

RE-OPENING PLAN

2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR



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HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS

2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR

For the safety of our community, we will be implementing the following for our *in-person instruction model*;

- Small class sizes.
- Large open classrooms (to allow for social distancing).
- Less than 10 students per teacher.
- Students will remain with their class/teacher for the duration of the day.
- Workspaces will be set up/outlined to ensure social distancing is maintained.
- Outdoor learning environments will be utilized and encouraged to amplify social distancing.
- The children will be required to eat lunch in their classrooms.
- Daily sanitation protocols of rooms and materials will be carried out during and at the end of each day by staff.
- Hand sanitizing stations will be available for everyone entering the building to sanitize their hands.
- Drop off will be staggered over a period of 30 minutes.
- Parents will be required to wait outside the school at the pickup station to drop off and pick up their child.
- Slippers will be worn in the classrooms. No outside shoes permitted past entry.
- All bedding will be individually stored and will be sent home to be washed and brought back for use.
- Children and staff will wash their hands as soon as they arrive at school, and routinely throughout the day.
- Parents/visitors will be limited inside the school unless it is an emergency or its extremely necessary.
- All visitors will be required to wear a face-mask and to take off their shoes.
- Occupancy will be limited to <50% capacity at all times.
- Over 100sf of indoor space per person will be available.
- 30 acres at our indoor/outdoor center will be available and utilized often.
- All teachers and staff will be encouraged to wear masks and/or face coverings in the limited circumstance when distancing is not feasible.
- All staff will be trained in recognizing/detecting the signs of covid-19 infection.
- In the case of suspected infection, students will be isolated until their immediate pick up from the school.
- Children with temperature the 100°F, coughing, sore throat, fast breathing, shaking, or chills, headaches, or lethargic will not be accepted back until fully recovered and fever free for 48 hours.
- If a child/family had been out of the state of New York, the school must be notified, and a 14 day self quarantine may be required.
- Remote learning work will be provided to any student infected/exposed that will be quarantined at home.
- In the event the state mandated a closure due to COVID-19, we will revert to our virtual classroom model for grades 1-12. As attendance is mandatory for in person instruction it will also be mandatory and recorded through a virtual model.

The social distancing of young children is certainly a daunting prospect. But as we have considered these issues, we have realized that the authentic Montessori approach we offer is uniquely suited to social distancing: both in terms of how children interact physically and in terms of their emotional well-being.

Classrooms:

Our classrooms offer an uncluttered and enticing environment specifically designed for children at each stage of their development. At our sites we are lucky that our children enjoy large spacious rooms with fewer pupils per room, but the careful use of the space is also key. Our classrooms are meticulously cared for, which encourages the children to take care of them too. The children return learning materials to the shelf after they have used them, so it would only be a small step to clean materials after use.

Independence:

A central part of the Montessori approach is the focus on child-led learning which nurtures children's independence and confidence. Our children are given greater freedoms and responsibilities which encourages them to take responsibility for their actions and be considerate to others, making it easier for them to comply with social distancing measures and more emotionally prepared for change. The focus on independence of mind has also provided our students an advantage for the remote learning we have offered during the time of "lockdown".

Hygiene and self-care:

From an early age our children are encouraged to practice good hygiene and to care for their own person. They remove outdoor shoes and put on slippers on arrival and hang up their own coats and bags. They are responsible for washing their hands and faces as necessary after eating, using the restroom, playing outside or using art materials. As the Covid-19 crisis unfolded this year we increased our emphasis on good hygiene further with more frequent hand-washing and our children will be ready to continue these practices and adopt further measures as necessary.

Outdoor learning:

One of the main pillars of the Montessori approach is a focus on integrating nature into children's daily learning throughout the year. Our children are provided opportunities to work outside as much as possible. They do specifically outdoor activities such as gardening and play, but they are also encouraged to take their indoor learning outside – such as lessons in math, reading and art. As the children already see our outside spaces as learning zones as well as places for play, an increased focus on outdoor learning will be relatively seamless.

Behavior:

Many visitors to our school are surprised by the atmosphere of calm they find and even our very young children's ability to concentrate for long periods of time. This atmosphere is no happy accident but a carefully cultivated way of behaving and interacting with others. Our authentic approach to Montessori includes a focus on "Grace and Courtesy" – this is where we practice and model behavior such as walking around the room, sharing materials or making an apology. From the age of 18 months the children use breakable plates and glasses and learn to be careful with them; our table spaces have flowers in glass vases and the children carefully navigate the room in which the vases are rarely knocked over. This greater self-awareness and self-control will make social distancing more achievable even with the youngest children.

Whatever the future holds, our children's happiness and safety will always be our first priority but we are reassured that their Montessori education will help them and our staff to cope in these extraordinary times.

Entrance Protocols and Monitoring:

- Hand sanitizing stations are available for everyone entering the building to sanitize their hands.
- Drop off times will be staggered.
- Parents will be required to wait at the pickup station to drop off and pick up their child.
- Health screenings will take place of staff and children upon entrance each morning. Checking for signs of infection, which could include flushed cheeks, fatigue and extreme fussiness. Anyone showing signs of illness will not be permitted to enter. This includes a temperature of 100.4 or higher.
- Any staff member or child who has any of the following signs or symptoms will be sent home:
 - Temperature greater than or equal to 100.4F
 - Cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, diarrhea.
 - In the last 14 days has had contact with someone with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, under investigation for COVID-19 or ill with respiratory illness.
- Stay home if sick. If children or staff show signs of illness, we will ask the ill person to stay home until they've been symptom-free without medication for at least 48 hours.
- Families will be asked to report possible illness if anyone in their household shows symptoms or has tested positive for COVID-19.
- Each child will go to the sink and wash their hands before beginning their day.
- Nonessential visitors will not be permitted in the building. Volunteering opportunities will be limited.
- A table by the front entrance with tissues, hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes will be available.
- Shoes must be removed immediately upon entrance of the building. Staff and students will have indoor slippers available.

Protocols for Inside the Building:

- All teachers and staff will be encouraged to wear masks and/or face coverings in the limited circumstance when distancing is not feasible.
- Handwashing will be required of all students and staff members immediately upon entering a classroom.
- Children and Staff will not be permitted to wear outside shoes in the classroom (indoor slippers only).
- Gloves will be worn while handling food or during any contact with a bodily fluid.
- Hand washing- All staff and children should wash hands at the following times:
 - Arrival at the school and after breaks.
 - Before and after handling food or medication, eating, feeding a child.
 - After working with a child and before working with the next.
 - After personal toileting or helping a child use the bathroom.
 - After wiping nose, mouth.
 - After cleaning.
 - After out door activities.
 - Before and after caring someone who is sick.
 - After coming in contact with bodily fluid.
 - After assisting a child with hand washing.
 - After handling garbage.

Social Distancing Strategies:

- Classes will include the same group each day, and the same teachers will remain with the same group each day. Staff and children will only use their assigned room for the day.
- Class sizes will be adjusted to guidelines given to us by the CDC, state and local authorities.
- <50 school occupancy will be maintained at all times.
- Over 100sf of indoor space per person will be available.
- Playground times will be staggered and allow for disinfection before another class may enter the playground.
- Social distancing will be required of all students and Bc staff in every possible circumstance.
- In accordance with Federal, State, and local public health recommendations, masks or face coverings are strongly recommended for students and staff to help prevent the transmission of COVID-19 when social distancing is not possible during school or related activities.
- Students and staff may wear face shields in accordance with CDC guidance.
- It is highly recommended that students be at least 6 feet apart for all lessons, work and classroom experiences. To achieve this, we will be teaching the classes in small groups of 6 to 10 students per teacher (depending on class size and room size).
- Specials will be held within each classroom (with the exception of physical education, which will be held outside).
- Small groups of students will be identified and kept together throughout the day.
- Class-size will be optimized based on classroom space availability.
- Outdoor spaces will be used for instruction often (playground, village park/river, 30acre indoor/outdoor center)
- Communal spaces (community room, playgrounds, bathrooms) will be sanitized between uses. Distancing will be maintained in every grouping.

Cleaning and Sanitizing Procedures:

- Routinely clean, disinfect, and sanitize. Each school has a schedule for cleaning and disinfecting all common areas, work, materials, and classrooms throughout the day.
- Sanitizing machine schedules are followed for all classrooms.
- Children's bedding and nap mats are stored in individual bags and laid out 6 ft. apart.
- Linen/blankets for napping children will be assigned to a single child and laundered at the end of each week.
- Items that cannot be cleaned and sanitized will be removed from the rooms.
- All personal items water bottles/ lunch box/clothing must be fully cleaned at home before returning to school the following day.

Food Preparation and Meals:

- Staff ensure children wash hands prior to and immediately after eating.
- Handwashing is required of staff before and after snack and lunch times.
- All students will eat lunch in their classroom or socially distance outside, and not in common areas. .
- Food must not be shared with the exception of snack which will be prepared by one person.
- All students should have a personal water bottle and a clean lunch box each day.

Facilities:

- MMS buildings and facilities include but are not limited to:
 - 15,000 sf of indoor classroom space over multiple buildings and two campuses
 - Open/gated outdoor play area
 - Local park access for outdoor instruction and play
 - 30 acre indoor/outdoor center for instruction and activities
 - Over 100sqf per person available in all classroom.

- Building occupancy will be limited to < 50% capacity at all times.

- Ventilation will be optimized in the school building to ensure that there is an ample exchange of air. In addition, if weather condition supported, windows and all our classrooms will be open daily. Classrooms will also be equipped with HEPA filters.
- Cleaning and disinfection practices will be standardize throughout the school. Disinfection parentheses cleaning of desks and equipment) will be performed in classrooms on a regular basis, between classes, and at the beginning and end of each day.
- We will follow the CDC schedule for cleaning, as applicable: cleaning and disinfecting will occur at the beginning and end of each day: all materials, surfaces, door knobs, and bathrooms.
- Playground equipment will be sanitized between each class use.
- Each classroom will have access to two in class private bathrooms.
- Each classroom will be equipped with an in class sink (outside of bathrooms) for hand washing and drinking water.
- Unidirectional flow within the school will be established through: open hallways and double staircase access.
- Emergency drills will continue to be carried out throughout the year.
- Fire code compliance will continue to be submitted to BOE annually.

Classroom Guidelines:

- Every child will be assigned their own work rug.
- The sharing of classroom work and materials will be minimized and/or sanitized after use.
- Items that cannot be cleaned and sanitized will be removed.
- Student's belongings will be separated from others' in individually labeled containers, cubbies, or designated areas.
- Physical interaction through partner or group work will be limited.
- Classroom arrangement will be such to maximize physical distancing.
- Students will be asked to avoid using each other supplies and equipment.
- We will ensure adequate supplies is available in each classroom (soap, hand sanitizer, towels, tissues, disinfectant, trash containers).

Transportation:

- Students are to be dropped off and picked up by parents or approved persons in the designated area.
- Bussing will be available on a limited/need basis by each students approved school district and will adhere to guidelines and recommendations for transportation.
- Drop off times will be staggered.

Students:

- Should stay home if sick, at high risk for illness, or if they have had exposure to COVID-19. Support will be provided to students who are well but unable to come to school through remote learning.
- Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette will be reviewed with students.
- Hand washing stations will be set up in each classroom so students may clean their hands as they enter the classroom.
- All students will be encouraged to bring personal water bottles for use throughout the day.
- Hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds will be reinforced with increased monitoring to ensure adherence. If soap and water are not readily available hand sanitizer will be available for use.
- Students will be encouraged to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue. Use tissue should be thrown in the trash and hands washed immediately.
- Students in the early childhood classroom will not be expected to stay 6 feet away from each other or from their teachers. To support this we will be teaching the classes both outdoors and in small groups of 6 to 10 students per teacher. The very nature of young children means that they will come into close contact and Teachers may touch and even hug their students. However, we will be working to shape the classroom activities to reduce unnecessary contact between students at all levels. In addition, students will frequently wash their hands, especially before activities where they come in closer contact.
- Grade 1 to 12 students will be expected to work at their personal workspace, and the curriculum will be adjusted to avoid unnecessary physical contact between students. However, within the small class groups of 6 to 10 students per teacher they will be allowed to play together, especially outside.
- Students will be moving through an open layout (to and from the restrooms, and as they move in and out of the building) and will be expected to socially distance at those times.
- Student should have two sets of clean clothing available to keep in school when needed.
- Students are asked to not bring in (non-essential) personal items for home including show and tell.

Staff:

- Staff must maintain at least 6 feet of separation from other individuals. If such distance is not feasible other safety measures such as face covering, hand washing, cough etiquette, cleanliness and sanitation will be vigorously practiced.
- Staff will be asked to minimize travel/outside meetings.
- Leave policies unexcused absence policies will be updated to reflect increased need.
- Substitute staffing plan will be reviewed and confirmed.
- Staff will be trained regarding all policies and continued emotional support of the community:
 - Recognize the signs and symptoms of COVID-19
 - Recognize the signs and symptoms of an increased stress response.

Parents:

- Parents/caregivers will have minimal entry/exit into the school in order to minimize exposure.
- Drop off and pick up will be operated from the front of the school. Back parking will be closed.
- Parents are asked to check their child's temperature at home in the morning before bringing the child to school.
- Parents should be prepared to answer a set of health questions.
- Parents/caregivers doing drop off and pick up will be asked to remain outside of the school at the drop off/pick up station (and not linger).
- If a parent/caregiver needs to escort their child into the school, they will be asked to wear a mask and maintain 6 feet from other individuals.
- Parents are encouraged to join our Bloomz classroom pages as well as our REMIND text alerts.
- However, email is always the preferred method of communication.
- Parents are required to be available for rapid pick up if a child becomes ill.
- CDC is criteria for not accessing the school:
 - If they have been sick with COVID-19
 - If they have recently had close contact with a person with COVID-19

Travel:

With the ongoing COVID -19 outbreak, the state of New York encourages everyone to heed the advice of the CDC and US State department's travel guidelines, alerts and warnings. The mandated 14 days quarantine for travelers from high risk areas will be enforced.

Instructions for self-quarantine travelers can be found on the CDC COVID -19 travelers information. According to public health COVID-19 testing is now available in commercial, private and academic labs. Please inform us immediately if any one in your family is sick and planning to get the Covid-19 test done, in order for us to take necessary precautions.

Guidelines for Illness:

- Teachers will monitor students for symptoms of COVID-19 throughout the day. If a student displays COVID-19 symptoms the teacher will alert the office and the parents will be called to pick up the student. A staff member will come and escort the student to a comfortable but isolated place where here she will be cared for by the staff while they wait for a parent to pick them up. Students will be asked to wear a mask while waiting for parents, unless they are nauseous or have vomited.
- We will follow New York State guidelines as they evolve regarding when to request parents to keep their children home.
- Employees and parents are asked to inform orange county health department (DOH) of any positive COVID-19 tests or confirmed exposure to COVID-19. The DOH and individual physicians will manage whether someone is asked to isolate or not.
- Once we have confirmed a positive test in our school community with suspected additional exposure, the positive exposure class will be closely monitored and or temporarily relocated to our uncontaminated indoor outdoor center.
- If a specific class of students requires quarantine, we will provide remote instruction to the entire class during that time.
- If an individual child is quarantine, we will provide support in curriculum for that time individually depending on the child's age and grade.

- We will inform the school community of any positive cases in students or employees in a general way, as we currently do for other infectious diseases. The community will be informed of the student in a particular class, or faculty member who has had contact with a specific class, has had a positive COVID-19 test. We will not be identifying individuals by name as we wish to provide some personal privacy.
- We will follow up with parents and staff through our many communication services.

Additional Safety Measures:

- Classrooms will have a bucket/box for used items to be cleaned.
- Drop off times will be staggered.
- Once in classrooms, the children will stay in their classrooms for the day except to go outside to the playground.
- Signage will be available and displayed to serve as a reminder for appropriate hygiene/hand washing.
- Signage will be displayed regarding identification of COVID-19 symptoms.
- The classrooms and the playground will be sanitized daily.
- In the event a child becomes ill or must be quarantined at home remote learning work will be provided.
- Each classroom is equipped with at least two private bathrooms which will be regularly cleaned and disinfected.
- Students will be educated on proper hygiene (hand washing, respiratory hygiene, personal space).
- Food allergy awareness will be noted to ensure student safety during meal times in class or outdoors.

- Continued communication:
 - designated COVID-19 point of contact
 - participation in community response efforts-communication systems (email, Bloomz, REMIND)

- Support coping and resilience. Increase support will be put into place for any student or staff member who is experiencing increased stress due to these demands.