



We know you have a lot of questions around how Hilltop's school year will look in the midst of Covid-19. Here are some FAQs. If you have any other questions, let us know!

**I know parents won't be allowed in the building at this time. What will drop off and pick up look like?**

We will have scheduled arrival and departure times, staggering each class for a different time. Families and caregivers enter by the upper parking lot, form a line in the lower parking lot by Hilltop's entrance. One staff member will greet you at your front passenger window with a list of verbal health screening questions. If the answers are acceptable, you will be asked to remove your child from their car seat for a temperature check. If your child's temp is below 100.4 degrees, one of their classroom teachers will escort them to their classroom.

**This is my child's first time in preschool and I am concerned about leaving them with new people at a new building. How will you ease the transition for both me and my child?**

Be sure to attend the Parent Orientation on Monday, August 31st at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. A link to this meeting will be made available by August 24th. This will give you the opportunity to meet Mrs. Sosnicki and hear about the routines and policies of the school. You will also be given the chance to ask questions.

Following the Zoom meeting, we will provide the opportunity for the teachers to present a virtual tour of your child's classroom and talk about your child's day.

Be sure to attend the Visiting Day scheduled for your child. One adult may attend with your child. The class will meet outside on the playground for the duration of the hour visit. This is an opportunity for the children to get to know their teacher before starting at school.

If we have specific separation anxiety concerns with individual children, we will address them directly with the child and the family or caregiver and create strategies for support during this time. Our experience tells us that children typically adjust on their first days within the first 15-30 minutes of their morning.

**What are the plans for keeping young children "distanced" from one another?**

We will maintain smaller class sizes. No more than 8 children in the 2 year old class, and no more than 14 children in the preschool classes. Even if the State of CT increases these numbers, Hilltop will stay at 14 children in a class. While walking in line from the car to the classroom there are spots or markers to let children know to keep a safe distance. These markers are about 3-3.5 feet apart. In the classroom, we will limit the amount of children in each play area, allowing just 1, 2 or 3 children at a time. Meeting times such as circle or story time will be limited to no more than 7 children at a time.

School Readiness children who have rest time at school will have their cots spaced 6' apart.

### **How about plans to be outdoors?**

As of this writing, we understand that science is currently saying that outside is safer than indoor time within groups. With that in mind, we will be outside as much as possible. Besides the playground, we will also access other areas of St. Paul's property and keep work and play outside as much as we can. Any equipment or spaces that are used by more than one group will be sanitized between groups. Each group will have their own bin of sandbox toys rather than sharing with all children in the program.

The indoor play room will also be used on a rotating basis with windows open. A staff member will sanitize the shared equipment between groups.

Any time spent indoors the teachers will assure that the windows are open to bring in fresh air to the inside of the building as well.

### **Will my child have to wear a mask?**

The State of CT Office of Early Childhood guidance document does not require children to wear a mask, so Hilltop's children will not need to. However, if a family wishes to have their child wear a mask at school, we will support that desire and maintain it to the best of our ability. If a child decides to take off their mask, the staff will place it in a zipped sandwich bag to be sent home at the end of the day.

### **How will supplies and equipment be handled?**

Each child will have their own tote box filled with things we typically use on a daily basis such as crayons, markers and scissors. Each child will have their own playdough in the tote as well as other supplies that might be needed for a particular day's plans. Sensory tables will have room for 2 children at a time and will use individual dishpans with water etc., and will be changed after each child. Manipulatives such as bristle blocks, legos etc. will be in individual bins and not shared at the table. Children will need to wash or sanitize their hands before and after using any of these items. All items will be cleaned and sanitized at the end of each day.

### **I know that all children use the same bathrooms. How will Hilltop maintain cohorts in the bathrooms?**

Only one group will be allowed in the bathroom at a time. Each group will use the bathroom at their scheduled time. A Hilltop staff member will sanitize the bathrooms between groups. If a child has to use the bathroom at an unscheduled time, the Hilltop staff will first check to be sure that there are no children from another cohort in the bathroom or in the hallway before escorting the child to the bathroom.

### **How will snack be served?**

Traditionally, Hilltop had "family style" snack experiences. Due to Covid-19, we will no longer serve "family style". All snacks will be prepared by a staff member in individual servings such as plastic storage bags or paper cups. The staff member will follow all health and safety protocols for handwashing, preparing food with mask and gloves on. During center time, snack will be one of the choices for children to choose from, with only 3 children at the table at a time in a rotating basis. A staff member will assure the spaces are cleaned and sanitized between children.

### **What if a child or staff member becomes ill or exhibits symptoms during school hours?**

If a staff member shows symptoms during school hours, they will be sent home right away. If a child exhibits symptoms during school hours, they will be isolated in the office area immediately and staff will call the child's parent or emergency pick up person. Children or staff who are sent home with symptoms will not be allowed to return without a doctor's note.

### **What if a child or staff member has been EXPOSED to Covid-19?**

If a child or staff member has had a first-hand EXPOSURE to Covid-19, we expect families to inform the school director, Mrs. Sosnicki as soon as possible. Staff or children will be asked to quarantine at home for 14 days for observation before returning to school.

### **What if a child or staff member has been DIAGNOSED with Covid-19?**

If a child or staff member has been DIAGNOSED with Covid-19, communication will be sent to families and staff who have had DIRECT CONTACT with that person. Communication will include the Remind App and a hard copy letter. All those who had DIRECT CONTACT will be sent home for 14 days to observe for symptoms. A diagnosis would enact a closure of at least the child/staff member's classroom and possibly all of Hilltop for a minimum of 14 days.

### **What if the Torrington Public Schools close due to Covid-19?**

Hilltop will make an independent decision to close due to Covid-19, following the above parameters. This means we may or may not close when Torrington Public Schools close.

### **What happens if my child has to be absent for an extended time, or if my child's class is closed, or all of Hilltop closes for an prolonged period of time due to Covid-19?**

Hilltop staff is preparing to provide distance learning opportunities for all children and their families.

- There is one school wide PRIVATE Facebook group, called "Hilltop's Online Pathways to Learning". Here all families will be able to access school wide events and happenings including the weekly Music Together® class.
- Each teaching team will have a separate PRIVATE Facebook group as well. They will share activities, photos, and videos if there are any prolonged absences. They will also use this platform if the classroom or program needs to shut down for a period of time.
- If a classroom or the school needs to close down for any length of time, teaching teams will meet with their class for Zoom Circle Time, based on their normal scheduled days.
- To help Hilltop support staff during a closure, we will ask families to continue to contribute to tuition at half rate.

. \*\*\*\*If you are uncomfortable in sharing your personal profile in Hilltop's Facebook groups, we ask that you create a new profile just for the activities within Hilltop's confines.

**Hilltop recognizes that this is a time like no other and we deeply appreciate your trust in us as we care for your children. We are committed to do our best in taking precautions to keep from having Covid-19 cross the threshold of our doors.**