



Dear Parents,

Our goal for this fall is to reopen as safely as possible, bringing children back to our school for in-person learning.

At this time, these are the health and safety practices that we have put together that will enable reopening of school for in-person learning this fall and follow NYS DOH guidelines. These requirements will be modified as needed during the summer and into the fall.

Communication

- The school will ensure all students are taught or trained how to follow new COVID-19 protocols safely and correctly, including but not limited to hand hygiene, proper face covering wearing, social distancing, and respiratory hygiene.
- The school encourages all students, faculty, staff, and visitors through verbal and written communication (e.g., signage) to adhere to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and DOH guidance regarding the use of personal protective equipment (PPE), specifically acceptable face coverings.

General Health and Safety Guidelines

Social Distancing and Face Covering

- Appropriate social distancing is required between individuals while in school facilities and on school grounds, inclusive of students, faculty, and staff, unless safety or the core activity (e.g., instruction, moving equipment, traveling in common areas) requires a shorter distance or individuals are of the same household.
- Students will be in small groups that remain with each other throughout the day. We will prevent inter-group contact to the maximum extent feasible.
- There are no required maximums on cohort or group sizes beyond our normal class size.
- We have sinks in each classroom for handwashing and will provide sanitizing stations with alcohol-based hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol) for other locations without sinks throughout our school areas i.e. playground.
- Hands will be washed at the start of the day when children enter the classroom | before snacks and lunch | after using the toilet | after sneezing, wiping, and blowing noses | after snacks and lunch | when students come in from outdoor play or recess.
- A distance of twelve feet in all directions will be maintained between individuals while participating in activities requires projecting the voice (e.g., singing), or aerobic activity resulting in heavy breathing (e.g., participating in gym classes).

- Any use of a school facility or grounds by the general public must be subject to the same guidelines required during all other school operations.

Face Coverings

- Children (pre-k and up) and adults, including educators and staff, are required to wear masks/ face coverings.
- School staff and visitors are required to wear face coverings unless the individual is under two years of age.
- Any time or place that individuals cannot maintain appropriate social distancing, individuals must wear acceptable face coverings.
- Acceptable face coverings for COVID-19 include but are not limited to cloth-based face coverings (e.g., homemade sewn, quick cut, bandana). Face shields worn without other face coverings are not considered adequate protection or source control against COVID-19 and should not be used.
- Face coverings should be cleaned or replaced after use and must not be shared. Students and parents/legal guardians should take responsibility for maintaining their face coverings. Please consult CDC guidance for additional information on cloth face coverings and other types of PPE, as well as instructions on use and cleaning.
- The school will have an adequate supply of face coverings, masks, and other required PPE on hand should faculty or staff need a replacement, or a student be in need.
- Face coverings will be worn, except for meals and instruction with appropriate social distancing.
- Face covering breaks for students will occur when they can maintain social distance.
- All individuals in school facilities and on school grounds must be prepared to put on a face covering if another person unexpectedly cannot socially distance; and for this reason, individuals – including students – must wear face coverings in common areas, such as entrances/exits, lobbies, and when traveling around the school.
- Students who are unable to medically tolerate a face covering, including students where such covering would impair their physical health or mental health are not subject to the required use of a face covering.
- All students, faculty, and staff will be trained on how to adequately put on, take off, discard PPE, appropriate face coverings.

Signage

- Signs will be posted throughout the school and will regularly share similar messages with the school community, consistent with DOH COVID-19 signage regarding public health protections against COVID-19. Signage will remind individuals to:
 - o Stay home if they feel sick.

- o Cover their nose and mouth with an acceptable face covering when unable to maintain social distance from others or in accordance with any stricter policy implemented by the school.
- o Properly store and, when necessary, discard PPE.
- o Adhere to social distancing instructions.
- o Report symptoms of, or exposure to, COVID-19, and how they should do so.
- o Follow hand hygiene, and cleaning and disinfection guidelines.
- o Follow respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette.

Facilities Guidelines

Classroom

- Desks and work rugs will be spaced 6 feet apart. Children will be assigned their own desk (or at a 2 person desk with plexiglass divider) and an individual rug to be used as their own space in the room.
- Children will have their own sets of pencils, colored pencils, scissors, glue sticks, watercolor paints.
- Shared Objects
 - o students, faculty, and staff to perform hand hygiene before and after contact with toys and shelf materials.
- Napping children will be 12 feet apart during nap time (can have cots oriented head to foot).
- Floor markings will be installed to illustrate social/physical distancing.
- Outdoor instruction will be used where health and safety conditions and physical space allow, considering, for example, allergies and/or asthma symptoms.

Food Safety

- For snack and lunch, students will wash hands before and after eating
- Students must be 6 feet apart or be separated by a barrier while consuming meals.
- Snacks will be limited this year to parents providing their own child's snack each day.
- Lunch may be limited to parent providing their own child's lunch each day (still under consideration) and will continue to occur in the classroom at the child's assigned table.
- Sharing of food between students will not be allowed

Small Spaces

- Staff shall limit gathering in small spaces (e.g, supply rooms, faculty offices) by more than one individual at a time, unless all individuals in such space at the same time are wearing acceptable face coverings or are members of the same household. However, even with face coverings in use, occupancy should not exceed 50% of the maximum capacity of the space, unless it is designed for use by a single occupant.

Student Flow, Entry, Recess, Physical Education

- Student arrival will be staggered in the morning with specific windows of time for drop off.
- Each class will use the playground individually, hand washing before and after use. Hand sanitizer will be available on playground and cleaning high touch equipment after each group of students' use will be performed.
- Recess times will be staggered for each class so that classes are not mixing.

Screening

- Student and employees will be temperature checked and screened upon arrival for symptoms and history of exposure. Questions will ask if the person has:
 - (a) knowingly been in close or proximate contact in the past 14 days with anyone who has tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 or who has or had symptoms of COVID-19;
 - (b) tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 in the past 14 days;
 - (c) has experienced any symptoms of COVID-19, including a temperature of greater than 100.0°F, in the past 14 days; and/or
 - (d) has traveled internationally or from a state with widespread community transmission of COVID-19 per the New York State Travel Advisory in the past 14 days.
 - (e) confirm that the child does not have fever, shortness of breath or cough.
 - 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.

Please note that the manifestation of COVID-19 in children, although similar, is not always the same as that for adults. Children may be less likely to present with fever as an initial symptom, and may only have gastrointestinal tract symptoms, which will be taken into consideration during the screening process.

Facilities Cleaning Practices

In addition to full cleaning and disinfection, plan to spot-disinfect high-touch surfaces throughout the day.

Disinfect door knobs (bathroom/classroom door/front door)
Disinfect water dispenser
Disinfect light switches
Disinfect bathroom surfaces
Disinfect sink faucet handles (bathroom and classroom)
Disinfect tables
Disinfect chairs
Disinfect countertop
Disinfect classroom materials
Clean bathroom
Vacuum classroom
Refill soap dispensers
Disinfect shared computer keyboards and mice in Elementary

Ventilation

Increase the fresh air ventilation rate to the extent possible to aid in maintaining a healthy indoor air quality. We recognize there are many different types of ventilation systems, natural or mechanical, that may be limited for increasing ventilation outside air due to available heat or fan/relief airflow capacity.

- When weather allows, windows and doors will be opened to allow for greater air circulation.
- The school has installed MERV 13 air filters into all of their HVAC units.
- Each classroom has a newly purchased stand alone air filter with UVC light in order to kill airborne viruses. Additional air filters have been purchased for larger size rooms.

Extracurricular Activities and Use of Facilities Outside of School Hours

- We will be limiting or restricting nonessential volunteers and visitors, and activities held in the school such as assemblies or larger gatherings
- At this point all field trips and other large gatherings are cancelled.
- After school classes may be limited and are still under consideration whether to hold them this year.

Response to Students and Staff Presenting Symptoms

Students and employees may be asked to leave or not come into school if they test positive for COVID-19 or exhibit one or more of the symptoms of COVID-19, based on CDC guidance, that is not otherwise explained:

- A fever of 100.0° F or greater
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell
- Fatigue
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Cold and flu season will pose another challenge for us as flu symptoms closely mirror Covid-19 symptoms. **We are encouraging families and all students to receive the flu shot this year.**

- An employee, parent/guardian, or child who screens positive for or exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 must not be allowed to enter the facility or area and must be sent home with instructions to contact their healthcare provider for assessment and testing.
 - Children who are being sent home because of a positive screen (e.g. onset of COVID19 symptoms) will be immediately separated from other children and supervised until their parent/guardian or emergency contact can retrieve them from the program facility.
 - If the parent/guardian – who is a member of the same household as the child– is exhibiting signs of COVID-19 or has been tested and is positive for the virus, an alternate parent/guardian or emergency contact authorized by the parent must come pick up the child.

- In the event that a parent/guardian of a child must be isolated because they have tested positive for, or exhibited symptoms of, COVID-19, the parent/guardian cannot enter the site for any reason, including picking up their child.
- If a child or their household member becomes symptomatic for COVID-19 and/or tests positive for COVID-19, the child must quarantine and may not return or attend the program until after quarantine is complete.
- If the parent/guardian – who is a member of the same household as the child – is being quarantined as a precautionary measure, without symptoms or a positive test, staff should walk out or deliver the child to the parent/guardian at the boundary of, or outside, the premises. As a “contact of a contact,” the child may return to the school during the duration of the quarantine.

Cleaning and Disinfection Following Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19 Case

- The school will follow CDC guidelines on “Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility,” if someone is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19:
 - Close off areas used by the person who is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19.
 - The school does not necessarily need to close operations, if they can close off the affected areas (e.g., classroom, restroom, hallway), but they should consult with local health departments in development of their protocols.
 - Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.
 - Wait 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting, unless waiting 24 hours is not feasible, in which case, wait as long as possible.
 - Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, such as offices, classrooms, bathrooms, and common areas.
 - Once the area has been appropriately cleaned and disinfected, it can be reopened for use.
 - Individuals without close or proximate contact with the person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 can return to the area and resume school activities immediately after cleaning and disinfection.
 - If more than seven days have passed since the person who is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary, but routine cleaning and disinfection should continue

Return to School after Illness Schools

Our school must follow CDC guidance for allowing a student or staff member to return to school after exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19. If a person is not diagnosed by a healthcare provider (physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant) with COVID-19 they can return to school:

- **Once there is no fever, without the use of fever reducing medicines, and they have felt well for 24 hours;**
- **If they have been diagnosed with another condition and has a healthcare provider written note stating they are clear to return to school.**

If a person is diagnosed with COVID-19 by a healthcare provider based on a test or their symptoms or does not get a COVID-19 test but has had symptoms, they should not be at school and should stay at home until:

- It has been at least ten days since the individual first had symptoms;
- It has been at least three days since the individual has had a fever (without using fever reducing medicine); and
- It has been at least three days since the individual's symptoms improved, including cough and shortness of breath.

The CDC provides specific guidance for individuals who are on home isolation regarding when the isolation may end.

Closure

New York State has been on an exceptionally good trajectory with keeping Covid-19 down in the state. It is our hope that everyone continues to abide by state guidance of social distancing and masking in public to keep our numbers low and keep our kids at school. In the event that this situation changes and the school is once again subjected to a state mandated stay at home order, we will transition to distance learning after one week's time. Distance learning will include but not be limited to the following for each age group:

Toddlers

- Daily class meetings
- 2 weekly small group lessons

Children's House- 1st and 2nd Year Students

- Daily class meeting

- Minimum of 1 weekly small group lesson
- Minimum of 1 individual lesson
- Workplan with daily suggested assignments

Children's House- 3rd Year Kindergarten Students

- Daily class meeting
- Small group lessons
- Individual lessons
- Individual workplan with daily assignments that must be submitted by parents

Elementary Students

- Daily class meeting
- Small group lessons
- Individual lessons
- Individual workplan with daily assignments that must be submitted by parents

If we move again to distance learning, full tuition is still expected to be paid and no refunds or tuition reductions will be given. We do not have a financial resource to draw from if parents suddenly decided to drop out of our school or refuse to make monthly payments. If you are committing to your child to be in the Malta Montessori School for the 2020-2021 school year you are committing to full financial obligations for the school year regardless of whether or not we are physically present in the school.