



Old Dominion Association of Church Schools

IMPORTANT UPDATE – UPDATED VDSS CHILDCARE GUIDANCE FOR COVID-19 REOPENING, PHASE I

May 14, 2020

Dear ODACS Friends,

On Friday, May 8, 2020, Governor Northam issued Executive Order 61, which announces a transition into Phase I for reopening Virginia for business during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, beginning on May 15. Executive Order 61 included two brief statements that directly affect our Christian schools. The first was a reaffirmation of the closure of all K-12 schools for the remainder of the school year. The second was a reaffirmation that childcare centers may remain open.

Since the governor’s announcement, we have been waiting for updated Phase I childcare guidance from VDSS. That guidance was sent to childcare centers yesterday. You can find the entire VDSS document online by following this link.

<http://vaodacs.com/assets/Uploads/PDF-Files/Childcare/5.13.20-Child-Care-Letter-Phase-One-VDSS-Guidelines.pdf>

ODACS has read the guidance carefully and encourages its ministries to take note of the following highlights.

1. **While more adults will return to work in Phase I, thus creating an increased need for childcare, VDSS childcare guidance remains largely unchanged.** Perhaps the most significant implication of this fact regards staff-child ratios; childcare centers will need to continue to follow the COVID-19 staff-child ratios during Phase I, even if enrollment increases. By way of reminder, the following chart shows the ratios that will continue to be in effect.

REDCD Staff-Child Ratios		
Age Group	Current Ratio/Room Limit	COVID-19 Ratio/Room Limit
Ages 0-16 months	1:4, room limit based on square footage	1:4, no more than 10 individuals per room
Ages 16-24 months	1:5, room limit based on square footage	1:5, no more than 10 individuals per room
Ages 24-36 months	1:8, room limit based on square footage	1:8, no more than 10 individuals per room
Ages 36 months to 5 years	1:10, room limit based on square footage	1:9, no more than 10 individuals per room
Ages 5-9 years	1:20, room limit based on square footage	1:9, no more than 10 individuals per room
Ages 9-12 years	1:25, room limit based on square footage	1:9, no more than 10 individuals per room

2. **The VDSS reopening guidelines include other important information regarding summer programs, infection control, sanitation, personal protective equipment, social distancing, COVID-19 testing, and symptomatic individuals.** Ministries that provide childcare services during Phase I should be prepared to implement these guidelines.
3. **The VDSS reopening guidelines instruct childcare centers to follow the CDC's Guidance for Schools and Child Care Programs.** You can find the CDC guidance by following this link.

<http://vaodacs.com/assets/Uploads/PDF-Files/Childcare/CDC-Guidance-for-Child-Care-Programs-that-Remain-Open-During-COVID-19-Pandemic.pdf>

4. **To the best of our knowledge, other temporary VDSS procedures for COVID-19 childcare remain in effect.** These would include informing Child Care Aware of your intent to reopen, following temporary procedures for licensing inspections, and obtaining fingerprint background checks. More information is available on the Child Care Issues page of the ODACS web site. <http://vaodacs.com/child-care-issues/>
Important Note – The Child Care Aware online survey that was published earlier during the pandemic is no longer active. Childcare providers can update their program status by visiting this web site. <https://vachildcare.com>
5. **ODACS childcare centers are encouraged to continue to communicate with their local VDSS licensing office and with their local health department regarding any childcare questions that may arise during Phase I.** Proactive communication with government officials during the pandemic will continue to be an important way to maintain a good relationship with and a good testimony before those officials.

I hope that this information will prove helpful to you, and I am praying for all of our churches and schools during this challenging time. God bless you as you continue to minister to students and parents during the COVID-19 pandemic!

Sincerely,

Dan Zacharias
Executive Director