

New COVID19 Policies Preparing to Open Safely in the Fall 2020

Health Check

As required by the Virginia Department of Social Services, families are required to inform the school if they have symptoms of any illness. COVID19 symptoms will require us to report it to the Virginia Health Department to receive next step instructions on possible exclusions or temporary closures.

Children will receive a health check daily before leaving their car. Their temperature will be taken with a touchless thermometer, and they will be excluded with a temperature of over 99.5. The baseline temperature for admittance is specifically without the aid of medication. Parents will be asked if their child has had a cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell. If any of these are present, the child will be denied entry until these symptoms have been resolved and/or the child is under a physician's care with adequate documentation to provide proof of care and eligibility to return to school.

Children who show signs of COVID19, or any other illness, while at school will be isolated and parents must pick up from school immediately and/or appoint an emergency contact person to pick the child up if they are not able to do so. Parents must keep the school informed of the progression of the illness and if the symptoms develop into a positive diagnosis of COVID19. The Virginia Department of Health is requiring us to contact them for further instructions on management at the school level.

The same procedures will be applied to the adults in the environment, including health checks and exclusion for symptoms. Our main goal is to keep our school community a safe and healthy place to be.

Drop-off and Pick-up

Drop Off: We will institute a temporary car-pool drop-off from the parking lot between the hours of 8:00 and 9:00. If you arrive and no one is visible to take your child, please call the school for someone to come and get your

child from your car. You are asked to drive past the entrance, turn around, and pull up to the walkway that leads to the west front door. Someone will be there to take your child's temperature (using a contactless thermometer) and the parent/guardian will be asked about any potential health symptoms within the child's family and close contacts as discussed in Health Check above. This information will be necessary BEFORE a child will be taken into school. When all checks are performed and the child is confirmed to be fever free, they will be taken from the back left side of the car, along with their disposable lunch and snacks, walked to the CHMS door, and passed to someone that will be waiting inside to take them downstairs, sign them in, have them wash hands, and move to their classroom. Please be patient as this process may take some time to coordinate. Students MUST arrive by 9:00 as by this point the instructional day has started. If you arrive after 9:00 due to a prearranged absence, please call the school for someone to come upstairs and go through this procedure with you.

Pick-up for part day before lunch and after lunch will be similar to our full day pick-up procedures below. Please call the office when you arrive in the parking lot for upstairs pick-up arrangements. Please do not come into the school.

Pick Up: Pick-up for full day students will be from 4:00 – 5:00. School will remain open until 5:30 for those occasional times when you need a little extra time. but we strongly urge you to pick up by 5:00 so teachers can concentrate on the extensive cleaning and preparing of the environment required by the CDC to be ready for the next day. Parents will be required to pull up outside the building in the same manner as morning drop-off and stay in their car. Please call the school when you arrive and someone will bring your child to you. Due to state safety laws, parents will need to get out of their car, put their child into the back seat, and buckle their child into their car seats. Staff members are NOT allowed to buckle children in. Please be patient as this process may take some time. **Parents are urged to pick up before 5:00 and all children must be picked up by 5:30.** We thank you for your understanding.

Our intention is to minimize the number of adults that come into the building. If you need to pick up at any other time, such as for a doctor's appointment, please call the office to make arrangements for someone to bring your child to you in the parking lot.

Cubbie Bags/Backpacks/Toys from Home

Children should bring a bag full of extra clothes on the first day of school. These clothes will stay at school, and we will inform you when additional clothing is needed. In order to minimize exchange of germs, backpacks will not be allowed to come in and out of the building each day.

We will send home plastic grocery store bags daily with your child's work, thus avoiding cubbie bags going back and forth. Please donate grocery bags to the cause.

Please do not bring toys from home as this encourages sharing of toys and germs.

Social Distancing /Masks

Even though the principles of social distancing are in direct contrast to the Montessori philosophy, our teachers are ready to do what it takes to keep children safe in our environment.

Our main goal with social distancing is to minimize the transfer of bodily fluids from one person to another, as much as possible. This will require us to touch each other and the things in the classroom as little as possible. Our plan to accomplish this, as recommended by the Department of Social Services, is for each child to bring a banker box to school with supplies such as crayons and scissors, so no one will share supplies with anyone else. The supply list follows these policies. The children will work out of their box in a designated space in the classroom. The lid placed on top of the box will create their own box desk.

All teachers and children are asked to wear masks. We know we will have a learning curve with this and will work with the children to be successful. Please start practicing mask wearing at home this summer for a smooth transition when school starts. Here is a website that might be helpful.

https://schoolmaskpack.com/?utm_source=Facebook&utm_medium=FBPaidBitly&utm_campaign=SMP-HomePageJun02

Children will stay within their classroom group throughout the day to minimize contact with others. Children will not mix on the playground for the same reason. We will do our best to minimize close contact between

the students and their classmates however we are aware, as educators, that this may be a difficult thing to do. Children at this age are naturally curious and interested in their classmates' activities. We will do our best to guide and practice distancing and we appreciate your conversations at home to also help remind your child of this guideline.

Hygiene

Hand washing will take place multiple times a day, when entering the environment, after toileting, before and after eating, after playing outside, when leaving to go home, and many times in between. Children will be required to take care of all bodily functions and cleanliness needs, including how to cover their mouth (ideally cough into their sleeve or a tissue) when they cough, how to blow and properly wipe their nose, and wash their hands after, as well as taking care of their bathroom routines and properly washing their hands. Our licensing regulations state that children entering our program be fully potty trained, in underwear, be able to understand their own needs as to when to use the bathroom and be able to wipe independently as best they can. Again, these are things that should be practiced at home starting as soon as possible.

Disinfecting/Cleaning

CDC guidelines require that all surfaces that are touched by children and adults be either washed or sanitized daily. The materials the children use in the classroom will be washed with soap and water after each use. Door handles, light switches, faucets, tables and chairs, etc., will be disinfected either daily or after each use. Ventilation filters will be changed on a regular basis. During appropriate weather, windows can be opened from the top to allow for ventilation.

Testing

The CDC has determined that testing should be used for contact tracing and case investigation, but not to determine if children are allowed to return to school. Therefore, testing prior to school starting will not be required.

Schedules/Closures/Outbreaks

Our daily schedule will basically stay the same. The changes in arrival and departure times are to give us time to sanitize the entire building after each day's use. This will be a learning process for us, so please be patient while we figure out what works best.

If outbreaks occur in our community, we will follow the guidelines of the Fairfax County Health Department. Our understanding, however, is that the school must close for a 14 day quarantine. Parents should prepare for these occurrences and, to the best of our ability, we will move to an online format in order to continue academic lessons and foster connection with children and teachers. While we understand this is not the ideal method, until there is a viable vaccine, this "School at Home" format may occasionally need to be used in times of closure. Please understand that tuition is expected to be paid regardless of whether we are in school or online. We still have all of our financial responsibilities regardless of where we interact with the children.

Lunch/Snacks/Nap

Children will bring their own lunch, as usual, but now packed in a disposable bag, with each item in the bag packed in a disposable bag as well. Nothing will be sent home. Even three year olds need to be able to open all of their items by themselves. For example, if your child has difficulty opening a cheese stick wrapper, please take it out of the original plastic wrapping and put it in a baggie. This way, teachers can avoid touching any containers and food. For drinks, please only send flip top thermos water bottles with water. Children may use the water fountain to refill throughout the day and we will send them home each day for you to wash. If you forget to bring a thermos of water the children will be offered water from school. However, we urge you to send a bottle each day for children to have with them. Teachers will not be able to keep special drinks or other food items in the fridge. Please make all preparations for your child to be as independent as possible with all items disposable.

Your child will also bring a snack for mid-morning, and if your child stays all day, they should bring a second snack to be eaten at 3:00. These snacks must be packed completely disposable, so a few crackers in a baggie and a piece of fruit for each snack will work well. Please prepare the fruit so

your child can be as independent as possible. Slice the apples, peel the oranges, cut the grapes, etc.

If your child will be taking a nap, their small blanket must be able to fit into a small box that we will provide. This way the children can manage their own belongings and keep them separate from the others in the nap room. Blankets will be sent home once a month for washing. We will forgo sleepy toys for now in the interest of not spreading germs.

Changes to the Environment

In order to create an environment that is easily sanitized, we are changing out some of the materials for paper substitutes that children can work with and then take home instead of being put back on the shelf. We will also be rearranging the rooms, removing the cubbies we have always used in lieu of the box the children will keep their belongings in. Other changes may be necessary once we are back in the environment setting up for the new school year. Rest assured, however, that your child will continue to receive a true Montessori experience at Children's House!

Supply List:

One of the recommendations from the CDC concerning stopping the spread of germs is for each child to have their own supplies to use in the classroom. In order for us to accomplish this, we are asking you to supply the following the first day your child attends school. We will not be able to admit your child without these items.

1 banker/book box with an unattached lid that will serve as a small desk and also to keep supplies in.



Pencil box to keep the small items in

3 writing pencils
1 eraser
1 box 24 colored pencils
1 hand-held pencil sharpener with holder at the bottom
1 box 24 crayons
1 box 10 or 12 markers
1 pair scissors
2 glue sticks
1 clipboard
1 box tissues
1 water bottle with flip top lid

Snacks and lunch will also go into this box each day.

We will need TWO COMPLETE PAIR of change of clothes to keep in the bag that stays at school. This includes an extra pair of closed toe shoes! We will probably need to change clothes more often to keep control of bodily fluids. We will let you know when the supply gets low.

In addition to personal supplies, we ask you to help with the general cleaning supplies we will need to keep the environment clean. Every common surface, and all materials the children use, has to be cleaned or disinfected after each use, so this will be a lot of supplies. I know all of these supplies are in short supply, so we are giving you this list in plenty of time for you to find them before the start of school. I greatly appreciate your help; I would have to be constantly looking and shopping to keep up with this need.

2 containers of disinfectant wipes
1 Hand sanitizer (70% alcohol based)
1 liquid hand soap

1 bottle disinfectant liquid spray (Lysol or similar)

2 rolls paper towels

1 box vinyl gloves

2 extra masks. Your child should come to school with a mask on