



Maria Montessori Academy *Education For Life*

Updated January 7, 2022

Preamble:

Developing an Updated Communicable Disease Prevention Plan

Maria Montessori Academy supports students in developing their potential and acquiring the knowledge, skills, and abilities they need for lifelong success. Based on guidance from the BC Centre for Disease Control and experience to date showing schools as low-risk sites for COVID-19 transmission, it is our belief that preschool to grade 12 students can participate in full-time, in-class instruction in accordance with current public health guidelines for schools.

As we move into the New Year and the rapid spread of the Omicron variant, schools across BC have been instructed to update their Communicable Disease Plans. This plan continues to prioritize in person learning and promote equity and inclusion. We will implement and follow these guidelines through a trauma informed lens.

Layers of protection

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. We will continue to prioritize the 5 levels of protection: Public Health Measures, Environmental Measures, Administrative Measures, Personal Measures, and PPE.

Public Health Measures:

- Vaccination remains a critical tool and we encourage all who are eligible to be vaccinated
 - Daily attendance records for staff, students, and visitors will be well kept
 - Accurate class lists and bus lists will be kept digitally and kept up to date
 - Attendance will be closely monitored and public health will be notified if attendance dips below a certain threshold and public health will intervene
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- All employees and students who have symptoms of a communicable disease (eg COVID-19) should work with public health to determine what actions should be taken.
 - Public health considers vaccination status when determining what actions close contacts of a confirmed case should take. Staff and students who are not fully immunized and are identified as close contacts are more likely to be asked to self-isolate than those who are fully immunized.
 - Anyone who is not fully vaccinated and is travelling internationally does not need to self-isolate but is not permitted to come to school for the specified wait period of 14 days.

Environmental Measures:

Ventilation and Air Exchange

MMA will:

- Ensure that all HVAC systems are designed, operated, and maintained as per standards and are working properly.
- Windows will remain open as weather permits
- Planning for excessive heat or poor air quality from wildfire smoke will be done based on BCCDC resources

Increased Cleaning & Disinfecting

- Frequently touched surfaces are cleaned and disinfected at least once a day and when visibly dirty. This includes items touched by large numbers of people (door handles, hand rails, tap faucets, shared gym equipment etc)
- Surfaces touched by fewer people continue to be cleaned once a day (desks, lockers, manipulatives)
- Other cleaning will align with regular practices
- Textbooks, paper, or other paper-based products, laminated, or glossy paper-based products and items with plastic covers do not need to be cleaned and disinfected or quarantined for any length of time
- If a person's bodily fluids meet a surface, surface will be cleaned & disinfected immediately by school staff

Learning Space Configuration

- Space between people will be maximized and face to face seating arrangements will be limited and avoided whenever possible
- Continuing to encourage distancing and respecting personal space
- Cohorts/learning groups continue to be no longer required
- Regular learning activities that bring together multiple classes will be spread out whenever possible
- People are spread out within available space. Room capacity limits will not be exceeded.
- Finding time for outdoor learning will continue to be encouraged where possible

Administration Measures:

School Gatherings & Events

- School extracurricular and social gatherings will occur in line with those permitted as per relevant local, regional, provincial, and federal PHO
- All school gatherings and events (eg assemblies, parent-teacher interviews etc.) will occur virtually
- Staff gatherings (eg staff meetings, professional development) will occur virtually
- If there is a gathering that must be in person, 50% operating capacity will not be exceeded and no spectators will be permitted

Space Arrangement

- In indoor spaces, people have enough room to carry out intended activities without involuntary physical contact
- Spaces are configured so that space between all is maximized
- Social distancing continues to be encouraged
- WSBC will be used to determine measures for staff only spaces

Itinerant Staff, Temporary Teachers on Call, and Other Visitors

- TTOCs and other visitors are made aware of health and safety protocols and will know it is their responsibility to follow at all times

Entrance and Exits

- Classes have specific entrances and exits to use during times of transition
- Classes have specific stairwells to use to avoid crowding

Visitors

- Will be limited to those supporting activities that are a direct benefit to student learning and well being
- Will be required to complete a daily health check and will not be permitted to enter the school if they are sick
- MMA will keep a list of contact information of all school visitors who have entered the school
- Parents will no longer be permitted to enter the school

Curriculum, Programs, and Extracurricular Activities

- Field trips, extracurricular and social gatherings and events will occur in line with what is permitted at the local, regional, Provincial, and Federal public health recommendations and orders
- Local and international field trips will occur in line with those permitted as per relevant local, regional, Provincial, and Federal public health recommendations and Orders
- Universal communicable disease prevention practices will be implemented for music and PE specific to the activity
- Extracurricular sports tournaments will be paused
- Regular league play may continue

Bus Transportation

- All students and staff must wear masks while on the bus
- Can return to regular seating and on/offloading practices

- Frequently touched surfaces to be cleaned and disinfected at least once a day and when visibly dirty
- Other general cleaning will align with regular practices
- Hand sanitizer will be used prior to on/offloading
- Bus passengers are spread out where possible if empty seats are available
- Windows are open when weather allows
- The bus driver, staff, students, adults, volunteers will wear masks on school buses

Food Services

- Fundraisers involving food can return to regular operational and food safety practices.

Community Use of Schools

- MMA will continue to allow community use of school facilities and use will be aligned with related public health guidance, recommendations, and orders

Water Fountains

- MMA will have access to the refillable water bottle stations that are found at different places throughout the school

Personal Measures:

Daily Health Checks

- It is the Parent's / Caregiver's responsibility to complete a daily health check before sending them to school. If a student develops symptoms while at home, parents or caregivers must keep their child at home for 5 days if they are fully vaccinated or 10 days if they are not fully vaccinated, or longer if their symptoms persist. A reminder is included in the weekly newsletter with a link to the K-12 Health Check App
- It is each individual staff members responsibility to complete a daily health check prior to arriving at school

Stay Home When Sick/What to do When Sick

- Staff and students should stay home when they are sick
- Go to the BCCDC website to find information about what to do when sick with COVID 19 symptoms
- Students, staff, and parents/care givers can use the BC Self Assessment Tool app or call 811 to determine the next steps

Symptoms Develop at School

- 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. Parents must make themselves available to pick up their child.
 - Where possible, maintain a distance of 2 metres from the ill student.
 - Provide the student with a mask and tissues to cover their coughs or sneezes.
 - Avoid touching the student's body fluids (e.g., mucous, saliva)
 - 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.
 - If a staff member develops symptoms while at school staff will go home immediately

Returning to School After Illness

- When a person can return to school after being sick depends on the type of illness they had
- If they had COVID-19 or another communicable disease, they can return according to guidance from public health (typically 5 days of isolation for those fully vaccinated and 10 days of isolation for those that are not OR longer if symptoms persist)
- If a person is unsure, they should call 811 for guidance
- Health care provider notes are not required to confirm the health status of any individual (beyond those required to support medical accommodation as per usual practice)

Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

- At MMA we have always encouraged a diligent hand washing routine. This will be maintained and include the following times:
 - When they arrive at school
 - Before and after any breaks (recess/lunch)
 - Before and after eating and drinking (excluding drinks kept in cubby or at table)
 - Before and after using an indoor learning space used by multiple classes (ie gym, music, French room etc)
 - After sneezing or coughing into hands
 - 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.
- There are hand cleaning facilities throughout the school and outdoors
- Students will be reminded to cough or sneeze into their elbow or a tissue. Tissue will be disposed of and hand hygiene will occur
- Students will be reminded to refrain from touching their eyes, nose, face, or mouth
- Students and staff should refrain from sharing food, drinks, unwashed utensils, or anything else that goes on their lips/mouth

Personal Protective Equipment

Non Medical Masks and Face Coverings

- All K – 12 staff are required to wear a mask
- Students in grades K - 12 are required to wear a mask
- Students in preschool are required to wear masks
- The [PHO Order – Face Coverings](#) requires all students, staff, and visitors to wear a mask indoors at school
- Everyone who is able to must wear a mask. Those not able to wear a mask all day continue to be encouraged to wear one as much as they are able to.
- Reminders will be communicated to students and their parents that:
 - o wearing a mask is required under a public health order
 - o proper fit is a key factor in mask effectiveness
 - o masks are most effective when everyone who is able to is wearing one
 - o Masks should be 3 ply
- 3 ply masks are available for those who have forgotten theirs
- Parents are required to wear masks anytime while on school grounds or in the school building
- Students are asked to arrive to school wearing a mask

Accommodations will be made:

- For any student who is unable to tolerate wearing a mask for health or behavioral reasons
- To engage in an educational activity that cannot be properly performed while wearing a mask for example: playing a musical instrument or engaging in a high intensity physical activity
- MMA will work with those with mask exemptions to find strategies to reinforce and enhance other safety measures based on [this planning resource: mask exemptions](#)

Supportive School Environments

Personal Prevention Practices

- Students are routinely supported to practice personal prevention measures like properly wearing a mask and hand hygiene

Personal Space

- Staff and students will respect others personal space. Personal space is the distance which a person feels comfortable being next to another.

Positive and Inclusive Approaches

- MMA will continue to use positive and inclusive approaches that align with our existing practices

Other Information

- Classes will continue to work outside when practical
- Field trips will proceed with full understanding of the health and safety protocols in place for each destination
- A certain number of seating spaces will be available in the staff room. Additional staff rooms will be provided. Staff are encouraged to utilize outdoor spaces
- Maintain awareness of others' comfort as far as their definition of 'personal space'. Teachers will have this conversation with their students and regular reminders will be given.
- The flow of people in communal areas will be managed to avoid having a large number of people in one area at a time

Communication Strategies:

- Our community is 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 caregivers will continue to be 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
- Due to the evolving nature of this crisis, updates will be made available to all parties at the earliest possible time
- If at any time, you have questions, concerns or suggestions, we welcome your feedback. This can be done through email or by organizing a meeting with the appropriate person. With so many unknowns, we welcome any opportunity to find common understanding.

Thank you for your attention to this plan. We are looking forward to another school year of wonder and growth. It is our hope and intention that through community adherence to practical safety practices, COVID 19 and its variants will not detract from your families enjoyment of a sensational school year.

The Admin team at Maria Montessori Academy

