



St. Mark's Cooperative Nursery School
Reopening Policy
2020/2021 School Year

100 Hempstead Avenue, Rockville Centre, NY
(516) 536-6295
www.stmarksns.com

St. Mark's Cooperative Nursery School Reopening Policy

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Introduction

Dear Families,

We look forward to welcoming our families for the 52nd year at St. Mark's Cooperative Nursery School. We have missed our school community and can't wait to see everyone again. We thank you for partnering with us as we prioritize the health and safety of our community, while continuing our tradition of offering a quality early childhood program.

Through great research and collaboration with local preschools and the Office of Child and Family Services, we have developed our plan for reopening during the current global COVID-19 pandemic. We have every intention of starting school in September in the way that is closest to what the experience has traditionally been for our families while trying to implement important changes to keep everyone as safe as possible. In this light, we have pushed back our first days of school to the week of September 21st. Our 3s and 4s program will gradually phase in over the first 2 weeks and our 2s program will start the week of October 5th. This will allow us to fully prepare and have the program ready for our students' arrival. With the goal of being flexible we will be able to see what is working well and change what isn't using this phased in approach. These start dates will also allow for public schools to be fully operational and running smoothly before we bring all our children back.

In order for St. Mark's to do their best to keep our members and staff safe this school year, we are going to be relying heavily on our parents and caregivers to be on high alert for signs of illness in their little ones. Our policy has ALWAYS been, "When in doubt, keep them home". However, this year that is even more important than ever before. We are going to do our best to "cohort" students, stagger start times, and keep exposure to a minimum, but the only way for this to be successful is for parents to be extra vigilant and to keep their child out if they or anyone in their family has any suspected COVID 19 symptoms. We know that this is a difficult thing to do, especially when little ones tend to be sick on and off from November through March. But, the only hope we have of remaining open and creating/managing a safe and healthy environment is that sick little ones or little ones who have sick family members stay home and out of school until they are feeling 100% better.

All changes included in this policy will become the "new normal" until further notice. The guidelines laid out are subject to change based on the recommendations of the CDC (Center for Disease Control), the DOH (Department of Health), NYSED (New York State Education Department), and OCFS (Office of Children and Family Services).

Please be sure to read through this plan and sign and return the acknowledgement of receipt, the assumption of risk, and the OCFS-6040 Form (separate attachment) by August 21st. As always please feel free to reach out should you have any questions or concerns about this document. Remember that this policy is in place to ensure that St. Mark's Nursery School is a safe and enjoyable place for your family.

Best regards,

Michelle Creegan, Alicia Todaro, and the Executive Committee

Beginning of the School Year

Due to new regulations and best practices the beginning of the school year will look different from years past. We still remain committed to making the beginning of the school year a gentle time that will allow your child(ren) to see that our school is an extension of their family at home. We assure you that all of our teachers and staff will continue to work with any child and family in any class that exhibits difficulty separating. We will just have to be extra creative this year.

- Teacher/Family Meet and Greets for 2s Separation, the 3s, and the 4s will be scheduled over the first 2 weeks in September.
- All families (2s Separation, 3s, and 4s) should provide a weather appropriate change of clothes, labeled with your child's first and last name AND teacher's name, in a large sealable storage bag (e.g., Ziploc-style) to be brought during the Teacher Meet and Greets.
- Back to School Night will take place virtually and will most likely be per class/age level. More information regarding BTS night will come out in late August.
- We ask that children not bring backpacks to school at this time. Any correspondence or art work being sent home will be collected by the parent/caregiver at dismissal.
- Students will not be allowed to bring toys or other personal items into school. If your child is having separation issues they may bring a family photo with them to school in a Ziploc bag. If there are extenuating circumstances, the teacher in collaboration with the directors, and caregivers will decide upon a course of action.
- At this time, music classes will be offered virtually. There will be 3 different sessions offered per week. Families will be able to access the music classes from their homes on days they are not in session.
- Regular after school Extended Day Classes are on hold for the fall semester. We will reevaluate this in early January to see if we can offer Extended Day Classes in the spring semester (late January through May).
- All board meetings and staff meetings will be held virtually to keep physical contact and contraction risk to a minimum.
- Drop-offs and Pick-ups will take place either on the playground or in the hallway directly outside the internal doors to the program. The external door closest to the parking lot will be the entrance and the further door will be the exit. The Health Screening will take place at drop-off point. No parents or caregivers will be allowed past that entry point.
- If for any reason a parent or caregiver needs to enter the program at any time, they must wear a mask at all times and wash their hands as soon as they enter the program.

- **Our 4s program** will begin, Monday, September 21st. On Monday, September 21st the classes will be split in half and each group will go for 1.5 hours. Group A will attend from 9:00am to 10:30am. Group B will attend from 11:00am to 12:30pm. On Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, September 22nd, 23rd, and 24th, the entire class will attend for 3 hours, from 9:30am to 12:30pm. Only snack will be served. The 4s program will continue to run 3 hours in length through October. Only snack will be served in school during this time. This policy will be revisited in mid-October by the Reopening Committee to make a decision for November.
- **Our 3s program** will begin the week of Monday, September 21st with gradual separation sessions that will take place (weather-permitting) outside on our playground. More information will be forthcoming regarding our updated gradual separation process for the 3s. The 3s will begin their normal schedule starting the week of Tuesday, September 29th (Monday, September 28th is Yom Kippur).
- **Our 2s program** will begin the week of October 5th. More information will be provided shortly on the gradual separation process for the 2s.
- Students attending licensed Early Childhood Education Centers are not required to wear masks. Our 3s and 4s Families can decide to have their children wear masks in school if it is their preference. If your child is wearing a face mask and is constantly touching it, playing with it, or removing it, and it seems to be potentially causing the spread of germs more so than not wearing the mask, we will have the child remove the mask and place it in their cubby. If you would prefer your child not remain in class without a mask, please let your teacher know at the beginning of the year that you would prefer to come pick up your child in this situation.
- The current guidelines do not allow for any additional persons, other than staff and students to be admitted into the program unless they are deemed essential. Such essential staff would include all service providers and SEITS (Special Education Itinerant Teachers).
- For the first semester of school (September through January) field trips or in-house enrichment programs will be placed on hold.
- At the beginning of the year, use of the Indoor Playroom will be placed on hold. The best use of the Indoor Playroom will be reevaluated this fall.

Daily Practices

Arrival and Dismissal:

- Each family will be greeted by a school staff member who will check the student's temperature. A brief health questionnaire will be answered by the parent/caregiver dropping off the child.
- To the extent possible please have the same person perform drop-off and pick-up duties daily.
- Due to newly recommended best practices arrival and dismissal times will be staggered by age group. Starting and dismissal times will be updated and sent to membership by Monday, August 24th.
- If you arrive after drop off has finished for the day, you must ring up to the office and wait for a staff member to come down to complete the drop-off procedure.
- If your child is absent for any reason, please promptly contact the office via phone or email to notify staff.
- When walking up to check in, we ask that social distancing of 6 feet be maintained between all families as you await you turn to drop off your child. (We recognize that this will increase the time drop off requires and appreciate your patience throughout this process.)
- Drop-off and pick-up should be done by one caregiver and the responsible adult must wear a mask during both times.
- Upon entering the door of the Temple, we ask that the parent or caregiver sanitize their own hands and supervise the hand sanitizing of their little one.
- To ensure smooth transitions and enforce social distancing from other classes/levels, punctuality will be stressed for parents and caregivers dropping off their child(ren).

****Please note that these procedures are subject to change at any time. Your patience is appreciated as we work through these new procedures.****

Post-Screening

- Once your child has been assessed, another school staff member will take your child to their classroom to begin their day.
- Once the student has entered the program they will first go to the bathroom to wash their hands with soap and water and then be brought to their classroom. We ask that you help reinforce with your child the proper handwashing strategies, including lathering with soap for at least 20 seconds, washing, drying, and properly disposing of their paper towel. Make it a game! Who can make the most bubbles?

In the Classroom

- Your child's class will be their Cohort, a static group that will be considered a "family unit".
- All class sizes will be reduced. The 2s and 3s classes will be capped at 8 students. The 4s classes will be capped at 10 students in Room 10 and 13 students in Room 1/2 and Room 6/7.
- We will continue to follow all OCFS guidelines on staff to children ratios.
- Teachers will wear face coverings at all times indoors and outdoors when in the presence of children.
- While children will be allowed to interact with each other as you would your own family, they will be encouraged to give each other some "elbow room". Certain in-class activities will be altered slightly to naturally allow for social distancing, e.g. circle time will be more spaced, and center groups will be more limited in number.
- Our beloved "Special Days" will be on hold for the fall and will be re-evaluated in January. However, your child will still have Special Days which will highlight your child and allow them to be the class leader.
- At this time, snack will be provided by the school. This policy will be re-evaluated throughout the year. However, on your child's birthday, we will accept prepackaged cookies or goodies from the Pre-Approved Snack List for a special celebration.
- Temperatures may be retaken at any point throughout the day.
- Toys and materials that can be cleaned and disinfected will be shared by the group. Toys that are not easily disinfected will be temporarily removed from the classrooms until such time as it is safe to reintroduce them.
- Every class will have designated times to wash their hands with soap and water. These times include but are not limited to, when they enter the program, before and after eating, after using the restroom, and after outdoor playground. We intend to manage the schedule so that there is only one class in the hallway at a time. In the classroom, hand-sanitizer may be used on the students' hands as long as they are not visibly soiled/dirty.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Procedures

- Our regular supply vendor is providing us with additional cleaner and disinfectant that will be kept in a secure location where staff may dispense products safely into bottles for classroom use.
- A Cleaning and Disinfecting Log, as provided by OCFS (Form 6041) will be kept daily/weekly. This log will be available in the main office.
- Cleaning Protocol will be posted throughout the program as well as other CDC mandated signage regarding handwashing, hand-sanitizers, and preventing the spread of COVID-19.
- Hand Sanitizing stations will be placed throughout the program in easily accessible areas including, but not limited to the main entrance and outside the main office. Each classroom will also have their own hand sanitizer supply.
- The school will be using updated daily attendance sheets and sign-in logs for providers that will keep track of daily COVID-Screenings and Health Checks.
- Our custodial team will be at the school Monday through Friday and Sunday after school hours to clean and disinfect bathrooms, stairways, and high touch and traffic areas.
- Frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected multiple times per day. EPA approved disinfectants will be used on all tabletops, chairs, surfaces, cubbies, counters, handles, sinks, and doorknobs. Our floater position will be repurposed to help with not only daily health checks, but the daily cleaning and disinfecting of bathrooms, common areas, toys, and classrooms.
- Restrooms will be regularly cleaned and disinfected throughout the day.
- Toys children have placed in their mouths or otherwise contaminated by bodily secretions will be set aside from play until they are able to be cleaned and disinfected. Toys will not be shared between groups unless they are able to be washed and disinfected first. Toys will be cleaned and disinfected with an EPA-registered disinfectant and air-dried before use.
- The schedule for the outdoor playground will allow for time in between classes to disinfect high-touch surfaces.
- Each classroom will have a Medify Air – Air Purifier with a H13 – HEPA Filter. These air purifiers will vary in size depending on square footage of classroom.
- Touchless Soap Dispensers will be available in the bathrooms.

Health Policy Addendum – COVID 19

For many of the below points we will be relying HEAVILY on parents to monitor their little ones and answer the daily questions honestly. We are asking that every family take their child's temperature each and every morning that they will be attending school. This will help them get used to the new check-in procedure but also will allow you to have a base reading for when your child might be showing some symptoms of illness. ***If your child's fever reads anything above 99.5° we are asking families to keep their children at home.***

People with COVID-19 have experienced a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. The following symptoms should be taken seriously as they may point to COVID 19:

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

If a staff member or child develops COVID-19 symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19, the staff member or child's family **MUST REPORT** the suspected or confirmed case **immediately to St Mark's Nursery School**.

Please call the office during school hours or one of the Directors after school hours:

- St. Marks Office: (516) 536-6295
- Michelle Creegan (Educational Director): (516) 582-6064
- Alicia Todaro (Educational Director): (631) 767-7439

If a student or staff member is absent or is dismissed during the school day with symptoms that require further evaluation for COVID-19, an email will be sent to the legal guardians of the other students in the class alerting them that a staff member or child in their "cohort" is being further evaluated. If that student has siblings in St. Mark's Nursery School, legal guardians in those classes will also be alerted via email. Further information will be shared as it becomes available.

For any suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, St. Mark's Nursery School will immediately contact the Nassau County Department of Health and follow any guidance set forth. See below for some baseline policies:

- **If a child or staff member display symptoms or test positive for COVID-19**, the school will immediately contact the DOH (Department of Health) and follow all guidance provided. This may result in the whole class staying home to quarantine and self-monitor for a period of time, depending on when the infected person was last in class and the severity of symptoms. Families in that class will be notified immediately through email and/or phone calls.
- **If a family member of a child or staff member displays symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19**, the child or staff member must stay home for a 14-day period from the onset of family member's symptoms or positive test to ensure that they do not also present with symptoms. Families in that class will be notified through email and/or phone calls.

- **If a child presents with COVID 19 symptoms during program hours**, he or she will be immediately isolated from the class with one of the directors. We will have masks for children to wear if they present with symptoms. The family will be notified immediately and will be asked to pick up their child promptly. Any siblings or family members who live with the symptomatic student will be brought to the office and sent home with the symptomatic student. The child's class will spend the remainder of the day in an unoccupied classroom or outside on the playground.
 - The child may return to school when they are:
 - fever free (99.5° or below) without the use of fever reducing medicine for **72 hours**
 - **AND** they are symptom free without the use of medicine for **72 hours**
 - OR they have been seen by a doctor and test negative for COVID 19 and have had no fever or symptoms for **72 hours**.
- **If child presents with symptoms and is NOT tested for COVID-19 and has a fever from a verifiable source** (e.g., ear infection, strep throat), your child must be fever free for 72 hours without fever-reducing medication AND must take prescribed antibiotics for at least 24 hours prior to returning to school. We will also need a doctor's note confirming child's diagnosis.
- **If a child or staff member travels to one of the states or countries on the NYS DOH Travel Advisory**, they will not be allowed back to the program for 14 days. During those 14-days families should self-monitor for symptoms.
- **If a family member of a child or staff member travels to one of the states or countries on the NYS DOH Travel Advisory**, the family member must quarantine for 14 days and will not be permitted to bring their child for drop off or pick up. If family member develops symptoms, the staff member or child will be asked to stay home for 14 days and self-monitor for symptoms. They will not be permitted back until the family member has received a negative test or the 14-day isolation period is up.

As part of the daily health screening your child's temperature will be taken and a staff member will ask the parent or caregiver the following questions.

If the answer to ANY of these questions is yes, please do not bring your child to the program

1. Is your child's temperature higher than 99°?
2. Has your child had any known contact with a person confirmed or suspected to have COVID-19 in the past 14 days?
3. Is your child or any family member currently experiencing any of the following symptoms?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cough (new or worsening) ▪ Shortness of Breath (new or worsening) ▪ Trouble Breathing (new or worsening) ▪ Fever ▪ Chills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Muscle Pain (new or worsening) ▪ Headache (new or worsening) ▪ Sore Throat ▪ New loss of taste ▪ New loss of smell
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4. Has your child or a family member y tested positive for COVID-19 through a diagnostic test in the past 14 days?

*Subject to change based on Department of Health, New York State Education Department, Office of Child and Family Services, and Center for Disease Control Guidelines

Virtual Learning Policy

We are aware that remote learning is not ideal for this age group and that no one wants schools to close, even for a short time. The reason to implement virtual learning for preschoolers is to continue fostering relationships, which is at the core of early childhood education. We understand that this is a difficult position to be in and one that no one would like to occur. Therefore, if a school closure is mandated we will proceed as outlined below in order to keep the children socially and intellectually stimulated.

If necessary, we are prepared to switch to remote learning for **6 weeks**, and we promise that we will do everything in our power to make this a fun, productive, bonding, and enjoyable experience for all children. Our children's well-being will remain our main-focus, whether that be in-person or by virtual learning.

Throughout the "virtual learning" period:

- Directors will maintain ongoing communication with families via email.
- Classes will receive weekly communication from teachers.
- Online platforms (such as Google Classroom, Zoom, YouTube and/or Facebook) will be used for activities, sing along, and story time.
- Classes will receive an agreed upon mix of synchronous (live) and asynchronous (taped) learning.
- Each 3s and 4s class will have at least 1 Zoom type meeting per week. The groups may not meet as a full class but in smaller and more manageable sized groups.
- Teachers will provide parents with a supply list of a few essential items to keep at home in case of a prolonged closure. The teachers will supplement these supplies with other items to be sent home as well. This will allow for staff to know what materials students have on hand at home when assigning projects and crafts.
- Music Classes will be offered virtually throughout school closure.
- After a state closure occurs, the school will automatically continue "virtual learning" for 6 weeks-time. Virtual learning will begin the first Monday following any state mandated closure. If the school is forced to remain closed for longer than 6 weeks, the Executive Board will convene to decide the best way forward given the specific circumstances at that time.
- If an entire class is forced to quarantine, a course of action will be determined regarding "virtual learning" on a case-by-case basis.

Refund Policy

If the infection rate in NY is high enough to force the closure of schools for some time we will strive as always to ensure the financial sustainability of our school while working creatively to provide care and support to our families, students, and staff. Below is an outline of the refund policy we will follow if we experience a forced closure:

- As always, the initial deposit is non-refundable.
- There will be no refunds for any quarantine time due to staff or student COVID-19 symptoms or positive COVID-19 tests.
- For the first 6 weeks of remote learning, there will be no pro-rated tuition refunds.
- After the 6-week time period, refunds will be offered on a pro-rated per-session basis minus **20%** for operating costs.
- Only members in good standing will receive a refund.
- If the school cannot open as scheduled in September due to a government-mandated closure of schools, we will NOT start the school year in a virtual format. Tuition payments will be adjusted to reflect the number of sessions remaining if, and when, we are able to open.
- The Executive Board and Directors reserve the right to reschedule missed sessions if possible.

By signing the following Form of Receipt, you have full knowledge of this refund policy and agree thereto.

St. Mark's Commitment to Our Families

We know that this can be a fearful time as none of us have ever experienced something like this before but rest assured that the teachers and administration remain committed to our mission here at St. Mark's and our belief in a play-based curriculum.

- Our amazing staff will continue to create curriculum based on your children's interests and curiosities.
- We will continue to care for your children as if they were our own
- Your child will still be able to make friends and socialize with their peers.
- All of our students will get a chance to play outside everyday (unless it is freezing or raining REALLY hard!) We are looking into potential ways to maximize time outdoors for all classes.
- The classrooms will be set up in the same manner as before – encouraging play, exploration, and cooperative learning.
- Your children will still come home excited because of events that occurred at school that day!
- Your children will still learn and grow exponentially at St. Mark's Cooperative Nursery School!

We know this is not an easy decision to make. We respect the fact that the right answer will look different for each child and each family. If after reading this Reopening Plan in full you still have questions or concerns please reach out to either the Directors or our President:

Stmarks.michellecreegan@gmail.com - Michelle Creegan

StMarks.AliciaTodaro@gmail.com - Alicia Todaro

StMarks.Presidents@gmail.com - Gina Knecht

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we navigate this new year, together!



Parent or Guardian COVID-19 Reopening Policy Receipt Form

Dear Parents or Guardians,

Please thoroughly review our school's reopening policy for the 2020-2021 school year, which contains the procedures for St. Mark's Nursery School while in the process of reopening. After reading this policy, please complete this form, scan it, and return it to the school via email or regular mail as soon as possible (Final Return Date: Friday, August 21st). This form will be kept in your child's file for the duration of the school year. If you need a hard copy of this document and Receipt Form, please email us and we will arrange to get a copy delivered to you.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Michelle Creegan & Alicia Todaro
Educational Directors - St. Mark's Nursery School

I, _____, the parent/guardian of
(print name clearly)

_____, hereby acknowledge receipt of the St.
(print name clearly)

Mark's Nursery School Reopening Policy. I have read the policy and regulations set forth in this document, and:

_____ I agree to the above addendum.

_____ I decline the above addendum. By declining this addendum, I understand that my child will be withdrawn from St. Mark's Nursery School for the 2020-2021 school year. My deposit (minus a registration fee: 2s - \$50, 3s - \$125, 4s - \$200) will be returned to me by October 15th, 2020.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

**IF WITHDRAWING THIS FORM MUST BE RETURNED BY FRIDAY, AUGUST 21st,
TO RECEIVE REFUND OF DEPOSIT**



Assumption of Risk

St. Mark's Nursery School has implemented reasonable preventative protocols, policies, and procedures designed to reduce the spread of COVID-19 during your child(ren)'s participation in the 2020-2021 school year. These policies and procedures may be updated to reflect the most current information from the CDC and other government and health agencies. Children and their families are expected to adhere to these protocols in order to reduce the risks of contracting or spreading the virus at school. However, despite the protocols and procedures in place to mitigate the transmission of COVID-19 at school, there is an inherent risk that your child(ren) may become infected with COVID-19 due to their participation in school. By sending your child(ren) to school, you acknowledge and assume these risks, and agree that neither the school nor the Temple in which it resides is liable for any possible illness.

I, _____, the parent/guardian of
(print name clearly)

_____, hereby acknowledge that I have read and
(print name clearly)

understand the St. Mark's Nursery School "Assumption of Risk" Statement. I hereby agree to assume the risk of sending my child(ren) to school as outlined above.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____