 is now everywhere so school is not the only place a person may become infected.

The information provided in this packet is obtained from a combination of publicly available sources, including federal agencies and governmental entities. This information may vary and will be updated depending upon current situations and as the knowledge base concerning COVID-19 grows.

As there is yet much to learn about COVID-19, please be advised that Apple Orchard can give no assurances as to the accuracy or completeness of the information provided. Further, the information contained herein is provided for general informational purposes only and should not be construed as a contract or guarantee of performance or results.

How COVID-19 Spreads

Although the first human cases of COVID-19 likely resulted from exposure to infected animals, infected people can spread SARS-CoV-2 to other people. The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person, including:

1. Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
2. Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has SARS-CoV-2 on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the primary way the virus spreads. People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (i.e., experiencing fever, cough, and/or shortness of breath). [The CDC website](#) provides the latest information about COVID-19 transmission.

Safety in School

Preschool providers must follow strict regulations, particularly health and safety protocols. This focus on health and safety is vital in minimizing the spread of infectious diseases. Even pre-COVID-19, the high degree of sanitizing, disinfecting, and health and safety regulations in childcare prevented the transmission of infectious disease. In order to minimize the spread of COVID-19, [the CDC issued guidelines in March of 2020](#) and continues to update them. On June 1, 2020, the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) issued new minimum regulations for health and safety to be followed by all childcare programs after the extended closure (with several revisions throughout the summer). **Also, this year as mandated by Governor Baker, all children in a childcare program are required to get a flu shot by 12/30/2020.**

Children and COVID-19

We are very closely monitoring the data and studies regarding children and COVID-19. Typically, when it comes to respiratory infections and flu, children are in the high-risk category. While COVID-19 is a disease that scientists and doctors are still learning about, in the past months data has shown that while children are more likely to be asymptomatic, they do carry and spread the virus. Also, the vast majority of children with the virus will have mild symptoms.

It is extremely important to consider the steps our program is taking to stop the transmission of illness. At Apple Orchard, we will maintain small, stable groups of 10 to 12 children; we have a consistent team of masked teachers who can isolate if they get sick; children wash their hands more frequently, especially before eating; and we maintain rigorous cleaning practices.

Apple Orchard provides generous sick leave for our staff, and they don't work if they're sick. We have always been an organization that bases our decisions on evidence and data. It's the data and real-life experience, from nearly half of the childcare programs that have operated safely these past few months, that make us confident that programs can continue to keep children healthy and safe.

School Hours

School will start at 8:00 a.m. this year. There will be two drop offs at 8:00 - 8:30 a.m. for Class II and III and 8:30 - 9:00 a.m. for Chicken Coop and Class I.

New Child Home Visits

We will not be doing any home visits for new children this year. Teachers will arrange a time to meet with your child in groups of 5 or less, on site, outside at Apple Orchard. The sledding hill or the large paddock are good places to have a brief, 40-minute playgroup and time to meet new children.

Split Session Schedules

Since the classes will be small with a maximum of 10-12 children, Split Sessions will not be offered this year. We start school mid-week to help children acclimatize to being back at school. All classes and all children will attend full morning sessions on Thursday, September 10th and Friday, September 11th.

Limiting Visitors

In order to limit direct contact between parents and staff members and adhere to physical distancing recommendations, until further notice, Apple Orchard will be suspending our open door policy for families, visitors, and volunteers. Non-essential staff, parents, visitors, and vendors are restricted from entering the building.

Specialists will be asked to meet with children at home (in the case of Early Intervention or other specialized services). Admission tours will be virtual or outdoors and vendors will drop off supplies outside the building.

Parent Information Board

As no parents are allowed in the building this year, our parent board at the entrance to the school near the Silo will not be available. Teachers will provide frequent contact through our communication platform *Kaymbu* and Administration will also provide all school updates via *Constant Contact* and *Kaymbu*.

Weekly Memos

Teachers will send brief updates throughout every week via *Kaymbu* (an online platform to share photos, videos, and comments) and a monthly overview memo.

Email & Phone Messages

While we all use our email addresses, an email is NOT a reliable way to get a message to a teacher or administrator with a time sensitive matter. During the school day, calling the school is the best way to communicate. There is always someone who will take a message at the school number (617-731-6463). We also will never discuss children via email. A phone call or in person meeting is the best form of communication about children.

During the morning school hours, teachers will not leave the children to answer the telephone. **You may reach a teacher prior to 8:00 a.m. or set up a time to speak later in the day.**

You may always leave a message with Apple Orchard Administrators or on our voicemail at **617-731-6463**. The teacher will return the call as soon as possible. If there is a last-minute carpool change due to illness or unforeseen delay in pick-up, please contact the school by phone. Before going to carpool, teachers will check for messages with Diana, Sherry, and on our voicemail. We have an answering service that takes phone messages at night and on the weekends.

Rough and Tumble Play

Since the focus of rough and tumble play is close contact with other children, we will suspend that type of play for this year.

Bringing “Toys” to School

Please do not let your child bring toys to school. If a child requires a special blanket or object to assist in the drop off transition, or for comfort throughout the day, it must be labeled and washed daily.

Parking

In the fall and when the weather is good, parents may park in designated areas and help their children join their class at a specific outside drop off spot. If your child’s class is beginning the day inside, one of your child’s two teachers must walk him or her inside. Please do not park in front of the Silo Office. This area is for deliveries only. The turnaround by the stumps is for carpool use only. **All Cars Should Be Parked On The Opposite Side Of The Road From The School.** We would also appreciate you driving **SLOWLY**.

The parking area does get busy, but spots typically open up quickly. We appreciate your patience. Please be sure that anyone dropping off your child knows that if they do not utilize the carpool line, they must park and escort your child to the Silo Office entrance so an administrator can check in your child and help him/her settle into the class. **NO CHILD SHOULD EVER BE LEFT UNATTENDED.**

Morning Drop-off

We are implementing a tiered schedule for morning drop off at school. Class II and Class III children should arrive between 8:00 - 8:30 a.m., and Chicken Coopers and Class I children should arrive between 8:30 - 9:00 a.m.

Parents will be permitted to walk their children to their designated outdoor location (playground or big paddock) and a teacher will greet and screen at the gates. Teachers will collect the required wellness screening and, provided no symptoms of illness are identified, your child will be asked to use hand sanitizer and then join his/her group. In foul weather, one teacher from each class will be at the carpool drop off area to screen and walk children to their classrooms.

In accordance with licensing regulations, Apple Orchard will screen everyone before they are permitted to enter the program following the requirements below:

- We ask that only one adult get out of the car to drop off a child. Please try to be consistent with which adult drops off/picks up daily.
- If possible, because they are more at risk for severe illness from COVID-19, older people such as grandparents should not drop off or pick up children.
- One child will be admitted or released at a time.
- Please return to your car promptly. Socializing and chatting with other parents is discouraged.
- Parents and staff must sign written attestations daily regarding any household contacts with

COVID-19, symptoms (e.g., fever, sore throat, cough, shortness of breath, loss of smell or taste, or diarrhea), or if they have given children medicine to lower a fever.

- We ask that if you plan to drop-off or pick-up your child outside of the outlined times, you call us to let us know when you arrive in the parking lot **(617-731-6463)**.
- Individuals who decline to complete the screening questionnaire will not be allowed to enter the school program.

Afternoon Pickup

Parents arrive to pick up children in the carpool line for all pick up times. Children will be sitting physically distant on carpool stumps or in other designated areas, waiting with teachers. A teacher will walk the child to the car and buckle the student into the car seat.

Before gathering the next child for the next car, teachers will use hand sanitizer. Pick up protocols will be the same for Class III students leaving at 2:30 p.m., or for our Sandwich Club children leaving at 4:00 p.m.

Sandwich Club

Sandwich Club is our afternoon program and operates from 12:00 until 4:00 p.m. This year, to allow for teacher meetings and training, on **WEDNESDAYS Sandwich Club will end at 2:30 p.m.**

Children will remain in their morning class with the same students and teachers. Attendance will be taken in each class at 12:00 p.m. Children then transition to a healthy, parent-provided lunch. Please see the description of the afternoon in the Parent Handbook.

Sandwich Club Registration - Students will remain with the children in their morning program for Sandwich Club. Parents should contact Sherry Landry with questions about availability and billing.

Lunch - Parents must send in a “ready to eat” lunch for their child. Children will be physically distanced and teachers will use gloves when assisting children with their lunch.

Tooth Brushing - This year, there will be no tooth brushing.

Sandwich Club Optional Special Classes - This year we are not able to mix children in our afternoon program, so we are unable to offer our Specials. We hope in 2021-2022 they will be back!

Staff Training

During School Opening Orientation, staff will be trained with Apple Orchard Administrators.

Staff will also be required to take all the required EEC Health and Safety Trainings established with the new state regulations for early education. These protocols will be reviewed throughout the school year during our allotted staff meeting times. Teachers will be trained in recognizing symptoms, increased hygiene and disinfection protocols, and best practices in physical distancing with young children.

Parent Involvement

Parents are very important to the success of the school. Their role in the school is critical. However, this year EEC licensing requires we restrict parent contact and are not allowed to have parents in the school.

Parent Visits

This year, due to new EEC regulations and the restrictions of Governor Baker to protect children, families, and staff, we are not able to welcome parents inside the school.

We normally love to have parents visit and encourage them to spend an entire morning with their child three times a year; however, this year, in the interest of everyone's health we are not allowed to welcome parents into the school. Your child's teachers will keep you informed of your child's activities and progress through photos, videos, emails, and by phone.

Alumni Visits

We love to have former Apple Orchard students visit us but this year that will not be possible.

Parent Representatives

Each class has a parent representative selected by the Administration Team to give feedback, help coordinate special events, and keep the class informed of events. This year we will meet via Zoom.

Substituting

There will be the possibility of using a parent as a substitute if he/she has not been travelling and is symptom free.

Parent Conferences

Parent Conferences will be held outside in a physically distanced manner or via Zoom. We will hold fall and spring conferences and winter ones only if there is a concern about a child's development and growth.

Progress Reports

This year, teachers will provide a written, bulleted report in the fall and spring. This report will show areas of age appropriate child development and where your child falls in their mastery of these skills. In the fall and spring, teachers will be available in person to meet outdoors or via Zoom to discuss these progress reports. The winter progress notes are discussed if there is a specific teacher or parent request to meet.

Parent Class Evenings

This year, Parent Evenings will be held via Zoom. Teachers will give an overview of their class and a glimpse into the children's world at Apple Orchard.

Parent Workshops/Events

This year we will be unable to offer any in person parent workshops at the school.

New Parent Reception Evening

Depending on EEC, CDC, and MA regulations about outdoor group gatherings in late May 2021, parents with children joining the Apple Orchard community the following September may be invited to come and meet the Director, Administration, and other parents.

Classroom Fundraisers

This year, we will not be doing any fundraisers that involve collection of items at the school.

Student Art Show

This year, we will be unable to host our school Art Show in early February. We plan to create some online way to share the children's work so that parents may participate in viewing their child's work.

Scholarship Fair 2021

This year, we are uncertain if we will be able to host our Fair Day. We will stay in touch with our EEC licenser and monitor all health and safety guidelines from the state with the hope we can hold our Scholarship Fair on the farm on May 8th.

CLASSROOMS AND PLAYGROUNDS / PROGRAM CHANGES

Smaller Classes

In order to give children more room, while limiting the group size, EEC also has mandated that we increase the amount of square footage allowed for each child. Preschool aged children will have a maximum group size between 10-12.

Restructured Classrooms

Where needed, classrooms have been restructured to incorporate the larger square footage per child required. Classrooms have been rearranged to facilitate small group activities and individual play. The number of children permitted to use any one space or activity center at the same time will be limited to one or two children.

Consistent Staffing

Children will be in consistent groupings with consistent staffing and limited floaters. This will make it easier to trace contacts if a child or staff member does develop COVID-19 symptoms.

No Mixing of Classes

Groups of children will not be combined or mixed, either indoors or outdoors. The groups of children using the outdoor space will be alternated so that only a small number of children are using

playground equipment at one time. High-touch surfaces such as grab bars and railings will be cleaned and disinfected between groups.

Limited Sharing of Spaces and Materials

Children's belongings will be stored in every other cubby so materials don't touch. To minimize sharing of materials such as art supplies and equipment, each child will be given his/her own supplies.

We have removed any items that cannot be easily washed (i.e. stuffed animals, pillows) or that encourage children to put the toy in their mouths (i.e. play food, pretend utensils). Shared items that cannot be cleaned or disinfected will be removed from classroom spaces for the duration of the pandemic, or children will be provided individual portions. Group water and sensory tables will not be used at all, but children will be offered individual water and sensory play experiences.

Supervision of Children Indoors

As per our Handbook, children will continue to be supervised; however, supervision will have an additional layer this year as staff will be encouraging physical distance and hygiene for their students.

Attendance

Teachers take attendance daily, noting time of arrival and departure. This year, a health screening will take place at drop off each morning. Children will not deliver the attendance to the Silo Office this year.

“Three for All”, “Open School”, and School Sing Alongs

The children will not have the option to visit other classrooms or gather in large groups this year. **We will only sing when we are outside and able to be physically distanced.**

Outdoors

As being outside is shown to have lower transmission rates of COVID, this year the outdoors is a crucial component to our program.

Only two classes at a time will be allowed on the playground this year. The playground will be divided in half so the two groups do not mix. When spending the day outdoors, drop off of student backpacks in the morning will be spread out at different locations in the large paddock and outside entrances to classrooms. The aim is to keep classes from mixing.

The focus outside will be on travel to the outdoor classroom settings, engaging in curriculum at the outdoor location, and travel back to the school for pick up.

All Outdoor Classrooms have sturdy tents to extend outdoor time.

At this point, parents will not be able to join students on walks around the farm. If that can change during the year, we will certainly notify parents. As usual on walks around the farm, teachers will have an accurate headcount, carry walkie-talkies, a cell phone, and First Aid kits with thermometers, and, before leaving the school, write their destination on the white board.

Administration in the school building can reach teachers at all times during the day. All classes should be back near the school by 11:45 a.m. for carpool. In the case of kindergarten (Class III) on their three long days they will be back at school by 2:15 p.m.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL WELL BEING

Children's mental health experts advise Early Childhood educators to be more attuned and supportive of children who most certainly have experienced stress arising from quarantine restrictions. The stress may be severe enough to consider it traumatic stress. Under normal circumstances and traditional school starts, children have varied experiences. Some will exhibit separation anxiety while others dive right in. We expect some anxiety and mixed feelings as children return to the classroom and we are already planning how to manage and support that transition. Our teachers will assist all children with managing their emotions and support parents with these transitions. While there may be temporary operational differences in our program, our core values of flexibility, respect, growth, integrity, and excellence remain.

During the next few months, our curriculum will address and focus on the social emotional health of children. We're still warm and caring even if you can't see our smiles behind our masks! We know that being together in person will allow us to connect to your children in the manner that is critical for academic growth and child development at this age.

PHYSICAL (SOCIAL) DISTANCING

Young children are naturally social and crave physical contact with their family members and caregivers. We will be careful to balance the need for health and safety with the social-emotional needs of children.

We will not discourage children from playing together, nor will we insist on keeping space between them. When feasible, we will limit physical interaction, but we believe there is more to keeping healthy than staying COVID-free, and that returning to the joy of playing with friends, of interacting with others, and of feeling safe in a group are also extremely important for children's emotional health.

When possible, Apple Orchard educators will maintain at least 6 feet of distance and limit contact between individuals and groups. Staff will wear masks at all times. Activity areas will be designed in ways that allow staff to maintain physical distancing guidelines. Classrooms have been physically rearranged to promote distancing.

SIX FEET: Children will be encouraged to stay 6 feet apart as much as feasible. Children will eat meals and snacks spaced out at the table, or served picnic style. Weather permitting, classes will eat outside.

GROUP ACTIVITIES: We have suspended our schoolwide group activities for this school year.

NON-ESSENTIAL VISITORS: For the duration of the pandemic, the program will not be admitting any non-essential visitors.

PLAYGROUND: Our playground space will be divided in half and will only be utilized by two classes at a time, staying within their designated space. All classes using the playground will clean and sanitize any of the plastic toys in the sand box, balls, and plastic slides.

INFECTION MANAGEMENT

Infection management is a very important part of our daily routine. Force of Nature and Bioesque are used to sanitize bathrooms. Professional cleaners will clean classrooms at the end of each day. We will wash classroom rugs during the December Winter Break and the March Spring Break. We ask that no outdoor shoes be worn inside - every child and adult in the building should have slippers or a dedicated pair of indoor shoes.

School Wellness

Parents, children, and staff must stay home when sick. **If in doubt, please stay out of school.**

Illnesses

This year, sick children will be rapidly isolated and sent home. Illness is determined by a temperature that is above 100.4 degrees and any of the following complaints:

Fever or chills	Sore throat	Cough
Congestion or runny nose	Nausea or vomiting	Diarrhea
Muscle or body aches	Fatigue	Headache
New loss of taste or smell	Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing	

A sick child will be separated from the class with one of his/her classroom teachers until a parent, or designated adult, arrives to pick him/her up. Whenever we have a concern about the health of a child, parents will be called immediately.

Health Screening

Teachers will meet each child, complete a health assessment, and walk the child to his/her class.

Parents will complete a signed attestation of good health and no exposures. Questions include: In the past 14 days, have you had close contact with a person known to be infected with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19)? Close contact is defined as being within 6 feet for more than 10 minutes, of an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 while that person was symptomatic, starting 48 hours before their symptoms began until their isolation period ends.

Self-screening includes checking for symptoms including fever, cough, shortness of breath, gastrointestinal symptoms (diarrhea, nausea, vomiting), fatigue combined with another symptom, headache, new loss of taste/smell, muscle aches, or any other symptoms that feel like a cold. Individuals answering YES to the above mentioned symptoms will not be permitted to enter school.

It is imperative that you do not bring your child to Apple Orchard if you or he/she are sick. If your child has any sign of illness, you must keep your child home until 24 hours has passed without the use of medication or with a doctor's clearance. Our staff will not report to work if they are experiencing any symptoms and must confirm their self-screen results prior to starting work. **See Appendix A.**

Health Monitoring During the Day

Staff will actively monitor children throughout the day for symptoms of any kind including fever, cough, shortness of breath, diarrhea, nausea, unexplained rashes, and vomiting.

Children exhibiting signs of illness will be separated from the larger group and isolated until picked up by a parent. Classroom groups will be equipped with a touch free thermometer if needed throughout the day.

If the child is suspected of having a fever (temperature above 100.4°F), we will check the child's temperature with a contactless thermometer. Thermometers will be cleaned and sanitized after each use. We will have a safe space, easily supervised by staff, to isolate those children who may become sick while at school. Whenever possible, children will wait outside, in the fresh air, by the carpool stumps with a teacher until picked up. In inclement weather, children will wait in our library.

Children with symptoms of COVID-19 will be isolated from others with immediate parent pick-up. Self-isolation of any family members or staff exposed to, or displaying symptoms of, the virus will also be required.

IF A CHILD/EMPLOYEE CONTRACTS COVID-19

We would like to thank you in advance for your patience and understanding about a positive case and the steps we take in response. While working through a positive case may be new to many parents, epidemiologists are now cautioning that we will be living with COVID-19 for many months to come, so dealing with a positive case needs to be incorporated into our typical policies and routines.

A Positive Case and Medical Confidentiality

Since we severely restrict access into the building by non-essential visitors, a positive case of coronavirus within Apple Orchard will likely be a child or staff member. Medical confidentiality laws restrict how much personal information we can share about the person who tests positive, including their identity.

Who is Affected – Contact Tracing

For contact tracing purposes, the state and local health departments differentiate between “close contacts” and “incidental contacts.” Close contact is defined as being within 6 feet of a COVID-19-positive person for longer than 15 minutes. Apple Orchard's health and safety protocols limit close contact within the program, reducing possible exposure so only a percentage of children or staff in the program will have been in close contact with the person who tests positive. People identified as close contacts will be contacted individually by Apple Orchard. Others (not in close contact-incidental contacts) will receive a group email or other communication.

Positive or Presumed Positive Cases

Sick children or employees who are COVID-19 positive or symptomatic and presumed to have COVID-19 will not be allowed to return until they have met the criteria for discontinuing home isolation and have consulted with a health care provider. If a child or employee is presumed to have COVID-19, Apple Orchard will:

- Determine the date of symptom onset for the child/staff.
- Determine which days, if any, the child/staff was at Apple Orchard while symptomatic. Determine who had close contact with the child/staff at the program during those days (staff and other children) [see above for definition of close contact].
- If the individual tests positive for COVID-19 but is asymptomatic, isolation may be discontinued when at least 10 days have passed from the date of the positive test, as long as the individual remains asymptomatic. For example, if the individual was tested on April 1st, isolation may be discontinued, if no symptoms develop, on or after April 11th.

Notification Process

In the event that we experience an exposure, Apple Orchard will notify the following parties:

- Staff and families about the occurrence of an exposure (while maintaining confidentiality). Close contacts [see definition above] will be contacted personally, while incidental contacts will receive a general email.
- The local board of health, if a child or staff member is COVID-19 positive.
- Licensing agencies, if a child or staff member has tested positive.

Self-Isolating Following Potential Exposure

In the event that a staff member or child is exposed to a sick or symptomatic person, Apple Orchard will adhere to the following protocols:

Regardless of whether the individual has symptoms or not, the child or staff member will not be permitted to enter the school program and will be sent home.

Apple Orchard will consult with the local board of health for guidance on quarantine for other children and staff and what additional precautions will be needed to ensure the program space is safe for continued childcare services.

If an exposed child or staff member subsequently tests positive or their doctor says they have confirmed or probable COVID-19, **they must meet all three requirements:**

- Stay home for a minimum of 14 days from the 1st day of symptoms appearing.
- Be fever-free for 72 hours, without fever-reducing medication, if symptoms last for at least 5 days. If symptoms last for less than 5 days, then the sick individual only needs to be fever free for 24 hours, without fever reducing medication, before returning to school.
- Experience significant improvement in symptoms.

WHAT APPLE ORCHARD WILL DO

Assist in Contact Tracing

Identifying close contacts and requiring isolation/testing help reduce the risk of further exposure. Apple Orchard will contact close contacts personally, while everyone else will receive a general email.

Cleaning and Sanitizing

All school spaces will be thoroughly deep-cleaned per CDC guidelines and specific exposed classrooms or spaces will be closed off for 24 hours and students moved to a new space until deep cleaning can be performed.

Self-Isolation

Close contacts who have been exposed will be contacted and must stay home for at least 14 days after the last day of contact with the person who is sick, unless they provide a negative test.

Supporting our Families & Staff

This is going to be a challenging year for all of us. We will do our best to support you along the way. We will check in regularly with those needing to be at home. Teachers will share some Zoom recordings from the school day with students needing to quarantine at home.

WILL APPLE ORCHARD STAY OPEN OR CLOSE?

If we have a suspected or confirmed case of COVID, the Board of Health will determine whether we need to close. By limiting the use of floating teachers and not mixing classes, we greatly decrease the likelihood of the entire program being closed.

WHY WON'T DAILY HEALTH SCREENINGS CATCH COVID-19?

Our daily health screenings detect symptoms of COVID-19 if they are present. When a person actually tests positive, the health department will determine a close contact as one within 2 days prior to symptoms or a positive test result. Some individuals, particularly children, who test positive are asymptomatic. In some cases, although the child or staff member felt well at the start of the school day, the onset of symptoms will appear suddenly.

Sent Home Sick

If a child feels unwell during the day, he/she will be isolated with teacher supervision until picked up. All health and safety guidelines will be followed. If a staff member becomes symptomatic, he /she will immediately stop teaching and depart for home. If new symptoms are detected among a staff member, Apple Orchard will follow the requirements above on how to handle symptomatic individuals.

Self-Isolation

Exclusion protocols from the board of health will be followed for any child, staff, or family member with a positive test for COVID-19 or who are symptomatic and presumed to have COVID-19.

If a child becomes symptomatic, Apple Orchard will do the following:

- We will immediately isolate the child from other children and minimize exposure to staff.
- We have a separate room to isolate children or staff who may become sick. Isolated children will be supervised at all times by a staff member wearing PPE.
- When possible, a separate bathroom will be made available for use by sick individuals only.
- Others will not enter an isolation space without the appropriate PPE.
- The space will allow staff to keep the child away from other children until the child can be picked up.
- We will contact the child's parents and send the child home as soon as possible. If you are notified that your child is sick, you or an authorized pick-up person must pick up your child as soon as possible.
- We have an emergency back-up plan for staff coverage in case a child or a staff member becomes sick.
- We have extra masks available for use by children and staff who become symptomatic until they have left the premises of the program.
- Those being discharged, due to suspected infection, will depart from a designated separate exit from the exit used regularly.

Exposure

If a child or staff member has been exposed to COVID-19, regardless of whether the individual has symptoms or not, the child or staff member will not be permitted to enter the program. Exposed individuals must stay home for at least 14 days after the last day of contact with the person who is sick, or provide a negative test taken 4 or 5 days after exposure. We will follow guidance from the local board of health on quarantine for other children and staff members and what additional precautions will be needed to ensure the program space is safe for continued childcare services.

While safeguarding the privacy of the individual, we will notify parents if there has been a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 among the children or staff.

Travel

Apple Orchard has established our own policy around Travel Plans for students and their families. We will follow Massachusetts and CDC guidelines regarding travel restrictions, but also add a few additional restrictions. **(See Appendix A)**

ENHANCED HYGIENE PRACTICES

Bathroom Procedures

The major change to our regular bathroom guidelines is, when possible, we will only allow one child in the bathroom at a time. A teacher will stand at the doorway to ensure the child washes his/her hands thoroughly and help with dressing if necessary. After the child is finished, the teacher will enter the bathroom and clean all surfaces with Bioesque.

Increased Handwashing

Apple Orchard encourages, teaches, models, and reinforces increased handwashing protocols. Parents must wash their own hands and assist in washing the hands of their children before dropping off, prior to coming for pick up, and when they get home.

All individuals entering the building are required to wash hands immediately. Monitored handwashing and hygiene protocols for children will be built in at all necessary times during the day and at least once every hour. When outside or during activities where soap and water are not readily available for use, we will have carefully monitored use of hand sanitizer appropriate to the age of the child.

Staff and children must wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds in the following scenarios:

- entry into and exit from program space
- when coming in from outside activities
- before and after eating
- after sneezing, coughing, or nose blowing
- after toileting
- before handling food
- after touching or cleaning surfaces that may be contaminated
- after using any shared equipment
- after assisting children with handwashing
- before and after administration of medication
- after contact with facemask
- before and after glove changes

Staff must know and follow the steps needed for effective handwashing: Use soap and water to wash all surfaces of their hands (e.g., front and back, wrists, between fingers) for at least 20 seconds, wait for visible lather, rinse thoroughly, and dry with a disposable paper towel.

Posters of appropriate handwashing steps will be posted to encourage proper handwashing or children will be instructed to sing a song like “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star” TWICE (20 seconds) while washing their hands. If needed, children will be assisted with handwashing.

Hand Sanitizer

When outside or during activities where soap and water are not readily available for use, we will have carefully monitored use of hand sanitizer. Children will be supervised when they use hand sanitizer to make sure they rub their hands until completely dry, so they do not get sanitizer in their eyes or mouth. A permission release for hand sanitizer use was included on the enrollment forms.

Coughs and Sneezes

Children, families, and staff must avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth. Children will be taught to use tissue to wipe their nose, to cough inside their elbow, and to wash their hands immediately afterwards. If outdoors and soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer will be used by children and staff. Staff will instruct children to cough or sneeze into their elbow and then wash their hands with soap and water immediately or use hand sanitizer.

Personal Protective Equipment

Apple Orchard will provide PPE equipment to our staff. Our staff will also be supplied button-down shirts to use as smocks, eye protection or face shields upon request, and non-latex gloves.

Face Masks

Families, and staff must adhere to the CDC's recommendations for wearing a mask whenever going out in public and/or around other people. The CDC provides extensive information on masks [here](#).

Staff

Apple Orchard staff must wear a cloth face mask while serving children and interacting with parents and families. Apple Orchard requires our staff to wear masks during the day. As much as comfortable, staff will use transparent face masks to allow for the reading of facial expressions, which is important for child development.

Apple Orchard will provide each staff member 4 reusable face masks to care for and clean. Masks must be washed daily and any time the mask is used or becomes soiled, depending on the frequency of use. Information will be provided to all staff on proper use, removal, and washing of face coverings. Disposable masks will always be available for the occasional needed mask.

Children

The CDC encourages the wearing of masks for children age 2 and older who can safely and appropriately wear, remove, and handle masks. Additional guidance on use of masks by children is as follows:

- Masks must not be worn while children are eating/drinking, sleeping, and resting. Physical distancing will be practiced during these activities.
- Children 2 years of age and older will be supervised when wearing a mask. If wearing the mask causes the child to touch his/her face more frequently, staff must reconsider whether the mask is appropriate for the child.
- Families must provide their children with at least five clean masks for their child to allow for replacements as needed. Parents must plan for cleaning of masks and clearly mark each mask with the child's name. Guidance may be needed to distinguish which side of the covering should be worn facing outwards so they are worn properly each day.
- Apple Orchard requires that parents/guardians wear a mask when on the premises and at all times during drop off and pick up.

Exceptions: Situations that may inhibit an individual from wearing a face mask safely. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Children who cannot safely and appropriately wear, remove, and handle masks.
- Children who have difficulty breathing with the mask.
- Individuals who cannot breathe safely with a mask, including those with severe behavioral, cognitive or respiratory impairments, or those who require supplemental oxygen to breathe.
- Individuals who need to communicate with people who rely upon lip-reading.

Smocks / Long Sleeve Button Downs

Smocks or cover ups will be worn by any staff member when in close long term (over 10 minutes) contact with a child such as holding a child in their lap, when assisting with bathroom routines, or in contact with any bodily fluids.

Gloves

Apple Orchard staff will wear non-latex gloves during food preparation, while serving snacks, if in contact with bodily fluids, and while assisting in the bathroom. To reduce cross-contamination, gloves will be discarded after use. Handwashing before and after these procedures is always required.

First Aid Backpacks

Emergency Backpacks are stocked with supplies each September and replenished on a regular basis. This year we will add hand sanitizer and hand wipes to the bag in order to maintain hygiene.

All kits must include:

disposable gloves	cold packs	plastic Ziploc bags	pencil/pen/paper
Band-Aids	bottled water	liquid soap	first aid guide
sterile gauze	eye dressings	triangular bandage	emergency phone #'s
flexible gauze	cold packs	bandage tape	non-touch thermometer
			emergency medications

ENHANCED CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

Enhanced Disinfection

At Apple Orchard, we take our responsibility seriously for maintaining a clean, sanitary, and safe environment for children to grow, play, and learn. To ensure effective cleaning and disinfecting, surfaces will be cleaned and then disinfected using Force of Nature, Fogging with Force of Nature, and Bioesque Botanical Disinfectant Solution for bathrooms. These are hospital grade [EPA-approved disinfectant](#) solutions for use against the virus that causes COVID-19.

NO BLEACH. Many childcare programs use a solution of bleach and water and although it is effective for sanitizing and disinfecting, it is also corrosive, stains furniture and clothing, and is a skin irritant. Furthermore, it is known to exacerbate symptoms in those with asthma and breathing issues. For these reasons, we do not use bleach and water.

High-touch surfaces, such as door handles, light switches, faucets, toilet seats, and handles will be disinfected throughout the day, and a professional cleaning team will do a deep cleaning every night, in all areas, and on all touched surfaces.

Proper Usage of Cleaning Products

While children are in other areas, proper guidelines are strictly followed when cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting. All sanitizing and disinfecting solutions are used in areas with adequate ventilation. To ensure effective cleaning and disinfecting, surfaces are always cleaned first, then disinfected. All cleaning products will be used according to the directions on the label. Chemicals / solutions will not be mixed. Wait times are in accordance with the manufacturer's directions and then the surface is dried thoroughly or allowed to air dry.

Only single-use, disposable paper towels are used for cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting, not sponges or cloths. All sanitizing and disinfecting solutions are labeled properly to identify the contents, kept out of the reach of children, and stored separately from food items.

Cleaning Indoor Play Areas

Per EEC, children's books, like other paper-based materials such as mail or envelopes, are not considered a high risk for transmission of COVID-19 and do not need additional cleaning or disinfecting. We will not use or allow any cloth toys during this time. Toys that children have placed in their mouths or that are otherwise contaminated by bodily fluids are set aside until they are sanitized.

Cleaning Outdoor Play Areas

Children will use our playground only with their class cohort. High touch surfaces made of plastic or metal, including slides, balls, or plastic sand toys will be cleaned and disinfected after each class leaves the area.

Cleaning After a Potential Exposure

If an individual within Apple Orchard has a confirmed/suspected COVID-19 diagnosis, the CDC recommends closing off areas visited by the ill person. We will open outside doors and windows, and use ventilating fans to increase air circulation in the area, and wait 24 hours or as long as practical before cleaning and disinfecting. Cleaning staff will clean nightly and disinfect all areas such as classrooms, offices, bathrooms, common areas, or shared equipment used by the ill person, focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

When we all follow the plan, the chance of transmitting disease is greatly reduced. This plan is specific to COVID-19 and is in addition to our existing policies and procedures, which meet state licensing standards designed to foster safe environments. Science demonstrates that when members of a community adhere to the following health and hygiene protocols, we can contain the spread of disease. [Please refer to the CDC recommendations for parents.](#)

Stay Home When Sick

When in doubt, please stay out of school. If your child is sick, please keep your child home until fever free without medication for 24 hours, other symptoms have subsided for 24 hours or your child has been cleared by a medical professional to return to school. The length of time remaining home fever free does change with duration of symptoms. See Appendix A Covid Action Plan. If you are sick, please arrange for someone else to drop off or pick up your child.

Practice Good Hygiene

Cover your mouth with tissues whenever you sneeze or cough and discard used tissues in the trash. If that's not possible, cough or sneeze into your elbow. DO NOT cough or sneeze into your hand.

Avoid Touching your Face

We all need to avoid touching our faces, especially our eyes, nose, or mouth with our hands. If you accidentally touch your face or mask, please wash your hands.

Wear a Mask

Masks are always mandatory for adults on the school campus.

Practice Physical Distancing

Physical separation of at least six feet with others is expected and beneficial, especially when without a mask.

Limit Sharing

Avoid using others' phones, tools, or equipment whenever possible.

Conversation with your Child

Start talking with your child about starting school or going back to Apple Orchard and reminding them of all the fun challenges that happen here to create anticipation and excitement versus feelings of anxiety. Model the excitement of going back and remind them it is a place that will take care of and support them.

Support Our Community

We all understand that we are navigating a new normal and focus on supporting each other and offering support. Increasingly, people are testing “positive” despite following mandated guidelines. No one wants to contract COVID-19, nor bring it to our community. Please be kind, considerate and assume you do not know all the details of circumstances a family may be experiencing.

We are all looking forward to September and having the children on the farm. Please reach out with any concerns you may have. Our door may not be open yet, but our ears are! Please call the school directly (617-731-6463), with any questions, suggestions, or concerns. If we are unable to answer, please leave a message with our service or voicemail, and we will promptly call you back.

Email Contacts for the Administrative Team

Martina Albright	Program Director	Martina@appleorchardschool.org
Sherry Landry	Classroom Director	Sherry@appleorchardschool.org
Diana Walcott	Admissions/Development Director	Diana@appleorchardschool.org
Dee Bunstein	Business Office Director	Dee@appleorchardschool.org

APPENDIX A - COVID-19 ACTION PLAN / REFERENCE SHEET

Quick Reference sheet: Key actions for individual COVID-19 events

Event	Location of Event	Testing Result	Quarantine
Individual is symptomatic	If an individual is symptomatic <u>at home</u> , they should stay home and get tested.	Individual tests <u>negative</u>	Return to school once asymptomatic for 72 hours
	<p>If students become symptomatic <u>at school</u>, they should remain masked and adhere to strict physical distancing. Students will isolate outdoors or in the school library with a teacher while awaiting pickup.</p> <p>If a staff member becomes symptomatic at school, they need to notify co-teacher and Admin. Substitute coverage will immediately be provided and staff members will go home and get tested.</p>	Individual tests <u>positive</u>	Remain home (except to get medical care), monitor symptoms, notify the school, notify personal close contacts, assist the school in contact tracing efforts, and answer the call from the local board of health or MA Community Tracing Collaborative. Most people who have relatively mild illness will need to stay in self-isolation for at least 14 days <u>and</u> until at least 72 hours have passed with no fever and improvement in other symptoms.
		Individual <u>is not tested</u>	Remain home in self-isolation for 14 days from symptom onset

Individual is exposed to COVID-19 positive individual	<p>If individuals are <u>at home</u> when they learn they were in close contact with an individual who tested positive for COVID-19, they should stay at home and be tested 4 or 5 days after their last exposure.</p>	<p>Individual tests <u>negative</u></p>	<p>Return to school, if asymptomatic or once asymptomatic for 24 hours</p>
	<p>If individuals are <u>at school</u> when they learn they were in close contact with an individual who tested positive for COVID-19, they should remain masked and isolated with a teacher outdoors or in the school library while awaiting pickup.</p> <p>Individuals should stay at home and be tested 4 or 5 days after their last exposure.</p>	<p>Individual tests <u>positive</u></p>	<p>Remain home (except to get medical care), monitor symptoms, notify the school, notify personal close contacts, assist the school in contact tracing efforts, and answer the call from the local board of health or MA Community Tracing Collaborative. Most people who have relatively mild illness will need to stay in self-isolation for at least 14 days <u>and</u> until at least 72 hours have passed with no fever and improvement in other symptoms.</p>
		<p>Individual <u>is not tested</u></p>	<p>Remain home in self-quarantine for 14 days from date of exposure</p>

Protocol: Student or Staff Tests Positive for COVID-19

1. The students or staff members must remain at home (except to get medical care), monitor their symptoms, notify the school, notify personal close contacts, assist the school in contact tracing efforts, and answer the call from the local Board of Health or Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative. For most people who have relatively mild illness, they will need to stay in self-isolation for 14 days and until at least 72 hours have passed with no fever and improvement in other symptoms.
2. The student's parent/caregiver or the staff member informs the proper AO School Admin that the individual has tested positive for COVID-19. AO Admin will in turn notify others as appropriate. (e.g., school staff, parents, other administrators, and facilities staff).
3. Determine whether the student or staff member was at school during the time frame that started two days prior to symptom onset (or testing positive if not symptomatic) until the time of isolation.
 - A. If so, promptly close off areas visited by the COVID-19 positive individual until such areas can be cleaned and disinfected, if they have not been cleaned and disinfected already.
 - B. Promptly clean and disinfect the student's or staff member's class and any other areas visited by the individual, if that has not been done already.

Travel Protocol for COVID-19

Apple Orchard is going to follow MA Policy for Travel outside of the state except for one distinction. If a child, child's family member living in the same home, or staff member travel out of state for any reason, when he or she returns to Massachusetts:

Individuals (parents and children) must self-isolate / quarantine for 14 days, provided symptom free, without medications, before returning to school unless they do one of the following:

- 1) Are returning from the following low risk states as of 8/21/20; Vermont, Maine, New York, New Hampshire, and Connecticut. (These are subject to change as data evolves). Please see this website for an updated list <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-travel-order#lower-risk-states->
- 2) Take a COVID PCR test 4-5 days after return from travel (not prior to return as MA Guidelines suggest). Child or staff member may return to work with a NEGATIVE test result.

APPENDIX B: EEC DAILY HEALTH SCREENING / ATTESTATION FORM

EEC: Daily Screening Protocol for Child Care Programs

Instructions: Programs may use this form to screen all children and staff daily upon arrival and prior to entry into Apple Orchard School. It should also be used to guide the ongoing monitoring of children throughout the day.

If ALL of the below are NO, the child MAY attend the child care program. If the child shows signs of any of the below during the day, follow exclusion protocols and call the child's parent/guardian to come pick them up.

If ANY of the below are YES, the child SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED to enter the child care program. The child should return home with their parent or caregiver.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Does the staff member/child have any of the following symptoms?

- Cough?
- Sore throat?
- Rapid breathing or difficulty breathing (*without recent physical activity*)?
- Flushed cheeks?
- Gastrointestinal symptoms (*diarrhea, nausea, vomiting*)?
- Fatigue? (*Fatigue alone should not exclude a child from participation.*)
- Headache?
- New loss of smell/taste?
- New muscle aches?

Any other sign of illness?

Has the child had contact with someone in the previous 14 days with a confirmed or presumptive diagnosis of COVID-19 or someone who is ill with a respiratory illness?

Is the staff member/child cleared to enter the facility? YES NO

Staff Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Programs should be strictly enforcing the guidelines below with regard to child and/or staff re-entry following illness or exposure:

- If the child or staff member has been **exposed** to an individual who is COVID-19 positive or presumed to be COVID-19 positive, then they may not return to childcare for 14 days.
- If the child has **symptoms but not otherwise exposed** to an individual who is COVID-19 positive or presumed to be COVID-19 positive, they may not return to childcare until the symptoms abate.