

### I. INTRODUCTION

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Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Like many respiratory viruses, COVID-19 spreads quickly through droplets you project out of your mouth or nose when you breathe, cough, sneeze, or speak. Everyone infected with COVID-19 can spread it, even if they do not have symptoms.<sup>1</sup>

People with COVID-19 have reported a wide range of symptoms – ranging from mild to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. Anyone can have mild to severe symptoms. Symptoms may change with new COVID-19 variants and can vary depending on vaccination status<sup>2</sup>. Possible symptoms include:

- 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

### II. PURPOSE

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The Western Dairyland Head Start's COVID-19 Risk Mitigation Policy aims to protect children, families, and staff from infection and illness, per Head Start Program Performance Standard **45 CFR §1302.47(b)(9)**. The COVID-19 Risk Mitigation Policy is developed in consultation with the Western Dairyland Health Services Advisory Committee. It is subjected to modification from time to time based on recommendations from public health authorities such as the CDC and state and local health departments.

Western Dairyland Head Start program (WDHS) utilized the following resources for the COVID-19 Risk Mitigation Policy:

- Operational Guidance for K-12 Schools and Early Care and Education Programs to Support Safe In-Person Learning: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-childcare-guidance.html>
- Mitigating the Spread of COVID-19 in Head Start Programs: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/about-us/coronavirus/ohs-covid-19-updates>
- Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs: <https://nrckids.org/CFOC>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/about-covid-19/basics-covid-19.html>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html\\_\\_](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html__)

### III. COVID-19 VACCINATION

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COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective in preventing illness and protecting individuals from getting severely ill with COVID-19. Staying up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations is the leading public health strategy to prevent severe disease. Most importantly, a high vaccination rate helps reduce the burden of COVID-19 on people, schools, healthcare systems, and communities.<sup>3</sup> WDHS staff will promote awareness and support access to vaccination for Head Start families by sharing available resources and community vaccine clinic information. Staff can access the most current information based on evidence-based strategies and practices on the WD SharePoint site: [How to talk to families about the COVID Vaccines.](#)

Western Dairyland has implemented the COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate Policy since November 2021. All employees must receive COVID-19 vaccinations unless a religious or medical exemption is approved. Access the full COVID-Vaccination Policy here: [WDEOC-COVID Vaccination Policy.](#)

WDHS will encourage staff to stay up-to-date on COVID-19 vaccinations by allowing them to count their vaccination as work time. To ensure that the centers maintain the required staff-to-child ratio, we asked classroom staff to schedule appointments outside regular class time.

### IV. PREVENTION AND PRECAUTION

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To prevent the spread of COVID-19:

- WDHS will encourage families to keep children home when they are sick.
- WDHS will encourage staff and children get tested for COVID-19 if experiencing symptoms.
- WDHS will encourage families to practice frequent handwashing at home.
- WDHS will practice handwashing upon arrival to the program, before meals and snacks, after outdoor play, after using the bathroom, before going home, after nose blowing, or assisting a child with blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- WDHS will ensure staff and children cover cough and sneeze with tissues, throw tissues in the trash, and clean their hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer (if soap and water are not readily available).
- WDHS staff will clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily, per cleaning and disinfecting policy and procedures.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-childcare-guidance.html>

### V. ISOLATION AND QUARANTINE

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WDHS will follow the CDC's recommendations for COVID-19 isolation and quarantine requirements.

#### *Isolation requirements for positive cases*

If a child or staff tests positive for COVID-19, they must follow the following protocol:

- Inform the center and supervisor of the positive test date and symptom onset date.
- Immediately report the name, positive test date, and the first day of symptom onset to the Health Manager. The Health Manager will report to the local public health department.
- Stay home for five (5) days from the first day of symptoms onset or date of the positive test for asymptomatic individuals.
- Staff may return to work on day six (6) if symptoms have improved and are fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication. Staff must wear a mask through day ten (10) upon their return to work.
- A child may return to school on day six (6) if symptoms have improved and are fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication. Wearing a mask is encouraged but not required upon their return to school.

#### *Quarantine requirements for close-contacts*

If a child or staff is a close-contact with someone with COVID-19, they will:

- Monitor for symptoms
- Test on day five (5), if possible
- Wear a well-fitted mask for ten (10) full days, if possible

### VI. COVID-19 COMMUNITY LEVEL

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- WDHS will follow the CDC recommendations of requiring staff to wear masks when the COVID community level is high based on weekly data from the CDC's [COVID-19 County Check](#).
- WDHS will respect an individual's choice to remain masked when levels are low or medium.
- Staff will follow the recommended guidelines and consult the CDC's [COVID-19 County Check](#) when working outside our four-county service area.

### VII. GENERAL CLEANING, SANITIZING, & DISINFECTING GUIDELINES

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- WDHS staff will follow the usage directions on each product's label and the current cleaning and disinfecting policy and procedures.
- All cleaning and disinfecting products must be kept out of reach of children **AND** must be locked up when not in use.

## Western Dairyland Head Start

### COVID-19 Risk Mitigation Policy

- WDHS will not use disinfecting wipes and the Broad Spectrum Quaternary Disinfectant Cleaner (temporary product, use until gone) when children are present.

#### **Disinfecting Wipes**

- **CANNOT** be used when children are present.
- *Purpose:* Can be used on light switches, air control knobs, handrails, steering wheels, door handles, bus switches, bus door lever openers, etc.
- *Directions for use:* Thoroughly wet surface. The surface must remain wet for the entire contact time: 10 seconds for sanitizing or 4 minutes for disinfecting. Allow the surface to air dry.

#### **Lysol No-Rinse Sanitizer (Mix ¼ ounce per gallon of water)**

- *Purpose:* Can be used on all hard surfaces.
- Staff must follow the current WDHS cleaning and disinfecting policy and procedures.
- Can be used when children are present as long as they are not sitting at the tables.
- *Directions for use:* Spray surfaces with the solution. To properly disinfect, allow to air dry or remain on the surface for at least ten (10) minutes.

#### **Hand Sanitizer**

- *Purpose:* Staff will use on hands when soap and water are not readily available.
- *Directions for use:*  
**For adults:** Apply enough product on the palm to cover and rub hands together until dry. Staff should wash their hands as soon as soap and water are available.  
**For children:** Staff will give children one small pump (pea-sized). As soon as children have access to soap and water, they must wash their hands.

#### **Wet Wipes**

- *Purpose:* Use on hands to reduce the number of germs, dirt, and impurities when soap and water are unavailable.
- *Directions for use:* Clean hands with a single wet wipe or more if needed. Wash hands with soap and water as soon as available.