



Montessori Children's House COVID-19 Health & Safety Handbook

This Handbook has been created to ensure we all are taking appropriate action to protect our MCH community of staff, children, and families from the potential outbreak of illness. We are all in this together, staff and families alike. We must all commit to protecting the wellness of each other to the best of our ability. Ultimately, it is our united efforts that will allow MCH to offer a safe place for learning and work for our children and staff.

Due to the nature of the continuing SARS-COV-2 (COVID-19) pandemic, changes to this document are highly likely. The school aims to provide clear communication in a timely manner regarding any changes to policy or protocol.

Policies and procedures in this document are based on guidance and policies from the Oregon Department of Education (ODE), Oregon Early Learning Division (ELD), Oregon Health Authority (OHA), the Multnomah County Health Department (MCHD), national independent school pandemic briefings, and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

Each policy outlined in this handbook applies to all employees and community members while on MCH property. Policies outlined in this handbook override existing ones from our current Family Handbook where they overlap.

In addition to Oregon laws prohibiting discrimination, MCH will not refuse to enrollment to a child based on a belief that the child is more susceptible to contracting COVID-19 due to the child's or guardian's/caregiver's occupation, race, ethnicity, geographic location, disability, or pre-existing health condition.

This document, its appendices, and other COVID-19 resources, can be found on our website at: mch-pdx.org/covid-19.

Head of School, Courtney Walsh, is responsible for the overall implementation of the procedures and protocols outlined in this handbook. Please contact the school (**at office@childrenshousepdx.com or (503) 360.1179**) if you need the information included in this handbook to be shared in a language other than English.

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HEALTH & SAFETY PROCEDURES FOR FAMILIES & STAFF

Prior to arriving at MCH each day we ask families and staff to consider the following protocols to maintain a healthy and safe environment. Staff members will self-screen and attest to their own health on a daily basis; we ask that families do the same before coming to school each day.

School Employee Vaccination Mandate

All employees, volunteers, and contracted individuals who have contact with students as a part of school activities are required to show proof of COVID-19 vaccination or submit a form indicating exception from the requirement due to medical or religious reasons.

General Wellness Guidelines

While the COVID-19 global pandemic ebbs and flows, we are still a school full of children who may become sick with other illnesses. We have observed that our wellness practices that were initiated to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 have also helped to dramatically reduce the incidences of other communicable illnesses in our community. The effect of this has been fewer absences for students and staff.

These are our general health and wellness policies (from the OHA). Staff and children may not attend school if they have one or more of the following symptoms:

- Signs of a new cold or illness: runny nose, congestion, sore throat, feeling unwell, lethargic
- Fever over 100 degrees F in the last 24 hours
- Rash or rash with fever – new or sudden onset
- Diarrhea or vomiting in the last 24 hours
- Nausea or imminent vomiting
- Persistent cough
- Stiff neck or headache with one or more of above symptoms
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Complaints of severe pain

If staff are experiencing any of the symptoms listed above but still feel well enough to work, they must present proof of a negative COVID-19 test result prior to returning to work. We ask that families take the same precaution.

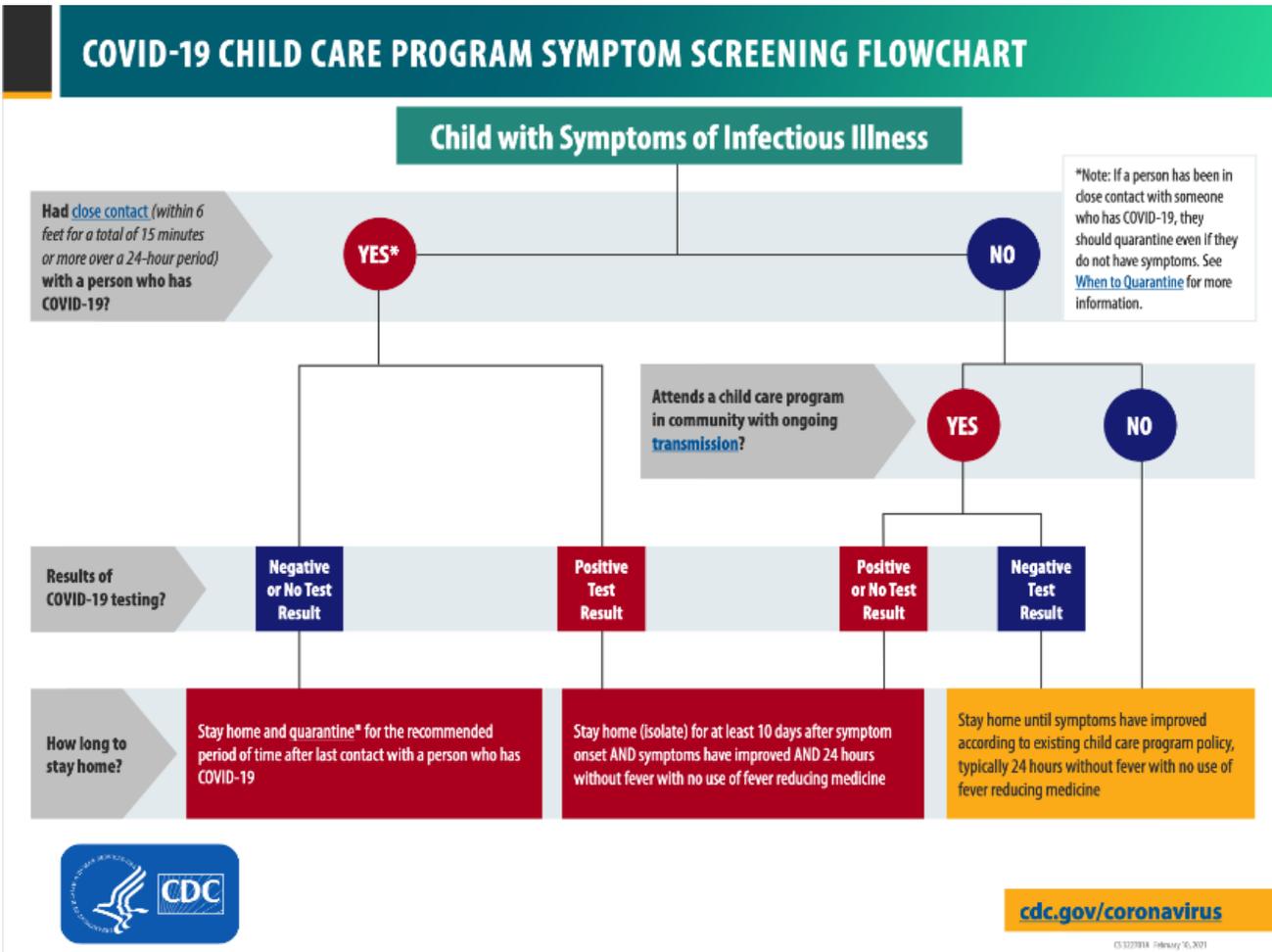
In addition, the OHA maintains a list of daycare-restricted diseases including chickenpox, scabies, and staph and strep infections, in which cases we must exclude the child and notify the Health Department of any outbreak.

COVID-19 Daily Wellness Screening

MCH will conduct a daily Wellness Screening for children and any other person (guardian, maintenance, etc.) coming into the program. Staff will wear appropriate face coverings and personal protective equipment while conducting Wellness Screenings.

In order to lower the risk of the spread of illness within our community, each day before a child comes to school, we ask families to conduct a self-screening at home. Upon arrival at school, each child's temperature will be taken with a contactless thermometer. If the temperature is over 100°F (37.8°C) the child will not be permitted on campus. Once the non-fever temperature is confirmed, an employee will sign in each child at

arrival. Children will also be signed out at dismissal. These detailed records are required to be kept for the purpose of contact tracing, should someone in our community be diagnosed with COVID-19. Employees complete a similar daily wellness self-check before arriving on campus.



Protocol if a Child or Staff Gets Sick or Exhibits Symptoms While at MCH

If a child or staff member exhibits any COVID-19-like symptoms while at school:

1. The child will be safely isolated and caregivers will be called. Staff members will be sent home immediately.
2. A staff member will remain with the child until they are picked up. The staff member will wear a mask, use gloves, and use as much social distancing as possible while providing as much comfort to the child as possible.
3. The isolation space will be closed for 24 hours to reduce the potential for respiratory droplets. If a 24-hour period is not feasible an MCH staff member will wait as long as possible (no less than three hours) and follow required sanitation protocols. MCH will ensure safe and correct application of disinfectants and keep disinfectant products away from children.
4. The Head of School will contact local health authorities of a possible or confirmed case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

5. The Head of School will inform staff members and families if they have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 and require them to stay home for the required period and self-monitor for symptoms. Staff will be required to update the Head of School daily about symptoms.
6. Children and staff exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms will be asked to stay at home for a minimum of 10 days after onset of symptoms and 24 hours after resolution of both fever and cough, **unaided by medications**. We will also ask that the individual seek a COVID-19 PCR test and report a negative test result in order to return.

If a child develops a low-grade fever, between 99-100 degrees, we will alert you and monitor your child's behavior and temperature regularly. If their temperature should rise above 100 degrees, we will follow the protocol outlined above and the same restrictions for returning to school will apply.

Confirmed Case of COVID-19 Within the Facility

If anyone who has entered the school has tested positive for COVID-19, we will report it to the Oregon Health Authority. We will communicate, in coordination with OHA, with all families and other individuals who have been in the facility in the past two weeks. MCH will consult with the OHA to ensure that the appropriate steps have been taken to make the school as safe as possible before bringing students and staff back.

If an unvaccinated student is exposed to a confirmed or possible case of COVID-19, they will need to quarantine at home based on instructions from the OHA that the school will receive at the time of the report. The school will report any confirmed or presumptive cases of COVID-19 to the local public health authority and seek guidance from those authorities regarding the scope and duration of any quarantine, isolation, cleaning, or possible closure. The school retains the right to close the building to ensure adequate cleaning is done.

Presumptive & Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 Within a Child's or Staff's Household

If anyone in a child's or staff's household has been exposed to someone who has a presumptive or confirmed case of COVID-19, the exposed individual and staff/children in the household may not attend school. They must enter into a quarantine period for the current required minimum of days after their last date of exposure to a presumed or confirmed case, and/or supply a negative result to a COVID-19 test. Children or staff who have a family member at home with symptoms of COVID-19 who has not been tested need to be monitored for symptoms carefully and stay home from school for the duration of illness (or until a negative result to a COVID-19 test can be supplied). The ill family or household member should be strongly encouraged to seek testing.

If anyone in your household is diagnosed with COVID-19, notify MCH and any known "close contacts" immediately. Be prepared to discuss the dates you were on MCH premises and where you may have been or who you may have come in contact with while at MCH.

Our goal is to work to mitigate risk for every member of our community and work to keep everyone as healthy as possible while maximizing access to the school and in-person learning experiences. Thank you in advance for your patience and support.

What If A Child Or Staff Member Has Taken A COVID-19 Test And The Results Were Negative?

Children or staff members will continue to self-monitor symptoms and can return after 24 hours symptom-free (unaided by medications). [See our General Wellness Guidelines](#).

Return to School After Out of State Travel

Staff are asked to present proof of a negative COVID-19 test result (taken upon return from out of state travel) prior to returning to work after out of state travel. If a test is not taken, staff are asked quarantine and monitor for symptoms for 10 days prior to returning to work (testing is preferred).

We ask that families take the same precautions.

Special Health Needs

If a child has a particular health need or susceptibility to disease, including COVID-19, MCH will work with the guardians/caregivers to develop a plan for the child to participate in school. MCH will ensure that all staff engaging with the child understand the plan.

Behaviors & Health Risk Prevention

As stress and trauma increase during the time of COVID-19, MCH staff anticipate more challenging and dysregulated behaviors for many children. Implementing and communicating predictable routines and procedures will be very important for all of the children and adults. Taking the time to review the procedures with your children will help them maintain a sense of psychological safety.

Due to the need for increased, strict health and safety guidelines and MCH's reduced number of staff, we are implementing the following policy:

- For the safety of all those in the community, any behaviors that put the health of other children or staff at risk during this time will result in a call to guardians for immediate pick-up. This may include spitting, biting, removing masks from faces of staff members or classmates, refusal to effectively wear a face covering for a period of longer than 30 minutes (with reasonable attempts by staff to help address any unmet needs), or any behaviors that increase the risk to our staff or impact the ability to maintain a safe environment for the children and our community.
- An assessment meeting will be scheduled with the Head of School and caregivers before a child may come back to school.

Staffing

All staff working at MCH are fully vaccinated and have completed the necessary First-Aid & CPR training. MCH will continue to provide staff members access to professional development that contributes to their learning and development. All staff (including new hires prior to their first day of work or during employee orientation) have reviewed the guidelines contained in this document and the Health and Safety Guidelines for Child Care and Early Education Operating During COVID-19, as well as any updates to the Guidelines that occur, prior to implementation.

DROP-OFF & PICK-UP PROCEDURES

The CDC recommends the same guardian or designated person should drop-off and pick-up the child every day. If possible, older people such as grandparents or those with serious underlying medical conditions should not drop-off or pick-up children, because they are more at risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

All adults must wear a face covering for pick-up and drop-off, regardless of vaccination status. All adults must maintain physical distancing when not engaged in hand-off of children to staff.

The admin team or classroom staff will be checking children in and out at designated areas outside the building. For each group, staff will record the time the child arrived and departed, along with who dropped off and picked up. These logs will be retained for a minimum of 2 years.

The pick-up/drop-off person will not be permitted to enter the building unless permission is granted by our Head of School, Courtney Walsh. The check-in and check-out process will include a wellness screening (*see below*). Classroom staff will be ready to receive children after they complete the wellness check.

Drop-Off

Each age group has an assigned drop-off period (see below). A staff member will complete a Daily Student Wellness Screening at drop-off. Upon completion of the screening process you may say goodbye and your child will walk into their classroom. We will only note that the screening was conducted and the child either passed or failed.

Pick-Up

At pick-up (see below) a staff member will help children as needed to prepare to go home (including a final washing of hands). Each child will have their temperature taken once more prior to departure. Staff will sign the child out upon departure with their approved pick-up adult. All Primary students use hand sanitizer at dismissal each day.

Schedule & Location

Please be sure you arrive on time for your assigned drop-off/pick-up window. If families miss their designated Full Day pick-up time, their child will be signed in to PM Care (charges may apply).

Classroom Drop-Off & Pick-Up

AM Care Drop-Off:

<u>Classroom</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
Chickadee Grove	7:45-8:15	@ Chickadee Grove entrance
Tanager Meadow	7:45-8:15	@ Main entrance (use intercom if needed)
Heron Cove	7:45-8:30	@ Main entrance (use intercom if needed)

Full Day Drop-Off and Pick-Up:

<u>Classroom</u>	<u>Drop-Off</u>	<u>Pick-Up</u>	<u>Location</u>
Chickadee Grove	8:15-8:30	2:45-3:00	@ Chickadee Grove entrance
Tanager Meadow	8:15-8:30	2:45-3:00	@ Main entrance
Heron Cove	8:30-8:45	2:45-3:00	@ Main entrance

PM Care Pick-Up:

<u>Classroom</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
Chickadee Grove	3:30-5:30	@ Main entrance (use intercom)
Tanager Meadow	3:30-5:30	@ Main entrance (use intercom)
Heron Cove	3:30-5:30	@ Main entrance (use intercom)

- If you have children in both Toddler and Primary communities, you may drop them off as early as 8:20am (7:45am if enrolled in AM Care).
- We ask that the sidewalk and our “front porch” be used only for drop-off and pick-up.
- Please follow social distancing, as indicated by the cones, on the sidewalk in front of school.
- We ask that parking spaces in front of the school be used for a maximum of five minutes during drop-off and pick-up (8:15-8:45am and 2:45-3:00pm).
- Please park safely and legally for drop-off and pick-up (no blocking the bike lane or double parking).
- Please use crosswalks (if crossing the street) when dropping off and picking up.

Daily Student Wellness Screening

In order to ensure the health and safety of our children, staff, and families a staff member will be administering a wellness check with each child in our program (same questions outlined in [COVID-19 Daily Health Check](#) section). Please remember our goal is to be safe; we ask for your patience as we all continue to work together through this process.

Every morning at drop-off and again at pick-up, a staff member will sign in/out each child. For the health and safety of all, childcare providers are required to keep detailed records for the purpose of tracking if someone is diagnosed with COVID-19. All staff performing daily health checks will wear a clean outer layer of clothing (apron).

The procedures for signing in/out are listed below:

1. One caregiver will escort each child or children to the sign-in area they've been designated.
2. A staff member will conduct a Daily Student Wellness Screening, which will have questions for both the child and their guardian.
3. The staff member will also take each child's temperature. If your child's temperature is under 99 degrees, they're able to attend school. If your child's temperature is between 99-100 degrees, they are allowed to attend school but we will check their temperature regularly. If your child's temperature is 100 degrees or higher, they will not be allowed to enter school.
4. The sign-in form will also include the name of the person dropping off and picking up.

Daily Preparedness Checklist

During the daily drop-off/sign-in process, MCH staff will ensure each child has all their necessary items for the day. Each community uniquely handles belongings owned by the children; the following is a list of items supplied from home:

- A daily lunch
- A clean, full, and sanitized water bottle (may be kept at school)
- Utensils (we provide cloth napkins)
- Nap gear (to be kept and laundered on the premises)

- Multiple sets of extra clothes (to be kept on the premises)
 - Primary students should have at least 2 extra sets of clothes and Toddlers at least 4 extra sets (including waterproof underpants-covers).
- Any needed medications (we have medication authorization forms upon request) – children should apply their sunscreen at home before drop-off, if needed
 - PM Care staff will help the children to apply sunscreen as needed prior to PM Outdoor Play
- Wearing a face covering (required for Primary students and Toddlers age 2 and older) -- please send spare masks and a sealing container for each set of “clean” and “used” masks (may be kept at school)

CLEANING & SANITIZING

MCH will follow up-to-date cleaning and sanitation guidelines outlined by the Oregon Early Learning Division, Oregon Department of Education (in regards to Kindergarten), Oregon Health Authority, and the Centers for Disease Control. Families can access these guidelines on the COVID-19 page of MCH’s website where they will be updated as needed.

HAND HYGIENE

Hand hygiene is one of the most effective actions we can all take to reduce the spread of pathogens and prevent infections, including the COVID-19 virus. MCH has based this policy on current guidance from the CDC and ELD. We will strive to take the strictest measures in terms of guidance from these sources for the health and safety of our community.

All children and staff will wash their hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, including the following times:

- Upon arrival at school
- Upon return from Outdoor Playtime(s)
- Before and after eating or preparing food
- Before and after administering medication
- Before and after toileting or assisting with toileting
- After wiping nose, coughing, or sneezing*
- Before and after moving between community groups*
- After sharing learning materials*
- Before departing school

**Hand sanitizer with 60-95% alcohol content may be used*

Adults should avoid touching their face and cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and throw the tissue away immediately. Staff will model and teach these expectations to the children. Except for toileting or when eating, preparing, or serving food, hand-sanitizing products with 60-95% alcohol content may be used as an alternative method to handwashing. Hand sanitizer will be stored out of reach of children when not in use. Hand sanitizer is only used in the Primary classrooms.

FACE COVERINGS

We will strive to take the strictest measures in terms of guidance from these sources for the health and safety of our community. We have based our policy on face coverings (masks) on guidance from OHA, ODE,

and ELD. Our approach aims to be consistent with the [CDC guidance](#) and current regulations from the Governor's Office as they are released.

Cloth face coverings do not replace regular handwashing practices. Face coverings must follow the CDC recommendations found [here](#). Exceptions can be made for staff and children if they have a medical condition or disability, as documented by their doctor's order, that prevents them from wearing a face covering.

All student and employee face coverings should be washed or thoroughly cleaned daily.

MCH staff use KN95 (or equivalent) masks or snugly-fitting three-layer (one of which is a filter) masks at school.

Expectations

For Adults: All staff members, caregivers, and approved visitors (*see Visitor Protocol*) are required to wear a face covering in order to enter the building.

- Guardians are required to wear face coverings for pick-up and drop-off.
- All staff members will wear face coverings while inside MCH, except if they are eating while on a break.
 - Staff members are encouraged to take breaks outside or at a socially distanced space away from colleagues and children.
 - Staff members are provided clear face coverings or protective plastic barriers to provide language lessons as we recognize the importance of seeing the mouth for the child's development in this area.

For Children: The state of Oregon requires face coverings for children ages five and above (and recommends them for ages two and above). Based on this guidance, we require that all children in our Primary classrooms (3-6 years old) wear a face covering while attending school. Children in the Toddler Community (at least two-years-old) are encouraged to wear a face covering while attending school. Students may remove their face coverings for snack, lunch, naptime, or for a brief face covering break when they can maintain a distance of at least six feet (two meters) from others. Hand washing/sanitizing will take place before and after each removal.

- Families must provide face coverings for their children.
- Staff will give Grace and Courtesy lessons to the children on the usage of masks, the reasons for wearing them, and how to effectively take them on and off.
- If a child refuses to wear a mask, staff will work with the child to help them feel comfortable wearing a mask.
- Children will not be disciplined for the inability to safely wear a face covering.
- Each classroom will set up a designated space for each child to place their masks whenever they aren't being worn. Your child's classroom teacher will communicate these protocols with you.
- Children will be asked to remove their mask during snack, lunchtime, and naptime for their safety while maintaining a distance of at least six feet (two meters) from others.
- If a child cannot wear their mask (or maintain social distancing whilst unmasked) after consistent and reasonable efforts by staff to help support them in doing so, their guardian may be called to pick the child up.

When Eating: Face coverings must first be removed in order to eat. First, wash hands and prepare eating space. Sanitize hands just prior to removing face covering. Take off the face covering as noted below, place it in the designated space, and sanitize hands once more. Enjoy snack/lunch. When finished eating, clean hands/face with napkin, sanitize, replace mask, sanitize, and then clean up eating area. Wash your hands again prior to returning to work.

Washing Face Coverings: For children, face coverings used at school must be laundered each day. Staff members will add face masks to classroom laundry or send masks home to be washed.

Notes About Face Coverings

Face coverings should:

- Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face.
- Cover the nose and mouth of the wearer.
- Be secured with ties or ear loops.
- Include multiple layers of fabric, one of which should be a filter (or be KN95 or equivalent).
- Allow for breathing without restriction.
- Be able to be laundered and machine dried (or otherwise sanitized) without damage or change to shape.

Using a Face Covering

- Wearers should wash hands before and after putting on their face covering.
- Wearers should avoid touching the outside of their covering. If you do, wash your hands with soap and water. If that is not available then use hand sanitizer (60-95% alcohol content).
- Wash your hands (20 second wash cycle) or use hand sanitizer (60-95% alcohol content) before you remove the face covering from container. Remove the face covering from the storage container.
- Cover your mouth and nose with the covering and make sure there are no gaps between your face and the covering. Tie the covering or use the elastic loops for your ears.
- Replace the covering with a clean one if it becomes damp or soiled.
- To remove the covering:
 - a. Remove it from behind (do not touch the front of the covering)
 - b. Fold the covering onto itself and place it in the container for “used” coverings
 - c. Wash your hands with soap and water after removing your covering. If soap and water are not available then use hand sanitizer (60-95% alcohol content).
- Face coverings should be washed daily or a new face covering worn daily.
- Disposable one-layer face coverings are no longer permitted for school use.
- Staff must change face coverings if they have interacted with a sick child.

SOCIAL/PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Young children are likely to find it difficult to physically distance themselves from one another. Staff will model and create opportunities for the children to practice making space for one another while at school. As teachers, MCH staff are considered high-contact persons. For the health and safety of our staff, we urge our families to follow social distancing guidelines when not at school.

- We will follow guidelines for group size and staff-to-child ratios as outlined by ELD. As of August 17th, 2021, the max group size for Toddlers is 8 (ratio 1:4) and Primary is 20 (ratio 1:10).
- Classrooms will include the same group of children each day and the staff will remain with the same group whenever possible.
- Children in the two Primary classrooms may combine during Outdoor Playtimes (social distancing is encouraged for children from different classrooms) and will combine during PM Care.
- New children may be added to a group or moved from Toddler to Primary if it is a permanent change.
- Individual tables will be designated for Primary children to eat at.
- Mats for nappers will be spaced at least 3 feet apart (6 feet whenever possible) and arranged in a head-toe-position.
- Children's belongings will be kept in a personal bag/backpack and will be spaced so they are not touching.
- Families will be asked to provide all face coverings (Primary and Toddler), lunches, utensils, and water bottles for each child.

RECESS/OUTDOORS

We will continue to go outside every day. If weather or air quality prevent any Outside Play, the school day may be shortened. Groups will practice social distancing from neighbors and non-MCH community members while out in our neighborhood. Staff will follow our normal safety protocols while outside. Everyone will wash their hands immediately upon returning to the classroom from time spent outside. Children and staff will remain masked while outdoors (except for water breaks, during which un-masking / re-masking procedures will be followed).

SNACK & LUNCH

In the Toddler Community, we have suspended family-style meals. Staff will closely monitor the children to ensure that they aren't sharing and/or touching each other's food. Water bottles will stay at school and staff will wash and sanitize them daily. For Primary, instead of sitting together to eat, each child will have their own table to sit at to eat their meals. Water bottles will be sent home at the end of each day to be cleaned and sanitized.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

MCH will provide the following PPE for staff members:

- KN95 or equivalent face masks.
- Staff members must avoid touching the cloth face covering.
- It is essential to continue frequent and consistent hand hygiene.
- The face covering must be changed each day and/or when soiled.
- An apron (or equivalent of staff choice) that can be washed daily.
- Protective gloves for cleaning.
- Disinfecting products: At MCH we use Force of Nature Non-Toxic Natural All-Purpose Cleaner or EPA-registered household disinfectants. During this time it is important to use approved cleaners that have efficacy against multiple diseases. MCH will provide the different solutions clearly labeled with ratios, uses, and dwell-times. It is each classroom's duty to fill them according to the written guidelines.

- Hand sanitizer will be provided. The preferred and most effective practice is proper handwashing but hand sanitizer will be provided for those times when hand washing isn't feasible.

PREVENTION FOR HIGH CONTACT STAFF

Due to the nature of working with young children, classroom staff are considered to be high contact employees. Interactions between classroom staff and the children are likely to include distances of less than six (6) feet in order to support the mental well-being of the children in MCH's care. Social distancing of at least six (6) feet should be observed when possible amongst adult staff members and families.

Requirements

In order to reduce the potential spread of contagions within the community, Montessori Children's House is instituting the following requirements:

- High contact employees shall wash or sanitize their hands at least once per hour.
- Areas of high traffic shall be cleaned frequently and on intervals required by the Oregon Health Authority's most current recommendations.
- High contact employees shall limit, when possible, movement outside of their classroom/working environments while on MCH grounds.
- Activities normally conducted in person, such as family conferences, will take place virtually or via telephone. If families cannot engage in virtual or phone visits, please inform the school and we will work with you to solve this challenge.
- Family education events will be virtual or may be suspended altogether. As staff are spending more time than ever on daily environmental maintenance, cleaning, and sanitizing, they may not be asked to plan and present family education events in addition to their daily work.

VISITOR PROTOCOL

For the health and safety of our staff, families, and community during the COVID-19 outbreak, MCH will limit visitor entry into the building. Only these individuals may enter the school:

- Guardians, if there is a concern for the health and safety of their child (please call ahead)
- Contracted specialty instructors
- Emergency medical personnel
- State licensing/Regulators/Inspectors
- Maintenance, repair, and janitorial personnel, only when children are not present (when possible)

All other individuals are subject to approval by our Head of School, Courtney Walsh, before entry is permitted.

All visitors must follow the procedures listed below:

- Put on a face covering prior to entering
- Wait outside to be invited in by a staff member
- Use hand sanitizer on their hands after entering
- Have their temperature taken by a staff member
- Sign in, recording your name, date, time of arrival (and departure when you leave), and phone number (for contact tracing). Writing utensils will be sanitized between uses.

- Answer MCH's COVID-19 Daily Health Screening Checklist questions in the presence of a staff member. We will only note that the screening was conducted and the visitor either passed prior to entrance.
- Sanitize and disinfect handled items in the lobby area.
- All visitors will only be let in by staff. Visitors will be accompanied by a staff member at all times (unless working within the school), while maintaining physical distancing.
- Guardians seeking enrollment will be permitted to visit the school only when children are not present. The family must comply with all visitor protocols and guidelines detailed above.

KEEPING KIDS SAFE

An evidence-based approach to protecting kids during the school year



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Academy of Pediatrics strongly recommend that in order for schools to remain open, which is of critical importance to the education and wellbeing of children and families, certain public health measures must be instituted and adhered to, like universal **mask** wearing.

Why now?

Delta has changed the game

- Delta is 200% more transmissible and results in up to 1000x higher viral load compared to previous variants.
- This translates into a R(0)–6–10. Meaning, on average, one person infects 6–10 people. This is similar to the R(0) for chickenpox and higher than the R(0) for smallpox.
- Vaccinated individuals who become infected can spread the Delta variant to others.

Kids don't have an immunity wall.

Not enough kids are protected for an effective immunity wall

- For example, only 30% of children have SARS-CoV-2 antibodies in Texas, meaning a **majority of kids have yet to be exposed** to COVID-19 (Messiah et al., 2021).
- Many children haven't had the opportunity to be protected by the COVID-19 vaccine.
 - Only 12% are eligible
- Not enough eligible adolescents are vaccinated.
 - Only 39% of 16–17 year-olds and 27% of 12–15 year-olds are fully vaccinated in the United States (AAP, July 28, 2021)

We can do it safely during a pandemic.

Study after study shows the effectiveness of a layered approach in K-12 schools

- In **Missouri**, schools that implemented masks, physical distancing, and increased ventilation had much lower transmission than in the community (Dawson et al., 2021)
- In **Utah**, despite high community incidence and an inability to space students' classroom seats >6 ft apart, high student mask use resulted in low transmission and no school-related outbreaks in 20 Salt Lake County elementary schools (Hershow et al., 2021)
- In rural **Wisconsin**, masking requirements and student cohorting within schools allowed transmission risk to remain low (Falk et al., 2021)
- A study in **Florida** found a layered approach is especially needed when community spread is high (Doyle et al., 2021)

We need to do it for our kids' health.

COVID-19 in kids can range from mild to severe illness

- As of July 22, 2021, over 4.1 million COVID-19 pediatric cases have been reported. The CDC estimates that the "true" burden is 26,838,244 pediatric cases in the U.S.
- In 23 states, 16,878 pediatric hospitalizations have been reported. The CDC estimates 209,264 cumulative pediatric hospitalizations in the U.S. as a whole.
 - Hospitalization rates for COVID-19 are higher than for the 2009–10 H1N1 pandemic.
- As of May 2021, 3,742 MIS-C cases have been linked to COVID-19.
- Over 400 pediatric deaths have been reported since the beginning of the pandemic. Although this seems low compared to adults, **COVID-19 is now a top 10 cause of death for adolescents in the United States.**
- Mortality is not the only negative outcome. Long COVID-19 (or Post-acute Sequelae of COVID-19 [PASC]) has been reported among kids.
 - The British National Health Service is reporting that 7–8% of kids experience long COVID-19 and is opening new pediatric clinics for long COVID-19 around the country.

We need to do it for our community.

We need to stop transmission among kids to stop spread in the community.

- Kids spread SARS-CoV-2 as efficiently as adults. Several outbreak investigations have demonstrated transmission among children, adolescents, and young adults, including transmission to older household members.
- Living with a child engaged with in-person school without public health mitigation measures increases the odds of COVID-19 for the household (Lessler et al., 2021)
- Children who got COVID-19 at two Utah daycares spread it to household members (Schwartz et al., 2020)

A collective approach is far more effective.

A collective approach is far more effective than an individualistic approach

- While masks provide protection to the wearer, they primarily serve as source control and the greatest benefits occur if everyone wears them.
- Kids are highly influenced by peers and teachers. If all peers are required to wear masks, social desirability will play a factor into compliance.
- Using vaccination status to determine who should wear a mask in schools will be a huge burden on teachers and staff and nearly impossible to enforce

This guide was created by Dr. Katelyn Jetelina, MPH PhD--epidemiologist, mom, and founder of Your Local Epidemiologist. With the assistance of Dr. Alison Bernstein, PhD (neuroscientist, mom) and Dr. Christina Probst, MD FAAP (pediatrician, mom).