



# Montessori Children's House

## COVID-19

### Health & Safety Guidelines Handbook

*Release date: September 6, 2022*

The top priority of Montessori Children's House is to provide a safe learning environment for children. We have used the following planning principles, as well as recommendations from the CDC and Rhode Island Department of Education to create a back-to-school plan and health and safety guidelines handbook.

Planning principles:

- Opening MCH for the 2022-23 school year with health and safety as a top priority
- Continuing health and safety guidelines while maintaining a calming and inspiring environment for children
- Ensuring high-quality curricula for all program levels
- Enhancing school-to-family communication and family participation

The Health and Safety Guidelines Handbook will allow for changes as the crisis is not over, things may change, and we must adhere to state and local orders as they are issued. Our focus is always on student and staff safety, health and well-being of our community, and mindfulness toward adjusting to meet our community's needs. We will continue to communicate plans and decisions as they develop.

\*All policies and routines subject to change due to CDC and state guidelines

### ***Masking***

Wearing a mask is not required unless students, faculty or staff are returning to school after COVID-19 infection and recovery, or when mild symptoms of illness are present with no fever and a negative test result. We encourage each person to make their own decision about wearing a mask at school. Please note- there may be times that masking for a defined period will be recommended in situations such as a cluster is present in a specific class(es) or when our community level is high and an increasing number of COVID-19 cases is present. We appreciate your help and cooperation. We will continue to monitor the guidance and make changes accordingly.

### ***Parent Health Screening- Before Arrival***

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.

**In the absence of a more likely diagnosis** (physician documented allergy or other non-contagious illness), if your child has any of the following symptoms, your child will need to stay home. Children must be symptom free for 24 hours, **without the use of a fever reducer**, before returning to school.

- Temperature of 100.4° Fahrenheit or higher
- Cough- including a persistent dry cough without the documentation from a physician about an allergic condition
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Muscle or body aches
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell
- Congestion or runny nose (new)
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

### ***Health Screening- Staff***

- All staff members will self-screen for Covid symptoms.

***Child Illness Policy and Procedure***

Our sick child policy will be amended as follows:

- Children will be sent home when any of the following symptoms are observed:
  - Temperature is 100.4° Fahrenheit or higher
    - Temperature will be taken at least two times to verify
  - Cough- including a persistent dry cough without the documentation from a physician about an allergic condition
  - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - Muscle or body aches
  - Headache
  - Sore throat
  - Nausea or Vomiting
  - Fatigue
  - New loss of taste or smell
  - Diarrhea
  - Congestion or runny nose (new)
- *Note: the school reserves the right to send a child home for illness even in the absence of fever and regardless of a note from a physician.*
- If any of these symptoms are observed, the school will:
  - Place the child in a safe isolation area with all belongings until they are picked up
  - Call parent(s) for pickup. If a parent is unavailable, we will call others on the emergency contact list
  - On-call nurse will be consulted as needed
- Returning to school:
  - If sent home, children must be symptom free for 24 hours, **without the use of a fever reducer**, before returning to school.

***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, the school will take the following actions:

- Notify staff and parents/caregivers that a member of the classroom community has been diagnosed with COVID-19. Confidentiality will be maintained.
- Notify the school community that a child in the school (not their community) has been diagnosed with COVID-19. Confidentiality will be maintained.
- Confidentiality will be maintained, as well as information to counter stigmas

- All follow up actions (quarantine, classroom closure, etc.) will be dictated by the public health department

### ***Children or Staff with Positive Case of COVID-19 - Returning to School***

Children and staff who have a positive diagnosis and who have stayed home (home isolated) can return to school/work when the following criteria are met:

- Fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication **and**
- Symptoms have improved **and**
- 5 days since symptoms first appeared
  - OR time-based approach if asymptomatic when tested positive. Isolate until:
    - 5 days since date of specimen collection
- They must wear a N95 or KN95 mask days six through 10. If they cannot wear a mask in school, they must stay home for a full 10 days.

**Those who may have been exposed to COVID-19 no longer need to quarantine themselves. At this time, if you were exposed to COVID-19, you should wear a high-quality mask for 10 days and get tested on days five and seven.**

In addition, MCH will be following these procedures:

- MCH will comply with any and all state or local health department guidelines regarding school closures, cleaning and sanitization practices, reopening, and re-entry of students after infection with the disease.
- MCH reserves the right, at the sole discretion of the Head of School, to close the school at any time that such action is deemed appropriate in order to minimize the transmission of disease. Such closures may be deemed appropriate even in the event that there are not any confirmed cases of the disease in the school. Additionally, a closure may be deemed appropriate despite the fact that local school district or other local authorities have not undertaken similar action or issued a similar recommendation.

***Communication***

MCH will utilize email as the primary method of communicating school closures and other information, including any changes made to our school routines and policies. Our COVID-19 resource page will be available and updated throughout the year.

Questions, concerns and comments: please contact [coneill@montessorichildrenhouse.org](mailto:coneill@montessorichildrenhouse.org) or [office@montessorichildrenhouse.org](mailto:office@montessorichildrenhouse.org)