

# New World Montessori School

## Operating Plan Under COVID-19

### Overview

After considerable planning and deliberation, New World Montessori School has decided to reopen our campus on August 17, 2020, for all-day students. Reopening NWMS 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 our campus recognizes that: Number 1, for NWMS families and staff, that risk is balanced against the educational, social, economic, and other costs of remaining closed. Number 2, our school must reopen with many new health and safety protocols to do everything we can to responsibly mitigate that risk to the extent possible, and Number 3, each family and staff member must decide how to balance those risks, and whether to return to campus.

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 campus we are aiming to fulfill the mission of New World Montessori School, 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 we are employing to mitigate COVID-related risks at school. That 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 and limit the group size and interactions. These procedures will not require children from the Infant Community to wear masks in the classroom (though teachers will wear masks 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 reopening with these new protocols represents an important first step in responsibly living with the virus.

In sum, NWMS has concluded that reopening our campus under these conditions is in the best interest of the community and that each NWMS family will make its own decision about the balance of risk, and what is best for their children.

### Arrival and Departure

We will be assisting in the arrival and departure procedures, by adding procedures for health screening and hand hygiene, as well as meeting the state guidelines for social distancing and limited contact.

#### Assisted arrival

- Assisted arrival for all children will be from 7:00 to 8:30 am.
- Walk-up arrivals cannot be facilitated during this time.

- The same parent or designated person should drop off the child each day.
- Parents must wear a face mask during arrival.
- Every child must have a Health Screening completed and brought to school or logged by parent prior to arrival the first day.
- Lunch box and personal items go on the floorboard of the car below the seat or inside the trunk.
- Drive your vehicle through the front door parallel to the curb and wait for one of the staff members to assist you.
- Staff will take your child's temperature using a contactless thermometer prior to your child leaving the vehicle.
- Your child will be invited to unbuckle the seat belt or be assisted as needed.
- As soon as your car door closes and your child is safely away from the car, you may pull up to the exit.
- Staff members will clean hands after each child's arrival.

### **Assisted Departure**

- Assisted departure for all Infant Community and Children's House will be from 3:00 to 3:15 pm
- Departure for Elementary will be from 3:15 to 3:30 pm.
- Walk-up departures cannot be facilitated during this time.
- Parents must wear a face mask during assisted departure.
- Please pull up and wait in your car; your child will be walked to you and helped inside the car.
- Once your child is in the car, pull up to a parking space to finalize buckling your child in their car seat.
- Once your child is secure in the car, you may pull up to await your turn to exit the parking lot.

### **Late Arrival**

Late arrival must be scheduled in advance with the main office. Please follow this procedure:

- Contact the Main Office at (915) 593-8091 and indicate the exact time of your child's late arrival.
- Admin Staff will notify the classroom to plan for receiving the child at the pre-arranged late arrival time.
- At the pre-arranged late arrival time, please pull up to the curb and wait for an Admin Staff to proceed with your child's health screening.
- Admin Staff will escort your child to his/her classroom, where Classroom Staff will proceed to greet your child and assist him/her with the regular arrival procedure.

### **Early Departure**

Early departure must be scheduled in advance with your child's teacher and Admin Staff. Please follow this procedure:

- Contact the Main Office at (915)593-8091 and indicate the exact time of your child's early departure.

- Admin Staff will notify the classroom to plan for assisting the child with departure at the prearranged early departure time.
- At the pre-arranged early departure time, please pull up to the curb and wait.
- Admin Staff will collect your child from the classroom and bring him or her to the car.

## Health and Temperature Screening Protocol

Daily employee and child health screenings are important to help reduce the transmission of COVID-19 at school. All children and staff will be screened daily for the following criteria:

### COVID Symptoms :

- Temperature of 100.0°F or more o Fever o Cough o Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing o Loss of taste or smell
- Have used medications to lower an individual's temperature
- In the previous 14 days, has had contact with someone with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19
- Is waiting for COVID-19 test results
- In the previous 14 days, has traveled to another state or another country

### Staff Self-Screening Prior to Arrival at School

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 above, she/he will contact the administrators, not come into work, and follow the procedures in the section COVID-19 Symptoms at School - Staff.

### Staff Screening at School

All staff will conduct a temperature check and record their Staff Health Screening form upon arrival at school.

### Parent Screening of Child Prior to Morning 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. **NWMS asks our community to be extra cautious during this time.** We are committed to keeping our children, staff, and families healthy and rely on one another to do their part in making this possible. A completed Health Screen Sheet for each child must be turned in daily to NWMS Staff and ask that these are done prior to arrival at school to help the drop-off process move quickly.

### Staff Screening of Child at School

Upon arrival, a staff member will follow the screening protocol:

- Collection of the prefilled **Health Screening Form**.
- Take your child's temperature using a contactless thermometer. Additional temperature checks will be taken during the day as needed.
- If the child has a temperature of 100.0°F or more will not be admitted to the school.

- Staff will make 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. If the child exhibits any of these symptoms at arrival or at any point during the day, the child will be isolated, and parents will be required to pick up their child.

## Children's Meals

### Snack

We will continue to send out a snack list request each Friday (Children's House), at the end of the month (Infant Community), and occasionally (Elementary). Children will not be participating in the preparation of the snacks, nor will they be gathering together at the snack table. The classroom assistant will carefully wash everything before it is divided up and passed out to each child to eat at their individual worktable.

### Lunch

During this period of the pandemic, all the children will bring their lunch in a lunch box (name clearly written). We suggest a well-balanced lunch that includes meat or protein, a vegetable side and a fruit. Please include a drink, silverware, and two paper napkins.

For more information regarding lunch policies please refer to the NWMS Parent Handbook. NWMS Students will enjoy his/her lunches in their environment with the added safety measures of:

To keep promoting social relationships among the children, additional safety measures will be implemented by the classroom staff as needed, such as meals outside, one child per table.

### Water

Elementary students must bring a full thermos or water bottle every day. NWMS will provide ways to refill these containers as needed.

Younger students will be provided with paper cups.

## Face Masks

NWMS will expect our children from Children's House and up, staff, and all present on the NWMS campus to wear a face mask. Face masks are meant to protect our school community in case the wearer is unknowingly infected but does not have symptoms. For more information, see the CDC: [\*Use of Face Cloth Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19.\*](#)

### Staff, Parents, and Guests

All Staff, Parents and Guests are asked to wear a face mask while on the NWMS campus. This not only helps with the safety of our community, but also sets a good example for our children. Parents and guests are asked to wear masks during arrival and dismissal, including when in the car.

NWMS Staff will follow the same expectation except during the following:

- When working with the children during presentations that require clear articulation and visibility of mouth (shields will be used instead).
- If a child needs to see a staff member’s facial expression.
- When in a designated “no mask” space (e.g. playground, during lunch time) unless parents request the use of the mask at all times.

**Children** - The wearing of masks teaches the children to be responsible citizens, which is a part of the Montessori philosophy. Masks will also help maintain a healthy class community as well as allow the children to be in closer proximity with their peers as they build their social skills.

Spaces and times will be provided for when the masks will not be used during the day, when 6-foot distancing is possible, or during lunch.

We recommend that families practice the usage of masks before the school year begins.

## Limiting the Spread of COVID-19 at School

New World Montessori School does not expect that children will distance themselves totally from other children or adults while at school. Children learn by engaging with their environment, which includes the other people in it. The NWMS building is a small space in comparison to many schools, therefore true social distancing (6 feet apart) is not always possible. The Staff will work with the children on the importance of social distancing as well as the usage of masks.

- All children will enter and exit the building at drop-off and regular pick-up through the main entrance, including After School Care.
- All students will remain in their classroom groupings (5 groups – Infant Community, Children’s House D, Children’s House E, Lower Elementary, and Upper Elementary) during lessons, group time, meals, and playtime.
- Teachers will assure that children have single table workspaces inside.
- During meals, the teachers will set the children at appropriate distances.
- At nap time, children’s nap mats will be spaced out as much as possible, with alternating head to toe arrangements to reduce the distance between children.

## Parent Contact/Communication, Messaging and Phone

Each teacher can be communicated with through TEAMS. Teachers will respond to messages within 24 hours during the work week. Teachers do not respond to phone messages during the day. Time-sensitive contact with teachers can be facilitated by calling the main office.

### Conferences

Conferences will be held by the teacher via TEAMS as needed or as requested by the teacher or parent.

### Observations

Due to restrictions in place to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, regular, in person, observations will be postponed.

## Training

Staff will receive ongoing training regarding State and CDC recommendations and requirements as well as other topics including, but not limited to, mental health, managing stress, and how to stay true to Montessori during COVID-19.

NWMS encourages our school community to be educated as well. As resources become available, links, documents, etc. will be shared via TEAMS.

## Healthy Hand Hygiene

As described by the CDC on When and How to Wash Your Hands, washing hands can keep you 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:

- When entering a classroom
- Before and after each work choice
- Before and after eating or handling food
- After using the toilet or helping a child use the bathroom
- After coming in contact with bodily fluids
- After playing outdoors
- After handling garbage
- Before and after touching your eyes, nose, or mouth because it's a common way that germs spread.

## Use of Hand Sanitizer by Staff

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

## Cleaning and Disinfecting

New World Montessori School follows recommendations by the Texas Department of Health for cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting. Steps to keep NWMS as clean as possible will include the following: Staff will routinely clean, sanitize, and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched.

All bathrooms will be cleaned and disinfected regularly and as needed throughout the day.

ULV cold spray fogger will be used to disinfect and sanitize our environments at the end of week. The ULV cold spray fogger ensures that even the hard to reach places are coated evenly and effectively.

### Classroom Materials

- Materials will be cleaned and sanitized regularly throughout the day using spray sanitizer, and disinfecting fogger on weekends.
- Materials that cannot be cleaned and sanitized will not be used.

- Materials that children have placed in their mouths or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretions or excretions will be set aside until they are cleaned.
- If a child becomes ill while at school, materials that he or she has been working with will be set aside until they are cleaned.
- Yoga Mats will be used (versus rugs) for floor workspace and will be sanitized regularly throughout the day.
- 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.

### **Playtime Activities**

- Activity supplies will be available for each individual classroom and will be sanitized as needed. Activities that children have placed in their mouths or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretions or excretions will be set aside until they are cleaned.
- If a child becomes ill while at school, activities that he or she has been using with will be set aside until they are cleaned.

### **Nap Time Bedding**

- Each child’s bedding is kept separate and stored in individually labeled bags and shelving and will be sent home at the end of each week to be laundered.
- Mats are labeled for each child and will be disinfected daily.

## **Cleaning and Disinfecting Procedures (if staff or child has been directly exposed to COVID-19)**

Due to the nature of the small NWMS building, if a child or staff member has been exposed to COVID-19 (through a direct family member or sitter/nanny, etc.) it will be necessary for the whole school to close. The building will be closed for 48-hours. This closure period allows for the following:

- Day 1 – Building is empty. This is to help minimize the potential for exposure to respiratory droplets.
- Day 2 – Cleaning and disinfecting of the entire school by wiping all frequently touched surfaces and utilizing the fogger.

## **COVID-19 Symptoms at School – Children**

If COVID-19 symptoms begin while at school, the child must be sent home as soon as possible. Sick children will be kept separate from well children and staff contact will be limited as much as reasonably possible, while ensuring the safety and supervision of the child until they leave.

- Classroom staff will follow these isolation procedures:
  - Classroom staff will take the child to the isolation location in the portable classroom. The portable classroom will remain closed to other children or guests until the child has been picked up and the space has been disinfected. The classroom staff will inform the Admin staff of the symptoms exhibited.

- Admin staff will contact parents to come to school to pick up the child. Parents are required to arrange for their child to be picked up as soon as possible, and NO LONGER THAN 1 HOUR FROM THE ORIGINAL NOTIFICATION.
- The Admin staff will supervise the child until the parent arrives.
- Once a parent has left with the ill child, the portable classroom will be cleaned and sanitized by staff.
- Materials, toys, and furniture touched by the child who is sent home will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.
- In the case of a child who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and does not get evaluated by a medical professional or 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 listed 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 COVID-19 test.

### COVID-19 Symptoms at School – Staff

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

- Staff exhibiting new or worsening symptoms of possible COVID-19 at school should:
  - Put on a disposable face mask
  - Leave the classroom
  - Review and complete the CDC's Symptom and Self-Checker
  - Obtain a COVID-19 test – COVID Assessment Sites
  - 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 get evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, the individual is assumed to have COVID-19, and the individual may not return to work until the individual has met the return criteria for Children or Staff with Positive Case of COVID-19 on page 9.
- If the staff member has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to work before completing the self-isolation period specified by the Department of Health, the individual must obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for the return based on a negative COVID-19 test.

### COVID-19 Exposure - Staff and Children

If a staff member or child has been identified as close contact to 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 with the infected person.



## Positive Case of COVID-19 at NWMS

If COVID-19 is confirmed in a child or staff member at NWMS, all persons will be required to self-quarantine for 14 days per the CDC guidelines. The following actions will be taken by school administration:

- Contact the Department of Health and Family Service to report the presence of COVID-19 at NWMS.
- Notify the school community that a child in the school has been diagnosed with COVID-19. Confidentiality will be maintained.
- Close NWMS for 2-weeks to allow self-quarantine for all children and staff.
- Complete disinfecting procedures. Decisions about potential extension of closure will be made in consultation with the local Department of Health.

## Children or Staff with a Positive Case of COVID-19

Children or Staff who have exhibited symptoms and who have stayed home (home isolated) can return to NWMS 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)
- The child or staff member has improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath, etc.)
- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared, or a negative COVID-19 test. For more details, please refer to the CDC – <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/end-home-isolation.html> When You Can Be Around Others After You Had or Likely Have COVID-19.

## Responding to a COVID Case or Exposure at NWMS

NWMS will immediately respond to a positive COVID case or student/staff exposure using the following guidelines:

- If a student or staff member has been diagnosed with COVID-19:
  - An Emergency Health Alert text message will be sent to all families in NWMS.
  - A message with more details will be sent in TEAMS (confidentiality will be respected, as usual, and names will not be given).
  - The NWMS building will close for one week. A combination of online interactions and one week of prepared educational materials will substitute for in-school learning during the one-week closure. If additional time is needed, usage of allotted holidays or an extension of the school year may be necessary.
  - During the closure, cleaning and disinfecting will occur to prepare the space for all to return.
- If a student or staff member has been exposed to COVID-19 (through a direct family member, sitter/nanny, etc.):
  - An Emergency Health Alert text message will be sent to all families in NWMS.
  - A message with more details will be sent in TEAMS (confidentiality will be respected, as usual, and names will not be given).
  - NWMS will be closed for 48-hours to allow for the proper disinfecting process.