

Introduction

At MMS, our primary commitment is to the students and families we serve. Our priority is providing an authentic Montessori education while keeping students, staff, and families safe and healthy. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention has been emphatic in stating that children should return to full-time in-person learning. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), returning to full-time in-person learning is a priority for all schools this year. We are so blessed we were able to provide in-person education all year last year and keep our student's Safe in their classroom pods.

Our Back to School 21-22 plan this year, will define clear guidance for the operation of our two schools.

As suggested by the CDC, we will monitor community transmission and occurrence of outbreaks to guide our decisions on the level of layered prevention and strategies. But please stay assured our plan retains a focus on the social-emotional needs of our students,

Please be advised, parents entry into the the school will continue to be limited and masks must be worn by visitors at all time regardless of vaccination status.

Health and Safety

- ★ Mask Use
- ★ Improving Ventilation
- ★ Encouraging Hand Washing and Respiratory Etiquette
- ★ Reminding students and staff to stay home when sick and to get tested.
- ★ Continuation of Quarantine when Necessary
- ★ Continuation of High Standards of Cleaning and Disinfection

Mask Use

- All staff are required to wear masks regardless of their vaccination status.
- All students are to wear masks indoors.
- All outside visitors regardless of their vaccination status, are required to wear a mask upon entering the school buildings.
- Masks do not need to be worn outdoors.
- Each classroom and the main office will have a supply of masks as needed.
- Toddler students under age of 2 are not required to wear a mask inside as they remain in their own pod throughout the day.
- NYS OCFH and DOH agencies understand how difficult it is to require the youngest children to wear masks, and have jointly agreed to revise guidance allowing child care providers to continue the practices and protocols that have been in place since the start of the pandemic by encouraging, not requiring, children aged 2-5 to wear masks.

Ventilation

- Inside doors and windows will continue to be kept open as much as possible.
- Air Filters will continue to be used at our school.

Hand Washing/Sanitizing

- All entrance areas will have hand sanitizer available to accommodate any staff, visitors, and/ or students as they enter the buildings.
- Students will be given time to use the bathroom and hand wash/hand sanitize throughout the day, in particular when coming to school, before lunch, after lunch, and at the end of day at a minimum.
- All teachers and staff are recommended to use hand washing or use hand sanitizer throughout the day
- Hand washing with soap and water is still the gold standard for prevention of disease. Hand washing should be done with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. MMS/CHM will do the following:

★ Hand hygiene includes:

- Signage encouraging hand washing and correct techniques; Traditional hand washing (with soap and warm water, lathering for a minimum of 20 seconds), which is the preferred method. This can be accomplished by singing or humming the happy birthday song twice;
- Adequate facilities and supplies for hand washing including soap and water;
- Use of paper towels or touch-free paper towel dispensers where feasible (hand dryers are not recommended as they can aerosolize germs);
- Use of no-touch trash can where feasible;

○ Extra time in the schedule to encourage frequent hand washing/sanitizing

★ Students and staff should wash/sanitize hands as follows:

- Upon entering the building and classrooms;
- After sharing objects or surfaces;
- Before and after snacks and lunch;
- After using the bathroom;
- After helping a student with toileting;
- After sneezing, wiping, or blowing nose or coughing into hands;
- Anytime hands are visibly soiled;
- When hand-washing is not available use a hand sanitizer

★ Hand Sanitizer

At times when hand washing is not available (for example at a field trip or at our farm), students and staff may use a hand sanitizer containing a minimum of 60% alcohol. It should be noted the students will be monitored and supervised when using these. Using hand sanitizers will include:

- Placement of sanitizer dispensers located near entrances and throughout common areas.

Stay at Home When Sick

- Parents will be told to keep ill students home.
- Any student with a temperature of 100 or above will be told to stay home.
- Students with a fever will be told to stay home for at least 48 hours after the fever is gone without the use of fever-reducing medicines, such as acetaminophen.

Quarantine and Testing

- The Orange County Health Department will provide guidance on who is to quarantine or isolate.
- QUARANTINE keeps an individual who was in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 away from others. If you had close contact with a person who has COVID-19:
 - Stay home until 10 days after your last contact.
 - Check your temperature twice a day and watch for symptoms of COVID-19.
 - If possible, stay away from people who are at higher-risk for getting very sick from COVID-19 and who are unvaccinated.
- ISOLATION keeps someone who is sick or tested positive for COVID-19 without symptoms away from others, even in their own home.
- Our office will continue to communicate with the Orange County Department of Health on positive cases of COVID-19.
- Fully vaccinated people who have a known exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 do not need to be tested or be quarantined, as long as they are not exhibiting symptoms.

High Standard Cleaning/Disinfecting

- All school areas will be cleaned and disinfected regularly with attention to the high traffic areas, including doorknobs and handles, by the cleaning service.
- All classrooms and buildings at large will be cleaned in accordance with NYS Guidelines.
- All high traffic areas will be cleaned and disinfected regularly.

Other COVID-19 Health Protocol

Glove Use

- Gloves will be used by staff for all treatments, injuries and procedures. Hands will be washed and gloves changed between students and staff.
- Glove usage is only necessary for staff.
- For routine daily work, gloves are not recommended for use.
- Hand washing is the best defense against exposure, and the use of gloves requires hand washing before and after the use of gloves.

Caring for non-sick students or non-COVID-19 suspected illnesses

- Staff will be trained on signs and symptoms of illness and send any students with signs of illness or complaints of illness to the school office. Symptoms to be observed, per guidance from the CDC and NYSED, are flushed cheeks, rapid or difficulty breathing without recent physical activity, fatigue and/ or irritability, and frequent use of the bathroom.
- Students that require treatment for injury or chronic conditions will be assessed and treated in a separate location from sick students.
- Students that have non-COVID-19 symptoms of illness may be treated in the same area as students receiving treatment or care.
- Diagnostic equipment will be cleansed between students and if available, disposable equipment will be used.
- Areas will be disinfected after each student and staff by staff.
- Confidentiality will always be maintained.

Caring for students / staff with symptoms of COVID-19

- Students or staff exhibiting signs of illness or signs of COVID-19 will immediately notify the office to be assessed.
- Signs and symptoms of COVID-19, as per the CDC, will be shared with all staff and updated if needed.
- If staff or students show signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and there is no other explanation for their illness, they will be isolated in a supervised separate area and sent home.
- Staff supervising the isolation room will have appropriate safety equipment as per CDC, NYSDOH, and NYSED.
- The parent/ guardian will be called to pick up the student with suspected symptoms of COVID-19. When they arrive at the school, they will need to call the office and the ill student will be brought outside to the parent/ guardian.
- The parent/ guardian will be instructed to call their health care provider.

Returning to school after illness

- CDC guidance will be followed for allowing a student or staff member to return to school after exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19.
- If a person is not diagnosed by a healthcare provider (physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant) with COVID-19 they can return to school:
 - Once there is no fever, without the use of fever reducing medicines, and they have felt well for 48 hours;
 - If they have been diagnosed with another condition or have a healthcare provider written note stating they are clear to return to school.
- If a person is diagnosed with COVID-19 by a healthcare provider based on a test, or their symptoms, or does not get a COVID-19 test but has had symptoms, they should not be at school and should stay at home until:

- It has been at least ten days since the individual first had symptoms;
- It has been at least three days since the individual has had a fever (without using fever reducing medicine); and
- It has been at least three days since the individual's symptoms improved, including cough and shortness of breath.
- An at home PCR test kit is acceptable.
- An individual who tested positive must obtain written clearance from their primary care provider (PCP), that complies with CDC guidance for the return to school of students, faculty, and staff following illness or diagnosis of a confirmed case of COVID-19 clearance criteria include but may not be limited to the following CDC guidelines: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-in-home-patients.html>.

Visitors and Building Entry

To ensure all staff, and students comply with building entry and exit procedures, MMS/CHM will do the following:

- Limit nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations during the school day.
- All visitors regardless of their vaccinated status, must be wearing proper face covering prior to entering any building and it must be worn at all times. Visitors will have restricted access to the building.
- Proper face covering includes, but is not limited to, a surgical mask, cloth mask, balaclava or bandana and must completely cover the individual's mouth and nose.

Daily Health Screening

Parents, caregivers, or guardians will be strongly encouraged to monitor their children for signs and symptoms of infectious illness every day through home-based symptom screening. Students who are sick or exhibit symptoms of any illness should not attend school in-person and their health care provider should be contacted.

Parents are encouraged to take their children's temperature and monitor themselves for any signs and symptoms of illness daily. Any student, staff or parent who has any signs of illness will need to stay home.

Signs and symptoms of COVID-19 may include but are not limited to

- Fever or chills (100.0 or above)
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea