

Health and Safety Seasonal Considerations: Autumn

It takes a village to keep a child safe and healthy. Our staff and families must work together! Autumn is a beautiful season, but it can also be a season of storms (hurricanes/snow and ice) and illness. Please find information on how we can best orchestrate our efforts to keep all members of our school community safe and sound.

How Central contributes to the safety of all of our children

Central staff spend about 25 hours a year in safety drills and training. Safety drills are a regular part of your child's experience at Central, as well. We exceed DSS standards in our training of all staff members, even our substitute teachers, on safety monitoring and protocol.

Inclement weather

Central Virginia is impacted by several different weather patterns. It can be remarkably unpredictable and only a few miles can make the difference between a major weather concern and something much less troublesome. Central staff are weather watchers. The director begins the day by checking several weather reports and has severe weather alarms set on her phone as well as the school's main phone. Additional staff members monitor throughout the day as well.

Communications between parents and school during threatening weather

As a parent and grandparent, I understand the amount of gnawing stress and anxiety a parent feels when they do not have immediate access to their children when things turn unpredictable. We understand this and always attempt to put meaningful information out to parents when these moments arise. Unfortunately, we cannot sustain endless contact because we have other, very important, issues to manage. Mainly, the safety of your children and our staff.

There are two times when we will contact you when weather turns tricky.

Emergency messages: Indicates an emergency requiring you to pick your child up immediately. We will contact you using **Text-Em-All**, an automated service that leaves Central staff free and available to manage the needs of children and staff.

Non emergency message: This means that we are experiencing a changeable situation (which may or may not develop into an emergency). Usually, we will use email to help keep you informed.

We ask you to not call the school once you have received either an emergency notice or a non emergency message This is very important.

In the event of an emergency or complications caused by weather, we will be here until your child is picked up by you or your designated adult. PLEASE DO NOT CALL CENTRAL to ask if we are aware of bad weather (we are) or to inform us you might be late in the event of inclement weather (we will wait for your arrival).

Feel free to send emails if you would like, but understand we may be very busy working on our first priorities: monitoring, caring for children, and providing our teachers continual support.

How Central contributes to a healthy school community

Central tries hard to find and maintain the balance between accomodating a child that might be a bit under the weather and sending a child home with parents who may find it hard/stressful to leave a demanding job behind.

- We repeatedly take temperatures over a period of about 15 to 30 minutes before contacting a parent. If a child's fever goes down, we continue to monitor. Of course, if it is rising or stays the same, we contact the parents.
- We provide an office space for a sick child to rest and to receive constant monitoring.
- We follow the most exacting guidelines for fever (101 for an infant or toddler and 100 for a child older than 3). In addition to the fever, the child must also demonstrate another symptom such as lethargy, lack of appetite, physical discomfort, great need for sleep, etc.
- Central follows exacting personal hygiene guidelines for all staff and children.
- We maintain very clean environments. We use green products when we are able.
- We know each child very well and can take accurate assessments of general health and functioning.
- We keep parents informed about a child's reports-even those that are not accompanied by fever.
- We actively monitor CDC sites to determine what health concerns may be of importance to our families.
- We ask that all staff members and student volunteers receive an annual flu shot.
- Central works hard to enroll families that are comfortable with, and participate in, fully immunizing their children.

How parents can contribute to a healthy community

- Sync your email address to your phone. This is very important for emergency text notices and notification of a sick child.
- Be familiar with the symptoms that require exclusion from school. Please refer to Central's Health First Policy for more information.

- Do not bring your child to school if they have exhibited these symptoms within the last 24 hours or if your child is being medicated in order to manage the symptoms.
- Be prepared to arrive within 30 minutes of receiving an email notifying you that your child has a fever or other symptoms of illness. Emails are used so that we can monitor time between notification and your arrival. It also allows us to track the number of students that may be sent home due to illness within any given time frame. We will only call if you have not responded to the email we sent you.
- Ask friends, sitters, relatives - in advance - to be available to help with child care if you must go to work or if you are not able to pick your child up within approximately 30 minutes of being notified that exclusion is necessary.
- Contact Central when anyone in your family has a contagious/communicable illness. We do not share this information-we only use it for tracking purposes.
- Understand that Central does not indicate which classroom an illness is in. If it is in one classroom, then it is in our community and we must always be mindful.

Help your child develop good personal hygiene skills such as (Six is Safe)

1. Washing hands when you arrive home or before you leave your house, before and after you eat, and/or anytime you touch your face or someone else's face
2. Sleeping long enough to wake alert in the morning
3. Drinking a lot of water
4. Eating the best foods possible
5. Keeping open sores covered
6. Staying home when sick (especially important for young children who cannot generally manage symptoms or control the spread of germs like adults can)