

2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR



# COVID-19 Handbook

MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF DURHAM



LAST UPDATED: FEBRUARY 22, 2022

# Table of Contents

Introduction..... 1

Sanitation Protocols.....2

Staff Training.....3

Health Screening.....3

Drop-Off, Before School Care, & Dismissal Procedures.....6

    Toddler Drop-Off, Before School Care, & Dismissal Procedures.....6

    Early Childhood/Elem Drop-Off, Before School Care, & Dismissal Procedures.....8

    After School Dismissal & Drop-In Procedures.....10

    Late Arrival Procedures for All Students.....11

General Distancing and Safety Protocols.....11

Communication Procedures.....13

## Introduction

Every decision and action we take in preparation for the 2021-22 school year at Montessori School of Durham are 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.

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, and communication plans. The policies and procedures we are employing work to mitigate COVID-19 related risks at MSD programs. These plans are built around intensive health monitoring and screening procedures, as well as classroom procedures designed to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. 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), the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), and the ABC Science Collective. 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.

# 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.

## 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.
- Air purifiers (with internal UV lights) will be running in the classroom spaces.
- Recommended HVAC filters were installed and will be replaced regularly.
- Mats for napping will be sanitized daily using EPA-approved cleaning products. Blankets and nap belongings, provided by families, will be laundered by the school or by the families (depending on the child's level).

## Bathrooms

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

## 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.

## 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. 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, quarantine protocol, 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

While we no longer require the daily Ascend Health Screening to be completed, the health of employees and children should be monitored to help reduce the transmission of COVID-19 at school. 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:
  - Shortness of Breath or difficulty breathing
  - Loss of smell or taste
  - Chills
  - Muscle pain/body aches
  - Vomiting or abdominal pain
  - More than 3 loose stools in 24 hours
  - Sore throat
  - Onset of severe headache
  - Fatigue
  - New uncontrolled cough
  - Loss of appetite
  - Congestion or runny nose

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

- or is under investigation for COVID-19.

***See procedures regarding exposure on the MSD COVID-19 Guidelines packet.***

# Health Screening (continued)

## Staff Screening of Child at School

Staff will make visual inspections of the child for signs of illness. If the child exhibits COVID-19 symptoms 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 [Moriah@msdurham.org](mailto:Moriah@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. Please refer to the MSD COVID-19 Guidelines packet for procedures or documentation necessary before return.

## 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 an isolated location.
  - 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 MSD COVID-19 Guidelines packet which provides guidance for next steps.

**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.

# Health Screening (continued)

## COVID-19 Symptoms - Staff

Staff must monitor their health and are required to stay home if they are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 and to contact the MSD office. If on campus, Staff exhibiting new or worsening symptoms of possible COVID-19 should leave the classroom and contact the MSD office. In both scenarios, staff must follow the MSD COVID-19 Guidelines packet.

## COVID-19 Exposure - Staff and Children

If a staff member or child has been identified as in close contact to someone who is diagnosed with COVID-19, follow the MSD COVID-19 Guidelines for procedures regarding exposure.

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

The individual that tests positive must contact the office and follow the MSD COVID-19 Guidelines for procedures regarding return to campus.

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.

## 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).

## Health Screening (continued)

**COVID-19 Vaccinations:** COVID-19 vaccinations are encouraged as they help protect from contracting COVID-19, limit the spread of COVID-19, and prevent from serious illness, hospitalization, or death due to COVID-19

**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. 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 procedures, it will be difficult for your child's teacher to have a conversation with you in the carline. 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.

### Toddler Drop Off Procedures

- Toddler parents/guardians will bring their child through the gates to the toddler playground, will check in at their child's welcome yard, and drop off their child's belongings.
- Toddler Before School Care (BSC) begins at 7:45 am. Children in BSC will be on the playground.
  - 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.

## Toddler Drop Off Procedures

- Toddler parents/guardians will bring their child through the gates to the toddler playground, will check in at their child's welcome yard, and drop off their child's belongings.
- Toddler Before School Care (BSC) begins at 7:45 am. Children in BSC will be on the playground.
  - 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.

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.

## Toddler Dismissal Procedures

- Park in the lower parking lot and walk through the gates onto the toddler playground to the welcome yard gate for your child's class. An MSD staff member will dismiss your child to you.

## 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 drop-in for 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.

## 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 your child (2 years-old and above) has a mask with them for school. Wearing a mask is optional indoors and outdoors as of April 18, 2022 but all students should have a spare mask on campus.
  - 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 Early Childhood and Elementary students:**
  - Park in the lower parking lot and walk up to the stop sign at the carline to be checked in.
    - Please be sure that your child (2 years-old and above) has a mask with them for school. Wearing a mask is optional indoors and outdoors as of April 18, 2022 but all students should have a spare mask on campus.
  - The child will then be guided or directed to the appropriate classroom.
  - There is NOT a pedestrian drop-off option at the front office or at the Elementary playground gate this year. All Early Childhood and Elementary students must arrive through the car line or be walked from the lower lot to the carline stop sign for check in.

## Early Childhood and Elementary Drop-Off Procedures (continued)

- **Drop-Off for Early Childhood and Elementary Before School Care (BSC) children:**
  - Early Childhood and Elementary BSC begins at 7:45am. BSC will be on the After School playground or in the After School building during inclement weather.
    - Please be sure that your child (2 years-old and above) has a mask with them for school. Wearing a mask is optional indoors and outdoors as of April 18, 2022 but all students should have a spare mask on campus.
  - Park in the top parking lot and walk your child to the After School playground and check them in on the BSC roster with the BSC staff.
  - Your child will be guided to their classroom from BSC when their level's arrival window begins.
- **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.

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-3:10pm	4:00-4:10pm, 6:00pm
Elementary	8:20am-3:00pm	8:10am-8:20am	3:00pm-3:10pm	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.
- 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 3:00-3:10pm pick-up window, your child will be considered an After-School Drop-In. Please follow the the After School Dismissal Procedures.

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

- Park in the top parking lot and go to the After School playground gate. 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).

## Early Childhood and Elementary AS Drop-In Procedures

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 for drop-in care, however a courtesy call is appreciated.

## Late Arrival Drop-Off Procedures for All Students

- Park in the top parking lot and wait outside the office to be checked in.
- The child will then be guided or directed to the appropriate classroom.

## General Distancing and Safety Protocols

### • Students:

- Masks: Please be sure that your child (2 years-old and above) has a mask with them for school. Wearing a mask is optional indoors and outdoors as of April 18, 2022 but all students should have a spare mask on campus. We do not allow masks that have exhalation valves or vents or neck gaiters on campus.

### • Faculty and Staff:

- Distancing:
  - Staff and faculty are encouraged to 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.
- Masks: Please be sure that your child (2 years-old and above) has a mask with them for school. Wearing a mask is optional indoors and outdoors as of April 18, 2022 but all students should have a spare mask on campus. We do not allow masks that have exhalation valves or vents or neck gaiters 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:
  - Transitioning from room to room
  - After using the restroom
  - After sneezing, coughing, or nose blowing
  - Before and after eating
  - After touching commonly used surfaces
  - If it is necessary for them to be in contact with a student.

### • Within the classroom:

- Group gatherings and lessons will be distanced as much as possible.
- The work space will be arranged to allow for as much distancing as possible.
- Sanitizing of materials and workspaces will take place according to our protocols, which are informed by national, state, and local guidelines.
- Children will wash hands regularly, especially before and after snack and lunch, after using the restroom, after sneezing, nose blowing, or coughing, and throughout the day as necessary.

## General Distancing and Safety Protocols (continued)

- Hand sanitizer will be available in class as needed.
- Children will not share food brought from home.
- The classes may engage in group food preparation. Proper handwashing and sanitation procedures will be followed.
- 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:**
  - All students will bring their own snacks and students staying all day will bring their own lunch.
  - Children will wash their hands before and after lunch.
  - Teachers will sanitize the lunch and snack spaces according to the school's sanitation protocols.
- **Outside work spaces:** Children will be allowed to work in their class' outdoor work space and distancing from their classmates will be monitored. If a child is having trouble 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 while distancing as much as possible. 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.
- 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 an administrator to discuss expectations moving forward.

**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 space.
- All therapists must complete a health screening in the office every time they come to campus.

# Communication 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. 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. Confirmed cases will be reported to the MSD COVID-19 response team, including but not limited to the Administrative Team.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.