



COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan

After considerable planning and deliberation, we have decided to reopen Montessori Children's Academy on August 3, 2020. We are opening with the intention of completing our usual 175 - 180 days of school just as we strive to do in our regular academic year. By adding time onto the beginning of the year and by maintaining a flexible calendar for the remaining time, we hope to be able to withstand another possible closure.

Reopening MCA entails some increased risk of contracting the COVID-19 virus for all concerned because attending school involves daily human contact among children and staff who will then be in contact with others in their own homes. Our decision to reopen recognizes that:

1. for MCA families and staff, that risk is balanced against the educational, social, economic and other costs of remaining closed,
2. our school will reopen with many new health and safety protocols in place so that we will do everything we can to responsibly mitigate that risk to the extent possible, and
3. each family and staff member must decide how to balance those risks, and whether to return to school.

Our classroom environments are designed to harness the developmental forces of each plane of a child's development for the child's own optimal self-construction through experiential interactions with the environment. Our ability to guide that development is diminished in the absence of a face-to-face learning environment. By reopening our classes we are aiming to fulfill the mission of Montessori Children's Academy, which is to guide the intellectual and character development of each child along a path towards his/her full and unknown potential, in ways that honor the complementary needs of the individual and the group.

This document explains the policies and procedures that we are employing to mitigate COVID-related risks at school. This approach is 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. These procedures will not require young children to wear face coverings in the classroom (though guides will wear face coverings most of the time) or to observe the social distancing rules expected of older children and adults. We do not believe it is possible to enforce those restrictions with our younger children.

Nevertheless, we believe that reopening with these new protocols represents an important first step in responsibly living with this virus.

In sum, MCA has concluded that reopening under these conditions is in the best interest of the community and that each family will make its own decision about the balance of risk with what is best for their children. The information in this document will provide clarity around the practices and procedures that we have established to minimize exposure to our community but in no way warrants that COVID-19 or other communicable disease infection will not occur through participation in our programs.

Reopening Policies and Procedures for Staff and Children

These policies and procedures are adopted in accordance with the State of Michigan and the child care licensing rules and guidelines as well as those of the Center for Disease Control (CDC) as a means to limit exposure to COVID-19. They are subject to change as warranted by local and state mandates. Parents and staff will be informed via email of updated versions with at least 24 hours notice.

Daily Procedures

Operating Hours

We will temporarily change our operating hours to 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. This will allow us to maintain consistent staff interaction with the children.

Child Arrival and Departure

Our existing assisted arrival and departure system, with added procedures for health screening, meet the state guidelines for social distancing and limited contact.

Drop Off Procedure

- Parents are encouraged to be on the alert for signs of illness in their children and to keep them home when they are sick.
- Parents are required to conduct pre-screening each day at home, fill out the pre-screening form, and hand it in upon arrival. Parents who have not completed the pre-screening form prior to arrival must complete it prior to having the child taken out of the car.
- Arrival for all Primary children who do not have Elementary or Toddler siblings will be from 8:00 to 8:30 a.m.; arrival for Elementary and Toddler children and their siblings will be from 8:30 to 9:00. If you come outside of your assigned time, please park and wait till the retrieval ends; we must maintain consistent contact between the children and classroom staff members.
- It is imperative that the car name tag be visible in the passenger side window of your car.
- Parents must wear a face mask during arrival. We will not retrieve a child whose parent does not have on a mask.

- We will maintain limited contact between parents and staff; if you have a question or concern, please call Ms. Dash and she will relay your message to the appropriate staff member.
- The same parent or designated person should drop off the child each day.
- Lunch bag items must be placed on the floorboard of the car below the young child's seat.
- Following our usual drop-off procedure, drive your vehicle to the front of the building, forming two lines only, leaving the center lane open.
- A staff member will walk to your car to greet your child. We ask that you place the pre-screening form in her basket, that you do not get out of the car, and that your child remain seated with his/her seatbelt on.
- The staff member will take your child's temperature using a contactless thermometer prior to your child leaving the vehicle.
 - If your child has a temperature of over 100°F, you will be asked to drive to a parking space to the left of the dumpster and, after five minutes, the staff member will walk to your car and verify the temperature with a different thermometer.
 - A child with a double verified temperature of over 100°F will not be admitted.
- If the child's temperature is below 100°F, s/he will be invited to unbuckle the seat belt or be assisted as needed. A staff member will walk young children into the building; Elementary children may walk in unattended.
- As soon as your car door closes and your child is safely away from the car, you may slowly drive out of the parking lot.
- Staff members who have made hand to hand contact with the child will clean their hands with hand sanitizer prior to retrieving another child.

Late arrival

Late arrival must be scheduled in advance with Ms. Dash; there will be no admittance after 9:00 unless the late arrival is excused (please bring in a doctor's note from the scheduled appointment). Please follow this procedure:

- Contact Ms. Dash and indicate the exact time of your child's late arrival.
- Ms. Dash will notify the classroom staff to make arrangements for receiving the child at the pre-arranged late arrival time.
- At the pre-arranged late arrival time, please pull up to the front of the building and wait.
- A staff member will be at the front door at the pre-arranged late arrival time and proceed to assist the child with arrival following the regular arrival procedures.
- If you do not arrive at the pre-arranged late time, the staff member will not wait and will return to the classroom.

Pick Up

- When at all possible, the same adult should pick up and drop off the child each day.
- Primary children who do not have Elementary or Toddler siblings will leave school between 3:15 and 3:30. Elementary and Toddler children and their siblings will leave school between 3:30 and 3:45.
- Parents must wear a face mask during pick up.
- It is imperative that the car name tag be visible in the passenger side window of your car.
- Please pull up and park at the designated arrival/departure location in front of the building. Stay in the outer two lanes of the driveway.
- We will maintain limited contact between parents and staff; if you have a question or concern, please call Ms. Dash and she will relay your message to the appropriate staff member.
- Wait in your car and your child will be walked to your car and helped inside the car. Elementary children will walk unassisted to their cars.
- Once your child is in the car and the staff member has moved away, step out of the car to finalize buckling your young child in the car seat.

Early Departure

Early departure (prior to 3:00 p.m.) must be scheduled in advance with the guide and Ms. Dash. Please follow this procedure:

- Contact Ms. Dash and let her know the exact time of your child's early departure.
- Ms. Dash will notify the classroom staff to make arrangements for assisting the child with departure at the pre-arranged early departure time.
- At the pre-arranged early departure time, please pull up to the front of the building and wait.
- A classroom Assistant will bring your child from the classroom at the pre-arranged early departure time and proceed to assist the child to your car following the regular departure procedures.

Daily Screening of Staff

Staff members will conduct self-screening prior to arrival at school. If a staff member self-identifies as having symptoms listed in the screening criteria below, she will contact her supervisor, not come into work, and follow the appropriate procedures.

All staff members will sign a daily self-certification affirming that they:

- do not have a cough.
- do not have shortness of breath.
- do not have a sore throat.
- do not have body aches.

- have no family members in their household with symptoms consistent with COVID 19.

Upon arrival, all staff members will have their temperature taken with a contactless thermometer. Staff members with a double verified temperature of 100° F or more will be relieved of duty for the day.

A designated Administrative Staff Member will conduct and record Staff Health Screening for each staff member upon arrival at school.

Temperature of staff will be taken again at the end of their shifts.

Daily Screening of Children

- Staff will conduct and log the temperature checks of each child in the community three times each day. (At arrival, before lunch, prior to departure)
- Contactless thermometers will be used in all cases if possible.
- Staff will make a visual inspection of the children for signs of illness.

Health and Temperature Screening Protocol

All children and staff who meet any of the criteria below will be denied entry or will be sent home:

- Temperature over 100°F, verified on two thermometers. (Note: while state guidelines specify 100.4°F or above, staff will follow the 100°F temperature threshold).
- Any of the following symptoms which are of greater intensity or frequency than what is normally experienced:
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Chills
 - Repeated shaking with chills
 - Muscle pain
 - Headache
 - Sore throat
 - Loss of taste or smell
 - Diarrhea
- Any of the following circumstances are valid:
 - In the previous 14 days has had contact with someone with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19;
 - Is under investigation for COVID-19; or
 - Has traveled to another state or another country in the previous 14 days. A negative COVID-19 test result taken at day 7 will allow re-entry into the school.

Sick Policy

Our sick child policy will be amended as followed:

- If COVID-19 symptoms begin while at school, the child must go home as soon as possible. Sick children will be separated from well children and staff contact will be limited as much as reasonably possible, while ensuring the safety and supervision of the child until s/he leaves.
- Classroom staff will follow these isolation procedures:
 - Classroom staff will offer the child a disposable face mask but will not require the child to wear it.
 - A classroom staff member will inform Ms. Dash of symptoms exhibited.
 - Ms. Dash will contact parents to come to school to pick up the child within 30 minutes. If a parent is not available within 30 minutes or there is no response from the phone call(s), the emergency contacts on the child's Information Form will be called for pickup.
 - A classroom staff member will take the child to the isolation tent in the central room with all belongings to go home. The child will lie down there on a cot or mat.
 - Ms. Dash will wait with the child until the parent arrives.
 - Once a parent arrives, a staff member will take the child and his/her belongings to the car.
 - After the ill child has left, the isolation tent will be cleaned and sanitized by staff.
- If sent home, children must be symptom free for 72 hours, without the use of a fever reducer, before returning to school. The minimum time at home will be three days from the onset of fever (i.e. send home on Monday, return on Friday at the earliest).
- The school reserves the right to send a child home as sick even in the absence of fever and regardless of a note from a physician.
- Parents are prohibited from using a fever reducer for an enrolled child within 12 hours of the child's return to school. Evidence of usage may result in discontinued enrollment.
- Children or staff who are sent home with a fever and/or COVID symptoms may be required to complete a negative COVID-19 test prior to return.

COVID-19 Symptoms in Children

- 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.
- In the case of a child who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 but does not receive an evaluation by a medical professional or is not tested for COVID-19, the child is assumed to have COVID-19 and cannot return to the

community until the individual has met the criteria for return under Children or Staff with Positive Case of COVID-19.

- A child who has exhibited symptoms that could be COVID-19 can return to school if the parent has obtained a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on a negative COVID19 test and an alternative diagnosis.

COVID-19 Symptoms in Staff

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

- Staff exhibiting new or worsening symptoms of possible COVID-19 at school must:
 - Keep the face covered with a mask.
 - Leave the classroom and the school.
 - Obtain a COVID-19 test.
 - Follow the recommendations of their healthcare provider.
- In the case of a staff member who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and does not receive an evaluation by a medical professional or is not tested for COVID-19, the individual is assumed to have COVID-19, and she may not return to MCA until she has met the return criteria for Children or Staff with Positive Case of COVID-19 listed below.
- If the staff member has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to work before completing the above self-isolation period, the individual must obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for the return based on a negative nucleic acid COVID19 test and an alternative diagnosis.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Procedures when a staff member or child has become sick during the school day:

Staff will clean and disinfect all areas used by the ill persons, focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces. Staff must follow CDC's guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting. Materials and furniture touched by the child who is sent home will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.

COVID-19 Off-Site Exposure

If a staff member or child has been identified as having been in close contact with someone outside the classroom community who is diagnosed with COVID-19, that staff member or child will be required to self-quarantine for 14 days per the CDC guidelines. Close contact means being closer than 6 feet apart for more than 15 minutes to person who was infectious.

Positive Case of COVID-19 in the Classroom 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.

The following actions will be taken by school administration. We will:

- contact Child Care Licensing to report the presence of COVID-19 in our school.
- notify the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.
- notify staff and parents/caregivers that a member of the 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)
- notify the school community that a child in the school (one of the other classrooms) has been diagnosed with COVID-19. Confidentiality will be maintained.
- complete disinfecting procedures.

Please Note: Decisions about extending closure to other classrooms will be made in consultation with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

Return to MCA: Children or Staff with Positive Case of COVID-19, who have exhibited symptoms and who have stayed home (home isolated) can return to school/work when the following criteria are met:

- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications); and
- The child or staff member has improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and
- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared, or negative results of an FDA Emergency Use Authorized COVID-19 molecular assay for detection of SARS-CoV-2 RNA from at least two consecutive respiratory specimens collected ≥ 24 hours apart (total of two negative specimens).

Definitions of Quarantine and Isolation

Quarantine is used to keep someone who might have been exposed to COVID-19 away from others. Quarantine helps prevent the spread of disease that can occur before a person knows s/he is sick or 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).

Additional Protective Procedures

Face Coverings and Protective Equipment

All staff members will wear face coverings while working indoors. Face shields will be our preferred covering because this will allow the children to see the adults' faces.

- Toddlers and Primary aged children are not required to wear face coverings at school. Primary children will be given a face mask when symptoms are revealed and as part of isolation prior to pick-up by parents.
- Elementary children will wear face coverings when working closely with each other.
- Gloves will be used by the staff while disinfecting surfaces, materials and objects.

Physical Distancing Strategies

Montessori Children's Academy does not expect that young children will distance themselves from other children or adults while at school. Young children learn by engaging with their environment, which includes the other people in it. However, Montessori Children's Academy will employ the following strategies for limiting the spread of COVID-19 in our communities:

Communities will consist of stable classroom groups. Stable means that the same children and their consistent adult staff members are in the same group each day.

- Children will not move from one class to another during the day.
- We will strictly observe the child-staff ratio.
- The Guide and Assistants will stay in the same classroom for the entire day. In the case of illness, adults within each classroom will sub for each other.
- When feasible, the physical distance between children will be increased in daily work locations, group gatherings, meals, and snacks.
- At nap time, children's cots will be spaced out as much as possible, with alternating head to toe arrangements to increase the distance between children's faces. Some Primary children will nap in the Nap Room; some will nap in their own classrooms. The Toddlers will nap in their room.
- Classroom communities will not be on the playground together.
- Staff members are expected to maintain a 6 foot social distancing with each other while at work.
- Staff members will refrain from hugging, handshakes, high-fives, etc.

Meals and Snacks

- We will not serve family-style snacks or meals. Each child will bring his/her own snack and lunch from home. Food preparation (an important part of the Montessori curriculum of practical life) will be temporarily suspended.
- Staff will ensure that children wash their hands prior to and immediately after eating. Staff members must wash their hands before assisting children.
- All uneaten food will be thrown out.
- The school will provide place settings. All will be washed in our sanitizing dishwasher after each use.
- Each Primary child will bring a water bottle (labeled with the child's name) to school for outside use at recess. These will be kept in a designated place outside the classroom. A staff member will be responsible for handing the bottle to each child and for refilling it when necessary.
- Community water fountains will not be used.

Healthy Hand Hygiene

Washing hands can keep one healthy and prevent the spread of infections from one person to the next. All children and staff will engage in hand hygiene at the following times:

- Upon arrival, all will be required to wash their hands immediately after putting away their outside shoes.
- Before and after each work choice, when feasible
- Before and after eating or handling food
- After using the toilet or helping a child use the bathroom
- After coming in contact with bodily fluid
- After playing outdoors
- After handling garbage
- Before and after touching eyes, nose, or mouth because that's how germs enter our bodies.
- Our main cleaning agent will be soap and water. Hand sanitizer will be provided for staff (at level out of reach of children) to use as needed.

We will Follow these Steps for Washing Hands

1. Wet hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. Lather hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of hands, between the fingers, and under the nails.
3. Scrub hands for at least 20 seconds.
4. Rinse hands well under clean, running water.
5. Dry hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

After assisting children with handwashing, staff will also wash their own hands.

The back of each child's hands will be stamped upon arrival to serve as a visual cue for hand washing throughout the day; stamps should be faded or gone by pickup.

Hand Sanitizer (only for adults when they can't use soap and water)

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to get rid of germs in most situations. If soap and water are not readily available, we will use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

Steps for hand sanitizer use:

1. Apply the gel product to the palm of one hand (read the label to learn the correct amount).
2. Rub hands together.
3. Rub the gel over all the surfaces of hands and fingers until hands are dry. This should take around 20 seconds.

Access to the Building

- Access to the interior of the school will be limited to children and staff.
- School tours will be held virtually.
- Vendors and service providers will be limited to access at non operational times.
- Emergency service vendors (i.e. HVAC repair when the unit is not working) will be scheduled at non-operational times if possible. If immediate service is required:
 - Children will be removed from the area accessed by the provider.
 - The service provider must wear a face covering.
 - A staff member will accompany the service provider at all times.
 - Areas and surfaces will be disinfected after completion of service.
 - Parents will be notified via email of the emergency service with details of repair required, the name of service provider/company, time of service call (start and end) and areas accessed.

Community Events & Gatherings

The following events will be suspended until further notice:

- All school community events (i.e. picnics)
- On-site parent/teacher conferences and meetings (these will be held remotely)
- Parent classroom observations
- Field trips/goings-out

Cleaning and Disinfecting

Montessori Children's Academy follows the Cleaning and Sanitization Practice suggested by the CDC guidelines and has a detailed plan for each community, including staff responsibilities.

These efforts include the following:

- Staff will routinely clean, sanitize, and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched, especially materials, as detailed in the Cleaning and Sanitization binder.
- All bathrooms will be cleaned and disinfected regularly throughout the day, at a minimum of three times per day.
- Our newly purchased Electrostatic Sprayer will be used to disinfect and sanitize our environments in each classroom while the children are outside at recess. The electrostatic charge ensures that even the hard to reach places are coated evenly and effectively.

Cleaning and Sanitizing Classroom Materials

- Materials that cannot be cleaned and sanitized will not be used.
- Materials that children have placed in their mouths will be set aside until they are cleaned by hand by a person wearing gloves.
- Machine washable cloth materials will be used by one individual at a time and will be laundered before being used by another child.
- Children's books, like other paper-based materials such as mail or envelopes, are not considered high risk for transmission and do not need additional cleaning or disinfection procedures.

Clean and Disinfect Bedding

Each child's bedding is kept separate from others and cots are labeled for each child. Bedding is laundered and cots are cleaned at least weekly.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Products

Montessori Children's Academy uses disinfecting products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19.

Disinfecting

- Adult common areas will be disinfected with Arrow S150 (a food grade disinfectant) after drop-off time, after lunch and at the end of the day:
 - Adult bathrooms: faucets, toilet handles, sink surfaces, paper towel dispensers
 - Kitchen
 - All door handles (inside and out)
 - Computer and monitor
 - Phones
 - Front office (horizontal surfaces)
- Classroom common areas (outdoors included) will be disinfected with Arrow S150 (a food grade disinfectant) or soap and water at opening, after lunch and at the end of the day:
 - Tables and chairs
 - Shelves

- Commonly used materials and objects
- Door handles
- Bathroom sink faucets
- Toilet handles
- Paper towel dispensers
- Tricycle handles and seats
- Commonly used outside toys
- Grab bars on playground equipment
- All rooms will be sanitized with our electrostatic sprayer while the children are out of the building at recess.

Transparency & Communication

- Log records of daily disinfecting will be available for parents and state officials to view in a binder which will be kept in the office.