

Bloomington Montessori Communicable Disease Outbreak Plan

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Introduction

A disease outbreak is defined by the World Health Organization as “the occurrence of cases of a disease above what would normally be expected in a defined community, geographical area or season.” An outbreak of a disease may occur in a restricted area (e.g., a single school or household), or it may extend over a larger area, such as multiple schools, a community, or even the entire nation. It may last for a few days or weeks or several years.

In a school setting, an “outbreak” is considered 20% student and staff illness/absence in any one classroom, at which point this plan would be implemented at the classroom or school level.

Poor hygiene practices and close contact with individuals throughout the school day are factors that put schools at a greater risk for an outbreak of an infectious disease. As infections may occur and spread rapidly, school personnel must be prepared to put processes and policies into place quickly to mitigate the spread of disease; to communicate with staff, parents, and their

communities promptly, to continue to provide instruction and services to their student population; and above all, to keep their students safe.

Illness Prevention and Safety Protocols

Vaccination Records

Student vaccine records are collected annually and housed in the student's FACTS family portal account. Staff vaccine records must be submitted when an employee is hired and updated as new vaccines are obtained.

In the case of an outbreak, school staff members are included in the group of individuals that would be excluded from school and school-related activities until the disease-specific immunity requirements have been met. Although there is always the potential for needing the immunization status information for several other vaccine-preventable diseases, the most frequent diseases where immunity status would be necessary for a school setting are measles, meningitis, varicella, and mumps.

The BMS Office Assistant will review student and staff vaccination records annually at the start of the school year to determine compliance and notify anyone needing additional vaccinations. The Office Assistant will also notify the parents, through email, of these identified students, informing them that should an outbreak of vaccine-preventable disease occur in the school, their student will likely be excluded from school until it is determined, per the disease-specific protocol, it is safe for them to return to school.

Any students or staff members who are vaccine exempt or ineligible will be tracked, and their records will be noted in FACTS.

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.
- 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 share 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 pod.
- Upper Elementary classrooms share communal spaces and receive lessons from all upper elementary staff. Therefore, these classrooms will be considered a pod.
- Because these groups will not be isolated, they may participate in recess together.
- **After Care**
 - AfterCare will be divided into Lower Elementary and Upper Elementary AfterCare Programs to limit the classroom crossover (outlined above) to what already occurs during the school day.
 - A limited number of spaces will be provided for 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 AfterCare will help protect students and staff. Families can sign up for AfterCare one month at a time.

Illness Policy

- Screen children for applicable symptoms before coming to campus
- When a person may NOT be on campus-**ILLNESS/ISOLATION**
 - Please see the [BMS Illness Policy](#) for details regarding specific illnesses.
 - Students or staff who exhibit symptoms must stay home. If these symptoms start at school, students will be brought to the office for immediate pick-up. Testing is highly encouraged for anyone experiencing symptoms that cause them not to pass screening.
 - For illnesses for which there is a test, if students receive a positive test, they must follow isolation guidance for their specific illness.
 - 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, but no later than 30 minutes after being notified.
 - Sick staff will be asked to leave campus and head home immediately.

- If someone is too sick to wait for a ride or drive themselves, paramedics will be called.

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.
 - All families and staff will be provided a checklist that reflects the guidance of the CDC and the state and local health departments for applicable diseases. The expectation of following guidance is part of being a community member.
- All staff should self-screen before coming to campus by taking their temperature and identifying any possible symptoms they are experiencing. If a staff member has any questions about whether they should come to campus, they should contact the Head of School before coming.
- Parents are required to screen their child(ren) at home before coming to campus. This includes a temperature check for fever, an assessment for any other symptoms, and assessing any possible exposure due to contact with a sick person or travel by a student or household member.

Cleaning

- BMS will provide staff training on cleaning procedures and 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 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 activities, using soap, and at least 20 seconds of washing.
 - Teachers and staff will 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 always be available to children and staff, although handwashing is always preferred if possible. Children will be helped to

use hand sanitizer when needed (such as after wiping their nose) if handwashing is impractical.

- 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 their face, hands, nose, mouth, and eyes. Staff will also work on modeling 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 the financial and environmental impact of increased HVAC use.
- BMS has evaluated HVAC efficiency for the school to ensure fulfillment of standards and added MERV 13 filters in the HVAC system. Additional HEPA units are also used in each classroom and office space.

Communicable Disease Outbreak: School-wide Response Levels

In the Event of a Confirmed Case of a Communicable Disease at BMS

- Preventative Measures
 - The safe return date may vary based on the diagnosed illness. BMS will use recommendations from local, state, and federal health agencies as outlined in the Illness Policy. At a minimum, BMS must follow the directives of the Monroe County Health Department. When there is a recommendation discrepancy, BMS reserves the right to go above and beyond those recommendations to ensure the community's safety.
- Self-reporting
 - If a student exhibits symptoms or tests positive for a communicable disease, we depend on families to report this to the Head of 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 diagnosed/sick individual and encourage voluntary quarantine.
- The classroom will be notified of the diagnosis/positive test of a classroom member and encouraged to symptom screen and test if symptomatic. Extra precautionary measures, such as masking, preventative treatments, and additional attention to personal hygiene, are optional and recommended.
- The school will notify the community of any diagnoses/positive tests weekly during an outbreak.
- BMS may need to implement short-term closure procedures if 20% of our students and staff in any one classroom are absent due to the same illness.
 - 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. Following the closure notice, teachers will inform families about these opportunities as soon as possible.
 - 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 possible disease exposure.
 - In the event of closure, BMS will thoroughly clean and disinfect the campus.
 - With local health officials, the BMS Administration and Executive Committee will decide to extend the school dismissal. Temporarily dismissing childcare programs and K-12 schools is a strategy to stop or slow the spread of communicable diseases in communities. **We understand that closures are very hard on families and students, and we will work to prevent them as much as possible.**
- BMS will work to ensure continuity of education.
 - If a required communicable disease-related absence is expected to be one week or less, the individualized practice of the current concepts the child is working on will be provided for students in grades 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 disease-related illness, BMS will arrange for at-home learning

opportunities, including 30 minutes of a live individual or small group learning with opportunities for assignment feedback.

- Please see the “Learning During Illness: Required School Absence” FAQ.

Attendance

- As in our attendance policy, parents should call the main office to inform the school of student absences and the reason for absence. 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 (1:00 pm for Hickory’s afternoon class). An office staff member will follow up on any absences for which parents have not reported a reason, 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 at high risk for communicable diseases, 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.