



July 5, 2021

Dear Heartworks, STEAMworks and Loveworks Families,

As you are aware from our previous letter in June, we have been working on slowly returning to “normal” and changing some of our policies in recognition of the state reaching more than 80% of eligible individuals receiving at least one COVID-19 vaccination shot, as well as changes in policies with the state and childcare regulations. Below are some additional updates.

### **Masks:**

As mask mandates in the state have changed, we have altered our policies to the following:

#### **For Staff:**

- We highly recommend and encourage staff and educators to continue to wear masks when inside a program and unable to physically distance. Unvaccinated individuals will continue to wear masks while working with children, unless they are outside and able to physically distance themselves. Fully vaccinated staff (who have provided documentation of immunization to the Director) may, if they choose, remove their mask while in the program unless local guidance states otherwise based on community transmission rates.

#### **Children:**

- While inside the program, we continue to follow and encourage children to follow the state and CDC Childcare Regulations which includes:
  - Masks are recommended for children two and older while in childcare during indoor activities this summer.
  - Masks are developmentally appropriate when children can properly put on, take off, and not touch or suck on the covering.
  - Children do not need to wear masks or maintain distance when outdoors and should not wear masks while eating or sleeping.

#### **Visitors and Families:**

- All visitors entering the program, including family members, must wear a mask.
- Family members picking up or dropping off outside are encouraged to wear a mask.

### **Cleaning:**

We will continue to maintain our higher cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting standards based on COVID requirements. This is another best practice that will remain, as we have found it results in a decreased level of general communicable illness within our schools.

### **Increased Hours:**

As was written in the June update, starting this month all schools are now offering 9.50 hours of care and learning and will no longer have staggered hours. Beginning on Wednesday, August 25, all schools will offer 10 hours of care and learning from 7:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

While state licensing agencies have lifted the children and staff policies of not combining children and staff from different classrooms, it remains a best practice to keep consistency whenever possible. There are times, however, where groups of children in the same age range may combine. To extend hours of care available, groups will return to combining at the beginning and end of the day as a regular practice. Further, there are situations where staffing patterns necessitate the need to combine groups, such as when staff are absent due to vacation or illness while also maintaining the state’s required ratios by age groups.

### **Drop Off/ Pick Up:**

As was written in June, a consistent drop-off and pick-up timeframe has proven to be one of several positive best practices that have come out of the pandemic. This has allowed children and teachers to have more meaningful, consistent, and calmer starts to their daily routine. Therefore, as we extend hours, we highly recommend having a

consistent drop-off and pick-up time for the benefit of your child as well as to help us in preparing to have enough staff scheduled. Family members picking up or dropping off outside are encouraged to wear a mask.

For Loveworks, if your child will arrive substantially early or late based on your normal drop off time, please call the school to notify the Director; the same is true for at the end of the day.

For Heartworks, if you are not enrolled in the Early Care or Extended Care Programs and wish to be, please speak with the Director to learn if there is space available for either an occasional day or for a permanent change; the Director will also inform you of the additional tuition.

As was written in the June update, we plan to continue the current practice of dropping off outside at the school door or on the playground, school dependent, when arriving in the morning to maintain continuity for everyone and for calmness for the children. This policy will remain in place for at least the rest of the summer.

Each individual Director will communicate in the next week when families may begin to enter the building this month to pick up their child at the end of the day. Families will pick up from the hallway outside of their child's classroom. Families will be able to see into the classrooms and also have the ability to social distance a bit more in the hallways rather than congregating inside the classroom together when arriving; this will also help the children who are remaining with us to not worry where their parents are when seeing other parents enter the classroom. We will move towards the practice of welcoming families into the classroom starting on August 25, once the children are more accustomed to seeing more unfamiliar adults enter the building. All families and visitors who enter the building must either wash their hands upon arriving into the school or use our sanitizer that will be located near the entrance areas for those schools without a sink close by.

Please provide plenty of time to arrive at school at the end of the day in order to be out of the building with your child by the end of your scheduled time - 12:00 or 4:00 for some at Heartworks & STEAMworks and 5:00 for those enrolled in Extended Care at Heartworks & STEAMworks and also for all families at Loveworks. Our current late-fee policy remains in place (\$20 charge per day for pick-up that occurs 5 minutes past scheduled pick-up time, up to \$100 charged per week). As our closing routine still includes cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting, along with a need to release our teachers on time after their shift, it is imperative families arrive with plenty of time to receive your child and leave the building on time.

### **Tours:**

For the past year, we have provided tours to prospective families virtually. At the end of this month or the beginning of August, we will be returning to in-person tours during operating hours. All tour participants will be required to wear a mask. We will also be happy to tour families who are currently enrolled yet never had an in-person tour due to the restrictions and policies of the pandemic during the past year. If you are interested in an in-person tour, please speak with your Director who may be able to share a sense of when in-person tours will resume at your location.

As you are well aware, national, state, and local regulations continue to change as restrictions are lifted or may increase based on the pandemic; as such, I am anticipating sending out another update at the beginning of August. We appreciate your patience as we thoughtfully and intentionally unravel the many restrictions that have been in place over the past year.

Thank you once again for your continued partnership. We look forward to continuing to play, learn, and grow with your family.

Much appreciation,

*Lisa*

Lisa Zengilowski, President  
Heartworks, STEAMworks and Loveworks Schools