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# **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 provide the most balanced learning environment we can. The following document outlines what Emergency Operations Protocols will be in place for the 2022-2023 school year. 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 indoor and outdoor masking, heightened physical distancing, and quarantine requirements.

BMS continues to communicate with the Monroe County Health Department (MCHD) and the 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 vaccinate to the fullest extent possible, including boosters if eligible. Vaccination ensures greater safety for 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 must declare their COVID-19 vaccination status.

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. Changes in vaccination status warrant the completion of a new form.

BMS is required by law to collect vaccination status information for our school population.

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## Mitigation Staff Testing Policy

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

Testing will occur via PCR saliva test. Testing will occur 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. Testing will occur in the front office of the school.

Participating staff must submit a sample by 1 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 before testing.

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 before 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 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 outlined 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 indoor spaces.
- To the greatest extent possible, staff members will not come in direct contact with more than one group of students.

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- 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:
    - Half-day Early Childhood - Hickory AM and Hickory PM
    - Full day Hickory/Lunch Program Hickory & Sweetgum (outdoors only)
    - Lower Elementary - Walnut and Maple
    - Upper Elementary
  - Vaccinated staff, such as the Spanish teacher, substitutes, or interventionists, will be allowed to visit multiple classrooms and may relocate groups of podded children to another location within the school to provide instruction.
  - All in-class observers including college students, speakers, or parent volunteers will be masked around students.
  - After Care.
    - A limited number of spaces will be provided. This number will be reevaluated based on risk level but will begin with 20 Lower Elementary and 13 Upper Elementary spots.
    - Consistent attendance in After Care will help protect students and staff. Families can sign up for After Care for all school days during the month for a flat rate of \$180 per month, charges will be billed to your FACTS account.

## Sick Policy

- Screen children before coming to campus
  - We will be using the ISDH screening tool found here: [At-Home Screening Tool](#)
- 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 to be sent home. Testing is required for anyone experiencing symptoms that cause them not to pass the COVID screening.
    - 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 negative COVID PCR or RAPID test results from either a lab or at-home test.
        - Exception: if a student has had Covid in the last 90 days, they are not required to take a Covid test and may follow the regular illness policy.
      - They isolate for eight days from the onset of symptoms.

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- 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 zero (0). Students must also be at least 24 hours fever, vomit, and diarrhea free without medication and their symptoms must be resolving to return. They do not need a negative COVID test to return to school after completing their isolation.
- Students must mask indoors on campus on days 9-10 after their symptom onset or positive test result, whichever occurred first.
- Quarantine Options
  - **There is no longer a required quarantine period for close contacts within the classrooms. If the student is in close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID (non-household members), they must mask indoors for five days school days after their last exposure and test on the fifth calendar day after their last exposure.**
  - **If a staff or student tests positive for COVID the entire pod must mask indoors for five school days after their last exposure and test on the fifth calendar day after their last exposure. If the pod consists of multiple classrooms they will separate while indoors for five school days.**
  - **If the close contact is a household member, the positive person must be able to isolate away from the student. If they can not isolate, students must quarantine at home for eight days with testing on day eight before returning to school. When they return to campus, they must mask for five days and retest on day five before unmasking. COVID PCR or RAPID test results from either a lab or at-home test are accepted.**
- 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 pick them up immediately.
    - Sick staff will be asked to leave campus and head home immediately.
    - 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 optional **for both INDOORS and OUTDOORS** for everyone on campus, with the exceptions of:

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- Masking after COVID-19 exposure.
- Documented medical accommodations that include an alternate face covering.
- 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 when masking:
  - Acceptable: Three-layer, tightly woven cloth masks or a two-layer cloth mask with a disposable filter that fits well.
  - Better: Surgical-grade disposable masks that fit well. Crossing the loops for a better fit for children often causes huge gaps, making the mask ineffective. Children most often require child-sized masks to achieve a 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 tolerated throughout the school day.

## Transportation

- Drop-off
  - Parents will get students out of cars and walk students to their classrooms' designated entrances.
    - Designated Entrances:
      - Hickory-Early Childhood playground door (gate entrance on BMS parking lot walkway)
      - Magnolia-Magnolia courtyard playground door (doorbell installed)
      - Sweetgum-Main building entrance doors (use doorbell)
      - Walnut and Maple-Annex main entrance
      - Sycamore and Willow-walk through Magnolia courtyard to patio door (use 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.

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- Hickory drop-off and dismissal from playground gate.

## Screening

- [At-Home Screening Tool](#)
- Screening principles
  - [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 must 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 COVID-19 or are exhibiting symptoms MAY NOT come to campus.

## Food and Drink

- BMS will follow all applicable federal, state, and local regulations related to the safe preparation of food.
- Lunches
  - All Early Childhood Students will eat lunch in their classrooms.
  - Lower and Upper Elementary will eat lunch at their designated lunch time in the main building common area.
  - Tables will be sanitized before lunch is served.
  - 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 immediately after the task, and wash hands.
- 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.

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- **Snack**
  - Sinks for filling water bottles and food preparation will not be used for other purposes.
  - BMS will prepare snacks with individual servings of healthy food options twice a day for all day early childhood students and once a day for half-day early childhood and elementary students. We ask that any students who attended Elementary Aftercare bring a healthy snack to be eaten in Aftercare.
- **Handwashing**
  - Children should wash their hands before and immediately after eating.
  - Adults should wash their hands before preparing food and helping children eat.

## Cleaning

- BMS will provide staff training on cleaning procedures and the proper use of the approved cleaner (QUAT cleaner).
- Rooms will be cleaned throughout the day and sanitized once a day
  - **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 of the playground will be provided to the greatest extent possible.
    - Hand sanitizer will always be available to children and staff, although handwashing is always preferred if possible. If handwashing is impractical, children will be helped to use hand sanitizer when needed (such as after wiping the nose).
      - Young children must be supervised 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, 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 increased HVAC use's financial and environmental impact.

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- BMS has evaluated HVAC efficiency 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 space.

## 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 high-risk close contacts of the positive individual. High-risk status is determined by medical documentation submitted to the school by the family.
  - Upon notification students and staff in the pod with a positive case will be required to mask for five school days.
  - The classroom will be notified of the positive test of a classroom member and encouraged to symptom screen and mitigation test at home on fifth calendar day after 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 closing a classroom if 20% of a podded group is Covid-positive and/or exhibiting Covid symptoms. In the event of a 20% rate, the MCHD will be notified.
    - Closures predicted to include three or fewer 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 inform families about these opportunities immediately 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.

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- In the event of closure, BMS will thoroughly clean and disinfect the campus.
- With local health officials, the BMS Governance Team will decide to extend 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 hard on families and students and will work to prevent them as much as possible.

## 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. 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.
- Office staff will ensure compliance with sick policies and procedures for any absences due to illness.
- Medically Fragile Students
  - If a student has a medically documented condition that makes them at 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.