

# Hartley Nature Preschool Fall 2022 COVID-19 Policies and Procedures



Updated 6/17/2022

We are looking forward to having your child and your family join the Hartley Nature Preschool (HNP) community for a year of education, exploration and play. As always, the health and safety of our preschoolers, staff, and volunteers is our utmost priority. Below are our current Covid-19 policies for you to review.

All of our planning for operating programming during the time of Covid-19 has been and will continue to be based on guidance, requirements, and recommendations from the MN Department of Health (MDH), MN Department of Human Services (DHS), St. Louis County Public Health, and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). HNC also considers ISD 709 decisions and policies. HNC COVID policies will continue to evolve as public health guidance evolves. Throughout the preschool year you will be informed of any updates to HNC COVID policies.

If you have any questions about exposures, symptoms, testing, or HNC COVID policies please email preschool director Kaitlin Erpestad at [psdirector@hartleynature.org](mailto:psdirector@hartleynature.org) or call Hartley at 218-724-6735. Please note that calls and emails received at the end of or outside of business hours will be answered as soon as possible on the next business day; your call or email may not be answered before preschool begins on the next business day.

## Testing and Symptoms

Children experiencing Covid-19 like symptoms who do not have an alternative diagnosis must stay home and be tested. See [MDH guide to symptoms, testing, and isolation](#) for full guidance.

### [COVID-19 Like Symptoms and Symptom Self-Checker\\*](#)

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

*\*This list does not include all possible symptoms.*

- Written proof of test results is required. Email Kaitlin and/or your child’s teachers a screenshot of your child’s test results for all negative and positive tests.
- If COVID test is negative, stay home until symptoms improve, including being fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication).
  - “Improved symptoms” means that the individual no longer feels ill; they can participate in all preschool activities, indoors and outdoors, just as they did before they were ill, and any remaining symptoms, such as a cough or runny nose, are mild, or infrequent.
- If no Covid test is obtained, proceed as if the child is positive; the child should stay home for 10 days. See Testing Positive (Isolation) section below.
- Just like before the Covid-19 pandemic, there may be times when HNC staff determine your child to be too sick to participate in preschool and will ask for them to be picked up. If they are exhibiting Covid-19 symptoms, they are required to receive a Covid-19 test before returning to preschool.

### Antigen Test Use

If you choose to use an antigen test for symptoms or proof of negative test after a quarantine:

- Follow the instructions included in the test kit exactly
  - **If the test directions say it requires two tests, then you must use a series of two tests, taken exactly according to the directions.**
- See [CDC guidance for antigen testing for community settings](#) for guidance on what to do in the case of negative or positive antigen tests
- At the discretion of the preschool director, HNP may require a follow up antigen or PCR test before the child may return to preschool

### Quarantine (after being exposed to Covid-19)

Following MDH guidance, HNC requires a 5 day quarantine with proof of negative test for return after any confirmed Covid-19 exposure for unvaccinated participants.

- **If your child is up to date with their COVID-19 vaccine or has had a confirmed case of Covid-19 in the last 90 days:**
  - They may attend preschool as long as they are **completely symptom free**.
  - If your child is symptomatic or becomes symptomatic with *any one or more symptoms*, they must have a negative Covid-19 test before they may return to preschool. [COVID-19 Like Symptoms](#)
  - According to the [CDC](#), you are up to date with your COVID-19 vaccines when you have received all doses in the primary series and all boosters recommended for you, when eligible.
  - A copy of the child’s vaccine card must be on file with the preschool director for a child to be exempt from quarantine.
- **If your child is not vaccinated against Covid-19 or is not up to date on their vaccine:**  
 Following MDH guidance, HNP requires a 5 day quarantine with proof of negative test for return after a confirmed Covid-19 exposure for unvaccinated participants.
  - The last day of exposure is day zero. Children may return after 5 full days with a negative test (return day 6 after the exposure).
  - Please see the [MDH Quarantine Guidelines](#) for full guidance.

### Notification of Exposure

HNP is required by licensing to inform families if a child is a close-contact of a positive case of COVID-19. If your child is exposed to Covid-19 at preschool, you will receive an email notifying you that they have been identified as a close contact. The email will contain directions for how to proceed based on your child’s vaccination status and history of prior COVID infection.

## Household Contact Exposure

A household contact is someone who is exposed to Covid-19 by someone in their home that they cannot isolate (be completely separate) from.

- An unvaccinated child should stay home for the ill person's 5 day isolation period and an additional 5 day quarantine (total quarantine period is 10 days, returning on day 11).
  - A negative test from day 5 or later is required for return. A PCR test is strongly preferred.
- Vaccinated children may continue to attend preschool if a household member tests positive for COVID.
  - The child must immediately isolate and be tested if they develop any one or symptom.
  - If the child remains symptom free, testing is recommended on day 5 or later. A PCR test is strongly preferred.
- Please see the [MDH Quarantine Guidelines](#) for full guidance.

## Testing Positive (Isolation)

- HNP requires a 10 day isolation period for children who test positive for Covid-19 due to challenges with masking for this age group and due to periods of the day when masking is not possible (snacks, lunch, nap time, etc).
- HNP is required by MN law and licensing regulations to report all positive cases of Covid-19; notify HNP of any positive results ASAP by calling 218-724-6735 or emailing [psdirector@hartleynature.org](mailto:psdirector@hartleynature.org)
- See [MDH guide to symptoms, testing, and isolation](#) for full guidance.

## Masking Policy by Community Level

The [COVID-19 community level](#) is updated every Thursday and will show us if the community level is low, medium, or high. Following CDC recommendations, Hartley Nature Center masking policies are as follows:

- At **low community levels**, masks are **optional** inside the nature center building and indoors for children, staff, and families during the preschool day.
- At **medium community levels**, masks are **strongly recommended** for children, staff, and families inside the nature center building and indoors during the preschool day.
- At **high community levels**, masks are **required** for children, staff, and families inside the nature center building and indoors during the preschool day.
- The Hartley Nature Center building is owned by the city of Duluth. Masks are required inside the nature center whenever city-owned building mask mandates are in effect.

## Masking Logistics

- In partnership with families, teachers will help children learn how to effectively wear a mask.
- Wearing a mask is a skill children are learning and practicing, just like they are practicing toileting, hand washing, and independently dressing for the outdoors. We will lovingly support each child as they practice becoming a reliable mask wearer. Teachers will help children as needed.
- Children will not wear masks when eating, drinking, or napping.
- Preschoolers are required to bring at least two labeled masks to preschool each day in a clean, labeled, reusable container or sealed plastic bag.
- Throughout the school year anyone is welcome to wear a mask at any time regardless of vaccination status or community level of transmission.
- Masks are not required outdoors.

## Vaccination Policies

- The CDC recommends vaccination as the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. All eligible individuals are *strongly encouraged* to get vaccinated. Visit [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) to find out where you and your family members can get vaccinated.

- [Vaxforkids](#) is the MDH resource for families to learn about the safety of the COVID-19 vaccine for children, what to expect when their child gets vaccinated, and why it is important for children to be vaccinated.
- All HNC staff are required to be vaccinated for COVID-19 or to test weekly and provide test results to their supervisor.
- All HNC volunteers that come into contact with program participants are required to be vaccinated.
- At this time the COVID-19 vaccine is not required by the state of MN for children to attend child care. Proof of vaccination, including booster doses if eligible, must be on file for a child to be exempt from quarantine.
- Vaccination status, like other medical information, is private data. None of our staff members are able to share another person's vaccination status.

## Hand Hygiene

High quality and frequent hand washing practices, as described in the HNP Parent Handbook, will continue to be followed.

- In non-winter months children will be given hand sanitizer at drop off before joining in play.
- Children will not use hand sanitizer at drop off when the temperatures drop and we need to keep fingers warm and mittens dry. In these colder months, the focus will be on cleaning hands at times that mittens come off, such as before and after eating or after using the restroom.
- Hand sanitizer will be used with adult supervision frequently throughout the day and whenever soap and water are not available.

## Cleaning and Disinfecting

HNP will continue to follow our regular rigorous cleaning and disinfecting policies. During the pandemic, staff will also:

- Increase cleaning between groups of children.
- Clean high-touch surfaces frequently.
- Continue to use natural, porous items like sticks and rocks for play and learning indoors and outside whenever possible.

## Ventilation

- The HNC ventilation system is set to draw fresh air into the building as frequently as the outdoor temperature and air quality allow. The ventilation system has a HEPA filter.
- We open windows and doors and turn on ceiling fans in the classrooms whenever possible.
- Thanks to a generous donation from [Lake Superior Dental](#), we have 2-3 portable HEPA air filters in each classroom.

## Travel Restrictions

- Not in effect at this time.

## Financial Policies

- HNP will not issue refunds or credits for COVID related absences or closures. Regular tuition payments are due regardless of days missed due to quarantine or illness.
- The May 2023 deposit will remain non-refundable regardless of a child's attendance.
- You may choose to keep your child home at any point and continue paying tuition to hold their spot. We will continue to require 30 days written notification of permanent withdrawal from HNP.
- During a short-term closure, such as for a mandated quarantine, distance learning activities will not be offered.
- We understand that COVID-19 has negatively impacted many family's financial situations and we welcome individual families to reach out about financial policies at any time.

Please reach out with any questions about exposures, symptoms, testing, or HNC COVID policies. You can call Hartley at 218-724-6735 or email Kaitlin at [psdirector@hartleynature.org](mailto:psdirector@hartleynature.org). We are looking forward to a safe and healthy preschool year of learning, play, and exploration in Hartley Park!