

Getting Ready for School

Updated: 8/1/2024

Health Check

As required by the Virginia Department of Education (our licensing agency), families are required to inform the school if they have symptoms of any illness.

Children will receive a health check upon arrival at school. They will be checked for the following signs of illness: runny nose, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, red or crusty eyes, or new loss of taste or smell. If any of these are present, the child will be isolated, and the parent called to pick up their child. For the well-being of your child, please arrange pickup within the hour of the call. Parents must keep the school informed via email of the symptoms and progression of illnesses.

The same procedures will be applied to all adults who stay in the environment during the day, including health checks and exclusion for symptoms. Our main goal is to keep our school community a safe and healthy place to be.

Drop-off and Pick-up

Drop Off: Parents will be bringing their children into the building in the mornings. Drop-off time is from 8:00 – 9:00. School starts at 9:00 and all children should be in class by 9:00am. Only park in spaces not designated for UUCR staff or handicapped spaces. Please drive slowly and watch for children crossing the parking lot. Our entrance door is now the west foyer door on the right side of the building. Please see Cinthia to get your fobs that will allow you access to this door. Come down the stairs, down the long hallway, and into the foyer to sign your child in at the sign-in desk next to Ms. Cinthia's office. Be sure to look at the bulletin board for important information and sign-ups.

In order to have the least amount of congestion in the hallway, please follow this procedure.

- Pack your child's snack separately from the lunch container for easy access to the snack in their go-home bag.
- Your child should first put their coat and Go-Home bag on their hook in the Sunshine Room.
- Your child should then take their snacks and water bottle from their Go-Home bag and put snacks in cubby and water bottle on top of cubby.
- Then, they will wash their hands while you sign your child in to the sign in book.
- Please walk your child to the entrance to the classroom and say a quick and confident goodbye. Children should enter the classroom by themselves to greet the teachers and begin their day.

- This may seem overly specific, but the goal is to have 30+ children enter the classrooms within the space of an hour with the least amount of congestion in the hallway. The above routine will help!
- Please remember that class has already begun for many of the children and the teachers so please be respectful of their need for a calm and peaceful classroom. The stairs get very loud so have your child use their “indoor voices” and understand that this is part of our school space when entering upstairs. Cinthia is available if you have administrative questions. Classroom specific messages can be passed along to your child’s teacher.

If you arrive between 8:00 and 8:30, all children will go into the Sunrise Room, the larger classroom. If your child is in the Sunset Room, the smaller room, they will transition to that room at 8:30.

Students must arrive by 9:00 as by this point the instructional day has started. Please remember the learning process has already started in the classrooms. We appreciate your adherence to arrival before 9am. We would like to keep disruptions to a minimum.

Pick-up Carpool 3:00/5:00: You are asked to drive past the front entrance, turn around, and pull up to the walkway that leads to the west front door. Do not get out of your car and walk up to the school. This causes confusion for the students and presents a safety concern for all involved.

Pick-up Part Day: Pick-up for Part-Day after lunch students will be 12:30 PM. Please come downstairs to sign your child out and gather their bag. Please note that 12:40 is a transition time for preschool students for nap so we appreciate you arriving promptly.

Pick-up School Day: Pick-up for school day students is 3:00 PM. Please follow the procedures below listed under full day pick-up.

Pick-up Full Day: Pick-up for full day students will be from 4:40 – 5:00. We ask that you try to stay within these stated pick-up times as it is easier for staff to keep track of children leaving at these set times. A sign with your child’s name will be issued to you at the beginning of the year for you to hold up to indicate to the staff who you are here to pick up. There are lots of kids and cars so these signs are very helpful to ensure a smooth pick-up procedure.

Due to state safety laws, parents will need to get out of their car, put their child into the back seat, and buckle their child into their car seats. In order to avoid either children or adults stepping into oncoming traffic, we ask that you place your child’s car seat on the left side of the back seat behind the driver. Staff members are NOT allowed to buckle children in. Please be patient as this process may take some time.

If you need to pick up at any other time than the ones listed, such as for a doctor's appointment, please call or email the office to let us know of your plans so we can have your child ready. If you are not sure of the best time to pick up outside these times and have flexibility let us know so we can help avoid transition, nap, lunch, etc. times. You can come down to the classroom, sign your child out, and make eye-contact with a teacher before leaving so that we know your child has left for the day.

Extra Clothes

Children should bring a bag with 2-3 extra clothes on their first day of school. These clothes will stay at school in the bag, and we will inform you when additional clothing is needed. If you see wet clothing coming home, you will know to send in an extra set of clothing the next day. In order to minimize exchange of germs, backpacks will not be allowed to come in and out of the building each day.

"Go-Home" Bags

A wipeable, plastic grocery store bag called the "Go-Home bag" will go home daily with your child's work and other school related items. We will provide a bag for each child to use daily. As it is a plastic, reusable bag we have found this the easiest bag for you to clean out and wipe down weekly at home.

Please check your child's bag daily and remove paperwork and extra items. Occasionally, we may send something from the office or from the classroom teacher so be on the lookout for those items.

Shoes and Shorts

Our wonderful playground includes lots of natural play features. The nature of the play space necessitates always wearing socks and close-toed shoes. Tennis shoes or leather shoes that Velcro are best. Children may not wear sandals, jellies or crocs as these types of shoes do not protect the feet nor give proper support for running and climbing.

For children wearing skirts or dresses we ask that they wear a pair of shorts underneath due to all the busy activities of the day.

Toys from Home

Please do not send toys from home unless pre-arranged with the teacher. There will be an opportunity for children to participate in a Sharing Day once a month, these items follow our curriculum themes.

Masks

Masks: Our general mask policy is masks are optional for everyone; children, teachers, and parents. We will still have masks on hand for children to wear who may be exhibiting visible health symptoms at school. If you want your child to wear a mask indoors or outdoors, please let us know, and send in a supply that your child can keep in his or her cubbie for easy access.

Bathroom Use/Hygiene

Hand washing will take place multiple times a day, when entering the environment, after toileting, before and after eating snacks and lunch, after playing outside, when leaving to go home, and many times in between. Children will be required to take care of all bodily functions and cleanliness needs, including how to cover their mouth (ideally cough into their sleeve or a tissue) when they cough, how to blow and properly wipe their nose, and wash their hands after, as well as taking care of their bathroom routines, such as wiping themselves, and properly washing their hands.

Our licensing regulations state that children entering our program be fully potty trained, in underwear, be able to understand their own needs as to when to use the bathroom and be able to dress and undress and to wipe independently as best they can. Again, these are things that should be practiced at home before school starts so your child is comfortable with being independently successful using the bathroom.

Disinfecting/Cleaning

We continue to use best practices to clean and sanitize tables, chairs, sinks, and shelves, door handles and light switches. The materials the children use in the classroom are washed with soap and water/approved disinfectants on a regular basis. Filters on our air purifiers and HVAC system will be changed on a regular basis as well. During appropriate weather, windows can be opened from the top to allow for ventilation. In 2022, UUCR, our landlord, installed a new, very effective heating and cooling system throughout the entire building designed to clean and purify the air.

Lunch/Snacks/Nap

Children will bring their own lunch, packed in an insulated bag. Uneaten and unopened packages of food will be sent home. Please help your child be independent by preparing the lunch items for easy opening. Even three-year-olds need to be able to open all their items by themselves. For example, if your child has difficulty opening a cheese stick wrapper, please take it out of the original plastic wrapping and put it in a baggie. This way, teachers can avoid touching any containers and food.

For drinks, please only send flip top thermos water bottles with water. Children may use the sink to refill throughout the day and we will send them home each day for you to wash. If you forget to bring a thermos of water the children will be offered water from school. However, we urge you to send a bottle each day for children to have with them.

Teachers will not be able to keep special drinks or other food items in the fridge. Please make all preparations for your child to be as independent as possible.

Your child will also bring a snack for mid-morning, and if your child stays for 5:00, they should bring a second snack to be eaten at 3:00. Crackers in a baggie and a piece of fruit for each snack will work well. Please prepare the fruit so your child can be as independent as possible. Slice the apples, peel the oranges, cut the grapes, etc.

VA Licensing states that all items (Lunch and Snack) coming into school must be labeled with **Child's Name and Date each day**. Label each snack container or bag as "Snack 1" and "Snack 2" as this eliminates any confusion for the children. Label lunch bags with the current date each day. We found the best way for parents to do this is to use the same snack containers for morning and afternoon each day. Place a strip of masking tape on the items for the week with M-F dates, circle the correct date each morning, in the evening cross that date out. This is a tried-and-true parent tested method! Please place these snacks separately from the lunch bag so they can be easily accessed and put in their cubbies at drop off.

If your child will be taking a nap, a SMALL blanket must be able to fit into a small plastic shoe box that we will provide. A receiving blanket or other *small* lightweight item for cover is best. This way the children can manage their own belongings and keep them separate from the others in the nap room. Blankets will be sent home each week for washing.

COVID Guidelines

While COVID-19 still poses a significant health threat to people at higher risk, its health impacts are now similar to other respiratory viruses, like the flu. As a result, the CDC has now issued a unified Respiratory Virus Guidance rather than separate guidance for each specific virus.

Respiratory Virus Guidance: When you may have a respiratory virus, including COVID-19, stay home and away from others when you have the following symptoms: fever, chills, fatigue, cough, runny nose, and headache. You can return to your normal activities when, for at least 24 hours, your symptoms are getting better overall and you have not had a fever and are not using fever-reducing medications.

When you go back to your normal activities, take added precautions over the next 5 days, such as additional hygiene, masking and physical distancing. You may still be able to spread the virus even if you are feeling better. If you develop a fever or you start to feel worse, stay home and away from others for at least 24 hours and return to your normal activities when symptoms have improved, and you have no sign of fever without taking medications.

Testing is no longer required by the CDC or the Virginia Department of Health. However, if someone in your household has tested positive for COVID, or your child has had a known exposure, please test him or her for COVID, inform the school so we can inform others, and follow the guidelines above for respiratory viruses.

Sick Child Policy (All Other Illnesses)

Your child must be free of symptoms of illness for 24 hours before returning to school. This means, for example, that if you pick your child up at noon with diarrhea, he may not return to school the next day, even if the symptoms are gone in the morning. If the doctor prescribes antibiotics, they may come back to school after they have been on antibiotics for 24 hours.

Following is a list of symptoms and illnesses that require you to keep your child at home until he is free of the symptoms for the time stated below.

- Appearance/Behavior – Child looks or acts differently within the last 24 hours; unusually tired, pale, lacking appetite, confused, irritable, and difficult to awaken or just not “themselves.”
- Chicken Pox – Until all blisters have dried into scabs, or about six days after rash onset.

- Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye) – Bacterial – until 24 hours after treatment begins. Viral – until a letter from a physician is provided to verify that the child does not have bacterial conjunctivitis. In both situations, the child should be well enough to participate in normal daily activities.
- Diarrhea – An increased number of abnormally loose stools in the previous 24 hours. Observe the child for other symptoms such as fever, abdominal pain, or vomiting.
- Eye/Nose Drainage – Thick mucus or pus draining from the eyes or nose within the last 24 hours.
- Fever – Temperature of 100°F or higher, especially if accompanied by other symptoms such as vomiting, sore throat, diarrhea, headache and stiff neck or undiagnosed rash. The child should be fever free, without the aid of fever reducing medicines like acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin), for 24 hours before returning to school.
- Head Lice – No-nits policy: Child must be treated with medications, all lice killed, all eggs or nits removed and no sign of a re-infestation. There are forms that are required to be completed before returning to school.
- Respiratory Illness – Until child is without fever for 24 hours and is well enough to participate in normal daily activities.
- Respiratory Symptoms – Difficult or rapid breathing or severe coughing; child makes high-pitched croup-y or whooping sounds after he coughs; child is unable to lie comfortably due to continuous cough.
- Skin Problems – skin rashes, undiagnosed or contagious.
- Sore Throat – Sore throat, especially when fever or swollen glands in the neck are present within the last 24 hours.
- Streptococcal Sore Throat/Scarlet Fever (with rash) – until at least a full 24 hours after treatment begins and the child is without fever for 24 hours.
- Vomiting – One or more episodes of vomiting within the previous 24 hours.
- Antibiotics – Children on antibiotics should be kept home for at least 24 hours after the first dose is given to allow the medication to take effect.

Supply List

First Day

Please send these items to school with your child the first day of school:

- 1 box 10 or 12 Crayola markers
- 1 box 24 Crayola colored pencils

Every Day

- 1 water bottle with flip top lid
- Go-Home bag
- Lunch bag with easy open lids and containers
- Snack #1 labeled name AND date every day
- Snack #2-for children staying until 5:00pm

Keep at School

TWO COMPLETE PAIR of change of clothes to keep in a bag that stays at school. This includes an extra pair of closed toe shoes. We will let you know when the supply gets low.