



The Montessori School *of* Raleigh

COVID-19 Response Plan | August 13, 2021 Revised February 4, 2022

This revised COVID-19 Response Plan ("Plan") will be in place beginning February 14, 2022. The Montessori School of Raleigh (MSR), in its discretion, may make amendments to this Plan. Any updates or changes to this Plan will be communicated to parents and employees via email. The most recent version of this plan can be found on the School's [Health and Wellness](#) webpage.

MSR continues to consult the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), and the North Carolina Strong Schools Public Health Toolkit ("Toolkit") for COVID-19 guidelines and policies and will continue to make decisions based on scientific data related to mitigating the risk of transmitting COVID-19.

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Contacting the School Regarding Illness

Parents should always report any illness-related absences to the School Nurse and the Administrative Support Manager on your student's respective campus. Any COVID-19 absences, diagnosis, exposure, symptoms, test results, and questions about quarantine should be directed to the School Nurse via email at nurse@msr.org.

On-Campus Mitigation Efforts

The school continues to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 through the following:

- Encouraging vaccination for those employees and students who are eligible;
- Requiring all students and adults on campus (other than students in Toddler classrooms) to wear a mask while indoors, unless eating or napping;
- Implementing a classroom cohort model;

- Regular deep cleaning of classrooms with Clorox Total 360 machines;
- Frequent handwashing and hygiene throughout the day, and access to hand sanitizers;
- Ionization filtration system in all rooms on campus;
- Requiring unvaccinated employees to participate in weekly COVID-19 testing;
- Following physical distancing guidelines; and,
- Increased use of outdoor spaces.

Cohorts

Students will be divided into cohorts to allow for physical distancing in classrooms and on campus.

- Each cohort will be comprised of multiple classrooms.
- Students across the classrooms in a cohort may share indoor or outdoor space during before-school or after-school care.
- Depending on the nature of the activity, separate classrooms within a cohort may mix indoors during the school day if it supports classroom learning and student engagement.
- All COVID-19 mitigation strategies will remain in place, including masking and distancing.

The following cohort model remains in place for the 2021-2022 school year:

Toddler I	Cohort A	Children's House I	Cohort C	LE1	LE/UE Cohort
Toddler II		Children's House II		LE4	
Toddler V		Children's House VI		LE2	
Toddler III	Cohort B	Children's House III	Cohort D	UE2	
Toddler IV		Children's House IV		UE3	

Middle School	Cohort H
Upper School	

Mask Policy

Employees, students, and visitors are required to wear masks while indoors, regardless of vaccination status, other than students in Toddler classrooms.

Students, employees, and visitors will no longer be required to wear face masks when outside, unless directed to put masks on due to the activity and/or inability to physically distance. All students, employees, and visitors should maintain physical distancing of three to-six (3-6) feet, depending on the activity or interaction, when outdoors. Please see the "Physical Distancing" section of this Plan below for more detailed information. All MSR employees will

continue to adhere to physical distancing guidelines. MSR employees will continue to prioritize distancing among children when they are in static, stationary positions with masks off (eating).

Individuals who have any medical or behavioral condition or disability, including, but not limited to, any person who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious or incapacitated, or is otherwise unable to put on or remove a mask without assistance, will not be required to wear a mask. Individuals that meet this criteria must request a Mask Exemption Form from the School Nurse and may be required to provide medical documentation or certification from a health care provider in support of their request for a mask exemption.

Physical Distancing Policy

Physical distancing of a minimum of six (6) feet is required between adults (MSR employees and/or visitors) and students both inside and outside, regardless of an individual's vaccination status, to the greatest extent possible. Short, closer encounters for brief periods are allowable, when necessary, and the adult should wear a mask, even if the encounter occurs outside.

Physical distancing of a minimum of three (3) feet will be maintained between students within school settings to the greatest extent possible, recognizing that children, particularly young children, may have difficulty with this. Encouraging physical distance of a minimum of three (3) feet between students should be done in a developmentally appropriate way. The school will continue to prioritize six (6) feet of distancing among children when they are in static, stationary positions with masks off (i.e., eating).

Parents/Visitors on Campus

All parents and visitors must check in and out at the Main Office on the campus they are visiting. All parents and visitors must wear masks while in school buildings. Parents and visitors who might be feeling ill or have symptoms of COVID-19 should not come to campus.

Community Events

MSR is planning to host a number of virtual and in-person classroom/community events during the 2021-2022 school year. All dates and guidelines for specific events will be shared with MSR families via email and Veracross.

COVID-19 Illness Policy

Students and MSR employees should stay home and be referred to their healthcare provider for testing and care when they first begin experiencing any of the following symptoms of COVID-19:

- Fever (temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher) or chills;
- Sore throat;
- Cough;
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath;
- New loss of taste or smell;
- Congestion or runny nose;
- Fatigue and muscle or body aches;
- Nausea, diarrhea, or vomiting; or

- New onset of severe headache, especially with a fever.

COVID-19 Quarantine & Return Policy

A student or MSR employee who either has symptoms of COVID-19 or tests positive for COVID-19 must comply with the following which reflect current CDC guidelines:

- Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 must isolate for a minimum of five (5) days and must be fever free for a minimum of 24 hours (without using fever-reducing medicine) and symptoms must be improving before returning to campus (Day 0 is the first day of symptoms + five (5) more days of isolation. Upon return to school, the individual must be able to wear a high-quality mask on campus for another five (5) days. Examples of high-quality masks include KN-95, N-95 or double masking with a cloth and medical mask.)
 - Please note that after the employee's required masking period, all regular masking rules will apply as noted above in the "Masking" section.
- If an individual is unvaccinated and has symptoms of COVID-19 but has not tested for COVID-19 nor has visited a health care provider, that individual will be presumed positive and must isolate for a minimum of five (5) days. The first day of symptoms is day 0. Prior to returning to campus, that individual must be fever free for a minimum of 24 hours (without using fever-reducing medicine) and other symptoms of COVID-19 must be improving. The individual must be able to wear a high-quality mask for an additional five (5) days after returning to campus.
- Unvaccinated individuals with exposure to someone who tests positive for COVID-19 must quarantine for five (5) days, regardless of a negative test result. Quarantine begins after the last known exposure to the person who tested positive for COVID-19.
 - Asymptomatic individuals with a negative COVID-19 test may be eligible for a shortened quarantine per CDC guidelines. These situations will be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the School Nurse.
- Fully vaccinated* individuals with an exposure to someone who tests positive for COVID-19 may be required to quarantine regardless of whether or not they are experiencing symptoms. These situations will be assessed on a case-by-case basis -by the School Nurse. Fully-vaccinated individuals should report any potential exposure to the School Nurse.
 - Fully-vaccinated individuals that meet the criteria of a close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19 should test five (5) days after exposure and submit their test result to nurse@msr.org.
- If an individual in the same household is undergoing testing for COVID-19, or if a person in the same household tests positive or is presumed positive for COVID-19, family members should contact the School Nurse, who will provide instructions on whether they need to quarantine.

- Individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past three (3) months and have recovered do not need to quarantine or get tested again as long as they do not develop new symptoms. The school requires the positive COVID-19 test result on file before allowing the individual to return to campus.

Exposure Policy

The CDC and NCDHHS have recently updated their definition of a close contact. Primary exposure is defined as: “an individual within six (6) feet of a person who has tested positive or is presumed positive for COVID-19 for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.”

- Exception: In the K-12 indoor classroom setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were within three to six (3-6) feet of an infected student (test-confirmed or presumed positive) if both the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time. This definition applies to other in-school settings and school bus transportation. This exception does not apply to extracurricular activities or athletics.

Secondary exposure (exposure to someone who has had contact with a suspected or confirmed case) does not necessitate quarantine. Individuals who have had secondary exposure should self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms.

Testing Guidelines

The following links provide information regarding local test sites:

- [Raleigh/Wake County](#)
- [Durham County](#)
- [NCDHHS Find My Testing Place](#)

The best time to test for COVID-19 is five to seven (5-7) days after last known exposure.

For additional information about testing, please reach out to the School Nurse.

North Carolina Mandates

Students, faculty, and staff are required to abide by all North Carolina state mandates related to COVID-19.

MSR-Sponsored Athletics

MSR’s athletics program will follow the COVID-19 guidelines published by the North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA), the North Carolina Independent Schools Athletic Association (NCISAA), and the Triangle Middle School Conference. Regular sports seasons are anticipated. Athletics are offered to students at the Upper Elementary and Middle School levels; therefore, students that opt to participate in MSR athletics will come into contact with students from other MSR cohorts.

Non-Campus Related Sports

If a student participates in sports that are not school-related, the school strongly recommends regular, weekly COVID-19 testing if the student is not vaccinated.

Recommendations for Gathering

If one or more unvaccinated family members have been present at a gathering with unvaccinated individuals from other households, the school strongly recommends the unvaccinated family member(s) test five to seven (5-7) days after the last day of a gathering.

Interactions with others, whether through travel or social activities, increases the risk of contracting and spreading COVID-19. If you are gathering with people outside your immediate household, or are traveling, MSR strongly recommends that families:

- Avoid contact with people who are sick;
- Follow local, state, federal, and international guidelines related to COVID-19 and travel;
- Limit the size of gatherings and hold such gatherings outdoors;
- Practice physical distancing of at least three (3) feet;
- Wash your hands and avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth; and,
- Wear a mask when around anyone who does not live in your household.

Vaccination Policy*

Once an individual has received two shots (Moderna or Pfizer) or one shot (Johnson & Johnson) and a two-week period has passed, that individual is considered fully vaccinated. Vaccinated individuals that meet the criteria of a close contact of someone diagnosed with COVID-19 will be asked to undergo testing five (5) days after exposure and submit their test results to nurse@msr.org. While on campus, vaccinated individuals will be required to wear a mask when indoors, and practice physical distancing, as some children and adults have not been vaccinated. If it has been over six (6) months since your initial vaccination series with Pfizer or Moderna, or two months have passed following your Johnson & Johnson vaccination and you have not received a booster vaccine, a five (5) day quarantine will be required.

Vaccination Confidentiality

The school will treat all vaccination information as confidential medical information. Accordingly, the School cannot disclose an individual's vaccination status. In addition, parents should not ask any employee, including their child's teacher, whether they are vaccinated. Employees may choose to disclose their vaccination status to their class or parents; however, the school does not expect or require employees to do so, and employees should not feel obligated to disclose such information.

Busing

Bus capacities have been reduced in efforts to limit exposure. Bussing is offered to students at various division levels, therefore, students that opt to utilize bus services will have contact with students from other MSR cohorts. Students and drivers are required to wear masks while on the bus. Students must be seated in their assigned seat. Hand sanitizer will be provided on the buses. Buses will be sanitized following each morning and afternoon bus run. In the case of positive

exposure on a bus, bus riders will be included in contact tracing. When possible, windows should be kept open while the bus is in motion to help reduce spread of the virus by increasing air circulation.

Studios

After-school Studios will be offered seasonally with diversified programming to ensure a balance of movement, STEM, arts, etc. Depending on the nature and location of a Studio, cross-cohort participation may be allowed.

Buffer Weeks

MSR does not plan to utilize “Buffer Weeks” following extended school breaks (i.e., following Thanksgiving, December break, or Spring Break). The School reserves the right to institute “Buffer Weeks” should data change significantly and it be deemed prudent to institute additional protections for our community.

Temperature Checks / Daily Self-Screening

Daily temperature checks at the classroom door will be discontinued; however, it is highly suggested that families self-screen for a fever and COVID-19 symptoms before arriving on campus. If a child is sick when they arrive at school, parents will be contacted to return to school to take the child home.

Field Trips and Extended Trips

MSR will not host any international field trips for the 2021-2022 school year. Local day field trips will be allowed and assessed on a case-by-case basis. There will be no overnight field trips.

Lunch and Snack

The My Hot Lunchbox program will be offered for the 2021-2022 school year. In addition, some food preparations and food activities will be reinstated, including community snack at the Children’s House level. Students will continue to eat outside, if possible, or at their designated spaces in the classroom. Microwaves and refrigerators for Middle and Upper School students will be available. Water fountains will be available for the sole purpose of refilling a self-provided water bottle.

General Illness Procedures

The following procedures are also documented in the 2021-2022 Families Handbook but have been restated here. These procedures apply to illness other than potential cases of COVID-19.

Students should remain at home when they exhibit the first symptoms of a potential communicable disease. No child should attend school if they are experiencing any of the following:

- Fever
- Runny nose, congestion
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

- Undiagnosed eye issues
- Undiagnosed deep coughs
- Undiagnosed rashes
- Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)
- Head Lice

A student may return to school after an illness if the student:

- Has been **fever free** for 24 hours without the use of any fever-reduction medications. A fever is defined as an oral temperature of 100.4° or greater;.
- Has not vomited or had diarrhea for 24 hours and the student is able to keep food and liquid down;.
- Has been on antibiotics for at least 24 hours at home and is symptom free; or.
- Has a doctor's clearance on file with the School Nurse.

Any student returning to the school before the required 24-hour period for any of the above symptoms will be sent home. A doctor's note may be required if an illness is prolonged or if there is a question of communicability such as rashes, sore throats, eye infections, and/or swollen glands.

If a student was out due to an injury, he or she must return with a written note to the School Nurse from the parent and/or physician stating specific restrictions and time limits. The school will not assume the student can participate fully in activities, including PE and recess, unless a note is provided.

Chronic illness will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Students with allergies or other chronic conditions need a doctor's note on file before they are eligible to be exempt from the 24-hour symptom-free policy. Any time a student exhibits symptoms related to a chronic illness or condition, the parent should contact the School Nurse to ensure the student is cleared to be on campus.