**Day Programs**

**Updates to our 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Policies and Procedures**

Dear Guardians, Friends and Families of The Price Center, on May 29, 2021, the Commonwealth lifted COVID-19 restrictions while maintaining necessary COVID-19 prevention and mitigation measures in certain settings, including day programs. This guidance replaces and supersedes all previously issued Day Program guidance issued by EOHHS. In adhering with local and state regulations I am happy to state that the following changes will now occur to our Covid-19 protocols, policies & procedures:

**Attestation Forms:**

Will no longer be required for vaccinated individuals effective 6/16/2021. Please continue to complete a daily attestation form for your individual if they **have not** been vaccinated.

**COVID-19 Public Health and Safety Standards**

Day program providers must continue to comply with federal and state COVID-19 guidance. This includes, but is not limited to, guidance on: [a) personal protective equipment (PPE](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/personal-protective-equipment-ppe-during-covid-19)), b) [considerations for health care personnel after vaccination](https://www.mass.gov/doc/considerations-for-health-care-personnel-after-covid-19-vaccination/download), and c) [return to work guidance for all workers](https://www.mass.gov/lists/covid-19-return-to-work-guidance), and d)  [safety standards for workplaces](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/reopening-mandatory-safety-standards-for-workplaces).

In addition to these requirements, we will continue to check the CDC website frequently to ensure we are implementing the most current CDC guidance and [Massachusetts guidance](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-public-health-guidance-and-directives). These standards are informed by public health data related to COVID-19, and may be amended in response to such data. We will also continue to adhere to program-specific guidance that may be issued by EOHHS agencies.

**Protective Measures / Mitigating the Risk of Spreading COVID-19**

*Masks*

* Staff are required to continue to wear masks while in the site, consistent with the [Commonwealth’s mask order](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-mask-requirements?n#mask-requirements-in-certain-locations-).
* Staff who are fully vaccinated may remove their masks when eating, drinking or congregating in break rooms or other non-clinical space.
  + If unvaccinated staff are present, everyone should wear masks and unvaccinated staff should socially distance from others.
* Individuals and Staff who are vaccinated may remove their masks when participating in outdoor activities.
* Regardless of vaccination status, staff may remove masks if they are alone in enclosed non-clinical space, or if they are outdoors and able to socially distance.
* Vaccinated participants and/or masked individuals are allowed to participate without needing to socially distance.
* Vaccinated participants are allowed to participate in group activities without masks.
* Unvaccinated participants should continue to wear masks during such activities.

*Congregate Activities*

* Individuals, **regardless of vaccination status**, may participate in congregate activities in the setting so long as they are not currently isolated or quarantining due to infection, or exposure, or new admission status.
* Fully vaccinated Individuals do not need to wear masks when dining or participating in congregate activities with other participants who are fully vaccinated.

*Screening entrants*

* We will continue to minimize points of entry, when possible, and will maintain our daily screening process to ensure that everyone arriving at program is assessed for symptoms of COVID-19, and exposure to others with suspected or confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection.
  + Symptom checks will be done upon arrival to program
* Any individuals with [symptoms](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html) of COVID-19 infection, will not be permitted to enter.
  + Any unvaccinated individuals who have had close contact with someone with COVID-19 infection in the prior 14 days will not be permitted to enter.
  + Vaccinated individuals will be able to attend program post exposure, but should notify Program Director so that additional symptom checks can be performed throughout the 14 day “post-exposure” period.

*Staff protocols*

* If staff experience signs or [symptoms](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html) of COVID-19 infection while they are working, they should notify the program supervisor, and follow all established exit procedures.

*Additional Considerations*

* We will continue to encourage social distancing through administrative and environmental controls. Participants who are fully vaccinated or wear masks will not be required to social distance.
* We will continue to adhere to [relevant guidelines from DPH and CDC](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-prevention-and-treatment) regarding infection control and prevention to maintain a safe environment for participants and staff.
* If signs or [symptoms](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html) of COVID-19 infection develop while a participant is on-site, the individual should put on a mask, if they are not wearing one already and move to an isolated area of the program. Notify the program director immediately.

**Precautionary Steps to Keep Participants and Staff Healthy**

*Reminders for Participants, Residential Programs, Guardians, Families & Staff*

* Use alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol often. If alcohol-based hand rub is not available, then wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Wash hands before eating, after going to the bathroom (or changing diapers), coughing, or sneezing.
* Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth.
* Cover coughs or sneezes using a tissue or the inside of your elbow (not your hands). Immediately throw the tissue in the trash.
* Stay away from people who are sick and stay home when you feel sick.

*Facility* *Protective Measures*

* Masks, such as surgical masks, is provided and will continue to be worn by all staff. Further information on PPE is included [here.](#PPE)
* Decisions about when to scale back or cancel activities will be made in consultation with our local board of health, or the DPH Epidemiology Line at 617-983-6800, if needed, and informed by a review of the COVID-19 situation in our community.
* We continue to adhere to reporting protocols to public health authorities, including reporting any cases among program staff or participants to the applicable local board of health and will continue to take containment measures, such as limiting group activities for 14 days, recommended by the board of health, or, if also needed, DPH Epidemiology Line at 617-983-6800.
* We will continue to train and educate program personnel about preventing the transmission of respiratory pathogens such as COVID-19.

*Confirmed Cases of COVID-19*

Any Price Center program serving a participant with a confirmed case of COVID-19 should immediately contact:

* The Director of Nursing & Health Services
* The individual’s guardian, as applicable
* The local board of health or the DPH Epidemiology Line at 617-983-6800 to review the risk assessment and discuss laboratory testing and control measures.

*Close Contact with a Confirmed Case of COVID-19*

* Fully vaccinated staff members or participants are not required to self-[quarantine](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-isolation-and-quarantine-information) following close contact.
* The facility does not need to be closed.
* The facility does not need to be cleaned at this time.
* If the exposed staff member or participant subsequently develops symptoms and tests positive for COVID-19, follow the guidelines under [confirmed cases.](#ConfirmedCases)

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

We [will continue to follow the most recent guidelines issued by DPH](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/personal-protective-equipment-ppe-during-covid-19) that align with the CDC as it relates to PPE usage, including any updated guidelines.

**Cleaning**

We will continue to follow our established plan for thorough cleaning and disinfection of all areas as consistent with [CDC guidance.](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html)

A cleaning and disinfection of a program may be required if a staff member or participant is confirmed to have COVID-19 and was present in the facility while they were symptomatic.

*Please note, our policies & procedures as they relate to Covid-19 may be subject to change as required by our Governing Agencies, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health or local boards of health.*

We continue to very much appreciate your support and assistance. As always we continue to closely monitor the rate of illness across the Commonwealth and are hopeful that the darkest times are now behind us. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding these updates please contact the nursing department at 617-244-0065 X5004.

Kind Regards,

Renata Ivnitskaya BSN, RN

Director of Nursing & Healthcare Services