

## **2020-21 SNOW LION SCHOOL HANDBOOK ADDENDUM**

Updated: November 13, 2020

As we face all these current changes and inconveniences, it is a really incredible opportunity to be teaching our children that this is a world where movement happens, where things change, where we experiment and innovate, and where we can readily adapt to new things. We all know that we have the power to frame things for children (and ourselves) and that the perspective we hold for the children dramatically determines how they will experience their world. This is nothing new, of course. We are always framing things for our children. As we come back together for the school year, we will be holding all of the cultural shifts and unknowns that are happening in our world with the utmost care and framing things like masks and temperature taking and social distancing in an empowering and optimistic way. This does not mean we will be denying how hard this time has been. Many of the children have sorely missed each other and the regularity of routines and the space will be held for all feelings, as always. But there are so many ways to see what is happening through a positive light and we will be leaning entirely into this approach. I am a big fan of using whatever circumstances we encounter as fodder for growth and joy and as opportunities to see the goodness in the world. I believe even things like masks and temperature taking can be held in this way and seeing the light coming through even things that seem like they are full of darkness is one of the keys to children's wellbeing. We want the children to deeply understand that this is a world where goodness resides in every nook and cranny. We also want to support and teach children to stay with their experience and not be jostled by an onslaught of information. I don't think there has ever been a better time to learn how to relax with the unknown and to dig deep into who we really are.

One of the things to know this school year is to expect adjustments as we go along. Again, we are always adjusting at Snow Lion. Adjustment is our middle name, since adjusting is such a huge part of contemplative education! But some of our well-oiled systems have to shift a bit now so we will be fine tuning as we go along. Also, as state and local policies shift, we will shift along with them.

In addition to our regular Snow Lion Handbook that you can access on the website, the following are additional//expanded policies and guidelines specific to this very unusual school year we are embarking upon.

### **PART 1: HEALTH POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **PART 2: DISTANCE LEARNING**

## **PART 1: HEALTH POLICIES and PROCEDURES**

- Self Care and Caution Fatigue
- Snow Lion Health Policy
- Rhythm of the Day and Action Items
- In-School Safety Precautions
- Health/COVID-19 Safety FAQ
- A Note About Lice

### **1. A Note About Self-Care and Caution Fatigue**

Now more than ever, it is essential that all of the adults in our community are practicing excellent self-care and keeping our immune systems as strong as possible. We can support our own and our children's immune systems through attention to excellent nutrition, high quality sleep, exposure to sunlight, breathing fresh air, etc.

I am sure you have all heard about caution fatigue by now and relate to the feelings of being "over it" with carefulness around social distancing and maintaining cautiousness as much as possible while we get through this pandemic together. I want to humbly and fervently request that we all recommit to doing our very best to limit our social contact to smaller pods with people being highly cautious as we move through the coming months so that Snow Lion can really serve the children and families in our community as much as possible. A couple interesting articles on caution fatigue:

<https://health.ucdavis.edu/health-news/newsroom/covid-fatigue-is-hitting-hard-fighting-it-is-hard-too-says-uc-davis-health-psychologist/2020/07>

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/08/health/quarantine-fatigue-is-real-coronavirus-wellness/index.html>

### **2. Snow Lion Health Policy**

As you know, these policies are subject to change as new information becomes available. Please thoroughly review each link below. We are and will continue to be erring on the very cautious side, using the following documents/policies as guidelines:

This most updated version of Snow Lion School's COVID-19 safety policies and procedures includes the newly released guidance for schools from CDPHE which has been fully adopted by Boulder County Public Health. The link with information on the Colorado COVID dial system is attached here for your reference: <https://covid19.colorado.gov/data/covid-19-dial/covid-19-dial-dashboard>. The new CDPHE guidelines are specific for the different levels on the dial. Here are the full new guidelines: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/16g-2exA5iRt4F5mIvy1WDuAkjRRwzWJw/view>.

Here are the current guiding documents/main things to know:

1. **At-home COVID-19 symptom screening tool for parents and staff:** [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RNDjUwHZv6nJFPLxjvOMXxfes\\_U6CxiH/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RNDjUwHZv6nJFPLxjvOMXxfes_U6CxiH/view)

Loss of Taste and Smell is now considered a “critical symptom”. If anyone in your family has this symptom, please report it to Kristin right away. Snow Lion continues to have a lower temperature threshold (per our usual guidelines) than CDPHE suggests.

2. **Child/staff feels/appears unwell after arriving at school:**

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/19Fr92Ix0CKGfXYQyQoiv0RyXzTdITqWL/view>

Basically the gist of this whole document is if your child is unwell in any way or if a family member is unwell, the child cannot be in school.

3. **Return to learn: guidance following a positive symptom screen for COVID-19:**

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rBdLkPppzWDRFQOHmetvRcwoIIDOageq/view>

This document has three parts which correspond to the state dial. R1 relates to Protect Our Neighbors (Green), R2 relates to Safer at Home Levels 1/2 (Blue/Yellow) and R3 relates to Safer at Home Level 3 (Orange).

4. **What happens to the contacts:**

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1\\_EpNDpNQ5tgL-r-xLqTFZQ-K2QtItR4I/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_EpNDpNQ5tgL-r-xLqTFZQ-K2QtItR4I/view)

The basics: a positive COVID test or a cohort member with loss of taste/smell will put cohort into quarantine for 14 days from point of contact with person with symptoms. If the person has any major or minor symptoms, there is a 4 day period where we watch symptoms and await negative PCR test in order to keep the cohort from quarantining. **This is why we are strongly recommending that anyone with even a small minor symptom gets a PCR straight away with any symptom at all- it is a protective measure for the cohort as if there is no negative PCR and/or resolution of symptoms within 48 hours, there is a strong possibility a cohort has to quarantine.** One more note: even though for Snow Lion’s illness policy, temperature thresholds are lower, when looking at quarantine guidelines, we will use CDPHE’s threshold as it gives us more leeway.

5. **Snow Lion’s Sick Child Policy and Exclusion Times:**

Please exercise the utmost caution and only send your child to school if there are absolutely no symptoms in your family or child. If we discover your child is sick or not themselves and possibly sick while at school, we will call you and as always (but even more so now!), really depend on you coming right away to pick your child up. If you will be more than 15 minutes away, please arrange for one of your emergency contacts to be on call anytime your child is at school. Again, please make sure you have a clear plan for picking up your child quickly in the event of illness. All symptoms must be completely gone for 24 hours in order to return to Snow

Lion. **Additionally, if your child or family has been exposed to anyone who is positive or presumed positive for COVID-19, we will require your child to be excluded from school for 14 days.**

We are using these five documents and deferring to the most restrictive policy of the 5 in any given situation. Additionally:

1. There is now a definition of “close contact” and we will be using CDPHE’s definition in our decision making processes around cohorts and contact for purposes of quarantining, should that become necessary.
2. There is now a distinction between major/minor symptoms and how these combine or stand alone determines times of exclusion from school and what families must do to re-enter school after illness or exposure.
3. There are now very specific criteria for how a child or teacher will return to school after illness during the Sustained Community Transmission phase in Boulder County.
4. There is now a great deal of guidance around how cohorts will quarantine if exposed to COVID-19 or presumed COVID-19 symptoms and criteria for returning to in-person learning. These policies are detailed and strict. After reviewing this information, we made the decision to break our school into smaller cohorts with the intention of minimizing the quarantine times for our families, should this become necessary.
5. It seems highly likely that many of us will need to be tested as we go through this year. We highly recommend making a plan for which test site you will use as soon as possible. A good place to start is by calling your physician and seeing how they are handling testing, if they will do the anterior nares swab for children, how quickly they will test, etc.
6. **A note for families with older children: all the new state policies apply to all learning environments, including learning pods and private schools. Please make sure your older children’s learning environments are following all CDPHE protocols around health screening, quarantines, and criteria to return.**

Snow Lion’s policies have shifted with the new guidance to include additional information on communication policies, cohorts, distance learning plans, and arrival and departure protocols. More detail is included in the updated handbook below, but in short:

Communication: Though BCPH is not recommending communication with families for all illness exposure and only reserving community health announcements for COVID-19 cases and presumed cases, we will be erring on the side of staying highly communicative when any illness is in our community.

Cohorts: Legally we can have up to 30 children per cohort, but the larger the cohort, the more exposure and possibility for quarantine rises. Our cohort sizes may change throughout the year.

Distance Learning: Barring a worsening of the pandemic and a legal mandate to stop in-person learning, the only reason we will return to distance learning is if we have a cohort needing to enter a quarantine period. In this case, for whatever is left of the two week quarantine time, your child will have access to an online learning program.

Arrival/Departure Protocols: Teachers will be outside to help check the first 1-2 children into their cohort each morning to help ease the morning health screening line traffic. We would like to avoid having parents come into the building at all and will have a place for your child's things to be left outside in the play yards.

A note about getting a doctor's clearance: we highly recommend getting a paper copy of this while at the doctor's office. We do not have a fax machine and doctor's cannot legally email us medical information.

Also, a note about COVID-19 tests for children: there is now an anterior nares swab test that is more comfortable for small noses. In the event your child needs a test, you may want to request this test instead (according to BCPH it is just as effective).

As a reminder, the following list contains the current symptoms we are tracking for COVID-19. In addition to these, we are (as always) tracking all eye, skin and any other potentially contagious conditions as well. All symptoms are now "stand-alone". This means that they are being looked at individually and do not need to be paired with another symptom to be considered excludable.

- Cough
- Congestion and Runny Nose or Other Cold Symptoms
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Temperature above 99.4
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell
- Gastrointestinal Issues
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Eye issues
- Child or anyone in the family is "not themselves"

We know this is a great challenge and will likely require more contact with your doctor than ever before, but we also know how much we all value keeping safety a massive priority right now.

We have just completed a test run of all health policies and practices during summer camp. I am happy to report that illness in general was **way** down this summer from previous years. I am so grateful to our community and how seriously people are taking our state, local and Snow Lion health policies. If anything, parents are over-reporting potential symptoms. This has been very great to see and gives us cautious optimism entering the school year. Please continue to be extremely careful and keep your child home with any symptoms that could be virus related. More than ever, everyone who is at Snow Lion has to be in tip-top shape to be at school.

A note: if your child has any sort of chronic condition (i.e. allergies that could look like virus symptoms), we will need a physician's note describing these symptoms in detail. In many cases, our long-standing 24 hour symptom- free policy will still apply, however in some cases a child will be allowed back to school with certain symptoms that are very chronic, well-understood and do not impact the child's comfort at school.

**Based on overwhelming community feedback, Snow Lion School is requiring a 14 day travel quarantine for families after any air or train travel within the immediate family. This includes visits from other people who have stayed in the home after any air or train travel.**

These stringent health policies apply in full to all teachers as well.

## **7. Action Items/ Rhythm of Day**

### **a. What We Need from You Before School Begins (If You Did Not Attend Summer Camp)**

- Please take your child's temperature a few mornings at school drop off time. We will be taking temperatures every morning and would like to know your child's baseline temperature, especially if your child runs hot. If your child has been here for summer camp, we do not need this information from you.
- Please share any major questions or concerns your child has expressed about coronavirus, masks, etc. What have you told your child about what is happening in our world? About masks? Please share anything you feel is relevant, if you would like.

### **b. Daily Arrival and Departure Protocols**

- Before School Daily: Every morning before leaving home for school, please text the school phone at 720.683.2001 and answer the following three questions:
  1. Does anyone in your FAMILY have any of the above symptoms?
  2. Does your CHILD have any of the above symptoms?
  3. What is Your Child's Temperature?

You can send a very brief text that says, for example, “Family- No, Child- No, Temp 98.4”. **We will be making sure we have received this text from every family as part of the morning entry process.** We are really depending on all of us working together and transparency with this daily assessment to keep everyone healthy. If anyone in your family or your child has any symptoms or are “not themselves”, please do not come to school.

- **Morning Arrival:** In the morning, you will be greeted in the parking lot by 1-2 teachers. The two north spaces by the tiny office will be set up as a check-in station for screening everyone before they enter the gate. This is typically a very brief process, as long as everyone has texted their daily answers to health questions. Please maintain social distance while waiting in line. Also, please hold tight to your children in the parking lot. These are the things we will be screening for before anyone passes through the gate: 1. We will check for your text information. 2. We will take the temperatures of everyone accompanying your child to school for temps over 99.4. 3. We will visually screen the child and parent for the above symptoms. 4. We will sign your child in and you will be good to go! All morning drop-offs will happen outside. All adults and children over age 10 are required to wear masks per state ordinance at all times while at Snow Lion, including while in the parking lot or on the playground dropping off. Pulling down your mask to give your child a smooch goodbye is just fine. Cub families should plan to walk their children into the Cub yard and classroom area. Snow Lion families should plan to drop off outside the gate if your child has been at summer camp and is in that flow, or in the main Snow Lion yard. Teachers will be there to greet you, of course!
- **Midday and Afternoon Departures:** We will almost always be outside during departure times. When you arrive, Cub families should head to the Cub yard to pick up their children. Snow Lion families will pick up in the main yard. For afternoon pick up, please wait in the parking lot if you have an older child who is accustomed (from summer camp) to being walked out the gate. Please wear masks and maintain social distancing at pick up time.

#### c. Commitment Letter

We are requiring all teachers and families to commit to practicing social distancing and following safety precautions as mandated/suggested by Boulder County Public Health and other governing agencies. We will be asking everyone to sign a commitment letter to attend Snow Lion.

#### 4. **In-School Safety Precautions**

- Teachers will be wearing masks as required by law. Masks are currently optional for children over age 2 and younger than age 10. Masks are not advised for children under age 2. Children may never rest/nap in masks. We will be working with family preferences in an individual way to support those families that prefer

their child to wear a mask. We know this is very tricky territory and brings up a lot of feelings for people. Please know we are here to support you. We expected children to have some reactions to seeing teachers in masks this summer, but surprisingly saw the children easily transition into connecting with masked teachers. This reminds me of the quote by Antoine de St. Exupery: *It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.* This certainly seems to be truer now than ever!

- We are following CDPHE and BCPH guidelines for sanitizing the environment daily as well as other guidelines for health safety. Extreme daily sanitization practices are in effect. These were started at Snow Lion prior to the BVSD shut down last March.
- Children who rest at school will be 6 feet apart from other friends during this time. The energy of rest is still cozy and beautiful even with a little more space.
- Rest sleeping bags (we have these at school that a parent made for us last year) are washed daily. We no longer have rest bags for specific children since everything is being thoroughly disinfected daily.
- Water bottles and lunch boxes are now stored by each child's cubby and not on common shelves.
- We now have commercial grade air purifiers in all classrooms. We also have salt lamps in each room of the school. We are tackling indoor air quality from every angle we can!
- We are a school that values time outdoors and will continue to spend large portions of our days outside. Now more than ever, this will require all children to have very warm clothes when the weather is cold.
- We plan to have windows open throughout the year, even in cold weather. We will be requiring all children to have very warm clothes and full snow gear available once the colder months are upon us. Hats and warm socks/slippers will be a must! Below is an interesting article with pictures of children during the Spanish Flu pandemic. There is a little bit of political content in this article- please disregard that aspect. There are just great pictures and inspiration for staying in the open air this year as much as possible! <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/17/nyregion/coronavirus-nyc-schools-reopening-outdoors.html>
- In regards to hand washing and hand sanitizing, we are doing both like crazy, both as teachers and with the children. In the past, hand sanitizer was not legal to use with preschool age children. This policy has changed and we have hand sanitizer that we are using many times throughout the day in addition to handwashing/when hand washing is not practical. Children who dislike hand sanitizer may always opt to go inside and wash hands instead. We are using the



WHO recipe for hand sanitizer due to current issues with purchasing safe and effective hand sanitizer.

- Sensory play is very important for young children and also can be a big source of germ-spreading. We now have individually portioned sensory materials (moon sand, bird seed, playdough, etc) labeled with the children's names so that no cross contamination occurs and we can have our cake and eat it too.

## **5. Health/COVID-19 Safety FAQ**

Q: If my child has allergy symptoms, do we need a doctor letter to return to school?

A: Yes. Any symptoms that could potentially be COVID-19 symptoms will require a medical doctor's approval to return to school. In addition, please refer to How Sick is Too Sick?, the Decision Tree and Snow Lion's 24 hour policy to determine when your child can return. If your child has long standing allergy issues, please let us know so we can guide you with anything we need for documentation.

Q: What if one of my children has a runny nose. Should the other one stay home, too?

A: Yes, this would be a family symptom.

Q: Will the children be separated in smaller groups?

A: State and local policies around separating children into groups have been shifting over the last couple of months. For at least the first semester of the 2020-21 school year, the children will be broken into four distinct cohorts: the Cubs, and 3 Snow Lion groups. Cubs will stay entirely in their own yard and classroom space at all times as usual. While inside classroom spaces, children will be in smaller groups of 5-8. The school will be divided into a North and South side and 4 distinct classroom spaces for each cohort. These spaces will be set up as complete classroom spaces for both groups. The North and South yards will be shared by all older cohorts, but not at the same time. The Cubs yard will only be used for Cubs. Until the pandemic is over, we will not have the same free-flow of children being able to move from space to space in an unfettered way. This summer showed us how well new systems work and how happy the children are to be together even if more constrained (compared to pre-pandemic times).

Q: Are children and teachers required to wear masks?

A: Teachers are absolutely required to wear masks. This is optional for the children. See above.

Q: What will you do if there is a confirmed COVID-19 case at school?

A: We will follow the guidelines from CDPHE above

Q: Are you having children maintain social distance?

A: Space wise, the school allows for social distance at all times. We have a huge amount of space. There is no way to keep the children perfectly 6 feet apart all the time

due to their ages. We are definitely able to provide a lot of space and are as much as possible helping them to socially distance whenever possible. We are utilizing outdoor spaces as much as possible and intend to continue this.

Q: Will Snow Lion be instituting a travel quarantine?

A: Yes. See above.

Q: What if a child gets sick while at school?

A: We have an outdoor isolation area for any children who become sick while at school. Children who are suspected to have symptoms arising during the day will be assessed away from their cohort.

Q: Are teachers being required to follow all of these policies and practices.

A: Yes, all teachers are being required to follow these policies.

Q: With the new cohorts and separate classroom spaces, will my child still have access to all the awesome toys and materials at school?

A: Yes. Some materials will be disinfected and rotated between groups week by week, some materials will be divided and all activities will be available for all of the children, regardless of their cohort.

Q: How soon after exposure to COVID-19 can we test?

A: Snow Lion is requiring testing after 7-8 days have passed, as earlier testing can lead to false negative test results.

Q: If everyone in our cohort tests negative, would we still have to quarantine for 14 days?

A: If there is any COVID positive in a cohort, the cohort will be quarantined for 14 days from day contact began.

Q: If our cohort has to be quarantined, how much notice will we have?

A: It could be extremely sudden. For a COVID case, the quarantine starts the day the exposure to the cohort began.

Q: We have relatives flying in for the holidays. What should we do?

A: The day they arrive starts the 14 day quarantine period.

Q: We are flying out over winter break. How long do we need to quarantine upon our return?

A: 14 days.

Q: Are there any recommendations for family get togethers over the holidays?

A: Yes, have all family members test prior to getting together and be sure no one has any symptoms of illness. Then follow quarantines to return to school.

Q: How long do we need to wait to get tested after exposure to a known case?

A: Snow Lion is requiring a 7 day wait period before testing for asymptomatic cases. Although BCPH says that testing can happen as early as day 5, results are much better at day 7+.

Q: How long do we need to wait to get tested if we have symptoms?

A: You can test immediately if you or your child is showing symptoms.

Q: If we need a doctor's note to return, what does it need to say?

A: There is now an alternate diagnosis form letter that your doctor should fill out (see below).

Q: Are masks required for preschool children?

A: No, but this could change. My recommendation is to get your child accustomed to having a mask nearby, on a lanyard, etc. in case.

Q: Can I wear a handkerchief style mask while on site at Snow Lion?

A: No.

Q: If our county enters a Stay at Home order, what happens to Snow Lion.

A: Our intention is to declare ourselves essential and to continue operations. That said, we will follow state and local policies and should we be required to close in-person school, we will move to distance learning. More likely are short term closures from cohort exposures. If we are mandated to move to distance learning, of course there will be no choice, but everyone at BCPH and the state does not think this will be the case.

## **6. A Note About Lice**

Since we are on the topic of health, let's just take a second to review lice protocols, since these little buddies visit our town every year or two. Snow Lion is hard core about staying lice free. In some ways, our history with preventing lice outbreaks has helped us with the coronavirus situation. Here is a bit of information:

1. Add peppermint, tea tree and lavender oils to shampoo or spritz diluted onto hair. We have consistently seen children who are using shampoo and oils in their hair daily avoid lice.
2. Lice info: <http://www.webmd.com/children/tc/lice-symptoms>
3. If we have lice circulate, we will give you more information. Sorry for making you itchy just by talking about this. It used to be that lice was one of the bigger deals but of course now they seem so adorable, comparatively.

## **PART 2: DISTANCE LEARNING**

Update: Barring a worsening of the pandemic and broader closures, the only reason we will return to distance learning is if we have a cohort needing to enter a quarantine period. In this case, for whatever is left of the two week quarantine time, your child's main cohort teachers will collaborate to offer a distance learning program. There will be

a one day break between regular in-person school and distance learning to allow teachers time to prepare for this transition. Likely, distance learning will include circle with Kristin via zoom or YouTube, FaceTime individual or group calls on the days your child is enrolled, art materials for the coming activities available for pick up, story ring via You Tube or Zoom, and other offerings such as art, science and movement. We will use the basic model we used last spring, but will make adaptations based on your feedback and the teacher's observations of what could have been done better. Hopefully even mentioning distance learning is a moot point but we are ready to roll this out quickly if need be!

For the last 25 years, we have followed BVSD's every move for school closures. This year, we will mostly operate independently from BVSD for COVID-19 based closures, though we will still follow them for all weather and other emergency district closures in some cases. If there is ever reason to do so, we will follow BVSD COVID-19 closures in tandem with BCPH guidance, but we do not anticipate this being the case. The reason we are not following BVSD's lead with pandemic closures/re-entry phases is because we are small enough in size and large enough in space to be able to maintain more space and smaller ratios at all times. We are also able to screen families on a daily basis with a depth impossible in larger schools and exclude sick children from attending school. This is a big change to not just be following BVSD. That said, we are definitely staying highly tuned in with what is happening at the district level to track things that impact Snow Lion and to be able to support families who have children in district schools. Following are some frequently asked questions about distance learning.

Q: Do you plan to follow BVSD if they return to distance learning models?

A: Not necessarily. If it becomes necessary to fully stop in-person learning, we are prepared to transition to a distance learning model as we did last spring. We have a strong preference to maintain in-person learning.

Q: Are you considering having reduced class sizes or alternating days like BVSD?

A: We have slightly decreased the number of children enrolled at the school for the 2020-21 school year. Because of the size of our physical space and excellent ratios, we do not need to stagger days as BVSD proposes.

Q: If we have an older child in BVSD/SVVSD who is placed in a cohort that does not match with our Snow Lion schedule, can we change our child's days at school?

A: We will do everything possible to help families change to a more workable schedule that matches their BVSD/SVVSD cohort. That said, it may not be possible to perfectly match each families needs at this point in the year when the enrollment process is completed. We will do our best!

Q: Will you move to distance learning for BVSD weather or other short-term emergency closures?

A: No. We will not hold distance learning for planned holidays, snow/weather closures or short term district emergencies. For quarantined cohorts or unexpected closures of more than one week, from now on we will move to distance learning.

Q: Will there be an option for distance learning if we choose to opt out of sending our child to school during an outbreak?

A: We are looking at options for how to accommodate everyone in this situation. In the event of extended BVSD closures or a percentage of Snow Lion families wanting to shift to distance learning, it is possible that Snow Lion will move to offering distance learning and in-person learning in tandem.

Q: Will tuition be refunded if Snow Lion moves to distance learning?

A: No, tuition will not be refunded. It is unlikely we will have to move the entire school to distance learning but we are prepared to do this if necessary.