

**HUDSON COUNTRY  
MONTESSORI SCHOOL**



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**COVID-19  
OPERATIONAL PLAN  
REVISED 8.9.21**

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# SECTION 1 : OPERATIONS

## **CAPACITY**

Administration reviewed building plans and determined capacity for each classroom so that students and staff are able to social distance. In order to facilitate social distancing, the school has additional work desks so that each student has their own individual work space. Our gym and multi-purpose room will be used as a spare classroom if needed.

## **SOCIAL DISTANCING**

Classrooms are arranged so that students will be able to social distance 6 ft apart in all directions for mask breaks and lunch/snack. For instructional time, students will be seated 3 ft apart with a face covering. Each student will be provided with an individual desk. All staff and visitors are required to wear a face covering.

## **PPE AND FACE COVERINGS**

All Staff are required to wear a face covering. Students over the age of 2 years old are asked to wear masks during school drop-off and school pick-up (with the exception of our toddler program). They must wear face coverings when engaged in contact sports indoors. Students are given breaks throughout the day so they are not wearing their face coverings at all times (independent work time, lunchtime, etc.). An extra supply of face coverings are available for students, staff, and visitors.

- Faculty and staff have been given an allowance to purchase face coverings for themselves so they can perform their duties at work safely.
- An extra supply of face masks were purchased for adults and children (face coverings for students was added to our school supplies list).
- Faculty, staff, and students have been asked to clean their face coverings daily.
- PPE has been provided for staff conducting health screenings.

## **HYGIENE, CLEANING, AND DISINFECTION**

### **Hygiene**

- Students, faculty and staff have been trained on proper hand and respiratory hygiene. Parents/legal guardians will be provided with information on how to reinforce this at home.
- Proper hand hygiene stations are available around the school for handwashing and/or hand sanitizing.
- Signage is placed around each station as a reminder to practice proper hand/respiratory hygiene.
- Receptacles are placed next to each water source to discard soiled items such as paper towels.

### **Cleaning and Disinfection**

- All buildings are cleaned every evening by an outside cleaning company. Throughout the school day, faculty and staff are maintaining logs that include the date, time, and scope of cleaning and disinfection. The log has information that includes the frequency for everything that is cleaned and disinfected. Each teacher is responsible for their own classroom. Administration is assigned to clean and disinfect office areas.
- Our school is using a school-approved chemical cleaning/disinfecting system with improved formulas that eliminate harmful viruses (incl. COVID-19), bacteria and other microorganisms.

- For routine classroom disinfecting/cleaning we are using a product called Oxivir. Oxivir is on the EPA List-N and rated with an exceptionally short contact time of only 10 seconds. Apart from being highly effective, it is so safe that users of the product are not required to use PPE. If/when we are unable to purchase Oxivir, we will disinfect with a 6% solution of hydrogen peroxide.
- To reduce high touch surfaces, we have touch free amenities such as hand sanitizer dispensers, soap dispensers, paper towel dispensers, and trash receptacles.
- Restrooms are cleaned and disinfected after each use for the toddler and primary level (ages 18 months-5 years old). Elementary and Middle School bathrooms are cleaned and disinfected three times a day (morning, after lunch, end of the day).
- We are encouraging students to bring their own reusable water bottles to school.

### **COVID-19 SAFETY COORDINATOR**

Neeru Bhambree, the Director of the school, is designated as the COVID-19 Safety Coordinator. Her responsibilities include being the communicator and point of contact for any suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 and ensuring that all aspects of the school's operation plan is followed. The following people will assist her in doing this:

1. Sharon Tufo
2. Dorothy Murray
3. Sureka Perera
4. Beena Thomas
5. Angela Rambukwella
6. Marybeth Rose

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

#### **Cohorts**

Our school is following a cohort model. We have four buildings that provide each cohort with their own classroom space, their own entry/exit doors, and their own bathrooms. Cohorts do not intermingle with other cohorts at any given time. Siblings are placed in the same cohort to the best extent possible.

### **MODELS OF INSTRUCTION**

#### **In-Person Instruction**

- We are operating in-person, 5 days a week. During intermittent closings, we will switch to distance learning for our preschool age students, elementary, and middle school students. For our preschool age students, we have prepared four one week units of distance learning curriculum. Each unit of study includes a package of home study materials that each student will work on with their teacher via Zoom. Parents will be asked to pick up their packages from school each week so that their child can participate in distance learning when needed. All Elementary/Middle School teachers have a live learning curriculum where they have the ability to switch to distance learning at any time without notice. In the event a cohort is asked to self-quarantine, we will switch only that cohort to distance learning. During distance learning, art, music and Spanish lessons will be conducted remotely via Zoom to the child's home.
- Distance learning will be an option for families that include members that have underlying health conditions or who are in quarantine. During live instruction, distance learners will participate in class digitally as if they were actually in the live class. They will share the teachers with the live class and they will not have a

dedicated distance learning instructor.

### **Distance Learning**

Students will learn mostly through synchronous learning experiences using a remote platform. Asynchronous learning experiences will occur when students are unavailable to attend virtually or it works for the activity or lesson being taught.

### **TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT DISTANCE LEARNING**

Each multi-age level will use different types of technology to support their Distance Learning program (Zoom, Google Classrooms, Seesaw, IXL, Razkids, Email).

### **SPECIALS CLASSES**

Specials such as art, music, drama, Spanish, and gym will be held in person. We will adhere to 6 feet between students when engaging in physical activity such as gym classes. Music and band will follow the same protocol.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Students will attend trips virtually instead of going on offsite trips.

### **ATTENDANCE AND CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM**

The school collects and reports daily teacher and student engagement regardless of the instructional setting, specifically for Kindergartners through 8th grade. Attendance is taken everyday for students because it is required by the State but "absenteeism" only relates to school age children and only school age absenteeism will be reported to the State. It is understood that the current circumstances may influence attendance. Therefore, staff will keep the lines of communication open with families to avoid chronic absenteeism.

### **SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING**

One of the foundational principles of Hudson Country Montessori School is to nurture the social emotional well-being of all children, from toddlers to middle school, based on the pedagogical work of Maria Montessori. The objective is for the children to understand themselves and their interconnectedness to other humans and all living things in their immediate environments. Each year, the child develops a broader connection to the world around them in order to develop an understanding of universal equity and unity. During the school year, we implement programs that build off our current social emotional pedagogy to address the mental health, behavioral and emotional needs of students, instructional staff and non-instructional staff as it relates to the pandemic, recession and civil unrest. In recognition of these factors, we are prepared to establish the following guidelines:

1. A SEL(Social Emotional Learning) Team has been created to identify and analyze resources currently available at the school. It consists of students, families, the School's Director, teachers and non-instructional staff. The team represents the school community in expertise, role, experience, gender, race, culture and background. The team leads a coordinated approach, ensuring schoolwide SEL implementation. The team meets monthly to reflect on data, plan for school improvements and lead schoolwide SEL initiatives. These initiatives, in the traditional Montessori approach, include lessons on grace and courtesy, cultural presentations and education, lessons on self-empowerment and mutual respect as well as Cosmic Education (i.e. universal values and the common good). Likewise, the team is

developing an equity improvement plan to be implemented where any short-comings may be identified in order to have a school wide understanding about equity, creating a safe space for dialogue and revise curricular and instructional practices to reduce barriers and create educational equity for all students.

2. School staff is provided with SEL professional development to ensure that the whole school community is engaged in the adoption and implementation of sustainable SEL practices. Staff is trained on how to talk with and support students during and after the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency. Additional professional development will address issues of equity through a Culturally Responsive Educational approach.
3. Assessment materials are continuously being reviewed and revised. Implementation of new changes support the continued monitoring of children and youth in regard to the five competencies of SEL (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making) to monitor the delivery of services and support to those in need.
4. In addition to data collection, Hudson staff continues to perform nonacademic check-ins related to social-emotional well-being for all students as they had before the pandemic. Hudson Country Montessori staff engage in daily observations of the social-emotional well-being of the children. For very young children, staff communicate daily with parents/guardians and other caregivers. Lessons are developed to include alternative ways to communicate feelings since social distancing and mask wearing hinder traditional forms of verbal and nonverbal communication. Instructional time may be spent teaching a positive message on the importance of social distancing in the classroom and on the playground.

## **SAFE CLASSROOM PRACTICES**

### **Shared Objects**

- Each cohort of students have their own set of school supplies such as laptops, notebooks, lockers, cubbies, writing utensils, and workspace. Individual kits for high-touch supplies such as scissors, markers, pencils, erasers, etc. are assigned to each student to limit sharing of supplies between students.

### **Napping**

Students that are napping are spaced 6 ft apart in all directions. Napping materials are sanitized daily.

### **Ventilation**

Our school opens windows and doors wherever possible to increase ventilation. Teachers will hold classes outside weather permitting. Ventilation systems that are typically shut down at night are left running to maximize fresh/outdoor air exchange. Many of our classrooms have windows that open. In classrooms with windows that do not open, we have added portable HEPA filters with UVC lights that destroy and trap COVID-19. We have followed recommendations to upgrade HVAC filters from a rating of MERV 11 to MERV 13.

## **TECHNOLOGY AND CONNECTIVITY**

Teachers are provided with technology devices and internet access. Students who qualify for free and reduced lunch will be assisted in attaining devices and internet connectivity. Students at the Elementary and Middle School level are provided with technology devices each school year.

## **LARGE GATHERINGS**

### **Small Spaces**

Gatherings in small spaces are limited. Staff and students are required to enter and exit through their own classroom doors instead of coming through our main office building.

### **Faculty and Staff Meetings**

Most faculty and staff meetings are held virtually via Zoom with the exception of our back to school meeting. This meeting is held in our gym and staff will be required to wear face coverings and sit 6 ft apart in all directions.

### **Common Areas**

Our staff lounge for lunch will be limited to two people to meet social distancing requirements.

### **Schoolwide Events:**

Any events that require a large gathering will not be permitted until further notice.

## **EXTRACURRICULARS**

After-school activities will be offered virtually.

## **BEFORE AND AFTERCARE**

A Toddler cohort and three Primary cohorts specifically for students that attend Early Session, Late Session and/or Year Round, which includes Vacation Program have been created. There is only one Elementary cohort for Early Session/Late Session/Year Round. Children of families that need extended day care must be in one of the extended care cohorts.

## **ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL PROCEDURES**

Parents/legal guardians are not allowed to enter our buildings unless absolutely necessary.

All families arrive and park in designated parking spots. Parents/legal guardians walk their child to an assigned gate where their temperature and their child's temperature are taken. At the gate, information is collected regarding their child's exposure to COVID-19. Families are instructed to stand 6 ft apart while waiting in line for their screening.

Adults and children must wear a mask during arrival and dismissal. Before children are admitted to the building, their temperature is taken using a touchless thermometer. If the child's temperature is 100 degrees or higher, the child is tested again using a second thermometer. If the second thermometer displays the same temperature as the first thermometer, the child is not allowed to enter the building. The same protocol applies to people providing essential services.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Consistent with our plan to maintain the integrity of the various cohorts, we will not be offering a bus transportation option until further notice. In addition, we have been encouraging all families to transport their own children to school and to avoid public school bussing.

## **FOOD SERVICES**

Students have the option of bringing their own lunch and snacks in an individual lunchbox with a cold pack. The

school provides milk, apple/orange juice and dry snacks. Students in Early Session (extended care), are provided with breakfast items that do not require preparation. Late Session (extended care) students are served dry snacks. Individuals are 6 ft apart in all directions while eating snacks or lunch in their own classroom. They are seated at individual tables/desks. Individuals are prohibited from sharing food and beverages with each other. Prior to eating, students and staff practice proper hand hygiene. Eating areas are cleaned and disinfected before and after use. Catered lunch and pizza is offered.

### **Food Allergies**

Our school nurse provides allergy information to our staff. The information is kept in each students' classroom along with their emergency medication so it is easily accessible.

### **SCHOOL SAFETY DRILLS**

Our school conducts standard operations and procedures to the best of our abilities without deviating from current requirements. Fire (evacuation) Drills and Lockdown Drills are required by Education Law and regulation and the Fire Code and they must be conducted without exceptions. Fire Code Section 404 requires that schools maintain Fire Safety, Evacuation, and Lockdown Plans and these plans include how lockdown and evacuation drills are conducted. All staff and students are required to wear a face covering and social distance during safety drills.

### **VISITORS**

- People providing essential services are required to wear a face covering and their temperature is checked before they enter the building. If they have a temperature of 100 degrees, they are not allowed to enter.
- Special Education Services are considered an essential service. For most cases, services are provided in a designated space separate from all cohorts. This space will be cleaned and disinfected in between each use.
- Parents/legal guardians are not allowed to enter our buildings unless absolutely necessary. They are required to wear a face covering and their temperature is checked before they enter the building. If they have a temperature of 100 degrees, they are not allowed to enter.
- An individual in our main office is responsible for signing visitors in and out of buildings.
- Deliveries are brought to the side of our main building to limit person to person contact.

### **FACILITIES**

- Our school complies with the scheduled 2021 visual inspection
- Our school conducts lead testing while in operation
- Sprinkler inspections are done quarterly
- Fire inspections are done annually
- Alarm company inspections are done annually
- Playground safety inspections are done annually
- Air conditioning and heating systems are inspected annually

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

The school encourages all students, staff, and visitors to adhere to CDC and NYSDOH guidance regarding social distancing, the use of PPE, and other information relevant to a safe operation of our school through verbal, digital, and written communications. This information is communicated to staff prior to the start of school.

**The following signage is posted in all four of our buildings:**

- Wash hands/use hand sanitizer
- Stay 6 ft apart at all times
- Wear a face covering, covering your nose and mouth when you cannot stay 6 ft apart
- Follow respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette
- Stay home if you are sick
- Report symptoms of COVID-19 by calling the school and send the Director, Neeru Bhambree an email

**VULNERABLE POPULATIONS**

- Distance learning is an option for families that include members that have underlying health conditions or who are in quarantine. Parent/legal guardians are asked to inform the school through a written communication and will need to provide appropriate medical documentation.
- Employees that have underlying health conditions must inform the school through a written communication and provide appropriate medical documentation to the school. Each case is reviewed individually to determine if any accommodations are warranted and can be provided, or if the employee is eligible for a leave of absence.

# SECTION 2 - MONITORING

## SCREENING

- Prior to departing for school, parents/legal guardians of students are required to screen their child every day for COVID-19 illness. This screening includes a symptom checklist and a temperature check.
- Prior to departing for work, employees are required to complete a health questionnaire and take their own temperature on a daily basis. A supervisor reviews the health questionnaire before the employee enters the buildings.
- Upon arrival, parents/legal guardians walk their child to an assigned gate where their temperature and their child's temperature is taken. At the gate, information is collected regarding their child's exposure to COVID-19. Families are instructed to stand 6 ft apart while waiting in line for their screening.
- Employees, parents/legal guardians, and children must wear a mask during arrival and dismissal. Before employees and children are admitted to the building, their temperature is taken using a touchless thermometer. If the employee or child's temperature is 100 degrees or higher, they are tested again using a second thermometer. If the second thermometer displays the same temperature as the first thermometer, the employee or child is not allowed to enter the building. The same protocol applies to people providing essential services.
- Employees and children are not allowed to attend work/school if they are experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms in the past 14 days (even if a fever reducing medication was administered and the individual no longer has a fever) unless they submit a negative PCR test and their symptoms have resolved.
- Employees and children must refer to our sick policy to determine whether or not they can return to work/school.
- If an individual traveled internationally or from a state with widespread community transmission of COVID-19 per the New York State Travel Advisory in the past 14 days, testing and quarantining may be required. Individuals will be required to keep themselves informed of the School's policies regarding travel.
- Staff performing in person screening activities are given PPE and are trained on how to screen potentially infectious individuals.
- Staff are trained prior to the start of school on how to observe for signs of illness in students and other staff.

## POSITIVE SCREEN PROTOCOLS

- If any individual screens positive for COVID-19 at school, they are sent home immediately with instructions to contact their health care provider for assessment and testing.
- Students that have a positive screen (onset of COVID-19 symptoms) are separated from other students and staff. They are brought to an isolated area outside of our buildings and are supervised there until a parent/legal guardian can retrieve them from school.
- The school provides the individuals with information on health care and testing resources.
- The school notifies the NYS Health Department and Westchester County Department of Health immediately if the test results for COVID-19 are positive.
- Individuals are required to disclose if and when responses to the health screening questionnaires changes (during or outside of school hours).
- Individuals are able to return to school if they provide the school with documentation from a healthcare

provider evaluation, negative COVID-19 testing, and symptom resolution, or if COVID-19 positive, release from isolation. We consult with the local health department if it is safe for the individual to return after providing us with all the aforementioned documentation.

- Neeru Bhambree, the Director of the school, is the point of contact for all COVID-19 related cases.

#### **CONTACT TRACING**

- If COVID-19 cases are discovered, the local and state health department is contacted immediately.
- The school supports the local health department in tracing all contacts of the individual infected.
- A log of all visitors, guests, vendors, and contractors is maintained and it includes contact information, where they visited, and whether they were screened or not. This information is useful for contact tracing.

# SECTION 3 - CONTAINMENT

## **CLEANING AND DISINFECTION FOLLOWING SUSPECTED OR CONFIRMED COVID-19 CASE**

- In the event an individual is confirmed to have COVID-19, the area is closed off for at least 24 hours before it is cleaned and disinfected.
- Windows and doors remain open during this time to increase air circulation.
- The Health Department is contacted immediately so they can instruct us on what next steps should be taken.
- After the 24 hour period is over, the area and anything else the suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 came into contact with is cleaned and disinfected.
- The area is reopened for use after it is cleaned and disinfected.
- Individuals that have not had contact with the suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 can return to the area after it has been cleaned and disinfected.

## **QUARANTINE, ISOLATION, AND RETURN TO SCHOOL**

- If an employee/student tests positive for COVID-19, regardless of whether the employee/student is symptomatic or asymptomatic, the employee/student may return to work/school upon completing at least 10 days of isolation from the onset of symptoms.
- If an employee/student has had close or proximate contact with a person with COVID-19 for a prolonged period of time AND is experiencing COVID-19 related symptoms, the employee/student may return to work/school upon completing at least 10 days of isolation from the onset of symptoms and receiving negative test results.
- If an employee/student has had close or proximate contact with a person with COVID-19 for a prolonged period of time AND is not experiencing COVID-19 related symptoms, the employee/student may return to work/school upon completing 14 days of self-quarantine.
- Employees and students are able to return to school if they provide the school with documentation from a healthcare provider, negative COVID-19 testing, and symptom resolution, or if COVID-19 positive, release from isolation. We consult with the local health department if it is safe for the individual to return after providing us with all the aforementioned documentation.

## **COMMUNICATION**

- Faculty, staff, parents/legal guardians, students and visitors are provided with information regarding our safety precautions and protocols we are taking because of COVID-19. They are notified through email, texts, signage on campus, and information posted on our website.
- Faculty, staff, and students are trained to follow the procedures for social distancing, respiratory and hand hygiene, proper face covering wearing and any aspects related to COVID-19.

# SECTION 4 - CLOSURE

## CLOSURE TRIGGERS

- The school consults with the local health department to determine if the level of COVID-19 transmission may be increasing beyond an acceptable level.
- If cases are discovered, the local and state health department is contacted immediately. Based on the guidance of the departments, the impacted (one or more) classrooms are closed until we are given permission to reopen.

## COMMUNICATIONS

School closures are communicated through email correspondence and text messaging.

# **APPENDIX A: Committee Members**

Neeru Bhambree

Mark Meyer

Sharon Tufo

Agatha Serafin

Dorothy Murray

Westchester County Department of Health