

2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR



# COVID-19 Handbook

MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF DURHAM



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# Introduction

Every decision and action we take in preparation for the reopening of Montessori School of Durham for the 2020-21 school year is guided by the following core principles:

- We will proactively guard the health, well-being, and safety of the children, adolescents, 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, respected, and celebrated. We will offer our students a powerful learning program, regardless of the format. We are not looking to simply mirror “the way things were,” but will explore and capitalize on the advantages and opportunities provided as we go. Our commitment is to make the coming year both rewarding and memorable for our staff, students, and families.

The following is the Montessori School of Durham COVID-19 Handbook, including information on our sanitation protocols, staff training, health screening, campus procedures, distancing and safety protocols, communication and technology plans, and remote learning and hybrid learning plans. The policies and procedures we are employing work to mitigate COVID-19 related risks at school. These plans are built around intensive 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. Please be aware that this plan is fluid and will be evolving over time at MSD’s discretion, while considering national, state, and local government agencies' recommendations and requirements. These agencies include the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS). We also work closely with the North Carolina Association of Independent Schools (NCAIS) and their member Heads of Schools around the state to arrive at policies and safety practices specific to our areas of operation. This handbook is not intended as a contract and the school reserves the right to modify, at any time, any of the policies described or privileges granted. The policies and procedures in this document supersede some in the Family Handbook during this time.

# Sanitation Protocols

MSD will practice sanitation protocols that will be updated as needed to reflect current safety and health guidelines from national, state, and local organizations.

## Sanitation Materials

- Hand sanitizer and soap will be provided in the classrooms for hand washing.
- Disposable, one-time use paper based products for drying hands and drinking water will be used in the classrooms. Elementary students will use their own individual water bottles.
- UVC (ultraviolet light with wavelengths between 200-280 nanometers) lamps will be used at the end of each school day after children have left the campus. UVC light is a shorter wavelength than visible light, and is able to penetrate and destroy the bodies of viruses and bacteria.

## Playgrounds

- Play equipment and structure handles will be disinfected regularly between class playground periods and as needed using EPA-approved cleaning products.
- Each class will use individual bins of play equipment.

## Classrooms

- All classrooms will be cleaned regularly and as needed. All surfaces that have been used will be disinfected using EPA-approved cleaning products. MSD will follow the CDC recommendations for cleaning and disinfecting.
- Tables will be sanitized using EPA-approved cleaning products before and after snack and lunch.
- Mats for napping will be sanitized daily using EPA-approved cleaning products. Blankets and nap belongings, provided by families, will be sent home weekly for laundering.

## Bathrooms

- All bathrooms will be cleaned regularly and as needed. All surfaces that have been used will be disinfected using EPA-approved cleaning products.

## Shared Spaces

- Gates, handrails, and entry door knobs and handles will be sanitized following arrivals and dismissals and as needed.



# Sanitation Protocols (continued)

## Glove Use

- Our top priority is always protecting our community. Based on CDC findings, MSD does not require or recommend that our staff and students wear gloves except for:
  - Disinfection of the Isolation Room
  - Disinfection of common surfaces
- Regular use of gloves will include, but is not limited to: toileting, handling of soiled clothing, administering first aid, etc.

## Janitorial Company

- The janitorial company will use EPA-approved cleaners and sanitizers.
- All janitorial personnel are trained in COVID-19 sanitation procedures.
- The trained janitorial personnel will clean, disinfect, and dispose of hazardous waste.
- The janitorial company will use proper equipment and personal protective equipment (PPE) to perform their tasks.

## Sanitation Procedures if there is a COVID-19 diagnosis in the MSD Community

- COVID-19 “deep cleaning” is triggered when an active employee or student is identified as being COVID-19 positive by testing.
- Deep cleaning should be performed 24 hours after the school is notified of a positive case.
- The janitorial company will be contacted to deep-clean. They will follow all necessary procedures and local authorizations or permits to perform disinfection services and manage any waste generated.
- The MSD COVID-19 Crisis Management Team will coordinate and supervise the cleaning and disinfection process. They will ensure that:
  - Specific plans and strategies to clean all classrooms, common areas, offices, and any typical areas where staff and students interact will be followed.
  - Only authorized people access the school during the cleaning operation.
  - All third party team members will use any required PPE, which will be properly disposed of at the end of the process.
  - Employees are made aware that the work areas have been disinfected.

## Staff Training

All MSD staff will receive training to ensure that all understand the safety requirements, protocols, and expectations to help ensure everyone and their communities stay safe and prevent the spread of COVID-19. Training will include pre-return to campus trainings presented remotely in order to ensure employees' understanding and preparedness is in alignment with the MSD COVID-19 Response Plan. Prior to the orientation weeks, onsite training will present the protocols and procedures to all employees in order to ensure employees' understanding and preparedness is in alignment with the MSD COVID-19 Response Plan.

The training includes an overview of the MSD COVID-19 Response Plan and operating protocols including, but not limited to, personal protective equipment, disinfection measures and daily checklists, isolation protocol, social distancing protocol, self-quarantining and return to work, and visitor and contractor screening.

As MSD receives updates from local, state, and/or federal agencies, additional training will be provided to the staff.

## Health Screening

Daily employee and child health screenings are important to help reduce the transmission of COVID-19 at school.

**Health and Temperature Screening Protocol-** All children and staff who meet any of the criteria below will be denied entry. (We understand that this may be inconvenient but is necessary to minimize exposure and spread of COVID-19):

- Temperature of 100.4°F or above. Children and staff are not allowed to come to campus if medications were used to lower their temperature.
- Any of the following symptoms, if the symptom is of greater intensity or frequency than what is normally experienced:
  - Fever or chills
  - Cough
  - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - Fatigue
  - Muscle or body aches
  - Headache
  - New loss of taste or smell
  - Sore throat
  - Congestion or runny nose
  - Nausea or vomiting
  - Diarrhea

***\*This list of symptoms is subject to change as more information becomes available\****

# Health Screening (continued)

## Health and Temperature Screening Protocol (continued)-

- In the previous 14 days has had contact with someone with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19;
- or Is under investigation for COVID-19.

## Staff Self-Screening Prior to Arrival at School

Faculty and staff must attest to being symptom-free each day utilizing a mobile platform called Ascend, which will allow us to manage and monitor the health of employees and students. If a staff member self-identifies as having symptoms listed in the screening criteria above, they will contact the designated administrator, not come into work, and follow the procedures in the section: COVID-19 Symptoms at School - Staff.

## Staff Screening at School

Each day, all staff members' temperatures will be rechecked upon arrival to campus.

## Parent Screening of Child Prior to Morning Drop-Off

Parents are encouraged to be on the alert for signs of illness in their children and are required to keep them home when they are sick. Parents are required to attest that their child is symptom-free each day utilizing a mobile platform called Ascend, which will allow us to manage and monitor the return of employees and students. Parents who have not completed this screening prior to arrival must complete it prior to exiting the car to begin the school day. Those that do not have technology to access the screening must come to the office to complete the screening before continuing through the drop-off procedures.

## Staff Screening of Child at School

- Upon arrival, a staff member will take your child's temperature using a contactless thermometer. (See Drop-Off Procedures)
  - If the child has a temperature of 100.4°F or above, the staff member will verify the temperature again.
  - A child with a temperature of 100.4°F or above will not be admitted.

# Health Screening (continued)

## Staff Screening of Child at School (continued)

- Staff will make a visual inspection of the child for signs of illness which could include flushed cheeks, rapid breathing or difficulty breathing (without recent physical activity), fatigue, or extreme fussiness. If the child exhibits COVID-19 symptoms at arrival or at any point during the day, the child will be isolated and parents will be required to pick up their child.

## Absences from School

All absences must be reported by phone call to the office or by email to [Ashley@msdurham.org](mailto:Ashley@msdurham.org). Any families who have not reported an absence, have not arrived at school, and have not completed the self-screening protocol for their child will receive a phone call from an administrator to inquire as to the reasons for the child's absence and to determine whether the child is showing COVID-19 symptoms. The child or staff member experiencing symptoms that could be COVID-19 needs to see their health care provider. Please refer to the COVID-19 At-A-Glance Hand-Out for procedures or documentation necessary before a child returns.

# COVID-19 Symptoms and COVID-19 Cases in School

## COVID-19 Symptoms at School - Children

If COVID-19 symptoms begin while 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.

- Staff will follow these isolation procedures:
  - Office staff will come to get the child and will bring them to the isolation location:
    - Isolation location: Main office, side door office
  - The classroom staff will inform the office staff 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.
  - Parents will be provided the "At-a-Glance COVID-19 Handout."
  - 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.



## Health Screening (continued)

- Families are encouraged to coordinate decision-making around the child's care with the family health care provider if there are specific health concerns, chronic disease, or complex social or emotional dynamics in the home.
- The child experiencing symptoms that could be COVID-19 needs to see their health care provider. Please refer to the COVID-19 At-A-Glance Hand-Out for procedures or documentation necessary before a child returns. **NC DHHS has clarified that in order for someone (student or employee) to return to school after having symptoms that could be COVID-19, a negative molecular PCR (polymerase chain reaction) COVID test, rather than a rapid antigen test, is required along with the other documentation noted in the At-A-Glance Hand-Out.**

### Parent Responsibility

It is the responsibility of our entire community to protect the health and safety of the students, staff, and families. The following are two important areas that our parents must support to promote the health and well-being of the entire school community:

- Please do not send your children to school if they are showing any signs of illness. This is more important than ever before and supports the state requirements.
- If a child is sick, they will need to be picked up promptly (as soon as reasonably possible). Thus, we ask that parents ensure that either a parent or an emergency contact is readily available to come get a child if necessary on any given day. This means if a parent is out of town for any reason, the emergency contact should be notified ahead of time and made aware of their responsibility to be available to pick up an ill child as promptly as possible.

### COVID-19 Symptoms at School - Staff

Staff is encouraged to monitor their health and is required to perform daily health screenings for symptoms of COVID-19. Staff is required to stay home if they are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 and to contact their healthcare provider.

- Staff exhibiting new or worsening symptoms of possible COVID-19 at school should:
  - Leave the classroom
  - Obtain a COVID-19 test **(molecular PCR (polymerase chain reaction) COVID test, rather than a rapid antigen test)**
  - Follow the recommendations of their healthcare provider and, if tested positive, follow our procedures under: Positive Case of COVID-19 in the Community - Children or Staff

# Health Screening (continued)

## COVID-19 Exposure - Staff and Children

If a staff member or child has been identified as in close contact to someone outside the classroom community who is diagnosed with COVID-19, the staff member or child should obtain a COVID-19 test. Follow the At-A-Glance handout for quarantine procedures. Please contact the Office Manager and email the results of the COVID-19 test so we can plan for return to campus accordingly. If a positive case is confirmed, the procedures under "Positive Case of COVID-19 in the Community - Children or Staff" will be followed.

## Positive Case of COVID-19 in the Community - Children or Staff

If COVID-19 is confirmed in a child or staff member in a classroom community, all persons regularly in that community will be required to self-quarantine for 14 days per the CDC guidelines. MSD enrolled siblings or MSD staff members with students in that classroom community will also be required to self-quarantine. The following actions will be taken by school administration:

- Contact North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services to report the presence of COVID-19 at our school.
- Notify staff and parents/caregivers that a member of the classroom community has been diagnosed with COVID-19. Confidentiality will be maintained.
- Notify the school community that a child in the school (not their classroom community) has been diagnosed with COVID-19. Confidentiality will be maintained.
- Close the specific classroom community for 14 days to allow self-quarantine for all children and staff in the classroom community who have been in close contact with the person diagnosed with COVID-19 (per CDC guidelines).<sup>\*</sup> MSD enrolled siblings or MSD staff members with students in that classroom community will also be required to self-quarantine
- After 24 hours, complete disinfecting procedures
- During this time, the classroom involved will operate through remote learning. In addition, if a classroom is quarantined, any siblings, children, or staff members related to the individual showing symptoms of COVID-19 will be quarantined at home, as well. Our commitment is to continue to support any children quarantined at home with access to remote learning as much as possible.

*<sup>\*</sup>Decisions about extending remote learning as a result of a positive case will be made in consultation with the NCDHHS.*

# Health Screening (continued)

## Quarantine and Isolation Definitions (from the CDC)

- **Quarantine** is used to keep someone who might have been exposed to COVID-19 away from others. Quarantine helps prevent spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms. People in quarantine should stay home, separate themselves from others, monitor their health, and follow directions from their state or local health department.
- **Isolation** is used to separate people infected with the virus (those who are sick with COVID-19 and those with no symptoms) from people who are not infected. People who are in isolation should stay home until it's safe for them to be around others. In the home, anyone sick or infected should separate themselves from others by staying in a specific "sick room" or area and using a separate bathroom (if available).

## COVID-19 Testing

- Testing is done based on CDC recommendation for those with symptoms, those who do not have symptoms, but came in close contact with someone who has tested positive, and those who are in a CDC-defined high-risk group. MSD recommends that employees and families utilize their primary care physician (PCP) to seek medical care. CDC does not recommend widespread, asymptomatic testing, and instead recommends that all individuals take preventative measures including wearing face coverings and maintaining physical distancing to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus.
- NC DHHS has clarified that in order for someone (student or employee) to return to school after having symptoms that could be COVID-19, a negative molecular PCR (polymerase chain reaction) COVID test, rather than a rapid antigen test, is required along with the other documentation noted in the At-A-Glance Hand-Out.
- For more information, call the NCDHHS hotline at 2-1-1 or 888-892-1162 (available 24/7), or the Durham County COVID-19 Hotline at 919-635-8150 (available 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday through Friday).
- MSD will coordinate with the Durham County Department of Public Health to determine when and how to inform families, students, faculty and staff as appropriate and maintain privacy and confidentiality as required by law. MSD may also decide to issue notifications above and beyond what public health notification guidelines call for. Suspected, presumed, and confirmed cases will be reported to the MSD COVID-19 response team, including but not limited to the Administrative Team.

# Health Screening (continued)

## Flu Shots

Flu shots are highly recommended for all students, staff, and faculty in the fall to limit the number of people with COVID-19-like symptoms. Flu shots will not prevent COVID-19 but will limit the number of people who exhibit COVID-19 symptoms and will make testing for COVID-19 more efficient and effective. Additionally, flu shots will keep flu patients from overwhelming community health systems, allowing COVID-19 patients access to medical care.

## Drop-Off, Before School Care, and Dismissal Procedures

Due to COVID-19, our drop-off procedures will be modified to keep everyone as safe as possible as we return to school. We understand that this is a very stressful time, and we are all getting used to these new procedures. Please help us to keep the children as safe as possible by carefully reading these guidelines. With these new procedures, it will be difficult for your child's teacher to have a conversation with you at dismissal time. Keeping good communication is important to us so please, if you have any questions, feel free to email your child's teacher and set up a time to speak with them over the phone.

## Face Coverings

Young children sometimes find it difficult to wear a face covering, so we recommend that both you and your child/children (Early Childhood and Elementary students) wear your face coverings(s) on the way to school to establish the expectation that when they're going to school they will need to wear a face covering. If your child will not wear their face covering on the way to school, please be sure they put it on as soon as you arrive on campus. [Here is a link to the CDC's guidance on use of face coverings.](#)

## Toddler Drop Off Procedures (Half-day and All-day class)

- Toddler parents/guardians will bring their child to the first gate on the way to the Toddler playground. Please remember that parents/guardians must wear a face covering and social distance while waiting at the gate.
- An MSD staff member will be available at the gate to take your child's temperature with a touchless thermometer. After confirming that your child's temperature is below 100.4°F, an MSD staff member will guide your child to their classroom.
- In the event that your child cannot enter school you will be sent home with instruction on the guidelines for returning to school.

## Toddler Before School Care (BSC) Drop-Off Procedures

- Toddler BSC begins at 7:45 am. Children in BSC will be in their own classroom or on the playground by class if possible.
- Toddler parents/guardians will bring their child to the first gate on the way to the Toddler playground. Please remember that parents/guardians must wear a face covering and social distance while waiting at the gate.
- An MSD staff member will be available at the gate to take your child's temperature with a touchless thermometer. After confirming that your child's temperature is below 100.4°F, an MSD staff member will guide your child to their classroom.
  - In the event that your child cannot enter school you will be sent home with instruction on the guidelines for returning to school.

## Toddler Before School Care (BSC) Drop-In

- Drop-in use of this program is possible when space allows, for \$5.00/day per child. Before dropping off your child, you will be asked to fill out a billing form with your name and the date, and you will be invoiced for care on your next tuition account statement. If you would like regular Before School Care for your child, please contact the office to contract that care.
- Please follow the Toddler Before School Care (BSC) Drop-Off Procedures above.

Class	School Days	School Hours	Drop-Off Window	Pick-Up Window
3-Day Toddler	Tues, Wed, Thurs	9:00am-12:00pm	8:40am-9:00am	12:00pm-12:15pm
5-Day Toddler	Monday-Friday	9:00am-12:00pm	8:40am-9:00am	12:00pm-12:15pm
All-Day Toddler	Monday-Friday	9:00am-5:30 pm	8:40am-9:00am	2:45-3:00pm, 3:45-4:00pm, 5:15-5:30pm

Toddler Before School Care begins at 7:45. All toddler students can drop in for this care.



## Half-day Toddler Dismissal Procedures

- Park and wait at the first gate on the way to the toddler playground to collect your child.
- Toddler parents/guardians will pick up their child from an MSD staff member at the first gate on the way to the Toddler playground.
- Please be sure you are wearing a face covering and social distancing while you wait.

## All-Day Toddler Dismissal Procedures

- Park and wait at the first gate on the way to the toddler playground to collect your child.
- Toddler parents/guardians will pick up their child from an MSD staff member at the first gate on the way to the Toddler playground.
- Ring the bell next to the gate and wait for a staff member to bring your child out. If the staff do not respond after a few moments, please call the school phone number (919-489-9045).
- Please be sure you are wearing a face covering and social distancing while you wait.

## All-Day Toddler Extended Pick-Up Drop-In

- If your child is in the All-Day Toddler class with a contracted pick-up time of 3pm or 4pm and you occasionally need your child to stay later, we can accommodate a later pick-up time of 4pm or 5:30pm. Please contact the office with at least 15 minutes or more of advanced notice to make arrangements. You will be invoiced for the cost of care at a Drop-in rate of \$12 per hour. Care is billed after use and will appear on your statement at the end of the month. Payment is due on the first of the following month. If you would like regular extended pick-up for your all-day toddler child, please contact the office to contract that extended care.
- If you are unable to notify us at least 15 minutes before the Drop-in Care begins, it will be billed at an Emergency Drop-in rate of \$15 per hour.
- No penalties apply for canceling an extended pick-up time, however a courtesy call is appreciated. Knowing a family's plans helps the staff to set expectations for your child regarding the length of their day.
- When arriving for dismissal, please follow the All-Day Toddler Dismissal Procedures above.

## Early Childhood and Elementary Drop-Off Procedures

- **Carline Drop-Off for Early Childhood and Elementary students:**

- Pull down the driveway, to the right, and park in front of the stop sign at the corner of the last Early Childhood building.
- Please be sure that each person (3 years-old and above) in the car is wearing a face covering. A face covering is required for each Early Childhood and Elementary student coming to school. Have your window rolled down so we can take the temperature (with a touchless thermometer) of the MSD student being dropped-off. The student's temperature must be below 100.4°F to be dropped off.
  - In the event that your child/children cannot enter school you will be sent home with instruction on the guidelines for returning.
- If your child needs help, please get them out of their car seat and onto the sidewalk.
- The child will then be guided or directed to the appropriate classroom.

- **Pedestrian Drop Off for Elementary students Only**

- Park in the top parking lot and wait outside the office to be checked in.
- Please be sure all family members (3 years-old and above) at drop-off are wearing a face covering and that you maintain social distance from other families. A face covering is required for each Early Childhood and Elementary student coming to school.
- A staff member will check your MSD student's temperature with a touchless thermometer. The temperature check must be below 100.4°F to be dropped off.
  - In the event that your child/children cannot enter school you will be sent home with instruction on the guidelines for returning.
- The child will then be guided or directed to the appropriate classroom.

## Early Childhood and Elementary Before School Care (BSC) Drop-Off Procedures

- **Drop-Off for Early Childhood Before School Care (BSC) children in Betsy's class and in Denise's class:**

- Early Childhood BSC begins at 7:45am. BSC will be in the child's regular classroom.
- Pull down the driveway, to the right, and park in front of the stop sign at the corner of the last Early Childhood building.

## Early Childhood and Elementary Before School Care (BSC) Drop-Off Procedures (continued)

- Please be sure that each person (3 years-old and above) in the car is wearing a face covering. A face covering is required for each Early Childhood and Elementary student coming to school. Have your window rolled down so we can take the temperature (with a touchless thermometer) of the MSD student being dropped-off. The student's temperature must be below 100.4°F to be dropped off.
    - In the event that your child/children cannot enter school you will be sent home with instruction on the guidelines for returning.
  - If your child's needs help, please get them out of their car seat and onto the sidewalk.
  - The child will then be guided or directed to the appropriate classroom.
- **Drop-Off for Early Childhood Before School Care (BSC) children in Lisa's class and in Elementary:**
    - Early Childhood BSC begins at 7:45am. BSC will be in the child's regular classroom.
    - Park in the top parking lot and wait outside the office to be checked in.
    - Please be sure all family members (3 years-old and above) at drop-off are wearing a face covering and that you maintain social distance from other families. A face covering is required for each Early Childhood and Elementary student coming to school.
    - A staff member will check your MSD student's temperature with a touchless thermometer. The temperature check must be below 100.4°F to be dropped off.
      - In the event that your child/children cannot enter school you will be sent home with instruction on the guidelines for returning.
    - The child will then be guided or directed to the appropriate classroom.
  - **Early Childhood and Elementary Before School (BSC) Care Drop-In**
    - Drop-in use of this program is possible when space allows, for \$5.00/day per child. Before dropping off your child, you will be asked to fill out a billing form with your name and the date, and you will be invoiced for care on your next tuition account statement. If you would like regular Before School Care for your child, please contact the office to contract that care.
    - Please follow the Early Childhood and Elementary BSC Drop-Off Procedures above.

Level	School Hours	Drop-Off Window	Pick-Up Window	After School Pick-Up Window
Early Childhood	8:30am-12:00pm	8:15am-8:30am	12:00pm-12:10pm	3:00-3:10pm, 4:00-4:10pm, 6:00pm
Kindergarten	8:30am-3:00pm	8:15am-8:30am	3:00pm-3:20pm	4:00-4:10pm, 6:00pm
Elementary	8:20am-3:00pm	8:10am-8:20am	3:00pm-3:20pm	4:00-4:10pm, 6:00pm

Before School Care begins at 7:45. After the end of the drop-off or pick-up “window” of time, students are considered late for school or pick-up.

## Early Childhood and Elementary Dismissal Procedures

- **Procedures for dismissal in the car line:**

- Cars should pull all the way up on the right, in front of the stop sign, at the corner of the last Early Childhood building, and your child will be brought to you. For everyone’s safety, parents/guardians will help their child/children to get in the car and buckled in.
- Early Childhood and Elementary children will be dismissed one by one from their classrooms when their parent/guardian pulls up in the dismissal area of the car line.
- Please be sure to wear a face covering during dismissal.
- *The 3:00pm pick-up window has been extended in order to dismiss all students directly from their classroom spaces. The Kindergarten, Elementary, and Early Childhood After School pick-up window is now 3:00-3:20pm.*

- **Pedestrians picking up Elementary Children:**

- Park in the top parking lot and wait to pick up your child outside the office.
- Please social distance and wear a face covering while you wait.
- Your child/children will be brought to you at the office.
- If you miss the 12:00-12:10pm pick-up window, your child will be considered an After-School Drop-In. Please come to the office when you arrive so that your child will be brought to you.
- If you miss the 3:00-3:20pm pick-up window, your child will be considered an After-School Drop-In. Please follow the the After School Dismissal Procedures on page 16.

## Early Childhood and Elementary After School (AS) Dismissal Procedures (for 4:00pm and 6:00pm pick-up)

- **If you are picking up an AS student from Lisa's class or Elementary:**
  - Park in the top parking lot and, if your child is in Lisa's class, go to the After School playground gate. If your child is in Elementary, go to the Elementary playground gate at the bottom of the stairs. Please look for signage so you know where to go.
  - Ring the bell next to either gate and wait for a staff member to acknowledge you and bring your child(ren) out. If the staff do not respond after a few moments, please call the school phone number (919-489-9045).
  - We ask that all parents/guardians picking up their After School student(s) wear a face covering and maintain social distancing when on campus.
- **If you are picking up an AS student from Betsy's or Denise's class:**
  - Park in the lower parking area and walk to the dismissal shelter gate. Please look for signage so you know where to go.
  - Ring the bell next to the gate and wait for a staff member to acknowledge you and bring your child(ren) out. If the staff do not respond after a few moments, please call the school phone number (919-489-9045).
  - We ask that all parents/guardians picking up their After School student(s) wear a face covering and maintain social distancing when on campus.

## Early Childhood and Elementary AS Drop-In Procedures

All After School students (contracted or drop-in) will remain in their respective classrooms. In case of a family's unforeseen/occasional need for After School care, the drop-in process is:

- Email or call the school as early as possible but at least 15 minutes before the beginning of dismissal for your child so we can notify the staff.
- If you are unable to notify us at least 15 minutes before the Drop-in Care begins, it will be billed at an Emergency Drop-in rate of \$15 per hour.
- You will be invoiced for the cost of care at a Drop-in rate of \$12 per hour. Care is billed after use and will appear on your statement at the end of the month. Payment is due on the first of the following month.
- All Drop-in Care is billed for a one-hour minimum and quarter hour increments thereafter.
- No penalties apply for canceling or not showing up, however a courtesy call is appreciated.
- For dismissal procedures from After School at 3:00pm, refer to the Early Childhood and Elementary Dismissal Procedures on page 15. For dismissal procedures from After School at 4:00 or 6:00pm, refer to the Early Childhood and Elementary After School (AS) Dismissal Procedures above.



## Late Arrival Drop-Off Procedures for All Students

- Park in the top parking lot and wait outside the office to be checked in.
- Please be sure all family members (3 years-old and above) at drop-off are wearing a face covering and that you maintain social distance from other families. A face covering is required for each Early Childhood and Elementary student coming to school.
- A staff member will check your MSD student's temperature with a touchless thermometer. The temperature check must be below 100.4°F to be dropped off.
  - In the event that your child/children cannot enter school you will be sent home with instruction on the guidelines for returning.
- The child will then be guided or directed to the appropriate classroom.

## General Distancing and Safety Protocols

- **Students:**
  - Face Coverings: All Early Childhood and Elementary students will wear face coverings as they are able throughout the day. We do not allow masks that have exhalation valves or vents or neck gaiters as face coverings on campus.
  - Campus Transitions: The children will stay in their classroom, in their classroom's outdoor work space, or on the playground at designated times, throughout the entire day. If necessary, teachers will coordinate movement of children around campus using walkie talkies.
  - Celebrations: Celebrations of any kind, such as birthdays and holidays, will be enjoyed in the individual class inside the classrooms or outside with social distancing.
- **Faculty and Staff:**
  - Social Distancing:
    - Staff and faculty are encouraged to social distance from the students and one another throughout the day. The level of distancing between students and teachers may vary depending on the age of the child.
    - Communication will be by computer, phone, or walkie talkie as much as possible.
  - Face Coverings: Faculty and staff will wear face coverings whenever possible. We do not allow masks that have exhalation valves or vents or neck gaiters as face coverings on campus.
  - Hand washing: Faculty and staff are encouraged to wash their hands often, according to our workplace protocols. Specific times when they should wash their hands include:
 

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Transitioning from room to room</li> <li>▪ After using the restroom</li> <li>▪ After sneezing, coughing, or nose blowing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Before and after eating</li> <li>▪ After touching commonly used surfaces</li> <li>▪ If it is necessary for them to be in contact with a student.</li> </ul>
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## General Distancing and Safety Protocols (continued)

- **Therapy at School**

- From time to time students are recommended for occupational, physical, speech, or other therapies. MSD is glad to have therapy sessions occur at school. Teachers and Instructors benefit from receiving recommendations from therapists for strategies for the classroom.
- Before a therapist can work with a child at MSD, the therapist must complete a Background Authorization Form so that the school can conduct a background check which will be billed to the parents of the child receiving services. Therapists must also provide a Certificate of Liability naming MSD as an additionally insured party.
- We ask that parents and therapists notify the office to schedule use of a sanitized room.
- All therapists must complete a health screening in the office every time they come to campus.

- **Enrichments:** More information about potential, limited enrichment offerings will be announced as we are able. We are planning new, engaging offerings for After School students or those that drop in for After School with their class.
- **No School Camp:** Notice regarding No School Camps will be communicated when more information is available. Orientation Week 2 camp is not available this school year.
- **If there is a suspected or presumptive case of COVID-19 during the school day:** Staff will follow our protocol for documentation and the child will be brought to the isolation room away from other children and members of the community to wait with a supervising adult.

## Toddler Distancing and Safety Protocols

- **Drop Off: (see Toddler Drop-Off Procedures on page 10)**

- Each child will be checked in before coming to the classroom at the first gate on the way to the Toddler playground. Check in will include a temperature check with a touchless thermometer.
- For children of this age, it is not recommended that they wear face coverings.
- The child/children will be guided directly to their classroom by an MSD staff member.

- **Within the classroom:**

- Group gatherings will be kept to a minimum and lessons will be socially distanced as much as possible.
- The work space will be arranged to allow for as much social distancing as possible.
- Sanitizing of materials and workspaces will take place according to our protocols, which are informed by national, state, and local guidelines.

## Toddler Distancing and Safety Protocols (continued)

- **Within the classroom (continued):**

- Children will wash hands when they enter the classroom, before and after snack and lunch, after using the restroom, after sneezing, nose blowing, or coughing, and throughout the day as necessary.
- Hand sanitizer will be available at the entrance to each classroom and in class as needed.
- Children will not share food brought from home. Group food preparation by the children here at school will also be suspended for the time being.
- Windows will remain open as much as possible.
- It is at the teacher's discretion to send a child home if they suspect a child could be ill.

- **Snack and Lunchtime:**

- Teachers will sanitize the lunch and snack spaces according to the school's sanitation protocols.
- Children will wash their hands before and after lunch.
- All toddlers will bring their own snack and All-Day Toddler students will bring their own lunch.
- Children will be allowed to work outside and encouraged to distance from their classmates as much as possible.

- **Playground Time:** We are committed to providing opportunities for the children to play outside both individually or in small groups while social distancing as much as possible.

- Playground time will be on a rotating schedule by classroom.
- Children will have one-time use, disposable paper cups to access water when needed.
- Equipment and structure handles will be sanitized between classroom playground times according to our protocols based on national, state, and local guidelines.

- **Dismissal:** (see Toddler Dismissal Procedures on page 12)

- MSD staff will bring the child to their parent/guardian waiting at the first gate into the playground. Gates must remain closed.
- Please remember to wear a face covering and social distance as you wait to collect your child/children.

## Early Childhood Distancing and Safety Protocols

- **Drop-Off: (see EC and Elementary Drop-Off Procedures on page 13)**
  - Check in will include a temperature check with a touchless thermometer.
  - Children will wear face coverings at drop off.
  - Children will be guided to go directly to one of their classroom spaces to store their belongings, and begin work.
  - Each classroom of children will be divided into classroom spaces that they will rotate in and out of throughout the day.
    - Betsy's class will spread between their classroom and the vacant classroom in their building.
    - Denise's class will spread between their classroom and Lisa's classroom.
    - Lisa's class will move to the After School building.
- **Within the classroom:**
  - Group gatherings will be kept to a minimum and lessons will be socially distanced as much as possible.
  - Children will wear face coverings as much as possible throughout the day and will be reminded about the proper use of a face covering.
  - The work spaces will be arranged to allow for as much social distancing as possible.
  - Sanitizing of materials and workspaces will take place according to our protocols.
  - Children will wash their hands when they enter the classroom, before and after snack and lunch, after using the restroom, after sneezing, nose blowing and coughing, and throughout the day as necessary.
  - Hand sanitizer will be available at the entrance to each classroom and in class as needed.
  - Children will not share food brought from home. Group food preparation by the children here at school will also be suspended for the time being.
  - Windows will remain open as much as possible.
  - It is at the teacher's discretion to send a child home if they suspect a child could be ill.
- **Snack and Lunchtime:**
  - Snack and lunch will be brought from home.
  - The children will eat lunch in the classroom or outside (weather permitting) with their specific classroom while social distancing.
  - Snack will either be eaten together while social distancing or on their own in a specifically designated space.
  - Every child will wash their hands before and after eating.
  - Sanitation for snack and lunch will take place according to our protocols.

## Early Childhood Distancing and Safety Protocols (continued)

- **Outside work space (classroom patios):**

- Children will be allowed to work outside and will be monitored for social distancing.

- **Playground Time:**

- We are committed to providing opportunities for the children to play outside both individually or in small groups while social distancing as much as possible.
- Playground time will be on a rotating schedule by classroom.
- Children will have one-time use, disposable paper cups to access water when needed.
- Children will use their classroom bathrooms during playground time one at a time.
- All games, equipment, and structure handles will be sanitized between classroom playground times according to our protocols based on national, state, and local guidelines.
- Face coverings will not be required during playground time or vigorous outside physical activity unless this has been mandated by state or local government. They will store their face covering with their belongings to put back on when they come inside. They will be guided to follow CDC recommendations for taking on and off face coverings.
- The children will be given reminders about social distancing on the playground.

- **Kindergarten Reading:**

- Jessie, the Reading Specialist, will be collecting Kindergarten students outside their classrooms and bringing them to her room which has been sanitized according to our sanitation protocols and guidelines.
- Each classroom of Kindergarten students will have their own time for Reading to prevent the mixing of classes.

- **Dismissal: (see EC and Elementary Dismissal Procedures on page 15)**

- Children will be called for dismissal one at a time using walkie talkies and will be guided out to the car line.
- Parents/Guardians will be asked to wear a face covering while waiting for their child/children.



## Elementary Distancing and Safety Protocols

- **Drop-Off: (see EC and Elementary Drop-Off Procedures on page 13)**
  - Check in will include a temperature check with a touchless thermometer.
  - Children will wear face coverings at drop off.
  - Children will be directed to go directly to one of their classroom spaces to store their belongings, and begin their day.
  - Each classroom of children will be divided into classroom spaces that they will rotate in and out of throughout the day.
    - The Lower Elementary classes will spread between their classrooms and the Multi-Purpose building. (If the in-person numbers are such that the classes need to split, then:
      - Susannah's classroom will spread between their classroom and the Multi-Purpose building.
      - Shannon's classroom will spread between their classroom and the Elementary After School area.
    - Melissa's classroom will remain in their classroom as that area will allow for the recommended social distancing.
  - Please be sure their water bottle is full to minimize the number of times they need to refill while at school.
- **Within the classroom:**
  - Group gatherings will be kept to a minimum but the teachers will give small group lessons. Lessons will be socially distanced as much as possible.
  - Children will wear face coverings as much as possible throughout the day and will be reminded about the proper use of a face covering.
  - The work spaces will be arranged to allow for as much social distancing as possible.
  - Sanitizing of materials and workspaces will take place according to our protocols.
  - Children will wash their hands when they enter the classroom, before and after snack and lunch, after using the restroom, after sneezing, nose blowing, and coughing, and throughout the day as necessary.
  - Hand sanitizer will be available at the entrance to each classroom and in class as needed.
  - Children will not share food brought from home. Group food preparation by the children here at school will also be suspended for the time being.
  - Windows will remain open as much as possible.
  - It is at the teacher's discretion to send a child home if they suspect a child could be ill.

## Elementary Distancing and Safety Protocols (continued)

- **Snack and Lunchtime:**

- Snack and lunch will be brought from home.
- The children will eat lunch in the classroom or outside (weather permitting) with their specific class while social distancing.
- Snack will either be eaten together while social distancing or on their own in a specifically designated space.
- Every child will wash their hands before and after eating.
- Sanitation for snack and lunch will take place according to our protocols.

- **Outside work spaces:**

- Children will be allowed to work outside and will be monitored for social distancing.
- If a child is having trouble social distancing while working outside, they will be asked to rejoin the inside group.

- **Playground time: We are committed to providing opportunities for the children to play outside both individually or in small groups while social distancing as much as possible.**

- Playground time will be on a rotating schedule by classroom.
- Children's water bottles will be kept in individually-labeled cubbies on the porch to be accessed as needed.
- Children will be allowed to use their classroom bathrooms during playground time one at a time.
- All games, equipment, and structure handles will be sanitized between classroom playground times.
- Face coverings will not be required during playground time or vigorous outside physical activity unless this has been mandated by state or local government. They will store their face covering with their belongings to put back on when they come inside. They will be guided to follow CDC recommendations for taking on and off face coverings.
- If a child is actively not following the distancing rules, they will be asked to do a quiet activity by themselves until they can appropriately participate in playground time.

- **Specials Day:**

- Each class will start their day in their classrooms.
- Each class will have their own Specials day. They will rotate, by age group, between Music, Art, Spanish, and Reading, and they will move from each Special together as a group.

- **Field Trips:**

- For everyone's safety, off-campus field trips will be suspended until further notice. The Elementary children may still occasionally walk to Cornwallis park for outside work or play in the grassy spaces. This excludes use of the park equipment or facilities.
- The classes may take virtual field trips as arranged by the classroom teacher.

## Elementary Distancing and Safety Protocols (continued)

- **Dismissal: (see EC and Elementary Dismissal Procedures on page 15)**
  - Children will be called for dismissal one at a time using walkie talkies to either go to the car line or meet their parents who are in the pedestrian pick up area at the office.
  - Parents/Guardians will be asked to wear a face covering and social distance (if pedestrian pick-up) while waiting for their child/children.

For the safety of both the individual child and the rest of the group, if any child is consistently unwilling to follow our distancing procedures, they will be moved to the office and parents/guardians will be called to pick up their child. The child will be able to return when the parents/guardians have had an opportunity to conference with the child's teacher and either the Assistant Head of School or the Director of Elementary Education to discuss expectations moving forward.

## Communication and Technology Procedures

**The School will be communicating with parents as well as faculty and staff regarding COVID-19 in the following ways:**

- The administrative office will communicate with you directly should there be any updates on the COVID-19 situation that might have a direct impact on school operations. All updates and plans will be communicated via email and will then be posted on our website. ([see the COVID-19 page](#))
- You can [access the most up-to-date calendars for the year on our website](#). Any calendar changes will be communicated to enrolled families and will be posted on the website.
- Access to the MSD office will be limited. If you have a question or need to meet with an administrative staff member, please call or email to schedule an appointment.
- During Hybrid Learning or Remote Learning (defined on page 27), Teachers will establish a communication and lesson delivery schedule and virtual office hours to support students and families. During Hybrid Learning, Teachers will be connecting with families on a class level, and may share suggestions, feedback, and expectations on an individualized or small group level where necessary.
- Email remains the best way to contact a teacher. If you wish to speak to a teacher, please use email to set up a time for a phone call. Be aware that teachers may be calling from their personal cell phones. Please respect the privacy of teachers' numbers by not sharing them with others. In most cases, you can expect a response to emails within 24 hours, excluding weekends and planned school breaks.
- We will continue to post articles and celebrations of our students and community on MSD social media.

## Communication and Technology Procedures (continued)

**Technology Usage:** This will vary greatly depending on the age of the students and whether we are in a period of remote learning or in hybrid learning. The teachers may connect with the students, if necessary, through live conferencing programs such as Skype, Zoom, Google Meet, or Facetime. By accepting the call or invitation, parents authorize their child to participate in these face-to-face communications, and agree that there will be an adult present with the child, at least in the background, during any live session. This exception to our Code of Conduct is only for periods of time that we are in a remote learning or hybrid learning situation. If video of on-campus Elementary lessons or group time are shared with at-home hybrid learners, staff will abide by student photo use permissions provided by families.

**In general, the following communication methods may be used as needed depending on if we are in a remote or hybrid learning time:**

### Toddler

- Resource class or level page (via MSD website and requires page password)
- Teacher-sent educational materials (via MailChimp email)
- Google Meet, Zoom, or other video conferencing app (for individual calls during remote learning)
- Email

### Early Childhood:

- Resource class or level page (via MSD website and requires page password)
- Teacher-sent educational materials (via MailChimp email)
- Google Meet, Zoom, or other video conferencing app (for class meetings and individual calls during remote learning)
- Email
- SeeSaw app (Kindergarten) to give lessons, share assignments, and submit work

### Lower Elementary:

- Resource class or level page (via MSD website and requires page password)
- SeeSaw app to give lessons, share assignments, and submit work
- Google Meet, Zoom, or other video conferencing app (for class meetings and lessons)
- Email

### Upper Elementary:

- Resource class or level page (via MSD website and requires page password)
- SeeSaw app to give lessons, share assignments, and submit work
- Google Classroom/Google Drive accounts (no access to Gmail)
- Google Meet, Zoom, or other video conferencing app (for class meetings and lessons)
- Email

## Communication and Technology Procedures (continued)

MSD will teach Upper Elementary children the basics of safe internet practices. Out of respect for individual choices families may make in how and when to expose their children to this information, teaching these concepts to younger children will be the responsibility of parents, who are presumed to be in a position to know whether their children are active on the internet. **Common Sense Media** offers resources for parents and educators to help children navigate the sometimes treacherous waters of the internet. Here's the page that gets you into [Digital Citizenship](#), a program of lessons produced by Common Sense Media for empowering children to use technology safely, responsibly, and effectively. Parents would need to create a login (which is easy and free). All the resources you need to give the lesson are provided. It takes little to no time to prepare (read, print, or view a video), and you can easily modify and pick/choose specific parts. These are all backed by research from Harvard Graduate School of Education. They also have a parent's guide to [YouTube use](#).

Google for Education accounts are created for each Upper Elementary student through the msdurham.org domain. The students create files and store their work in their Google Drive accounts but do not have email access. Staff will monitor on-campus technology use and will oversee MSD account use. Computers, with access to the Internet, are set up in the Upper Elementary classroom only in high-traffic places and will be randomly monitored.

**Virtual Parent-Teacher Conferences:** Teachers will continue to use Montessori Records Express to make observation notes, record student progress, and create conference reports to send to parents. November Parent-Teacher Conferences will be scheduled with an online sign-up and will be held by the teachers via Zoom.

**Classroom Observations and On-Campus Volunteering Suspended:** Due to restrictions in place to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, classroom observations are suspended for all current parents, prospective parents, and student interns. All on-campus classroom presentations and volunteer opportunities are suspended. We are exploring possibilities for virtual presentations or volunteer opportunities. Administrators may conduct campus tours but will not enter classrooms and will only enter playgrounds that are not in use. All visitors will be required to wear a face covering and complete a health screening.

**Virtual Parent Education Nights:** The scheduled Parent Education nights will occur via Zoom and details will be communicated to families at least two weeks in advance.



## Communication and Technology Procedures (continued)

**Community Building:** Community Engagement is important to us. We are committed to providing opportunities to connect with new and existing families in a variety of ways. We encourage you to stay virtually connected with fellow MSD parents and families. The easiest way to do that is to stay in touch via email to plan any calls or video chats. You can find email addresses in our Family Directory, which will be provided to families after the orientation weeks of school. As we are able, other community events will be planned to connect with each other.

## Remote Learning & Hybrid Learning

In order to facilitate learning with students that may be at home for a period of time during this upcoming school year, we will outline guidelines below for “remote learning” and “hybrid learning.” During Hybrid Learning or Remote Learning, Teachers will establish a communication and lesson delivery schedule and virtual office hours to support students and families.

- **Remote learning** refers to a time when all of our students and staff are at home learning and working. At any point, it is possible the School may move to remote learning at the direction of the government or the Head of School.
- **Hybrid learning** refers to a time when a few or some students are at home learning while the remainder of the community is on campus. We recognize that there are some families who are immunocompromised or may otherwise opt not to attend classes in person.

If you opt for your child to learn from home while the remainder of students are on campus, we will need to be notified in writing (email [Natalie@msdurham.org](mailto:Natalie@msdurham.org)) **by 4pm the Tuesday before each week**, and your child will be considered a hybrid learner for the upcoming week. If you opt for your child to be a hybrid learner, this will be for the entire upcoming week. If your plan is to choose hybrid learning for an extended period of time, please let Natalie know your plan. This will inform our teachers of what hybrid learning materials they will provide.

In order for a student to return to on-campus learning, a family will contact Natalie ([natalie@msdurham.org](mailto:natalie@msdurham.org)) as they are considering their child's return to campus. Teachers and administrators will consult to determine the best date at which the child could have a smooth transition back to on-campus learning, which may be in coordination with another hybrid student's return. This will allow time to gather the necessary administrative return paperwork and plan a transition point with an orientation period as the child acclimates after many months away from "in-person" school. This also allows our teachers and specialists time to shift their focus from digitizing lessons and gathering take home materials for your child to preparing the classroom environment for your child's return.

## Remote Learning & Hybrid Learning (continued)

If your child or a family member is diagnosed with COVID-19 and/or your family is isolating/quarantining at home, you will be in touch with the administrative office to notify of that information and we will begin sharing hybrid learning materials as needed and as we are able, for the period that the child is out of the classroom.

**Campus Access:** Depending on the situation that dictates remote or hybrid learning, we will assess MSD family access to campus for pick-up of educational materials/supplies.

It is important to us that we maintain a feeling of connectedness through this process. We will be in regular contact in a variety of ways and continued communication between teachers and families is assured.

### Learning from a Montessori Perspective

When embarking on a time of learning from home, our aim is to create a Montessori-based framework that serves our students and supports parents as we all adapt to a different daily routine. It is important to us that the children's activity during this time be enjoyable, thoughtful, challenging, and rewarding. Our goal is to work in collaboration with families to keep alive the culture of learning that is unique to Montessori and provide families with support and activities that match the developmental needs and characteristics of each child in our community.

**How do we establish this at home?** The Montessori method is all about the process. While completion of work is important, it is our approach that makes all the difference. Learning is most effective when it is within a greater context. When we connect subjects and concepts, we establish meaning which fuels motivation in students. Above all, we want children to feel connected to their learning, not simply "complete assignments" while at home. Learning together with a sense of exploration, curiosity, and discovery results in deeper and more meaningful experiences for children. This instills a great sense of ownership and responsibility for the child.

### The Prepared Environment

For our younger students, the learning environment is your home and surroundings. This means supporting independence, engaging in meaningful tasks, and facilitating learning through various activities provided by the teachers. For our Elementary students, this will mean all of the above, plus establishing a quiet space, expectations, and routines for any specific assignments shared by teachers.

## Remote Learning & Hybrid Learning (continued)

### The Prepared Environment (continued)

Where age-appropriate you might like to discuss learning from home with your child and include them in some decision-making processes:

- Ask them where to set up their space (if applicable)
- Make a schedule together that works for your family (when to take breaks, have time outdoors, etc.)
- Gather ideas for activities and projects
- Organize materials

For our older students, it will be important for them to maintain their routine of handing in work and receiving feedback from their teachers. The teachers will share more information as the year begins and will help facilitate this process.

**Practical Life:** Practical life is an important part of experiential learning. It is part of every Montessori classroom and can be mirrored at home. These activities assist students in developing purposeful life skills for their continued growth and development. This includes refining fine motor and movement skills and practicing coordination, planning, and problem solving. Practical life activities:

- foster order and sequence;
- develop concentration;
- foster physical independence;
- foster the development of fine motor control; and
- provide opportunities for planning and carrying out tasks.

The Practical Life area also provides children with opportunities to contribute to family life. Inherent in these activities is the development of key executive functions: decision making, organization, problem-solving, impulse control, collaboration, and communication. These skills form the foundation of a child's academic learning. For example, sequencing a task is a pre-reading skill.

### Examples of practical life might include:

- setting the table;
- watering plants;
- tidying and organizing rooms;
- planning an outing;
- taking care of pets;
- preparing a snack/meal;
- helping with shopping lists/budgeting; or
- planting a small urban garden.

## Remote Learning & Hybrid Learning (continued)

Practical life is engaging for children at all stages of development and tasks are designed according to their level of coordination and independence. As your child gets older, these tasks will require less and less assistance from an adult. It is important to recognize when your child is increasing their level of independence and step back to allow their new skills to develop. You can organize a job chart or list of family projects as a way to help guide your child's interests. Planning and gathering resources to complete the tasks is purposeful work. These ideas foster a sense of contribution, responsibility, shared experiences, and satisfaction. As our children get older, these activities lead naturally to volunteer experiences and beginnings of community work. Refer to our [Age Appropriate Family Life Activities for Children](#) resource.

**The Uninterrupted Work Cycle:** Establishing a routine that works for your family is an essential first step to creating a successful learning environment at home. Children are very familiar with this framework from school. In a Montessori classroom, children are given large blocks of time in order to explore their work deeply. This contributes directly to the development of concentration and provides opportunities to problem-solve. It is the framework of this work cycle that allows learning to be child-centered, rather than teacher-directed.

**Ownership of Tasks and Sharing in Learning:** Montessori learning environments are rich, dynamic, and collaborative, resulting in skills and outcomes that will aid children throughout their lives. In order to foster a deep sense of ownership in their learning, we focus on two things: the developmental needs and characteristics of the child, and their interests. Here are a few key points that aid in cultivating a child's self-direction and attention to their work:

- Choice
- Participation in planning and organizing tasks
- Conversation
- Finding good resources
- Sharing of knowledge

You will be receiving regular communications from your child's classroom teachers. We encourage parents to monitor teacher suggestions and guidance when their child is completing work at home. The more children are involved in developing and detailing their activities, the more they can achieve.

## Remote Learning & Hybrid Learning (continued)

**A note regarding sharing and presenting work:** It is a regular occurrence in an Elementary classroom for children to present their work or projects to one another. This can be replicated at home. Planning a presentation or sharing time at the end of a project is very exciting for young children and gives our older students an opportunity to use their voice. It is an essential part of the learning process as it requires synthesis of learning to describe, explain, and express yourself clearly. It feels celebratory as well!

**Responsibility and Contribution to Community:** Being in a Montessori school is often described by students as being part of a big family. All of the aspects detailed above result in a feeling of belonging to a community and with that, we learn that there is a responsibility to ourselves, others, and the environment. It is our commitment to each child at MSD that they reach their fullest potential and feel that they are a valued part of our community.

**For more information regarding remote learning and hybrid learning by level:**

- [Check out the Toddler Remote Learning & Hybrid Learning Guide](#)
- [Check out the Early Childhood Remote Learning & Hybrid Learning Guide](#)
- [Check out the Elementary Remote Learning & Hybrid Learning Guide](#)