

# **Bloomington Montessori Pandemic Emergency Operations Plan**

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## Introduction

As the pandemic changes, and hopefully begins to dissipate, we must evolve with it to do our best to ensure the health and safety of our staff and families and also to provide the most balanced learning environment we are able. The following document outlines what Emergency Operations Protocols will be in place as of March 21, 2022. For the remainder of the school year, these guidelines will be reviewed every two weeks and updated as needed. In the event of a community surge of Covid-19 or the rise of a new concerning variant, immediate reinstatement of some or all protocols from previous PEOPs may be necessary. These include outdoor masking, heightened physical distancing, and quarantine requirements.

BMS continues to communicate with the Monroe County Health Department (MCHD) and Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH). Please see their websites for the most up-to-date publications for school recommendations. Most recommendations at these levels have been lifted at this time.

We encourage all families and staff to get vaccinated if they are able. Vaccination ensures greater safety to the person who is vaccinated, as well as decreasing the opportunity to transmit Covid to others. In short, the higher the vaccination rate within our school, the closer we can get to a sense of normalcy for all of us. Vaccination resources and information can be found on the ISDH and CDC websites.

## COVID Prevention and Safety Protocols

### Vaccination Status Declaration Policy

Effective immediately, all vaccine-eligible students and staff are required to declare whether they are unvaccinated/partially vaccinated (with no current plan to become fully vaccinated) or fully vaccinated against COVID-19 with a vaccination currently approved for emergency or general use for that purpose by the Food and Drug Administration.

Vaccine information should be provided directly to the Head of School using the provided form. Submitting proof of vaccination is recommended, but not required. Those who have not completed and returned a declaration form will be considered unvaccinated for the purpose of Covid mitigation guidelines.

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## Mitigation Staff Testing Policy

BMS will test all staff who are not fully vaccinated against COVID-19 bi-weekly. Staff who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 are invited and encouraged to participate in testing.

Testing will occur via PCR saliva test. Testing will occur twice weekly, every week in which the school is open, and will continue until either: a) the Pandemic Emergency Operations Plan is discontinued from use by the Board of Directors, or b) the testing procedure currently offered to the school is discontinued by MCC. If the school is open during the week, but not open to faculty and staff on the Wednesday of that week, then the Head of School will notify participating staff of the schedule to follow for that week's testing.

Testing will occur in the front office of the school. Participating staff must submit a sample by 12 pm. Participating staff will submit a saliva sample into the designated equipment under the direction and supervision of the Head of School. Staff should not drink, chew gum, vape, or smoke for 60 minutes prior to their testing time.

Staff who are required to test due to their vaccination status may miss testing under the following conditions:

- They are currently experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 (in which case they should be absent from campus and scheduled for symptomatic testing elsewhere);
- They are quarantining off-campus as a close contact of someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19;
- They are currently participating in PCR mitigation testing with another organization. In this circumstance, the individual should report this information to the Head of School, including the testing organization, the type of test being conducted, the testing schedule, and weekly testing results. Should off-site mitigation testing end prior to the end of BMS's testing program, that individual will be required to participate in BMS testing;
- They are not present for the entire week due to professional development, vacation, sick leave, or other forms of paid or unpaid leave; or
- They have tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 90 days.

Staff members who know that they will be absent on a scheduled testing day, but not absent for the entire week, should contact the Head of School to discuss their options.

Should any staff member at BMS test positive, that individual will immediately submit a list of close contacts to the Head of School, leave campus, and follow the quarantine and testing procedures outlined elsewhere in the PEOP. The Head of School will immediately follow classroom closure or distance learning procedures as outlined elsewhere in the PEOP.

## Isolated groups

- To the greatest extent possible, children will be with the same group of students and staff each day in separate physical spaces.
- Groups cannot be in the same space at the same time for recesses, lunches, etc.

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- To the greatest extent possible, staff members will not come in direct contact with more than one group of students.
  - Classroom Crossover
    - Isolation of groups can only be maintained to the level possible/practical. Certain pairs of groups throughout the school will unavoidably share spaces and staff at times. These groups are as follows:
      - Morning and afternoon half-day classes will be sharing teachers and a classroom. Therefore, they are considered one pod.
      - Lower Elementary classrooms share a hall, library, and other communal spaces. Therefore, these groups will be considered a combined group.
      - Upper Elementary classrooms share communal spaces and receive lessons from all upper elementary staff. Therefore, these classrooms will be considered a combined group.
    - Because these groups will not be isolated from each other, they may participate in recess together.
    - Vaccinated staff, such as the Spanish teacher, substitutes, or interventionists, will be allowed to visit multiple classrooms.
    - After Care
      - After Care will be divided into Lower Elementary and Upper Elementary After Care Programs in an effort to limit the classroom crossover (outlined above) to that which already occurs during the school day.
      - A limited number of spaces will be provided to each program. This number will be continually reevaluated based on risk level but will begin with 24 Lower Elementary spots and 13 Upper Elementary spots.
      - Consistent attendance in After Care will help protect students and staff. Families will have the option to sign up for After Care one month at a time, for all school days during the entire month, for a flat rate of \$175 per month, through FACTS.

## Sick Policy

- Screen children before coming to campus
  - We will be using the ISDH screening tool found here: [At-Home Covid Screening](#)
- When a person may NOT be on campus-**ILLNESS/ISOLATION**
  - Students or staff exhibit one or more symptoms from the at-home screening tool. If these symptoms start at school, they will be brought to the office for pick-up or sent home. Testing is highly encouraged for anyone experiencing symptoms that cause them to not pass the COVID screening.

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- Symptomatic students and staff who do not pass a COVID screening may not return until one of the following applies:
  - They provide a copy of the results of a negative lab-administered COVID PCR or RAPID test.
    - Exception: if a student has had Covid in the last 90 days, they do not need to take a Covid test, and may follow the regular illness policy.
  - They isolate for 8 days from onset of symptoms
- If a student receives a positive COVID-19 test they must be isolated for eight (8) days from the onset of their symptoms with the first day of symptoms being day one (1). Students must also be at least 24 hours fever, vomit, and diarrhea free without medication and their symptoms must be resolving in order to return. They do not need a negative COVID test to return to school after completing their isolation.
- Quarantine Options
  - **There is no longer a required quarantine period for close contacts. However, if the student was an unmasked (especially indoors) close contact of someone who tested positive for COVID, we urge families to take the precaution of quarantining the student at home, away from positive individuals, for 5-8 days, and to test on day 5 after exposure.**
  - A symptomatic student or staff member should quarantine while waiting for test results.
- The small room adjoining the office will be used as an isolation area that can be used to isolate a sick person.
  - If a sick child has been isolated, staff will clean and disinfect surfaces in the isolation room after the sick child has left. All areas on campus the child has visited will also be disinfected.
    - Sick children's parents will be called to immediately pick them up.
    - Sick staff will be asked to immediately leave campus and head home.
    - If a person is too sick to wait for a ride or drive themselves, paramedics will be called.

## Personal Protective Equipment

- Face Coverings
  - Masking is required **INDOORS** for everyone on campus over the age of 2 with the exceptions of:
    - Documented medical accommodations that include an alternate face covering or mitigation plan.

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- Outdoors, masks will be optional and physical distancing is encouraged when possible.
  - While eating, sleeping, or drinking and physically distanced from others.
- Please have children mask before coming to the door at drop-off, to avoid a traffic jam at the door, unless your child starts their day outside (Hickory Children). Hickory students, who choose to be unmasked outdoors, need to have their mask easily accessible for when it's time to enter the building. .
- Best masking practices and mask options are found on the CDC website here: [Your Guide to Masks | CDC](#)
- In addition, the ISDH explains that the following masks are appropriate:
  - Acceptable: Three-layer, tightly woven cloth masks or a two-layer cloth mask with disposable filter that fit well.
  - Better: Surgical grade disposable masks that fit well. Crossing the loops for a better fit on children often causes huge gaps, making the mask ineffective. Children most often require child-sized masks to achieve proper fit.
  - Best: (K)N95/(K)F95 or (K)F94/(K)F94 masks that fit well.
  - The CDC advises that fit and comfort are paramount. Individuals should come masked in the highest quality option that can be tolerated throughout the school day.

## Social Distance

- In the Building
  - Seats used for eating will be separated by six feet of distance or a physical barrier (partition). Physical distancing will be maintained while unmasked.

## Transportation

- Drop-off
  - Staff and parents will maintain social distancing whenever possible. Parents will get students out of cars and walk students to their classrooms' designated entrances.
    - Designated Entrances:
      - Hickory-Early Childhood playground door (new gate entrance on BMS parking lot walkway)
      - Magnolia-Magnolia courtyard playground door (new doorbell installed)
      - Sweetgum-Main building entrance doors (use existing doorbell)
      - Walnut and Maple-Annex main entrance

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- Sycamore and Willow-walk through Magnolia courtyard to patio door (use new doorbell)
- Pick-up
  - Lower Elementary will be dismissed from the Annex front entrance.
  - Upper Elementary students will be dismissed to the sidewalk at the front of the building to await parent pick-up. It is essential that students dress appropriately for the weather to spend this time outside as comfortably as possible.
  - All-day Early Childhood parents will ring the doorbell.
    - Magnolia: Classroom entrance through Magnolia playground
    - Sweetgum: Main Building doors (use the main doorbell) for drop-off and for pick-up until 4 pm, playground dismissal from the gate after 4 pm whenever weather permits, and from the main entrance during bad weather.
    - Hickory drop-off and dismissal from playground gate.

## Screening

- Screening principles
  - The recommendation from the Indiana and Monroe County Health Departments is to do home screenings due to the risks and time involved for students and staff when screening large numbers of individuals on-site.
  - [Screening K-12 Students for Symptoms of COVID-19: Limitations and Considerations](#)
  - All families and staff will be provided a checklist that reflects the guidance of the CDC and the state and local health departments. Families will be provided thermometers as needed. The expectation of following the guidance is part of being a member of a community.
- All staff should self-screen before coming to campus by taking their temperature and identifying any possible COVID-19 symptoms they are experiencing. If a staff member has any questions about whether they should come to campus or not, they should contact the Head of School before coming. If experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, staff MAY NOT come to campus.
- Parents are required to screen their child(ren) at home before coming to campus. This includes a temperature check for fever and an assessment for any COVID-19 symptoms, as well as assessing any possible exposure due to contact with a sick person or travel by a student or household member. Children who have an exposure to COVID-19 or are exhibiting symptoms MAY NOT come to campus. If a household member is exhibiting significant Covid symptoms and is awaiting a Covid test, the child may not come to campus.
- State-supplied School At Home Testing Kits (rapid tests) will be sent home with families by BMS as available, and use of rapid tests as a means of initial testing in the event of symptoms, or as a tool for mitigation testing, is encouraged.

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- Use of rapid/PCR tests within 90 days of a positive Covid test result is not recommended.

## Food and Drink

- BMS will follow all applicable federal, state, and local regulations and [guidance](#) related to the safe preparation of food.
- Lunches
  - Tables will be sanitized before lunch is served.
  - Students will eat in their classrooms at their assigned seats. Rooms will be cleaned and disinfected after lunch.
  - Paper napkins will be used in lieu of cloth.
  - Used dishes will be placed in bins and taken directly to the kitchen. Any adults touching used dishes must wear gloves, remove and dispose of gloves properly immediately after the task, and wash hands.
  - National Lunch Program guidelines will continue to be followed.
  - Staff will plate each meal so that multiple people do not touch serving utensils.
- Water Fountains
  - Water Fountains will be closed and students are encouraged to bring a personal water bottle labeled with their names. If they do not have a water bottle at school, a cup of water will be provided.
- Snack
  - Sinks used for water bottles and food preparation should not be used for any other purposes.
  - BMS will prepare prepackaged snacks with individual servings of healthy food options for Early Childhood students twice a day. These will be assembled by the Kitchen Manager in the certified kitchen.
  - Elementary students will be invited to bring their own snacks from home, which must be eaten at their individual workspace or outdoors.
    - We encourage families to pack snacks that are less messy and easy for children to eat independently. Snacks must be healthy and may not be shared. Recommended snack options will be covered in classroom welcome letters.
    - If a student forgets their snack, elementary teachers will provide a healthy option.
- Handwashing
  - Children should wash hands prior to and immediately after eating.
  - Adults should wash their hands before preparing food and after helping children to eat.

## Cleaning

- BMS will provide staff training on cleaning procedures, and also on the proper use of the provided, approved cleaner (QUAT cleaner).
- Rooms will be sanitized and cleaned once mid-day, in addition to the evenings
- BMS will follow daily schedules of required cleaning for each classroom and will monitor compliance. Frequent handwashing will be enforced and materials and high-touch items will be disinfected regularly.
  - Handwashing
    - Frequent handwashing is required for staff, including before and after any food prep, bathroom use, blowing nose, administering medication/ointment, or helping children with these types of activities, using soap, and at least 20 seconds of washing.
    - Support children to wash their hands upon arrival, before eating or after blowing their nose, using the restroom, or coming in and out from the playground will be provided to the greatest extent possible.
    - Hand sanitizer will be available to children and staff at all times, although handwashing is always preferred if possible. Children will be helped to use hand sanitizer when needed (such as after wiping nose) if handwashing is impractical.
      - Young children must be supervised when using hand sanitizer to prevent swallowing or getting it in their eyes.
    - Children will be given explicit lessons and reminders on the importance of avoiding touching face, hands, nose, mouth, and eyes. Staff will also work to model this.

## Ventilation

- Classroom groups will go outside whenever feasible for learning, work, and play while balancing weather-related comfort and safety and other factors that impact effective learning.
- When indoors, windows will be opened as much as possible to increase ventilation while balancing allergies, comfort, and the financial and environmental impact of increased HVAC use.
- BMS has had HVAC efficiency evaluated for the school to assure fulfillment of standards and added MERV 13 filters in the HVAC system. Additional HEPA units are also used in each classroom and office spaces.

# COVID-19 School-wide Response Levels

## In the Event of a Confirmed Case of Covid at BMS

- Self-reporting
  - If a student exhibits Covid symptoms or tests positive, we depend on families to report this to the school. We will ensure reporters' privacy to the greatest extent possible. Our community will be notified of the risk level, with no names associated. It is vital that family and staff feel comfortable reporting.
  - The school will work with the family to determine the safe date of return to school.
  - The school will notify any particularly close contacts or high risk contacts of the positive individual and encourage voluntary quarantine.
  - The classroom will be notified of the positive test of a classroom member, and encouraged to symptom screen and mitigation test at home on day five from exposure.
  - The school will notify the school community of any positive tests on a weekly basis.
  - BMS may need to implement short-term closure procedures. The current ISDH recommendation is to consider closure of a classroom if 10% of a classroom is Covid-positive and/or exhibiting Covid symptoms. In the event of a 10% rate, the MCHD will be notified.
    - Closures that are predicted to include three or less school days will not attempt to shift to distance learning.
      - Closures predicted to last longer than three school days will include distance learning opportunities. Teachers will disseminate information to families about these opportunities as soon as possible following notice of closure.
      - During school dismissals, all school events are also canceled.
      - BMS will communicate with staff, parents, and students in a timely fashion about the situation and decisions as they are made. BMS will coordinate with local health officials to communicate dismissal decisions and the possible COVID-19 exposure.
        - In the event of closure, BMS will clean and disinfect the campus thoroughly.
        - With local health officials, the BMS Governance Team will make decisions about extending the school dismissal. Temporarily dismissing child care programs and K-12 schools is a strategy to stop or slow the further spread of COVID-19 in communities. **We understand that closures are very**

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**hard on families and students, and will work to prevent them as much as possible.**

- BMS will work to ensure continuity of education.
  - If a required pandemic-related absence is expected to be one week or less, individualized practice of the current concepts the child is working on will be provided for students grade 1-6. This will also be provided for kindergartners upon request, as kindergarten is optional in Indiana.
  - If an individual student in grades 1-6, has been or is expected to be absent for more than a week due to COVID-19 related illness, BMS will arrange for at-home learning opportunities including 30 minutes of live individual or small group learning with opportunities for assignment feedback.
  - Please see the “Learning During Pandemic: Required School Absence” FAQ for more details.

## Emergency Campus Closures

- Staffing/ratios
  - 1: 15
- Tuition
  - Previously published tuition rates and enrollment policy applies.
- Cleaning
  - Monthly by contracted service, with disinfecting of high-touch surfaces daily by staff using the building (with expectations that staff in the building will take care of immediate cleaning needs as they arise).

## Attendance

- As in our attendance policy, parents should call the main office to inform the school of student absences and the reason for absence. Due to the pandemic, if the absence is illness related BMS will need to know what symptoms the child is experiencing.
- Teachers will report attendance in FACTS by 9:30 am (1:00pm for Hickory’s afternoon class). Any absences for which a reason has not been reported by parents will be followed up on by an office staff member and reasons will be recorded.
- For any absences due to illness, office staff will ensure compliance with sick policies and procedures.
- Medically Fragile Students
  - If a student has a medically documented condition that makes them high-risk for COVID-19, parents should work with administrators to create a health plan for the child. This may include extra safety measures for the child while on campus.

## Events

- School Gatherings
  - School gatherings will be minimal and virtual when possible. Special exceptions will be on a case-by-case basis and may include heightened precautions.
    - Visitors will be minimal, including essential repair and delivery people and specialized presenters/observers for educational purposes.
    - Parent observation rooms are open by appointment, limited to one family at a time.
    - Tours will be conducted for prospective families. Only one family can attend each tour. All participants must wear masks while in the building. These visitors may not go into classrooms and must observe classrooms from the observation rooms.