



Escuelita del Alma

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*El encuentro del aprendizaje con la cultura. * Where learning meets culture.*

March 12, 2020:

Dear Escuelita Families:

I write to update you and answer questions we have been receiving regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Please know that we are daily monitoring the developments that the different agencies like the CDC and the TX Dept. of Family Protective Services is issuing.

These are some things that Escuelita has already been implementing:

- Re-training all students and staff on proper and thorough disinfection of hands with lathering for 20 seconds before rinsing. We prefer washing with soap and water because of the shortage of hand sanitizer that everyone is experiencing, including Escuelita.
- Re-training students and staff on ways to prevent one's sneeze and cough particles from becoming airborne by covering our mouth and nose with the collar of our clothing or coughing or sneezing into our elbow. We prefer this method rather than instructing children to cover their mouths and noses with their hands because that, for sure, will mean that they, then, will need to hand wash, which is not always available or possible.
- Daily and constant disinfecting of all contact surfaces like tables and chairs and toys; with emphasis given to door handles (interior and exterior) and knobs, door panic bars, sink faucets, toilet bowl flushing handles, etc. We ask for your assistance with pulling on door handles when entering and exiting the buildings by using your clothing or a napkin or tissue to hold the handle, rather than with your bare hand. This will keep the handles cleaner for longer periods of time. When exiting through a door that has a panic bar, we push with our hip, back or forearm, instead of with our hand.
- When ringing our doorbells, please try to use a knuckle at your fist for it will be less likely that it has been in contact with an infected surface, as compared to your finger.
- Monitoring students' and teachers' health on-a-daily basis.

The main question that parents have asked is:

If schools close for classes due to the pandemic, will Escuelita also close?

Answer: Child care centers are monitored and licensed by the TX Dept. of Family Protective Services, not by the TX Education Agency (TEA), which monitors elementary, middle and high schools. This means that if our licensing agency is mandated by the TX Health Dept. or the City of Austin government to close centers to minimize the spread of the virus through person-to-person contact, then Escuelita will be forced to close. In other words, child care centers cannot close for classes at whim and just because the director decides to. We are obligated to follow the mandates of our licensing agency.

To our knowledge, Escuelita has not had any staff or students who have been ill with flu symptoms for approximately 3 weeks. We are doing everything possible to ensure that it remains like this. We also ask for your assistance with this. I will continue to communicate with you via email about any additional developments that pertain to Escuelita and COVID-19.

Sincerely,

Dina Flores, Director