

Meadow Montessori School Operating Plan Fall 2020

Introduction

Meadow Montessori School will open for the 2020-2021 academic year on September 8. We are excited to welcome everyone to campus for the new school year. We recognize that opening MMS entails some increased risk of contracting the COVID-19 virus for all concerned. Our decision to open our programs recognizes that it is in the best interest of children to be back in school, not only for learning, but also for their social and emotional development.

We recognize that attending school involves daily human contact among children and staff, who will then be in contact with others in their own homes. We acknowledge that risk is balanced against the educational, social, and emotional needs of children to continue their education in a way that distance learning cannot truly support. We emphasize that our school community must embrace many new health and safety protocols in order to responsibly mitigate any risks to the extent possible.

Montessori classrooms are essential for each child's development and optimal self-construction. This happens only through interactions with prepared environments—something that cannot be duplicated easily in the home. Our ability to guide/teach is diminished in the absence of a face-to-face learning environment. By inviting students to return to our campus, we are simply fulfilling the mission of Meadow Montessori School, which is to challenge each person to build a respectful community of trust, compassion, and academic rigor. We do this so our children can actively engage in the world to promote sustainability, peace, and justice. In other words, this is not a time to stay home.

This document explains the policies and procedures we are employing to mitigate COVID-19 related risks at school. This approach is built around new health monitoring and screening procedures, as well as new classroom/school day procedures designed to reduce the number of contacts during the school day and limit the group size and interactions. These procedures will vary according to the age and developmental needs of the child / student. Nevertheless, we believe reopening with these new protocols represents an important first step in responsibly living with this virus.

It is also important to note that Meadow Montessori is a small community, which allows our children to return to learning on a fulltime basis in a safe way, providing we act in a respectful and conscientious manner.

In summary, MMS is opening under conditions that are in the best interest of our community and with the guidance of the Federal and State health agencies, all of which you will find in this document. Each family will make its own decision regarding the balance of risk and what is best for its children. The information in this document will provide clarity around the practices and procedures MMS has established to minimize exposure but in no way warrants that COVID-19 or other communicable disease infection will not occur through participation in our programs.

General Preparedness and Planning

Meadow Montessori School has and will continue to collaborate, share information, and review plans with local health officials to help protect the whole school community.

This document was compiled using the COVID-19 guidelines and recommendations for schools and childcare programs published by the CDC, State of Michigan, American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Montessori Society. The operating procedures meet or exceed the minimum standards of care and will be updated as new information or additional guidelines are made available. Additionally, MMS's Health and Safety Task Force*, a committee of parents and professionals, will continually review all of our protocols throughout the school year, as will our new Health Administrator.**

General Information

We will be open each day from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. for Extended Time Care. Hours for the administrative staff are 7:45 to 5:00 p.m. For all specific information regarding your child's daily program, please consult the Parent Handbook, which includes daily schedules, contact information, etc.

Parent Gatherings

Although we understand the importance of gathering as a community, at least for the fall semester, all parent meetings and orientations will be virtual. We will communicate all meeting times and dates to parents at least one week in advance.

Observations

Before COVID-19, we always encouraged parents to come into school and watch their children during the school day; however, this year is different. We are limiting access to the buildings for all non-essential adults. Until further notice, we are "closed" for observations.

Conferences

Fall Conferences will be virtual as needed or as requested by the teacher or parent. Additionally, we will schedule virtual meetings for each classroom teacher and parents on a monthly basis to enhance communication and encourage cooperation.

Notifications

All parent notifications will be electronic, which includes field trip permission slips, announcements, etc. so we can decrease contact points between adults. The school will send forms electronically and parents will return them the same way. Payments can also be made electronically this year for the same reason.

Health Screening

The procedures that apply to all members of our community are as follows:

Parents must complete a Health Screening prior to arrival each morning

Parents will stipulate that your child is symptom free:

- No temperature over 100.0°F (We may also ask if medications were used to lower an individual's temperature.)

If any of the following symptoms is of greater intensity or frequency than what is normally experienced, your child should not be at school and you must report the following symptoms to our health administrator:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills

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- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea

Additionally, children should not be at school if during the previous 14 days they have had contact with someone with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19. Close contact is defined as less than six feet away for a time period of more than fifteen minutes.

For more information regarding the efficacy of health screenings for children:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/symptom-screening.html>

Arrivals

Children enter the buildings at several different locations in order to limit contact:

- Infants enter through the infant playground door.
- Toddlers enter directly through the Toddler House playground door.
- Preschoolers enter through the main entrance of the Early Childhood Building.
- *Lower elementary students enter through the west door of the elementary building.
- *Upper elementary students enter through the main door of the elementary building.
- *Middle school students enter through the east door of the elementary building.
- High school students go directly to Hobby's House.

*Elementary students who arrive before 7:30 in the morning will enter through the main door and check in immediately with the early morning staff in the Meadow Café.

We respectfully ask that students (who are not Extended Time care) arrive within a 15 minute window of the start time of their program. If a student is going to be later than 8:00 (elementary and secondary) or 9:00 (early childhood programs), please call the office so we can make sure the child is greeted.

Departures

Students will leave from the same doors where they arrive. Parents will collect their infants and toddlers at the classroom door, requiring them to park. All other parents remain in their cars, with separate pick-up lines for preschool, lower and upper elementary classrooms, as well as middle school. High school students will leave directly from Hobby's House. Parents must wear a face mask during departure if he/she is in contact with a staff member.

If your child needs to leave school earlier for any reason, please follow the following procedure:

- If possible, notify your child's teacher at the beginning of the day that you will need to pick your child up early.
- If you have not notified your child's teacher, please contact the main office who will notify the teacher that your child is leaving early.
- The teacher or assistant will walk your child to the departure location, where you will be waiting.

If your child is staying for Extended Time Care in either Children's House, elementary, or secondary, please call when you are on your way, and we will have your child waiting for you at the main entrance of the appropriate building.

Additional Policies and Procedures to Mitigate Spread of COVID-19

Staff will be familiar with and receive ongoing training regarding State, CDC and Monroe County Health Department recommendations and requirements.

Meadow Montessori's Health Administrator will closely follow the science of COVID-19 in order to keep our school community as safe as possible. The Health Administrator will be in daily contact with teachers and observe classrooms to ensure that all of the following health and safety policies are in place.

Face Coverings Staff and Children

Following the Governor's Executive Order 2020-164:

- All staff and children ages 4 and up when inside the building and when physical distancing is not possible;
- Children ages 2-4 are encouraged to wear face coverings when physical distancing is not possible;
- All students 1st – 12th when inside the buildings and when physical distancing is not possible.
- Exceptions:
 - Children under the age of 2;
 - Any child who cannot medically tolerate a face covering, has trouble breathing, or is unable to remove the face covering without assistance;
 - While eating, sleeping, or performing high-intensity physical activities;
 - When a child or staff member is outdoors and able to consistently maintain a distance of six feet or more from individuals who are not members of their households.

(Face coverings should cover the nose and mouth and fit securely around the chin and head)

Parents and Guests

Parents and guests are required to wear a face-covering at the following times:

- Assisted arrival and departure
- When inside the buildings
- When outside if physical distancing is not possible

Physical Distancing Strategies

We employ the following strategies for limiting the spread of COVID-19:

- Classrooms will have stable groups (cohorts) of students. Stable means that the same students and teachers are in the same group each day.
- Groups shall not mix with each other, as much as possible.
- Whenever possible each student will have a designated work table and/or floor space so that students can be spaced as far from each other as possible while engaged in activities at school.
- At nap time, children's naptime mats will be spaced out as much as possible, with alternating head to toe arrangements to increase the distance between children.
- We will utilize the outdoor spaces on our campus as much as possible.

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- Adults (other than necessary admin staff) will not travel between buildings. The ECB staff will not come into the main building, and elementary and secondary staff will not go into the ECB building.
- Specials teachers will not travel between buildings, with the exception of middle and high school foreign language classes.

Changes in the Buildings

- Students will fill water bottles from bottle filling stations. No drinking fountains.
- Students are restricted to use their assigned restroom;
- All windows will be left open as often as possible.

Changes in Procedures

- With the exception of new-year forms, all forms are electronic this year.
- All conferences and parent meetings will be held virtually.

Healthy Hand Hygiene

Washing hands is the best thing to do to keep us healthy and prevent the spread of infections. All children and staff will engage in hand hygiene throughout the day, upon arrival to the classroom, and after breaks.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

Meadow Montessori School follows the national standards for cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfection of educational facilities for children provided by Caring for Our Children (<https://nrckids.org/CFOC>).

Meadow Montessori School follows this Cleaning and Sanitization Practice and has a detailed plan for each program, including staff responsibilities, in the Cleaning and Sanitization binder.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Procedures if an infected person (staff or child) has been in a school building:

- Close off areas used by the individuals with COVID-19.
- Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.
- Staff will clean and disinfect all areas used by the ill persons, focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces. Staff must follow CDC's guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting

Cleaning and Disinfecting Products

Meadow Montessori School uses disinfecting products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19.

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/pdf/ReOpening_America_Cleaning_Disinfection_Decision_Tool.pdf

COVID-19 Symptoms and COVID-19 Cases in School

If a child becomes ill at school, the child must be sent home as soon as possible. Sick children will be kept separate from well children and staff contact will be limited as much as reasonably possible, while ensuring the safety and supervision of the child until they leave.

- Classroom staff will follow these isolation procedures:
 - Classroom staff will offer the child a disposable face mask but will not require the child to wear it.
 - Classroom staff will take the child to the isolation location in each building:
 - The classroom staff will inform the office staff and health administrator of symptoms exhibited.
 - Office staff will contact parents to come to school to pick up the child.
 - The office staff will supervise the child until the parent arrives.
 - Once a parent has left with the ill child, the isolation room is cleaned and sanitized by office staff.

- Materials, toys, and furniture touched by the child who is sent home will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.
- In the case of a child who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 as determined by a health professional but has not yet been tested for COVID-19, the child is assumed to have COVID-19, and cannot return to the community until the individual has met the criteria for return under Children or Staff with Positive Case of COVID-19
- A child who has exhibited symptoms that could be COVID-19 can return to school if the parent has obtained a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on a negative COVID-19 test or an alternative diagnosis.

COVID-19 Exposure

If a staff member or student has been identified as having had close contact to someone who is diagnosed with COVID-19, he/she will be required to self-quarantine for 14 days or follow the most current CDC guidelines.

Close contact means being closer than 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from 48 hours before the person was feeling sick until the time the person isolated.

Positive Case of COVID-19 in the Classroom Community

If COVID-19 is confirmed in a staff member or student, all persons who have had close contact will be required to self-quarantine following current CDC guidelines. The following actions will be taken by school administration:

- Contact Child Care Licensing to report the presence of COVID-19 in our school (ECB students)
- Notify the Monroe County Health Department
- Notify staff and parents/caregivers. Confidentiality will be maintained.
- Notify the school community that a child in the school (not their classroom) has been diagnosed with COVID-19. We will maintain medical confidentiality.
- Close the specific classroom for 14 days, if necessary, to allow self-quarantine for all children and staff (per CDC guidelines);
- Complete disinfecting procedures;
- *Decisions about extending closure will be made in consultation with the Monroe County Health Department.
- Children with Positive Case of COVID-19, who have exhibited symptoms and who have stayed home (home isolated) can return to school/work when the criteria established by the CDC have been met. MMS will follow the most current published CDC guidelines for symptom definition and quarantining, as these will continue to be fluid.

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Executive Order:

https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/MIEOG/2020/06/30/file_attachments/1485859/EO%202020-142.pdf

Michigan Safe Schools: Roadmap

[https://www.michigan.gov/documents/whitmer/MI Safe Schools Roadmap FINAL 695392_7.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/whitmer/MI_Safe_Schools_Roadmap_FINAL_695392_7.pdf)

CDC Guidance for Schools and Childcare Centers

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html>

American Academy of Pediatrics Planning Considerations for School Re-entry

<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/>

American Montessori Society

<https://amshq.org/COVID19>

***Meadow Montessori Health and Safety Task Force**

Mr. Tom Dunham, who is currently a member of the Board of Trustees and a former MMS parent, has a scientific background in human cell culture (sterile technique), law degree, and professional experience in Performance Improvement.

Dr. Jeanne Schall, as a hospitalist (Internal Medicine physician), brings her medical expertise to the group. Jeanne is a member of the Board of Trustees and has three children at MMS.

Mr. Robert Yockey has worked in the field of environmental services and industrial maintenance for 15 years. In years past he and his crews have responded to the 9-11 cleanup in New York and Pennsylvania, the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, the flooding in Houston, and are currently cleaning up facilities nationwide with confirmed cases of COVID-19. Robert's daughter is in lower elementary.

Ms. Heidi Burroughs is a member of the Board of Trustees and has served as Director of Finance at MMS for 22 years. On a day-to-day basis Heidi works with staff and parents and handles many facility issues at MMS. She is also a parent of a MMS graduate.

****Meadow Montessori Health Administrator**

Melissa Raymer received her Associate of Applied Science in Registered Nursing and Health Information Management. In addition to participating in extensive HIPAA and Healthcare Privacy and security training, Melissa previously received certifications as a Registered Health Information Technician, a Clinical Documentation Improvement Specialist, and a Health Informatics Systems Professional. She is currently in the process of earning a B S in Healthcare Administration. Melissa is a parent of a lower elementary student.