



New School Montessori Center

COVID-19 Protocols

Revised and Adopted: August 10, 2021



GENERAL

The New School's top priority is the health and safety of our students, families, and our local community. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the emergence of the more highly contagious Delta variant, the school will be implementing various protocols to address safety concerns.

Please note, the school falls under the jurisdictional supervision of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE). Whereas we also monitor recommendations and mandates from federal agencies and health organizations, it is important to note that the DHHS and DCDEE have the authority to enforce stricter or additional requirements above and beyond federal agencies. Consequently, our protocols may be different or more restrictive than current CDC or other federal agency regulations. Also, **please note** our policies and procedures are subject to change at any time.



PREVENTION

Hygiene Measures

- Teachers, staff, and children will frequently wash their hands with soap and water throughout the day. In particular, everyone must wash their hands upon arrival to school and every time they exit or enter the classroom or restroom. Additionally, hands must be washed before and after eating snack or lunch.
- Teachers will model and monitor appropriate handwashing techniques for young children. Teachers will also reinforce the messaging to avoid contact with one's eyes, nose, and mouth, and to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues.
- Teachers will also have hand sanitizer available as an extra precaution to help ensure students' hands are clean (will be applied to younger children by an adult).

Face Coverings

School Employees

- All school employees (regardless of vaccination status) must appropriately wear an approved face covering at all times when indoors, except while eating, drinking, or in an unpopulated area.

- Face coverings may be removed outside.
- Face shields are not recommended as a replacement for face coverings but may be worn at certain times for teaching purposes provided appropriate social distancing standards are followed.

Parents and Guardians

All parents and guardians are required to appropriately wear a face covering during the following times:

- When approaching a classroom or the office door
- At all times if within the school building
- If outdoors and **within 6 feet of a staff member or a child other than their own**

Students

- All children ages three and older **must** wear a face covering when in the building unless a valid exception has been granted by administration.
- Valid exceptions to wearing face coverings include:
 - Medical or behavioral conditions or disabilities
 - Seeking to communicate with someone who is hearing-impaired
 - Anyone who is unable to remove the face coverings without assistance
- Other exceptions to wearing face coverings include:
 - Child is under two years of age
 - Child is eating, drinking, napping, or engaged in a physical activity
 - Anyone who is unconscious or incapacitated
 - Children who are outdoors
- Each classroom has a secure and well-defined outdoor space available for children to work. Masks may be removed within these spaces.

Standards for Face Coverings

- Acceptable face coverings include cloth or disposable masks that fully cover the nose and mouth. Face shields are no longer permitted unless being used by a teacher or visiting specialist for instructional or therapeutic purposes.
- If you notice a child indoors not wearing a mask, please note that **we cannot discuss exemptions** with anyone other than the child's parent or guardian due to privacy restrictions.

Other Measures

The school will actively implement a variety of preventative strategies in accordance with safety measures recommended by governmental agencies and health officials.

Classroom Supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimize sharing of supplies and equipment among staff and students whenever possible.• Students will be provided with certain supplies for dedicated use.
Personal Supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To reduce cross-contamination, families are expected to limit what their children bring to and from school: in particular, soft materials or non-essential items that are difficult to clean or disinfect.• For young children who wish to have “small comfort items” for napping, please have one that is dedicated for school to minimize potential cross-contamination issues.• Bedding for younger children will be sent home on Fridays to be washed.
Ventilation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Each classroom will take advantage of the dedicated outdoor spaces accessible by each exterior door. Shaded workspaces will be arranged to allow for students to work both indoors and outdoors whenever possible.• The school has an installed iWave filtration unit in our HVAC systems that run throughout the building.
Separate Cohorts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To minimize cross contamination, each classroom or pre-designated classroom group will be considered as a separate cohort, and movement of teachers and students between these rooms will be restricted as much as possible.
Social-Emotional Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The teachers and administration will take measures to ensure children are physically, socially, and emotionally secure. We understand the potential for stress in our students during this challenging time and will adopt a variety of strategies to monitor, accommodate, and provide additional support whenever needed.

Cleaning, Maintenance, and Food Preparation

The school's enhanced cleaning and disinfecting products and protocols will adhere to state and local guidelines.

- Designated staff will be responsible for cleaning common contact surfaces such as desks, tables, counters, door handles, and light switches in each classroom, along with key spaces in other areas of the school, at regular intervals throughout the day.
- The after-school staff and commercial janitorial service will perform additional school-wide sanitizing and cleaning each evening.
- Weather permitting, each class will maximize circulation of outdoor air by opening windows and doors, unless doing so would pose a health or safety risk. Additionally, each class will utilize a prepared and dedicated outdoor learning environment throughout the day to the extent feasible.
- The school has installed a commercial air filtration and purification system (called iWave) into the existing units throughout the school building. This technology breaks down pollutants in the air into harmless compounds.
- To avoid cross-contamination and general health concerns, the school will not be providing classroom snacks. Each family must provide a morning and afternoon (for full day children) snack in the child's lunch box.
- Students will have access to either plastic utensils or classroom silverware for snack and lunch. Any non-disposable silverware or serving plates will be sterilized in our commercial sanitizer after each use.
- Children's lunch boxes or snack containers will not be placed together in our refrigerators. Lunches and snacks will be stored in each child's cubby or locker. In order to keep food fresh, parents should place an ice pack in the lunch box.
- To further minimize the risk associated with food preparation, parents are asked to bring food and containers that are easy for children to independently access and prepare. If at all possible, please reduce the number of meals that need to be heated.
- Individuals handling or serving food must use gloves. Gloves shall be used by employees who are screening others for symptoms or handling commonly touched items.



HEALTH SCREENING, ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES

Arrival and Health Screening

All staff, parents, and guardians are asked to minimize close contact with others at arrival and departure.

General Guidelines

- Parents are required to inform the school if any person with whom they've recently been in contact with has exhibited COVID-19 symptoms or tested positive for the COVID-19 virus.
- Parents are required to keep their children home if anyone in their immediate household is demonstrating COVID-19 symptoms. In this scenario, all children in the household should remain home until the individual with symptoms receives a negative COVID test result.
- If any member of a household or established cohort is seeking testing for COVID-19 **regardless of whether they are exhibiting symptoms**, the child should remain home until the family member receives a negative test result. **This also applies to people who are testing as a precautionary measure due to a potential exposure.**
- Our attendance tracking system is a contact-free process. Families are asked to download the free app from Brightwheel that uses a QR scanning feature to sign children in and out of the system.
- The attendance software will prompt for a series of COVID-related questions. Please answer these accurately.
- Parents are **required** to inform the school of **any** medications their child has received within 24 hours prior to arriving at school (with the exception of medicines that are part of their child's daily regimen). Please note, this requirement applies **regardless of the purpose** of the medicine.
- Health screenings throughout the day may consist of contact-free temperature readings and an evaluation of any other observable symptoms, in conjunction with an assessment of possible COVID-19 exposures.
- Parents or visitors are not permitted to enter the building without prior approval of administration. Should a parent wish to enter the building or arrange for an observation, please contact administration to schedule a time, and we will be happy to accommodate you. All adults entering the building will be subject to a health questionnaire.

The school will also monitor arrival and dismissal times as outlined below:

Arrival for Nido and Early Years Programs

- Parents should drop off at their child's **exterior classroom door** between **8:10am** and **8:40am** (unless participating in before-school care).
- Parents arriving after **8:40am** should bring their child to the **office door**.

Arrival for Children's House, Elementary, and MAP

- Morning carpool will be held between **8:10am and 8:30am**. All families enrolled in these programs are encouraged to use our carpool service.
- For families arriving between **8:10am and 8:30am who are not using carpool, please do not approach an exterior classroom door during the carpool service**. This is an important security measure to avoid teachers needing to attend to two different entry points at the same time. Instead, students should walk through the carpool door during carpool.
- For CH parents who wish to walk their child to their exterior classroom door, please do so either between **8:00am and 8:10am** or between **8:30am and 8:45am (non-carpool times)**.
- Elementary and MAP students who arrive after 8:30am and miss carpool should enter via the office, not the classroom exterior door.

Departures

Due to the challenge of ensuring coverage for separate cohorts, it is **essential** that parents arrive at least a few minutes earlier than the scheduled departure time. This timing is also important to facilitate a smooth and safe dismissal.

Unapproved late dismissals, even if only by a few minutes, will create multiple complications as we manage various cohorts. Families who arrive late will be charged the daily childcare fee **even if only a few minutes late departing**. Frequent late departures may result in a family being charged the annual childcare fee. Please contact the school as soon as possible to alert the administration and teachers if picking up a child earlier or later than their scheduled or pre-arranged departure time.

Departure for Nido and Early Years Programs

- Parents should pick up their child directly at the classroom's exterior door between the hours of **4:10pm and 4:25pm**.

Departure for Children's House, Elementary, and MAP

- **Noon and Full Day Departure (for CH):** Children will either be picked up on the playground or from the classroom's exterior door. The pick-up location for each class will be confirmed by the teachers in that class. In the event of inclement weather, all CH children will be picked up at their classroom's exterior door.

- **Departure (for Elementary and MAP):** Students will be dismissed in carpool between **3:15pm to 3:30pm**.

Before and After-School Care

Due to the need for separate cohorts, our before and after-school programs will be restricted to families who are enrolled in our annual childcare plans. Other families who call ahead to request attending before or after-school may be able to do so based on staffing availability.

Should the school be able to accommodate a request to use before or after-school for a family who is not enrolled in one of our annual childcare plans, the childcare daily rates will apply. Please visit the *Tuition and Fees* page on our website at www.montessoricenter.org for more information on childcare fees and annual childcare plans. Due to cohort and staffing assignments, please note that we **cannot provide after-school care for the Nido or Early Years** programs at this time. Apologies for the inconvenience.

All children participating in before-school care should sign in at the office door, not the classroom doors.



HEALTH MONITORING

All school employees will adhere to thorough health monitoring protocols throughout the day.

Symptoms of COVID-19

Symptoms of COVID-19 include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Fever and / or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Recent loss of taste or smell
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Runny nose or congestion
- Fussiness or lethargy
- Headache or body aches

Please note that while COVID-19 symptoms in children are similar to adults, children may exhibit milder forms of these symptoms or sometimes none at all.

Parents should provide the school with a note from a medical practitioner prior to attendance if their child has a chronic condition that may mimic symptoms of COVID-19, such as asthma.

Daily Monitoring

Staff and teachers will monitor their students for any symptoms that develop throughout the day.

Please note that knowingly sending a sick child to school or medicating with a fever-reducing medication prior to arrival **are serious infractions of our policy** and may result in a revocation of onsite enrollment and forfeiture of any applicable refund of school fees.

All school employees are instructed to report any personal symptoms they may be experiencing immediately and will be asked to leave the classroom until such time they are healthy enough to return.

Student and Staff Isolation Protocols

In the event a student develops a symptom of an infectious illness while at the school, we will implement the following:

- The student will be immediately taken to either the inner office or another isolated area in the building. The child's temperature will be recorded, and a teacher or administrator will document the details of the symptoms or concerns. If safe to do so, the child will be provided with a face covering.
- The parents (or emergency contacts if parents are not available) will be called to pick up the student as soon as possible.
- If the health screening identifies at least two symptoms of COVID-19, parents will be asked to keep the child home until they are able to provide an alternate diagnosis from a medical professional, per the guidelines in the Returning to School section below.

It is important to note that whereas there may be a variety of conditions that exhibit COVID-19-like symptoms, the school's employees are not trained to differentiate between other ailments and those caused by the COVID-19 virus. Considering the health risk and potential for mandated quarantines, the school will err on the side of caution in determining when to send students or staff home.



CONFIRMED DIAGNOSIS OR EXPOSURE TO COVID-19

Our most immediate concern is to reduce the potential risk of anyone in our community contracting COVID-19. However, the new variants of this virus are highly contagious. There is no guarantee that a COVID-19 outbreak will not occur, even with the most diligent of preventative measures.

Please remember it is mandatory for all families and staff to notify the school immediately if they; 1) develop COVID-19 symptoms, 2) receive a confirmed diagnosis, 3) if they plan to seek a COVID-19 test for any reason, or 4) if they have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for the COVID-19 virus.

Summary of Guidelines for Staying Home and Returning to School

To simplify the current guidelines issued by the DHHS, the following table is a summary of scenarios and associated criteria relevant for **all children and employees of the school**. For reference, “close contact” as defined by the CDC is an exposure to another individual within **6 feet** for at least **15 minutes** cumulatively over a **24-hour** period of time.

POSITIVE COVID-19 DIAGNOSIS

When to Stay Home / Circumstances

When to Return to School

I have tested positive with an antigen test, but do not have symptoms.	Can return immediately if a PCR test taken within 48 hours of positive antigen test is negative; OR Can return after 10 days of isolation from the initial positive test result.
I have tested positive with a PCR / molecular test but do not have symptoms.	Can return after 10 days of isolation from the initial positive test result.
I have tested positive with an antigen test, and I DO have symptoms.	Can return after 10 days of isolation from the initial symptoms or positive test result AND It has been at least 24 hours without a non-medicated fever AND Other symptoms are improving

COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

When to Stay Home / Circumstances

When to Return to School

<p>I have two or more symptoms of COVID-19 and will not seek testing or an alternate diagnosis from a health care provider.</p>	<p>Can return after 10 days of isolation from the initial symptoms AND It has been at least 24 hours without a non-medicated fever AND Other symptoms are improving</p>
<p>I have symptoms of COVID-19 and have received a negative test for COVID-19 or an alternate medical diagnosis for symptoms.</p>	<p>Can return after at least 24 hours without a non-medicated fever AND I have felt well for at least 24 hours</p>

EXPOSURE TO POSITIVE CASES OF COVID-19

When to Stay Home / Circumstances

When to Return to School

<p>I have been in close contact without a mask with someone with a confirmed case of COVID-19, and I AM exhibiting symptoms.</p>	<p>Can return after 14 days of quarantine from the last known contact with the COVID-19 positive individual.</p>
<p>I have been in close contact without a mask with someone with a confirmed case of COVID-19, and I AM NOT exhibiting symptoms.</p>	<p>Can return after 10 days of quarantine without a COVID-19 test if no symptoms materialize with daily at-home health monitoring.</p>
<p>I have been in close contact without a mask with someone with a confirmed case of COVID-19, and I AM NOT exhibiting symptoms.</p>	<p>Can return after 7 days of quarantine if no symptoms materialize with daily at-home health monitoring IF I receive a negative COVID-19 test no earlier than day 5 from the date of exposure</p>
<p>I have NO symptoms but have been in close contact without a mask with someone with a confirmed case of COVID-19, and I have been fully vaccinated OR I have tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 3 months.</p>	<p>Can return to school immediately IF NO symptoms are present.</p>

EXPOSURE TO POSITIVE CASES OF COVID-19, CONTINUED

When to Stay Home / Circumstances

When to Return to School

<p>I have been in close contact with someone with a confirmed case of COVID-19, and both I and the individual with the confirmed case have worn a mask consistently and appropriately for the entire time.</p>	<p>No quarantine is necessary IF NO symptoms are present.</p>
<p>I have been in close contact with a household member with a confirmed case of COVID-19.</p>	<p>Can return after 14 days of quarantine, which begins EITHER:</p> <p>At the end of a 10-day isolation of the person with COVID-19 (if this person cannot isolate from the other household members)</p> <p>OR</p> <p>After the last known close contact with the COVID-19 positive person (if this person can isolate from all other household members)</p>

EXPOSURE TO OTHERS WITH COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

When to Stay Home / Circumstances

When to Return to School

<p>I have been in close contact with a household member who has COVID-19 symptoms, and the individual does not intend to seek testing or an alternate diagnosis from a health care provider.</p>	<p>Can return after 14 days of quarantine, which begins EITHER:</p> <p>At the end of a 10-day isolation of the person with COVID-19 (if this person cannot isolate from the other household members)</p> <p>OR</p> <p>After the last known close contact with the COVID-19 positive person (if this person can isolate from all other household members)</p>
<p>I have been in close contact with a household member who has COVID-19 symptoms, and the individual has received EITHER a negative test for COVID-19 or an alternate diagnosis to explain the COVID-19 symptoms</p>	<p>Can return to school immediately IF NO symptoms are present.</p>

EXPOSURE TO OTHERS WITH COVID-19 SYMPTOMS, CONTINUED

When to Stay Home / Circumstances

When to Return to School

<p>I have been in close contact with a household member who has COVID-19 symptoms, and the individual does not intend to seek testing or an alternate diagnosis from a health care provider.</p>	<p>Can return after 14 days of quarantine, which begins EITHER:</p> <p>At the end of a 10-day isolation of the person with COVID-19 (if this person cannot isolate from the other household members)</p> <p>OR</p> <p>After the last known close contact with the COVID-19 positive person (if this person can isolate from all other household members)</p>
<p>I have been in close contact with a household member who has COVID-19 symptoms, and the individual has EITHER received a negative test for COVID-19 OR an alternate diagnosis to explain the COVID-19 symptoms from a medical professional.</p>	<p>Can return to school immediately IF NO symptoms are present.</p>

INDIRECT EXPOSURE

When to Stay Home / Circumstances

When to Return to School

<p>A household member has been exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19 outside of the household, and masks were NOT worn by both individuals.</p>	<p>Can return once the individual who has been exposed OR I have received a negative COVID-19 test result at least 5 days or more after the date of exposure.</p>
<p>A household member has been exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19 outside of the household, and masks WERE worn by both individuals.</p>	<p>Can return to school immediately IF NO symptoms are present.</p>
<p>I have had close contact with a non-household individual outside of the school who has been exposed to a positive case of COVID-19.</p>	<p>Please contact the school with details and for instructions on when to return.</p>

School Closure Criteria

Following the DHHS investigation of a confirmed case of COVID-19, there may be various courses of action taken. Please note that all quarantine requirements are determined by the DHHS.

- The school may not be required to close any classrooms if the DHHS determines that there was no issue regarding close contact, child / teacher ratios are appropriate, and there is sufficient space to continue normal operations. The DHHS may also determine closures based on the number of students appropriately wearing masks.
- The DHHS may decide to temporarily close either one or more classrooms or cohorts.
- Alternatively, the DHHS may determine the entire school needs to temporarily close.

In the event the school or one or more cohorts needs to close, elementary and MAP students will transition to online instruction. CH classrooms may also participate in Zoom lessons and group meetings.

Teachers have pro-actively planned for a potential classroom or school closure and are prepared to transition seamlessly to the online platforms.

Additional Notes

1. If a child is exhibiting **two or more** potential COVID-19 symptoms while at school, **all** siblings of the child should be picked up at the same time, regardless of whether the sibling is demonstrating symptoms. The child experiencing symptoms may return once a non-COVID-19 diagnosis has been confirmed, and they are free from symptoms (see chart above). Their sibling may return to school once a non-COVID-19 diagnosis has been confirmed for the member of the household who was demonstrating symptoms.
2. Please remember that COVID-19 testing is most accurate after **five days** of potential exposure. Test results within this timeframe may be inaccurate. The school strongly encourages families to consult with their health care provider for guidance on testing.
3. Please note that violations of any of the procedures or protocols contained within this document **are considered a serious infraction of our policies** and may result in a temporary revocation of onsite enrollment for a period of time to be determined by the school administration. Alternatively, for more serious or multiple infractions, the family may be dismissed from the school. In either scenario, forfeiture of any applicable refund of school fees will apply.
4. Please note, teachers and staff continue to receive their regular salaries during quarantine. Whereas we wish we could assist families during COVID-related absences, the school is financially unable to offer refunds or credits for any time missed due to quarantine or for any other reason.

Disclosure

Our procedures and protocols are designed to meet federal and state mandates to reduce the exposure to COVID-19. However, please be advised that The New School does not imply that the policies or procedures herein will prevent anyone entering the school property from exposure to COVID-19.

Please note, regardless of the mitigating procedures in place, all families, teachers, staff, and visitors assume personal risk by entering the school property.

If at any time a family becomes uncomfortable with attending the school in person due to the risk of exposure to COVID-19, they should immediately contact administration. The family may then transfer to a distance learning platform.

Our teachers, administrators, and staff are greatly appreciative for the support of the parent community in assisting with any and all efforts to maintain a healthy environment. Many thanks for your continued support and understanding during these trying times!