

IN-HOUSE SCHOOL DAY MINISTRY

Please begin by reading the introductory document found [here](#).

*Creating an in-house “learning pod” during the time of virtual learning, can help the families navigate during these difficult times by providing a safe space for students to focus on their work, while experiencing limited social interaction. For the purpose of this document, “in-house” is defined as a ministry for students during the school day that occurs in the church and operated by the church’s staff and volunteers only. **The full plans for these programs must be submitted to the District Superintendent for approval no later than fourteen days before the program is slated to begin. As each question is answered, the HCT should also be determining the answer to the question “Who is responsible?” This is not meant to be an exhaustive set of questions, but an aid to help Healthy Church Teams think comprehensively and delegate effectively in regard to their missions and ministries.***

1. Check the Church’s Insurance Policy

- Add education liability with medical on existing insurance policy
- Follow all guidelines provided by the Insurance company. The following are an example of an insurance company’s guidelines.
 - Approval from local health officials has been obtained, unless no such requirement exists.
 - No more than 25 children should be permitted at any one time at the facility, unless local health regulations allow more students, given current social distancing guidelines.
 - No children permitted who have any illness/sickness within the past 14 days, or those children who live with someone who is ill during the same time period. CDC and local health department guidelines should be adhered to.
 - Screened adults at a ratio not exceeding 7:1
 - Temporary arrangement as a service to the community only during the COVID-19 crisis period.
 - Building is conducive to hosting children and has a sanitization plan in place that is communicated to all for large or homeschool operations.
 - An appropriate check-in/check-out procedure is being utilized.
 - A full-time staff member should always be on-site to provide oversight to all volunteers.
 - No formal tutoring, advising, meals, medication dispensing, or before and after care activities are taking place. Instruction is done by the students’ teacher via their schools’ system of online instruction only.
 - Local police and fire should be notified of the new operation in case of an emergency.

2. Check with Local Health Officials

- Consult with the local Fire Marshal and Police Department and obtain permission.

- If possible, obtain written acknowledgment (letter or email) for the record.

3. Apply for exemption from Department of Social Service

- Churches who are temporality planning to open this type of service can fall under the [Code of Virginia 63.2-1715](#)
- Under section B.2, churches can qualify as a 'Come and Go program,' 'Serving School Age Children.'
 - [Code of Virginia 63.2-1715 Religiously exempt child day center](#)
 - This part of the Code describes a religiously exempt child day center (REDCDC) and the requirements for their filing and health and safety requirements.
 - This program is inspected annual by the VDSS licensing office for compliance with this part of the Code.
- File exemption and meet all regulations
 - File with the Commissioner of Social Services at [this link](#). (Send an email as indicated above in the Code of Virginia).
 - Certify that the child day program has disclosed in writing to the parents or guardians of the children in the program the fact that it is exempt from licensure;
 - Report to the Commissioner of Social Services all incidents involving serious physical injury or death of children attending the child day program. Reports of serious physical injuries, which shall include any physical injuries that require an emergency referral to an offsite health care professional or treatment in a hospital, shall be submitted annually. Reports of deaths shall be submitted no later than one business day after the death occurred;
 - Post in a visible location on the premises notice that the child day program is operating as a program exempt from licensure with basic health and safety requirements but has no direct oversight by the Department;
 - Have a person trained and certified in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) present at the child day program whenever children are present or at any other location in which children attending the child day program are present. The Red Cross offers online CPR training at this [link](#).
 - Maintain daily attendance records that document the arrival and departure of all children;
 - Have an emergency preparedness plan in place for severe weather.
 - Comply with all applicable laws and regulations governing transportation of children, if relevant for your setting.
 - Comply with all safe sleep guidelines recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics, if relevant for your setting.

4. Set up plan to open the "Learning Pods."

- Assess the need for virtual learning in the congregation and community.
- Communicate the need with Church council and Healthy Church Team
- Design your program to meet the requirements of Technical Assistance Manual for

Local Churches, Virginia Annual Conference, and other guidelines and requirements

- [Learning Pod proposal with sample documents, questions, and answers](#)

5. Documentation Questions to Consider:

- Create Learning Pod registration and agreement document
- Create Code of Conduct for Learning Pod
- Modify Safe Sanctuary and Medical Waiver for Learning Pod
 - [Sample Learning Pod Registration and Agreement](#)
 - [Sample Learning Pod Code of Conduct](#)
- Plan to submit weekly reports of operations and learnings to your District Superintendent

6. Sanitation Questions to Consider:

- How will the areas used for learning pods be sanitized throughout the day?
- Is more or better equipment needed for sanitizing (e.g. electrostatic sanitizer)?
- What is the plan for sanitizing restrooms, desks, chairs, and other “high touch” areas?
- Will any computer equipment be shared by more than one student, and if so, how will this equipment be sanitized?
- Will a playground be used, and if so, how will it be sanitized?
- How will the learning space be sanitized before other church activities, including Sunday worship and small groups?
- Who will be the liaison between the Learning Pods ministry and the church cleaning staff?

7. Distancing Questions to Consider:

- How will six-foot distancing be maintained between adults and students?
- How will students be kept distanced from one another throughout the day?
- What is the plan for maintaining distancing during pick-up and drop off?
- How will you isolate a student or adult who develops symptoms during the day until they can have someone come and pick them up?

8. Face Coverings Questions to Consider:

- What is your plan for face covering enforcement throughout the day for students and teachers?
- How will you assure that any parents who arrive in the building to pick up a child are masked?
- What will be your plan for masks and distancing during any time when food is consumed?
- What will your plan for masks be during any outdoors time?
- How will you provide masks for those who may have forgotten to bring one?
- How will you handle situations where someone will not wear a mask or refuses to wear one properly?
- How will you communicate your mask policy to students and their parents/guardians?

9. Health Screenings Questions to Consider:

- What is your plan for taking temperatures at the beginning of the day?
- How will you ask health screening questions when children arrive?
- What will be your policy on keeping children out of the program who have been exposed to someone who tests positive for COVID?
- How will you communicate to parents/guardians that a child who has tested positive or been exposed to someone who has tested positive must stay home for fourteen days?
- How will you maintain records of the health screening data that you collect?
- How will you do required contact tracing if someone in your program tests positive?
- How will you do mandatory reporting to the Virginia Department of Health and District Office?
- How will you require your staff or volunteers to get tested if they are exposed to someone who tests positive for COVID?
- What will be your plan if someone in your program is exposed to someone who is COVID-positive or who develops COVID symptoms but refuses to get tested?

10. Ventilation Questions to Consider:

- How will you balance indoor and outdoor time during the day?
- What is the best ventilated area on the church premises to host your learning pod?
- How could you use open windows to improve airflow?
- Is it possible to consume all food outdoors, possibly using tents and heaters, if necessary?
- Considering that the learning pod remains inside the building for extended periods of time, how will you select a space for this ministry that is large enough to maintain adequate physical distancing (beyond 6 feet)?
- How can you ensure that your HVAC system is set in an optimal way in regard to the recirculation of air?¹

11. Staffing Questions to Consider:

- Are you going to hire staff? How will you utilize volunteers?
- What is your plan for training your volunteers and staff in our Safe Sanctuaries policies?
- How will you conduct the necessary background checks of staff and volunteers?
- Who will be responsible for recruiting and scheduling volunteers?

¹ <http://doc.vaumc.org/News2020/VentilationFacts.pdf>