



# Maria Montessori Academy *Education For Life*

## Preamble:

### Developing a COVID-19 safety plan

Employers across BC are required to develop a [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#) that outlines the policies, guidelines, and procedures they have put in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. This plan follows the six steps outlined in the [COVID-19 and returning to safe operation guide](#). As a school we must involve frontline workers (teachers), joint health and safety committees, and supervisors in identifying protocols for our workplace. We have met regularly throughout the pandemic to reassess our protocol and blend mandates issued by the PHO and best practice in our community. We have consistently been found in compliance with all ordinances.

### Understanding the risk

The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads in several ways, including through droplets when a person coughs or sneezes, and from touching a contaminated surface before touching the face. Higher risk situations require adequate protocols to address the risk.

- The risk of person-to-person transmission is increased the closer you come to other people, the amount of time you spend near them, and the number of people you come near. Physical distancing measures help mitigate this risk.
- The risk of surface transmission is increased when many people contact same surface, and when those contacts happen in short intervals of time. Effective cleaning and hygiene practices help mitigate this risk.

### Selecting protocols

We understand that different protocols offer different protection. Wherever possible, we use the protocols that offer the highest level of protection and add additional protocols as required.

**First level protection (elimination):** Directive: Use policies and procedures to keep people at a safe physical distance from one another. Limit the number of people in your workplace at any one time and implement protocols to keep workers at least 2 metres from other workers, customers, and members of the public.

**Second level protection (engineering controls)** Directive: If you can't always maintain physical distancing, install barriers such as plexiglass to separate people.

**Third level protection (administrative controls)** Directive: Establish rules and guidelines, such as cleaning protocols, scheduled drop offs and pick ups, avoiding communal spaces etc.

**Fourth level protection (PPE)**: Directive: If the first three levels of protection aren't enough to control the risks, staff and students can be supplied with personal protective equipment (PPE), such as non-medical masks. PPE should not be used as the only control measure. It should only be used in combination with other measures.

### Restricting Access to the school:

- All workers and students who have symptoms of COVID-19 or have travelled outside Canada in the last 14 days or were identified as a close contact of a person with a confirmed case of COVID-19 must stay home and self-isolate in accordance with guidance from the [BC Centre for Disease Control](#).
- It is the Parent's / Caregiver's responsibility to assess their children daily before sending them to school. School staff will conduct a summary health check at drop-off by asking parents and caregivers to confirm their child does not have symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other respiratory disease.
- Parents and caregivers must assess their child daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other infectious respiratory disease before sending them to school. If a student develops symptoms while at home, parents or caregivers must keep their child at home until they have been assessed by a health care provider to exclude COVID-19 or other infectious diseases, and their symptoms have resolved.
- If a student develops symptoms while at school staff will:
  - Immediately separate the symptomatic student from others in a supervised area.
  - Contact the student's parent or caregiver to pick them up as soon as possible.
  - Contact 811 or the local public health unit to notify them of a potential case and seek further input.
  - Where possible, maintain a distance of 2 metres from the ill student.
  - Provide the student with tissues to cover their coughs or sneezes. Throw away used tissues as soon as possible and perform regular hand hygiene.
  - Avoid touching the student's body fluids (e.g., mucous, saliva)
  - Once the student is picked up, practice diligent hand hygiene.
  - Notify workers responsible for facility cleaning to clean and disinfect the space where the student was separated and any areas used by them (e.g., classroom, bathroom, common areas).

- Parents or caregivers must pick up their child as soon as possible if they are notified their child is ill.

## **Administration Areas:**

### **MMA Admin staff will:**

- Limit the public coming into the office.
- Parents and visitors are not able to visit the school at this time.
- Deliveries will be conducted through a single entry and contact tracing information will be documented.
- Visitors providing a service of educational value to a student or staff member may enter the building providing they are symptom free. They must wear a mask at all times and distancing will be maintained from staff and students.

## **Student Management and Hygiene**

### **Hygiene**

- At MMA we have always encouraged a diligent hand washing routine. This will be enhanced to include the following times:
  - When they arrive at school and before they go home
  - Before eating and drinking
  - After using the toilet
  - After sneezing or coughing into hands or tissue
  - Whenever hands are visibly dirty
- Staff may assist younger students with hand hygiene as needed.
- In addition to regular sink and soap, hand sanitizer will be available for use.
- Food should not be shared by students.
- Whenever possible, snacks should be prepared at home and arrive at school ready to consume (without rinsing, cutting, heating up etc.)

### **Physical distancing / PPE**

- As described above, parents and caregivers will remain outside of the school to drop off their children. (Exceptions will be made for vulnerable students)
- Regardless of your own comfort levels, avoid close greetings like hugs or handshakes and remind students to keep their hands to themselves when possible. Remember that

this lessened physical contact is a stress for students as well and we need to role model.

- The use of more online or video-based resources is acceptable at this time to allow more distancing options.
- Consider teaching classes outside when practicable. Please check on posted schedules as Outdoor time will be enhanced for all cohorts.
- Incorporate more individual activities or activities that encourage more space between students and staff. For younger students, adapt group activities to minimize physical contact and reduce shared items. For adolescent students, minimize group activities and avoid activities that require physical contact.
- Students are organized into strict cohorts that will stay together throughout the school day.
- Strive to minimize the number of different teacher(s) and educational assistant(s) that interact with groups of students throughout the day.
- As a school we will limit the use of shared learning spaces such as the gym, the music room and the library...all in an effort to avoid contamination.
- These areas will be sanitized thoroughly between cross-cohort use.
- Eliminate group food preparation activities.
- Scheduling will be used to stagger recess/snack, lunch, and class transition times to provide a greater amount of space for everyone.
- Field trips will proceed only after viewing and understanding the health and safety protocols in place at the destination.
- Field trips will be held outside whenever possible.
- During transportation, all staff and students will wear masks and bus windows will remain open.
- Whenever possible students will sit one to a seat.

## **Safety for Staff:**

### **Physical distancing**

- A certain number of seating spaces will be available in the staff room. Additional staff rooms will be provided and staff required to utilize their assigned space only. Please respect this as a necessary step. Staff are encouraged to utilize outdoor spaces or other alternatives.
- Maintain reasonable physical distancing whenever possible between workers and students.
- Manage the flow of people in public spaces such as hallways and on stairs.

### **Hygiene**

- Hand washing supplies are available at all times (i.e., soap, clean towels, paper towels and hand sanitizer).
- Staff will continue to wash their hands frequently to reduce the risk of transmission.

## Use of personal protective equipment (PPE)

- [BC Centre for Disease Control \(BCCDC\) guidance](#) now requires that all staff wear a mask at all times indoors, including:
  - At their work stations
  - On school buses
  - Within and outside learning groups
- Students in the preschool-K program will wear masks during drop-off, pick up and while transitioning through a cross-cohort area of the school (hallway)
- Students in Grades 1-3 will wear masks during drop-off, pick up, while transitioning through a cross-cohort area of the school, and while attending specialty subjects (Art, Music and French). Students in this age bracket are not encouraged to wear a mask indoors in school and on school buses.
- Students in Grades 4-6 will wear non-medical masks in all indoor areas, including:
  - At their work stations
  - On school buses
  - Within and outside learning groups
- Students in Grades 7-12 will wear masks at all times according to the health and safety guidelines.
- All staff and students may remove their masks when outside.
- Where PPE has been identified for tasks prior to COVID-19 pandemic, continue to use this PPE when performing these tasks.
- Exceptions to wearing masks include:
  - A person who cannot tolerate wearing a mask for health or behavioural reasons
  - A person unable to put on or remove a mask without assistance
  - If the mask is removed for the purpose of identifying the person
  - To engage in an educational activity that cannot be performed while wearing a mask. For example: playing a wind instrument or engaging in a high-intensity physical activity
  - If a person is eating or drinking
  - If a person is behind a barrier

## Cleaning and Sanitizing:

- MMA will be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with the BC CDC's [Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings](#). Cleaning practices will remain in line with the provincial health officer's [COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for Childcare Settings](#).
- High-traffic areas and high-contact surfaces such as doors and cabinet handles, stair railings, washrooms, shared office spaces, desks, keyboards, light switches, and communications devices will receive extra daily focus.
- Frequently-touched surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected at least twice a day.
- MMA will incorporate end-of-shift wipe downs for all shared spaces.

## Communication Strategies:

- Staff are reminded that all health and safety measures in place prior to the pandemic are still in place.
- Regular updates to COVID-19 related safety protocols are discussed at staff meetings, cohort meetings, through email and overseen by the risk management committee.
- Parents and caregivers will need to receive reminders to fully understand our policy that students must stay home if they are sick.
- Parents and care-givers are given regular updates to COVID 19 related protocols during drop-off and pick up, by email, by newsletter or during regular online Town-hall meetings.
- MMA will restrict non-essential people coming into the school such as deliveries.
- Due to the evolving nature of this crisis, updates will be made available to all parties at the earliest possible time.

Although a daunting document both in scope and practice, it is both a necessary tool for emerging from this difficult time and a touch stone as we learn more about the progressive nature of this pandemic.

The Admin team at Maria Montessori Academy