

How First Church of Lombard UCC is Keeping Children and Youth Safe From COVID-19

As of April 2021

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ALL AGES

1. **First and foremost, we are paying attention!** These guidelines are being written using all the direction available as of this writing, with sources as wide-ranging as the CDC, the state of Illinois, the United Church of Christ, and First Church of Lombard's own previously adopted guidelines. And we are continuing to listen, which means that these policies are subject to change as the situation develops. *While these guidelines are thus intended to be reviewed as needed, our expectation is that these parameters will remain accurate until further notice. Be watching for any updates.*
2. Our primary concern is demonstrating agapē love in all we do – which right now, often includes staying home if we are not feeling well. **Parents are responsible for monitoring the health of their students and keeping children and teens at home if they are feeling unwell, have a fever, or any other symptoms that may be COVID-related.** No additional health checks will be performed upon arrival at the class/meeting.
3. Attendance records for in-person events will be carefully kept to help with contact tracing. ***If someone in your household tests positive for COVID-19 within 14 days of attending an FCL function, please contact both Val Sutton (vsutton@firstchurchoflombard.org) and Pastor Jill Terpstra (PastorJill@firstchurchoflombard.org) immediately.*** We will follow the direction of the health department at that time.
4. **Masks and physical distancing will be standard at all programming, inside and outside the church building.** All students, leaders, and teachers will be required to wear a mask properly covering their nose and mouth, and we will all work together to maintain the recommended three feet of distance from others. Maintaining that distance may require changing meeting spaces/classrooms, either semi-permanently or on a meeting-by-meeting basis. Be watching for information directing students to different spaces – or even outdoors, which will be our preference when the weather allows.
5. **Hand sanitizer will be available in every area where groups are meeting and frequent use will be encouraged, especially upon arrival.** Handshakes, hugs, and similar greetings will not be allowed, with alternatives suggested.
6. **Activities will be planned with distancing in mind.** For example, if students are put in small groups or pairs for a game or discussion, enough space will be allowed to ensure that at least a 3-foot radius can be maintained. *See ministry-specific guidelines for more details.*
7. **Snacks, when served at all, should be individually wrapped rather than served communally or family-style. Drinks will also be served in individual packaging (bottles, cans, etc.) or directly from a tap into a cup or reusable container.** Handwashing will be required when snacks are served. Once someone has finished eating or drinking, they must immediately put their mask back on.
8. **When possible, we will keep supplies separate for each student's use from week-to-week, avoiding shared use of craft supplies, writing implements, Bibles, and more.**
9. **Training will be provided to volunteers to ensure they are familiar with these guidelines, as well as measures for sanitizing high-touch surfaces.**

MINISTRY-SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

NURSERY (Infants and Toddlers)

The nursery is closed until further notice. Families with young children are invited to worship in Hatfield Hall, where rocking chairs are available for your use.

SUNDAY SCHOOL (Preschool through 5th Grade)

- Students and teachers will follow all General Guidelines (see above).
- When it is safe and feasible to do so, in-person meetings will be held, in a room large enough to maintain physical distancing. When possible, classes will be held outdoors.
- For those who do not feel comfortable coming to church in-person, a weekly video ("Virtual Sunday School") will continue to be sent to all families with a shortened version of that Sunday's lesson. We want to ensure that everyone feels like they can learn and grow in a way that feels safe and comfortable.
- In order to reduce their exposure to others, children will head directly to Sunday School rather than joining their families in worship. Students must be picked up by a parent or another responsible adult at 11:00 a.m. (which may sometimes be a few minutes after the conclusion of worship). Be watching for information about where drop-off and pick-up will occur, as the spaces used may shift to accommodate the size of the group or to remain outdoors when possible.
- All students in preschool through 5th grade will attend a single class. To ensure compliance with all guidelines, this class will be under the direct supervision of FCL's Educational Ministries Director, Val Sutton, joined by an adult volunteer. Parents will be contacted if/when "Miss Val" will not be present.
- Because indoor communal singing has been known to spread the coronavirus, when indoors the children's music lessons will be focused on instrumentation, rhythm, and other musical concepts, rather than singing as a group. Singing will be reserved for times when Sunday School is held outdoors.
- Other family ministries and FCL activities for children will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine viability and any safety precautions that prove necessary.