

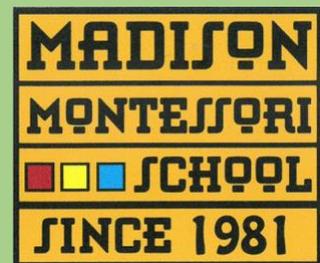
2021-2022

MMS Operating Plan for COVID-19



“There is a great sense of community within the Montessori classroom, where children of differing ages work together in an atmosphere of cooperation rather than competitiveness. There is respect for the environment and for the individuals within it, which comes through experience of freedom within the community.”

Dr Maria Montessori (as cited in Elizabeth Hainstock, 1986, p. 81 – The Essential Montessori)



Dear MMS Families,

As we get ready for the 2021-2022 school year, we know you may have many questions about how our school will operate as we continue to take measures for mitigating COVID-19. We hope that this document will add some clarity about our plans for the fall and answer some of your questions. It is challenging to be mindful of the possible scenarios that could be part of the year ahead. As new guidelines and standards from the different government agencies present themselves, please be aware our plans may have to be revised.

Our decisions and actions are guided by the following core principles:

- We will proactively guard the health, well-being, and safety of the children and adults in our community.
- We will remain true to our mission and our Montessori values.
- We will continue to cultivate a culture of belonging, with a deep commitment to each community member feeling embraced, valued, and respected.

Madison Montessori School has been using guidance available from several sources. Chief among them is the guidance from the Madison Health Department and NJ Department of Children and Families. For MMS to provide in person learning, we will adhere to the guidelines from these organizations.

The following information explains the policies and procedures we are employing to mitigate COVID-19 related risks at school. These procedures include expecting children, staff, and all present at school to wear masks and to observe the social distancing expectations. The staff will help guide the children through the usage of masks, and all will be provided spaces and times when the masks will not be used during the day, including when outdoors, or when 6-foot distancing is possible.

We hope the information outlined in this document will provide clarity around the practices and procedures MMS has established to minimize exposure to our community but in no way warrants that COVID-19 or other communicable disease infection will not occur through participation in our programs. Our goal is to remain open while protecting the health and safety of students, parents and staff.

This plan is the result of collective input from faculty, staff and parents. We appreciate the input and feedback that many of you have offered through emails, phone calls, conversations, etc. Your continued involvement and working together in partnership with MMS in following these procedures will be essential to making the school year a healthy and supportive environment for our children and community as a whole.

In the event the State of NJ asks us to quarantine again, a Remote Learning plan will soon follow with details.

COVID Vaccination

We will continue to monitor guidance from the Madison Department of Health and The Department of Children and Families regarding vaccination.

All MMS faculty and staff members have been fully vaccinated.

Grouping of Children

We will continue to use two separate cohorts for the 3-6 AM program. This practice proved to be effective in the past as we were able to operate even when COVID-19 cases were present at school. There will be no comingling between cohorts.

Screening & Arrival

Screening continues to be effective in conjunction with other mitigation strategies such as promoting healthy behaviors like wearing masks, frequent handwashing, maintaining social distance, and cleaning and disinfecting. These measures are needed to help protect students, parents, teachers, and staff from COVID-19.

Symptom screenings will identify only that a person may have an illness, not that the illness is COVID-19. Many of the symptoms of COVID-19 are also common in other childhood illnesses like the common cold, the flu, or seasonal allergies. The purpose of symptom screening is to identify individuals who may have COVID-19 and exclude those individuals from a setting to reduce the risk of transmission to others.

Procedure:

- Staff will monitor their health and fill out an online screening form before arriving at school.
- Families will be asked to monitor the health of their child and will have to complete an online screening form before arriving at school.
- **Any child with a fever greater than or equal to 100.4 will not be admitted to school.**
- **Children will arrive with face masks on.**
- Arrival times will begin at
 - **8:00 am for 3-6 AM Class 1 (Playground)**
 - **8:15 am for 3-6 AM Class 2 (Classroom)**
 - **8:30 am for Pre 3/2.5 year Classroom students (2 Day and 3 Day) (Classroom)**
 - **10:00 am for 10 AM Kindergarten (K Classroom)**
 - **1:00 pm for 3-6 PM Class (Playground)**
- Parking will be available along the sidewalk in spaces beginning with space # 59.
- For students starting on the playground, Parents/Caregivers may park by the playground and escort their child to the playground. Parents/Caregivers must wear a mask on school property (outside and in the car).

Late Arrival

- Parents may come into school to drop off their child. Please be sure to wear your mask on school premises.

Dismissal

Dismissal times will be as follows:

- 11:15 am for 3-6 AM Class 1 (Classroom)
 - 11:30 am for 3-6 AM Class 2 (Playground)
 - 11:45 am for Pre 3/2.5 year Classroom students (2 Day and 3 Day) (Classroom)
 - 2:30 pm for 8 AM Kindergarten (K Classroom)
 - 2:30 or 3:30 for Enrichment Program (Playground/Outside)
 - 4:00 pm for 10 AM Kindergarten (Playground)
 - 4:00 pm for 3-6 PM Class (Playground)
- Parents/Caregivers will be allowed to enter the school to pick up their child from the classroom or playground. All adults must wear a face mask while at school (even in your car).

Staying Home

Parents are encouraged to be on the alert for signs of illness in their children and to keep them home when they are sick. MMS asks our community to be extra cautious during this time. We are committed to keeping our children, staff, and families healthy and rely on one another to do their part in making this possible.

It is *essential* for children, parents, caregivers, and staff to understand the importance of staying home when sick. This includes not returning to school until at a minimum of 24 hours after they no longer have a fever (temperature of 100.4 or higher) without the use of fever-reducing medicine, AND/OR signs of a fever (chills, feeling very warm, flushed appearance, or sweating) . Everyone's cooperation will help keep our school open.

As before, students who are sick with contagious illnesses should not attend school. Most illnesses do not require the same level or length of isolation that COVID-19 does.

Symptoms

If your child has any of the following symptoms that indicates a possible illness that may decrease the student's ability to learn and put them at risk for spreading illness to others, they

should stay home. The following is a tool from the CDC that can help families with their daily screening decisions.

Please check your child for these symptoms / evaluate these situations:

- **Section 1**
 - Temperature 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher.
 - Sore throat.
 - New uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (for students with chronic allergic/asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline).
 - New loss of taste and/or smell.
 - Diarrhea, vomiting, or abdominal pain.
 - New onset of severe headache, especially with a fever.

- **Section 2**
 - Had close contact (within 6 feet of an infected person for 10 minutes or more) with a person with confirmed COVID-19.

- **Travel**
 - **Domestic Travel**
 - According to the CDC, unvaccinated individuals who do travel should get tested 1-3 days before their trip, 3-5 days after travel, and stay home and self-quarantine for 7 days after domestic travel.
 - For those traveling to New Jersey, domestic travel is defined as lasting 24 hours or longer to states or US territories other than those connected to New Jersey, such as Pennsylvania, New York, and Delaware.
 - For more information, refer to the [CDC's guidance for domestic travel](#).
 - **International Travel**
 - The CDC requires all air passengers arriving in the United States from a foreign country to get tested for COVID-19 no more than 3 days before their flight departs and to present the negative result or documentation of having recovered from COVID-19 to the airline before boarding the flight.
 - For more information, visit the [CDC website](#).

Students who have received a negative test result will be allowed to return to school once their symptoms have otherwise improved in accordance with existing school illness policy in the Parent Handbook.

Students, parents or staff diagnosed with COVID-19 or who answer YES to any question in Section 1 and YES to any question in Section 2 without negative test results should stay home, isolate themselves from others, monitor their health, and follow directions from their State or local health department.

Families, be advised that the local health department may contact the family for contact tracing. If contacted, families should notify the contact tracer that the student attended school.

If Symptoms Develop While at School

Some students or staff may develop symptoms of infectious illness while at school. Students will be isolated from other students and staff.

- Parents of students with any of the symptoms in Section 1 should follow the school's current illness policy to minimize transmission to others, to optimize learning opportunities, and to allow for these symptoms to resolve (at least 24 hours without fever reducing medications or in accordance with existing school illness policy).
- Students who develop any of the symptoms in Section 1 while at school will be placed in a designated isolation area with a staff member.
 - Parents will be asked to promptly pick up their child.

Face Covering

- Staff are required to wear masks indoors and outdoors.
- Students are required to wear masks indoors, unless doing so would inhibit the student's health. **
- When the outdoor temperature exceeds 80 degrees Fahrenheit, staff and children will be permitted to remove masks while outdoors, provided that social distancing of at least 6 ft between groups is maintained.

**It is necessary to acknowledge that enforcing the use of face coverings may be difficult for young children. Younger children, preschool or early elementary aged, may be unable to wear a mask properly, particularly for an extended period of time. Wearing of masks may be prioritized at times when it is difficult to maintain a distance of 6 feet from others. Ensuring proper mask size and fit and providing children with frequent reminders and education on the importance and proper wear of masks may help address these issues. *We ask you to please spend time helping your child get used to wearing a mask for extended periods. This will facilitate an easier transition into the school year ahead.*

Handwashing

Washing hands can keep us healthy and prevent the spread of infections from one person to the next. We will ask the children to wash their hands frequently throughout the day. Hand washing will be done with soap and water for the time it takes to sing the "ABC" song.

Key Times for Washing Hands at School:

- As soon as we enter the classroom or the playground.

- Before and after eating snack – Students will bring their own snack.
- After outside play.
- After using the bathroom.
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Before and after touching eyes, nose, or mouth.
- After touching materials and surfaces that are frequently touched.
- Prior to leaving for home.

Teachers will ensure children are doing it effectively and frequently. If soap and water are not readily available, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol may be used.

Cleaning and Disinfection

MMS follows recommendations by the CDC for cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting. We will continue to have the school cleaned every evening and will follow these steps during the day:

- Staff will routinely clean, sanitize, and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched.
- All bathrooms will be cleaned and disinfected regularly and as needed throughout the day.
- Air purifiers are in every classroom and windows will be kept ajar for circulation weather permitting.
- Materials will be cleaned and sanitized regularly throughout the day using EPA approved cleaning supplies.
- Materials that cannot be cleaned and sanitized will not be used.
- Materials that children have placed in their mouths or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretions or excretions will be set aside until they are cleaned.
- If a child becomes ill while at school, materials that he or she has been working with will be set aside until they are cleaned.
- Rugs, table mats, art supplies and certain learning materials will be assigned to each child for their individual use.
- Mats for resting are labeled for each child and are disinfected daily.

Food and Drinks

Snack

All MMS students will bring their own nut-free snacks and water bottles. All community shared snacks will be postponed until further notice.

Lunch

MMS Students will enjoy their lunches in their classroom environment with these added safety measures:

- Each child should bring their own lunch box, utensils, and 2 napkins. One napkin will be used as a placemat.
- To keep promoting social relationships among the children, additional safety measures will be implemented by the classroom staff as needed, such as meals outside, fewer children per table.

Water

All students must bring a full thermos or water bottle every day labeled with their names.

MMS will provide ways to refill these containers as needed.

Food Preparation/Cooking

Food preparation in Practical Life in the classroom is suspended until further notice, due to Covid safety concerns.

Cooking in the kindergarten classroom will be limited and adjusted to follow health and safety measures.

Kindergarten Field Trips

Kindergarten field trips off site will resume in the fall!

Parent Contact/Communication

We are excited to resume limited daily connection with our parent community. To that end, we welcome parents to pick up their children from the classroom/playground at the end of the school day. **Parents/Caregivers must wear masks on all school property.**

Additional methods of communication will continue to be messaging, telephone conversations, in-person and virtual meetings.

Each teacher can be communicated with through their email addresses. Teachers will respond to messages within 24 hours during the work week. Time-sensitive contact with teachers can be facilitated by calling the main office and/or sending a Remind message to the Administration Team.

Fall conferences will be held via zoom or in person depending on health and safety guidelines. Spring conferences will be held via zoom or in-person with more details to follow.

Observations can be scheduled with the office and your teacher and can be held via zoom or in-person. In-person observations can be no longer than 30 minutes. All adults must wear a face mask while at school.

Parent meetings will occur via Zoom and will be communicated to families at least 1 week in advance.