

# COVID-19 Re-Opening Plan for Northwest Montana Head Start Guidelines and Procedures 2020-2021



## Location information:

### Sites:

- Kalispell Site: 79 7<sup>th</sup> AVE EN Kalispell, MT 59901  
(2 full day classrooms 8:30-3:30, 4 half day classrooms 8-12 and 12:30-4:30)
- North Valley Site: 80 Railroad St. Columbia Falls, MT 59912  
(2 full day classrooms 8:15-3:15 and 8:30-3:30, 1 half day classroom 12:30-4:30)
- Tobacco Valley Site: 335 6<sup>th</sup> St. Eureka, MT 59917  
(1 full day classroom 9-2:30)

### Structure:

- 18-20 children per classroom with three staff members (1 lead teacher, 1 assistant, 1 aide)
  - Classrooms will be kept together as one cohort throughout the day.
  - Cohort classrooms will not be combined (e.g., during outside time) at any time. This will help reduce potential exposures and may prevent the entire center from shutting down if exposure does occur.

The Covid-19 Re-Opening Plan, Guidelines and Procedures 2020-2021 document provides guidelines and recommended operational procedures for Northwest Montana Head Start (NWMTHS). It is designed to help NWMTHS with a consistent approach to implementation and to help with the continued planning efforts for each building.

The guide focuses on practices to help reduce and minimize the transmission of Covid-19. The NWMTHS Covid-19 Guidelines and Procedures are based on Whitefish school district Covid-19 Task Force input and the Reopening of Montana Schools Guidance provided by the Montana Office of Public Instruction on July 2nd, 2020. It is also based on the City of Whitefish, Flathead City-County Health Department (FCCHD), Governor's office, CDC, American Academy of Pediatrics, scientific research and local health professional guidance. These guidelines and procedures will be updated based on new guidance and recommendations from those groups listed above.

It is also important to note that that content is also based on examples from other school districts in our valley, the state and country. Head Start will focus on Practices to Help Minimize COVID-19 transmission, Academic Programming and Social- Emotional and Behavioral supports for each phase.

<b>Local Health Officers School Directive</b>	<b>Safety and Health Measures</b>	<b>On-site and/or Remote Learning</b>
<b>Phase I</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Schools closed to public access</li> <li>● Limited staff access to schools limited to essential business (e.g. deliveries, contractors) and by administrative approval only</li> <li>● Face coverings are required for staff and non-staff</li> <li>● Health screening and hand sanitizing upon entry</li> <li>● Handwashing and germ transmission prevention pro-actively taught and frequently encouraged</li> </ul>	<p>Families will be offered 100% remote learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All instruction will be remote with daily Class Dojo instruction</li> </ul>
<b>Phase II Groups of less than 50 may change throughout the day</b>	<p>Student gatherings not to exceed 50 students (e.g., students eat lunch in classrooms and with no mass gatherings for assemblies or FFN)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Student groups kept together as a cohort</li> <li>● Frequent sanitizing of high touch surfaces</li> <li>● Non-staff access to schools limited to essential business (e.g. deliveries, contractors) and by administrative approval only</li> <li>● Face coverings are required for staff, and non-staff</li> <li>● Health screening and hand sanitizing upon entry</li> <li>● Handwashing and germ transmission prevention pro-actively taught and frequently encouraged</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● On-site instruction returns to 100% with full schedule</li> <li>● Staff delivering instruction on-site</li> <li>● Accommodations will be extended to students and staff who are required to stay home due to Covid-19 related reasons</li> <li>● Extra-curricular activities resume in compliance with Head Start activities limitations on crowd/group size, activity type, and health protocols</li> </ul>
<b>Phase III No limit on group size</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students rotate through schedules and routines as normal</li> <li>● Frequent sanitizing of high touch surfaces</li> <li>● Public visitors to schools limited</li> <li>● Face coverings allowed for health and safety.</li> <li>● Health screening and hand sanitizing upon entry</li> <li>● Handwashing and germ transmission prevention pro-actively taught and frequently encouraged</li> </ul>	<p>On-site instruction returns to 100% with full schedule</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Accommodations will be extended to students and staff who are required to stay home due to covid-19 related reasons</li> <li>● Extra-curricular activities resume</li> </ul>

\*Changes and updates to the NWMTHS Guidelines for Reopening Schools document may be made based on: City, Flathead City-County Health Department, Governor, MT OPI and CDC guidance. Each school may operate differently within each phase based on guidance from the regulatory agencies listed above.

## **Practices to Help Minimize Transmission of COVID-19**

To reduce communicable disease risk, it is imperative that we all do our best to follow infection control practices as identified by the CDC and Flathead City-County Health Department (FCCHD) in order to reduce and minimize transmission. We should assume that there is potential for community spread of COVID-19 in the Flathead Valley and use every effort to reduce risk of contracting or spreading communicable illness of any kind.

## **How to Protect Yourself and Others**

Students and staff will stay home if feeling sick. The following poster will be placed at building entrances CDC Stay Home if Feeling Sick.

## **Knowing How it Spreads**

- There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19.
- The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.
- The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person:
  - Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
  - Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
  - COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms.

## **Avoiding Close Contact**

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Put distance between yourself and other people outside of your home.
- Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) from other people when feasible.
- Remember that some people without symptoms may be able to spread the virus.
- Keeping distance from others is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.

## **Wearing a Cloth Face Covering Around Others**

- To reduce the spread of COVID-19, CDC recommends that people wear cloth face coverings in public settings when around people outside of their household, especially when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.
- Cloth face coverings may help prevent people who have COVID-19 from spreading the virus to others. Wearing a cloth face covering will help protect people around you, including those at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 and workers who frequently come into close contact with other people.
- Cloth face coverings are most likely to reduce the spread of COVID-19 when they are widely used by people in public settings. The spread of COVID-19 can be reduced when cloth face coverings are used along with other preventive measures, including--social distancing, frequent handwashing, cleaning, not touching your face, and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces.
- The cloth face coverings recommended here are not surgical masks or respirators. Currently, those are critical supplies that should be reserved for healthcare workers and other first responders.
- Even when wearing a cloth face cover, continue to keep as much distance between yourself and others, when feasible.

### **Washing Your Hands Often**

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

### **Covering Coughs & Sneezes**

- If you are around others and do not have on your cloth face covering, remember to always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow and do not spit. Throw used tissues in the trash.
- Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

### **Cleaning & Disinfecting**

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.

### **Monitoring Your Health**

- It is important to monitor your own health for symptoms related to COVID-19 including but not limited to: sore throat, cough, chills, body aches for unknown reasons, shortness of breath for unknown reasons, loss of smell, loss of taste, fever at or greater than 100 degrees F.
- If you experience any of those symptoms, you should stay home until you are symptom free or contact your local health care provider for additional guidance.

### **Prevention**

Common strategies to reduce the risk of disease transmission in schools and other community settings include:

- (1) Maximize the physical distance between people
- (2) Avoid large gatherings
- (3) Reduce hands touching physical objects
- (4) Avoid handshakes and high-fives
- (5) Avoid sharing materials
- (6) Respect others
- (7) Stay home when feeling sick
- (8) Measures to minimize dispersion of droplets and aerosols (e.g., face coverings)
- (9) Wash your hands often
- (10) Cough and sneeze in a tissue or use your elbow/sleeve

Because the relative contribution of each of these measures is reducing the spread of COVID-19 is not yet clear, public health experts have generally recommended that they be used collectively when possible.

## Environmental cleaning/disinfecting

### General Cleaning

- Clean all high-touch areas such as desks, chairs, counters, toilets, stairway railings, doorknobs, remotes, phones, and shared equipment daily using EPA household cleaners.
- If surfaces are visibly soiled, clean more often.
- Clean any surface that may have blood, body fluids and or secretions on them.
- Wear disposable gloves when cleaning surfaces.
- For clothing and laundry, use the warmest setting appropriate and dry completely.
- For classroom toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized, toys will not be used.
- Machine washable cloth toys will be used by one individual at a time OR not used at all.
- All soft toys will be laundered before being used by another individual.
- Toys will not be shared between groups unless cleaned before being moved to another group.

### Cleaning after a case is identified

- Close off all areas visited by the ill person.
- Open outside doors and windows if possible and use ventilating fans to increase circulation in the area. Wait 24 hours or as long as practical before cleaning and disinfecting.
- Clean and disinfect all areas such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment used by the ill person, focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces.

\*If more than 7 days has passed since the person who is sick visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary. Continue routine cleaning and disinfecting.

### Cleaning Procedures

- Common terms
  - **Cleaning removes germs**, dirt and impurities from surfaces or objects. Cleaning works by using soap and water to physically remove germs from surfaces. This process does not necessarily kill germs, but by removing them, it lowers their numbers and the risk of spreading infection.
  - **Disinfecting kills germs on surfaces or objects.** Disinfecting works by using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces or objects. This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove germs, but by killing germs on a surface after cleaning, it can further lower the risk of spreading infection.
  - **Sanitizing lowers the number of germs on surfaces or objects to a safe level**, as judged by public health standards or requirements.
- Sanitize frequently touched surfaces—**every two hours** and in accordance to the **Daily Roles and Responsibilities cleaning chart** and EPA approved cleaner.
  - Increase frequency of routine cleaning of high touch surfaces (doorknobs, switches, tables, chairs, counters, bathroom counters, sinks, etc.) with bleach solution.
  - Correct bleach concentration in spray bottles will be checked at random by management.

- Place toys that have been in a child’s mouth or contaminated in a clearly labeled “dirty toy” tub. Toys in the tub will be cleaned at the end of the day or between AM and PM classes with soap and water, rinsed, sanitized and air-dried.

**Laundry** (clothing, towels, linens and other items):

- Launder items according to the manufacturer’s instructions. Use the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely.
- Wear disposable gloves when handling dirty laundry from a person who is sick.
- Dirty laundry from a person who is sick can be washed with other people’s items.
- Do not shake dirty laundry.
- Clean and disinfect “dirty” clothes hampers in between use.
- Removed gloves, and wash hands right away.

**Outdoor area cleaning procedure**

- Outdoor areas, like playgrounds will be sprayed with the approved bleach solution after each cohort classroom occupies the playground.
- Cleaning and disinfection of wooden surfaces (play structures, benches, tables) or groundcovers (mulch, sand) is not recommended.
- Appropriate dry time will be given between classroom use.

**Cleaning and Disinfecting Procedure**

- Sanitizing high contact and frequently touched surfaces.
- Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted.
  - A solution of bleach and water should be used to sanitize all food preparation and contact surfaces. (Check the label to see if your bleach is intended for disinfection and has a sodium hypochlorite concentration of 5%–6%. Ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Some bleaches, such as those designed for safe use on colored clothing or for whitening, may not be suitable for disinfection).
  - 5 tablespoons of bleach per (1/3 cup) to 1 gallon of room temperature water sanitizing solution.
  - If surfaces are dirty, they must be cleaned with soapy water before sanitizing will be effective.
  - Leave solution on the surface for at least 1 minute.
  - Make sure that you use only UNSCENTED bleach for food contact surfaces.
  - All spray bottles must be clearly labeled with contents.

\*\*\*Bleach Solutions are effective for disinfection up to **24 hours**. New solutions will need to be made each day upon arrival at the center. \*\*\*

## **Contact Tracing**

### **Steps**

1. School Health and Nutrition Manager will report immediately to FCCHD suspected or confirmed cases in school.
2. School Health and Nutrition Manager will assist in identifying school contacts who have been in contact with the case during the infectious period and provide a list of contacts to FCCHD.
3. Close contacts are defined as anyone that had at least 15 minutes of exposure within 6 feet of the case. All close contacts will be required to quarantine for a period of 14 days from last exposure.
4. The FCCHD will work to notify contacts of their exposure, assess for symptoms and give quarantine instructions.
5. At the direction of the FCCHD, the school will send out notification to families and identified contacts announcing a COVID-19 case in the school, maintaining confidentiality of the student or staff member as required by the American with Disabilities Act and the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act.
6. The decision to close school or cancel school events will be made in coordination with FCCHD and the school.
7. An initial short-term dismissal allows time for FCCHD to gain a better understanding of the COVID-19 situation impacting the school and for the custodial staff to clean and disinfect the affected facilities.
8. FCCHD's recommendations for the scope (single school, full district) and the duration of the school closure will be made on a case-by-case basis.
9. The school will communicate with staff, parents and students about dismissals and cancellation of school events.
10. Once school operations resume, case contacts will not be allowed to return until they are released from quarantine.
11. Vulnerable populations will be advised to remain dismissed and this decision will be made in collaboration with the FCCHD.

### **School Notification of positive COVID-19 case**

1. The Flathead County Health Department FCCHD is notified of all positive cases in the county.
2. If a positive case is a Northwest Montana Head Start student or staff member the FCCHD notifies the Health and Nutrition Manager.
3. The Health and Nutrition Manager contacts the Director where the student or staff member attends or works.
4. The Health and Nutrition Manager gathers all the cohort information and potential close contacts and forwards that information to the FCCHD.
5. The FCCHD calls and informs all close contacts that they are required to quarantine.
6. When FCCHD has completed communication with all close contacts, the affected school community (staff and families) will be informed of a positive case within their building. Again, Head Start will only send the notification email and or letter after all close contacts have been reached by the FCCHD. (Unfortunately, there is the possibility that

you may hear about a positive case prior to the school notifying you as we cannot control what contacted individuals share with others.)

### **Sending students and staff home**

- Students and staff feeling ill will be sent home per NWMTHS sick policy.
- Students or staff that have any of the following symptoms: fever > 100 F, sore throat, new uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (for students and staff with a chronic allergic/asthmatic cough-a change in their cough from baseline), diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain, new onset of severe headache especially with fever AND have had close contact or potential exposure with a person confirmed with COVID-19 or with a person under quarantine for possible exposure to COVID-19, or asked to quarantine by a medical provider or the FCCHD will be sent home and referred to their health care provider for further evaluation and possible testing.
- Students sent home and referred to their health care provider for further evaluation and possible testing will need to receive a letter documenting why the student is being sent home which includes symptoms the child is exhibiting and temperatures taken.

### **Returning to school after being ill (not COVID-19 related or a negative COVID-19 test)**

A student or staff member may return to school when:

- At least 24 hours with no fever without fever reducing medication
- Symptoms have improved

### **Returning to school after having suspected signs of COVID-19 or a positive COVID-19 test**

CDC's ending home isolation, See CDC School Isolation Protocols May return to school:

- At least 10 days since symptoms first appeared AND
- At least 24 hours with no fever without fever reducing medication AND
- Symptoms improved OR
- It has been at least 24 hours with no fever, symptoms have improved, and student or staff received a negative COVID-19 test result and provide confirmation to the school in a health provider's note. A staff member or student who had a positive COVID-19 test but had NO symptoms, can return to school:
- 10 days since being tested, during which they had NO symptoms

### **A staff member or student who had a positive COVID-19 test but had NO symptoms, but then developed symptoms, can return to school**

- At least 10 days since symptoms first appeared AND
- At least 24 hours with no fever without fever reducing medication AND
- Symptoms improved: Staff or students that were confirmed to have COVID-19 need to be released from isolation by the FCCHD and notify the school and submit documentation that they have been released prior to returning. This may be done by the parent or staff member requesting documentation of the release from the FCCHD and submitting that to the Northwest Montana's Health and Nutrition Manager.



**A staff member or student is living in the same household as someone who has been directed by the Public Health Department to quarantine?**

- These individuals will participate in the first 3 days of the directed person's quarantine. If after 3 days the quarantined individual and yourself do not present with any of the COVID- 19 symptoms you may be allowed to return to work.
- If during any time the person you live with who was directed by the FCCHD to quarantine, starts to present symptoms stay home, contact the FCCHD and PCP for further quarantine instructions.

**When to quarantine?**

Anyone who has been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19. This includes people who previously had COVID-19 and people who have taken a serologic (antibody) test and have antibodies to the virus.

**What counts as close contact?**

- You were within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19 for at least 15 minutes.
- You provided care at home to someone who is sick with COVID-19.
- You had direct physical contact with the person (touched, hugged, or kissed them).
- You shared eating or drinking utensils.
- They sneezed, coughed, or somehow got respiratory droplets on you.

**Covid-19 Practices for Transportation:**

Bus staff will have masks, disinfectant wipes, sanitizers, safety face shields, etc.

- Assign seats.
- Reducing bus loads and alternate seating assignments when feasible.
- Busses are sanitized after every trip with students, AM, PM and field trips.
- Students will exit the bus and enter school immediately.
- Students will exit school and enter the bus immediately.
- Review and monitor parent pick-up areas outside of schools to encourage social distancing.
- Parents will be encouraged to remain 6ft from bus entrance during drop-off and pick-up--reducing the congregation of groups.

**Meal Time structure:**

- Only kitchen staff allowed in the kitchen. Please knock when picking up or dropping off meal carts.
- All staff and students will wash hands before meals.
- The teacher or assistant teacher will clean and sanitize tables with Quat clean IV before meals.
- All available tables will be used for meal time per classroom, with 1 adult at each table.
- Tables will be set prior to students sitting down.
- Adults will serve plated food to all students once all students are sitting.
- Students can ask for seconds and staff will serve.
- At the end of the meal, students can be excused 1 at a time to clean up their meal.

## **Physical Distancing**

- Posters encouraging physical distancing will be placed in classrooms and common areas
  - CDC Social Distancing poster
  - FCCHD Prevent the Spread poster
- Students who will be attending AM and PM classrooms will allow for cleaning time in classrooms between groups.
- Students will be kept in the same cohorts as their classroom, with teachers rotating when practical.
- Staff will work to create environments where the maximum amount of physical distancing can be achieved.
- Reduce congregation in hallways students will be dropped and picked up at entry way.
- Stagger class changes to avoid large groups of students in the hallway if feasible.
- Stagger dismissal to avoid large groups of students in the hallway, if feasible.
- Physical guides, such as school provided floor markings (both indoor and outdoor) and signs on walls, will be utilized to ensure that staff and students remain at least six feet apart in lines and at other times (e.g. guides for creating “one-way routes” in hallways) when feasible.
- Teachers are encouraged to remove extra furniture and/or equipment in the classroom to facilitate distancing and reduce high-touch surfaces.
- It is important to note that each classroom will be considered a cohort and all efforts to stay together throughout the day will be made.

## **Physical Distancing Cont.**

- Increased distance between children during table work.
- Planned activities will not require close physical contact between multiple children.
- Item sharing will be limited. AM and PM separation of supplies such as markers, crayons, pencils etc.
- Group sensory tables will have a maximum of 2 children at one time. Items must be thrown out daily (lentils, water, etc.) or sanitized each day if possible. Shared classrooms will alternate weeks for sensory table use.
- Time standing in lines will be minimized.
- Increased outside time is highly recommended and encouraged.
- Windows will be encouraged to be opened as much as possible, weather depending.

## **Drop Off and Pick Up**

- The number of people who enter the building will be limited.
- Drop off will be done at the entrance of the building for all classrooms. Rooms 1 and 2 in Kalispell will pick up at their classrooms side door. All other classrooms will pick up at the front entrance. Parents will not be allowed to take their children to their classrooms. A staff member will retrieve the child and their belongings and bring them to their classroom after they pass their temperature check and daily health check.
- Ideally, the same parent or designated person should drop off and pick up the child every day. If possible, older people such as grandparents should not pick up their children, because they are more at risk for serious illness.
- At drop off a staff member will perform a daily health check and take the temperature of each child (information will be recorded on the daily health check form).

## Temperature Checks

- Staff:
  - Self-monitor for symptoms at home to ensure you are not ill before coming to work. It is recommended that you take your temperature before arriving at work. Then again after arriving at work.
- Students:
  - A temperature check will take place at the front entrance upon arrive each day.
  - A staff member will use a non-contact forehead thermometer to perform the temperature check (100\* F is considered having a temperature).
  - Children with a temperature of 100\*F or over will **not** be allowed to enter.
  - Staff will ask families following questions upon arrival each day.
    1. Have you had contact with anyone known to have a lab-confirmed case of COVID-19?
      - If yes, the Flathead City County Health Department will have put them under quarantine and they will remain home, in quarantine, until the health dept releases them back to work/school/childcare
    2. Does your child have any symptoms of COVID-19? CDC poster provided

## Resources and Guidance Documents

Governor's Plan for Reopening Safe and Healthy Schools for Montana  
Reopening Montana Schools Guidance (MT OPI)  
Flathead City-County Health Department Guidance

“If there is a positive case in the school, we will do contact tracing to determine close contacts. Close contacts would be defined as anyone that had at least 15 minutes of exposure within 6 feet of the case. All close contacts will be required to quarantine for a period of 14 days from last exposure.”

CDC: The Importance of Reopening America's Schools this Fall

Guidance for Opening up High School Athletics and Activities from the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) and Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC), May 2020.

COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Return to In-person Education in Schools, American Academy of Pediatrics

School Reentry Considerations Supporting Student Social and Emotional Learning and Mental and Behavioral Health Amidst COVID-19, School Counselors Association and National Association of School Psychologists

\*Special thanks to local area school districts and districts throughout the state for sharing example guidance documents.