

## **First Church Preschool**

### **Mask Wearing Policies and Procedures**

In accordance with Memo #29 from the State of CT Office of Early Childhood (OEC), dated September 14, 2020, children ages 3 years and older must now wear a face mask while attending our preschool program. This change is effective September 21, 2020, and will continue for the duration of the public health emergency unless modified by the Commissioner of Early Childhood.

#### **Mask Wearing Requirements for Children Ages 3 Years and Older:**

All adults and children ages 3 years and older are required to wear a face mask at all times while indoors.

Masks will NOT be placed on children 2 years of age or younger, anyone having trouble breathing or is unconscious, or anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

Families are asked to provide 2 – 3 masks for each of their children enrolled in the preschool each day in order to have additional available masks in the event that one becomes soiled, torn, or lost. Used masks will be sent home daily to be laundered and returned the next time their child returns to school.

Children should arrive at school each day wearing their mask.

Masks may be removed during outdoor activities or when a child is eating or drinking.

Children who turn 3 years of age between September – November 2020 will have up to two months to acclimate to wearing their mask while at school.

Mask breaks will be provided every hour for a period of 10 minutes while indoors as deemed necessary by teachers. During a mask break, children will be encouraged to maintain a safe social distance of 6 feet whenever possible.

Teachers will support children and families as we wean into implementing the new face mask requirements by educating the children about the reasons for wearing a mask and how to properly wear, remove, and store their masks.

Teachers may assist a child with removing or putting on their mask, but the teacher must be wearing gloves while doing so, and teachers must also remove and discard the gloves and wash their hands after assisting a child with a mask.

Children who refuse to keep their mask on will be gently reminded of the importance of wearing their mask. They will be encouraged in a positive manner to wear their mask.

Children shall not be excluded from the program or isolated from their peers due to the child's non-compliance with mask wearing, yet teachers will continue to work with a child who resists wearing a mask with encouragement, re-instruction, and motivational strategies that support the child toward being more amenable to wearing the mask. Further, the child who resists wearing the mask will be encouraged to maintain physical distancing as much as possible.

#### **Exceptions to the Mask Wearing Requirement:**

A child with a documented medical condition, special health care need, or developmental need (such as sensory integration) for whom wearing a mask or face covering would be contrary to their health or safety is not required to wear a mask.

A child with a documented disability or special education need for whom wearing a mask or face covering would be contrary to their needs may be permitted exceptions. In addition, children and staff involved with certain special education and related services activities, such as speech and language therapy or where lip reading is required, may remove a face-covering mask intermittently.

In the case of a child presenting a documented exception for wearing a mask, a note must be provided by the child's parent, physician, relevant therapist, or special education professional stating how or why the child qualifies for the exception.

**Mask Wearing Requirements for First Church Preschool Staff:**

All adults, including all preschool staff, must always use a face mask while on the church campus, including outside. A teacher maintaining six-foot distance between herself and the children while outside may consider briefly removing the mask for no more than 5 minutes at a time. Also, a teacher can remove the face mask when eating or drinking. We have a designated break area for staff – the Orange Door classroom – where staff may safely remove masks to eat, drink, or take a mask break while also maintaining social distancing whenever someone else is also present in the break area.

First Church Preschool will provide a variety of masks to all adults who need one, and will also provide training on how to properly use and wear masks. Individuals should be mindful to avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth when taking off a mask, and they should wash their hands immediately after removing their mask.

9/17/20