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AHM KinderRHAMa COVID-19 Addendum

AHM Youth and Family Services continues to work closely with Region 8 (which includes RHAM High School and Middle School), and to follow guidelines from the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) and Chatham Health District to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and minimize the risk for our program participants, families, and staff. These guidelines may be modified to reflect current recommendations issued by the District, the OEC, the State Department of Education, Chatham Health District, and Local/State Government. We are license exempt as we are located in a public school, but will follow best practices issued by the OEC and the school district.

These are the recommendations for Child Care from the State of CT regarding Mask Wearing:
https://portal.ct.gov/vaccine-portal/masks?language=en_US

A note to Parents:

It is our intention that while following the guidelines and protocols below, we will also provide a happy and nurturing environment for your children, keeping them and our staff safe while also giving children a chance to participate in the wonderful experiences that happen in preschool! The most important of these include making friends, getting used to a routine, learning through play, and enjoying school! As always, we want to communicate with you about your child and any concerns you have, and are reachable by phone, email, or in person at drop off or pick up. There will be some changes, but we feel that they are not insurmountable, and we very much look forward to welcoming your child and your family into our program.

We had a wonderful year last year in preschool even with all the precautions. Children were very cooperative about mask wearing, and adjusted extremely well! We are hoping that it will be the same this year.

Staff:

- Staff will wear face coverings at all times unless they are outside
- Staff will self-monitor their health and stay home if sick
- Frequent handwashing will be practiced by all staff
- All staff shall cover their mouths with their sleeve or a tissue when coughing or sneezing, and encourage children to do the same; and dispose of soiled tissues immediately after use. They will also avoid touching their eyes, nose, or mouth with hands.

Children and Face Coverings

Based on our current climate and recommendations from the Chatham Health District, we are continuing to require that students wear face coverings. Staff will encourage face coverings in children and give frequent mask breaks during the day. Staff will be modelling this behavior as all teachers will be wearing face coverings.

We will provide outside time throughout the day where children can have adequate space between each other to take breaks from wearing their face covering.

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Program days/times/group size

We will have up to 14 children in the 3 year old class and up to 16 children in the 4 year old class. There will be 2 teachers present 5 days a week and will have 2 additional AHM Staff for extra support and substitute teaching as needed. Some of our students will be attending 2 days a week, some 3 days a week and some 5 days a week.

Classroom entry/visitors

Parents and Visitors will not be permitted in the KinderRHAMa Classroom at this time. Parents are welcome to call the classroom, or to talk with teachers outside at drop off or pick up. Children will not be going into other areas of RHAM High School at this time and will stay in the classroom and the play yard. The purpose of this is to keep the same group of people in the classroom and to minimize possible transmission of COVID-19. Our Director Becky Murray will act as a third support staff if needed.

Orientation

New families who would like to briefly visit the classroom with their child the week before school starts will be given a chance to do so! This will be an opportunity to meet the teachers, find their cubby, and get a sense of the program.

Entry into the room/Drop off and Pick up

- At this time, entry will be restricted to KinderRHAMa students and staff. The staff referred to here will be Cari Duigou ("Mrs. D."), Heather Holbrook ("Mrs. H.") and Becky Murray.
- Drop off and pick up will be conducted outside of the classroom in the play yard.
- At home, before you bring your child to KinderRHAMa, please monitor your child's health to ensure that they are looking, acting, and playing as they normally would.
- If they are not looking or feeling well, please keep them home and notify KinderRHAMa teachers.
- Parents and children will be greeted each day outside by KinderRHAMa staff in the parking circle.
- Each child will receive a quick health screening prior to entry for the day (described further below).
- Pick up will be outside in the play yard

Health Screening

- Health screenings will be conducted daily outside upon drop off.
- KinderRHAMa teachers will wash their hands and wear masks prior to greeting families,
- Teachers will then ask the parent to confirm that their child does not have the following symptoms: fever, shortness of breath, or cough. A temperature check is not deemed necessary at this time.
- Teachers will visually inspect the child for: signs of illness-flushed cheeks, rapid breathing, difficulty breathing, fatigue or extreme fussiness.
- If children have any of the above symptoms, they will ask parents to keep children home that day.

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Hand-washing

Upon entry into the room, staff will go with children to help them wash hands thoroughly. Hand-washing for 20 seconds will take place several times during the day including (as before) after using the bathroom, before eating, before going outside, and when coming in from outside.

Snack and Lunch

Regional School District 8 has made the decision to be nut-free as students will be eating in their classrooms. **We will also be nut free at this time as we are in the RHAM building. Please do not send in any food into the building that has nuts for the safety of our students.**

Birthdays

We have had parents send in a special treat for children's birthdays, but due to COVID19 are asking that you please send in packaged goods. We will acknowledge children's birthdays and help them celebrate with a special birthday crown and the class will sing to them!

Cleaning/Sanitizing

AHM staff will be conducting extra cleaning during the school day, as well as after dismissal. This includes cleaning and disinfecting as appropriate. KinderRHAMa staff will have extra wipes, as well as hand sanitizer in several locations of the room. RHAM maintenance staff will also be increasing their cleaning and sanitizing regiment in our classroom. We will constantly disinfect high touch surfaces, toys, games and materials during class as well as in between use by different groups of children.

Bedding*

*This only affects children who are staying for the extended day as they will be resting. Each child staying for an extended day will use the same cot each time they are with us. We will label this cot with their name. Each child who is staying for an extended day will bring in their own small blanket and small pillow. Bedding will be sent home weekly to be washed. We will store them in individually labeled bins or bags.

Illness

If children become ill during the day, parents or individuals on the child's emergency list will be called to pick their child up from school. If a child is showing symptoms that are consistent with COVID-19 during the school day, a staff member will bring the child to a specially designated isolation room in RHAM, which is staffed with a RHAM Nurse. The child will be picked up at this designated room.

If Child or Staff Member is diagnosed with Covid-19

If a child or staff member in the program is diagnosed with COVID-19, we will notify all staff and families in the program. COVID-19 is on the list of reportable diseases, and so we will immediately report cases to the DPH Epidemiology and Emerging Infection Program

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(860-509-7994), Chatham Health District and Eastern Highlands Health District (if the child lives in Andover) on the day of the diagnosis, or if there is a strong suspicion of the disease.

We will talk with families or staff to determine the date of symptom onset, and if the child or staff member attended the program while symptomatic or during the two days before the symptoms began. We will appropriately clean and disinfect the classroom.

Depending on the circumstances, and based on recommendations from the Chatham Health and Eastern Highlands Health Districts, we will follow program quarantine directives provided to us.

****Please note that these guidelines are subject to change and be altered based on guidance from our state and local government as well as our local health department. Changes will be communicated to parents immediately.***