

Reopening Plan for  
Valley Preschool, a Ministry of Houghton Wesleyan Church  
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Houghton, NY 14744

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## Overview

Valley Preschool (VPS) has been a ministry of Houghton Wesleyan Church for over 50 years. While not registered with the state nor required to be, we are submitting this reopening plan out of an abundance of caution and the desire to be open with New York State, our local community, our church body, and our preschool families about the steps we are taking to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

We meet on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings from 9:00 - 11:45 a.m. and serve children ages three through five. Over the past five years we have averaged a student body size of twenty students, a paid staff of four, and one or two regular volunteers. The indoor space we use consists of four classrooms (approximately 1,947 square feet) and our gym/community room (approximately 4,650 square feet). We also have a playground and access to a large yard/field area. VPS follows the closing policies of our local school district (Fillmore Central School) and has not met for instruction since March 13, 2020. Since that date HWC has not met for regular in-person Sunday services nor been conducting in-person children's ministries.

## Acknowledgements/Community and Family Engagement

Many thanks to the HWC pastoral staff, VPS team, VPS committee members, VPS parents, HWC custodial staff, and local physicians and other healthcare professionals for their dedication, feedback, and guidance as we have made plans to continue to provide a safe and healthy facility and program for the young children we serve and to their families. The contributions of their knowledge, insights, and expertise throughout the COVID-19 pandemic has served to enable us to put together this plan for reopening safely.

Other sources for reopening guidelines consulted since the beginning of our period of closure include, but are not limited to recommendations at the following websites:

- [https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/Childcare\\_and\\_Summer\\_Camps\\_Summary.pdf](https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/Childcare_and_Summer_Camps_Summary.pdf)
- [https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/Pre-K\\_to\\_Grade\\_12\\_Schools\\_MasterGuidance.pdf](https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/Pre-K_to_Grade_12_Schools_MasterGuidance.pdf)
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html>
- <http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/reopening-schools/nys-p12-school-reopening-guidance.pdf>

## Plan for In-Person Instruction

Valley Preschool plans to resume in-person instruction on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings in September. In addition to our usual sickness policies and cleaning procedures, we are implementing daily screenings, the wearing of masks by VPS staff and students, increased hand washing, social distancing practices, additional cleaning and disinfecting measures for toys, equipment, materials etc. and all surfaces, providing hand sanitizer in each room, and a greater use of our gym/community room space and outdoor spaces to ensure social distancing and good ventilation.

We currently have only 10 accepted students and have decided on a maximum of 16 this year or until COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. We have enough space and staff to allow for social distancing and for keeping children in cohorts if numbers dictate. The combination of a low population in greater than adequate space, the infrequency of our meeting, and the precautions and measures we are taking should serve to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 at Valley Preschool.

### Staff

- VPS staff will do daily temperature checks to ensure everyone at school has a temperature under 100.4° (F).
- VPS staff will wear a smock/over shirt of some kind over street clothes so that it can be changed if it becomes soiled by tears/other secretions if it becomes necessary to provide care to a child who is crying.
- VPS staff will wear masks. When all are seated and maintaining social distancing, masks may be removed for instruction. Masks may also be removed for occasional breaks if other measures are in place (away from others or in larger, better ventilated spaces).
- VPS staff will wash hands before school, when helping children wash, between activities, before handling paper plates, napkins, or cups at snack time, after bathroom use, and whenever they are soiled.

### Children

- Children will have their temperature checked daily upon arrival as part of the check-in process to ensure everyone at school has a temperature under 100.4°(F).
- Children will wear masks. If maintaining social distancing when seated for instruction or while eating their snack, children may remove masks. Masks may also be removed for occasional breaks if other measures are in place (away from others or in larger, better ventilated spaces).
- Children will wash hands before school, between activities, before snack time, when they are soiled, and following gym or outdoor play.

### Facility and equipment cleaning and precautions

- The items we use will be washed/sanitized daily. In each room and/or for each activity we will have a basket for items used during that session. Washing, combined with the amount of time that things will sit before being used again, will serve to kill viruses on these items.
- Rather than sharing crayons, each child will be issued a labeled plastic, lidded box containing crayons. Scissors, glue bottles/sticks etc. will either be included in these boxes or cleaned daily following use.
- Classroom and other surfaces will be cleaned daily by VPS staff and the church custodian.

- Hand sanitizer will be available in each room and outdoors for staff to use with children when washing can't happen right away.
- We will utilize the community room/gym space as well as outdoors (weather permitting) for many of our group lessons/activities to take advantage of better ventilation and space.

## Procedural Plans

### Drop-off and Pick-up

- One entrance will be used for dropping off and picking up children. Staff, children, and parents will wear masks for pick-up/drop-off time. As part of the check-in process, temperatures will be checked to ensure that no one is admitted with a temperature greater than 100.4<sup>o</sup>(F) or other indications of illness.
- After determining that each child is wearing a mask, staff will take them to the classroom(s) for putting away coats/belongings and for hand washing.
- Following hand washing at the end of the day, children will be released and checked out (as parents arrive).

### Group/classroom instruction

- Rugs and other indicators will be used to indicate socially distanced spaces (at least six feet apart) for floor seating during times of group instruction.
- Marking tape and other indicators will be used to limit numbers and to indicate where children should sit at tables to maintain social distancing.
- Children will wear masks throughout the morning, but especially when sitting is not conducive to instruction or when social distancing is harder to maintain briefly.
- Each child will use a separate, labeled, lidded craft bin containing crayons. Scissors, glue bottles/sticks etc. will either be included in these boxes or cleaned daily following use.
- Baskets will be utilized in centers and classrooms to collect toys/materials that have been used and are in need of washing/sanitizing.

### Learning and play centers

- The number of children at a given center will be monitored and limited so as to maintain social distancing.
- Marking tape and other indicators will be used to indicate where children should stand or sit to stay far enough apart.
- Baskets will be utilized in centers and classrooms to collect toys/materials that have been used and are in need of washing/sanitizing.

### Hand washing

- Children will wash hands before school, between activities, before snack time, after bathroom use, when they are soiled, and following gym or outdoor play.
- Staff will monitor children in the washing of hands.
- Hand sanitizer will be available in each room and outdoors for staff to use with children when washing can't happen right away.

### Snacks

- Parents will provide a snack and lidded cup/water bottle for water for their own child each day.

- Snack and water containers will remain in and be returned to the students cubby/backpack except for during snack time.
- Only disposable plates/napkins/cups will be used if needed
- Children will eat in shifts as necessary to maintain social distancing
- Masks may be removed during snack time.

### Plan for Monitoring of Health Conditions

In addition to daily temperature and symptom checks for staff and children upon arrival, staff will monitor their own health and that of students by watching for symptoms of illness throughout the morning.

If anyone fails the screening procedures, they will be denied entrance to the facilities. The Valley Preschool director and Houghton Wesleyan Church director of children's ministries will be notified in order to contact the Allegany County Health Department if COVID-19 is suspected.

### Plan for Containment of Potential Transmission of (COVID-19)

Staff who develop symptoms of illness during the hours of school operation will go home.

Students who develop symptoms during the school day will be isolated and supervised by staff in a designated room away from other students until arrangements can be made for parents meet and pick up the child.

If used, this containment area will be closed off for 24 hours (or as long as possible) before being thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.

### Plan for Closure/Suspension of In-Person Instruction

The directors of VPS and of HWC children's ministries will use the COVID-19 Western New York 7-day infection average (<https://covid19tracker.health.ny.gov/views/NYS-COVID19-Tracker/NYSDOHCOVID-19Tracker-DailyTracker?%3Aembed=yes&%3Atoolbar=no&%3Atabs=n>) to closely monitor local infection rates.

The decision to close Valley Preschool or suspend in-person instruction will be based on local infection rates, levels of staff and student absence due to infection or potential infection with COVID-19, and, of course the known presence of the virus in our facility.

We will closely monitor the closures of our local school district, Fillmore Central School, and in most cases will follow their plan for closure/suspension of in-person instruction.