

MILL FALLS

SAFE SCHOOL OPENING PLAN

AUGUST 2021



TEACHING & LEARNING IN THE AGE OF COVID

Mill Falls Charter School

2021/22 Opening Plan

Originally Prepared in June 2021 for ESSER-Required Safe Return
to In-Person Instruction & Continuity of Services

Updated in late August 2021 for September 2021 School Opening

Introduction, Purpose & Process

As we prepare to enter the 2021/22 school year, we do so with high energy, great enthusiasm, careful planning and the now-familiar presence of the COVID pandemic. As a school community, we have experienced so much together since COVID began significantly impacting our Mill Falls world in March 2020. We have faced these COVID challenges with tenacity, grit, creativity, empathy and courage. We are so proud of everything that we have achieved together – students, staff, board and families with a keen focus on supporting our students and their dedicated staff. The journey has been long, and though it is not yet over, we look forward to returning to many of the public Montessori school structures that make our setting unique, while still prioritizing student, staff and family well-being this school year.

Those of you who have been with us in past years, know that we approach everything from a safety-first perspective, knowing that in order for students to be prepared for learning, they need to feel and be safe. We have applied that same thinking to all things COVID.

This year the state of NH is not requiring any specific COVID measures, but rather providing guidelines and suggestions for mitigation which will be determined by each school or school district. To prepare our plan, we have sought professional public health advice and guidance from our committed partners at the Manchester Health Department, as well as reviewed guidance from the NH Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). We have also incorporated input from staff, families and educational partners. Our Public Montessori Coach who works nationally with similarly designed schools, has helped us develop systems to integrate our COVID safety mitigation measures that match our setting where kinetic learning is baked into our curriculum delivery which features small group lessons and student practice using our beautiful Montessori materials.

Our goal this year is to enable the students and staff to engage with the powerful Montessori learning style, safely and thoughtfully, all with the goal of allowing us to stay healthy and open to in-person learning, even as the COVID pandemic continues.

In order to do that, each of us in the Mill Falls Community must orient our approach to one that cares for our own health and that of those around us through the implementation and observance of COVID safety mitigation measures known to work in a setting like ours aimed at preventing unnecessary COVID spread, in as much as that is possible with this virus.

Last spring we partnered with the Manchester Health Department to provide vaccination for our staff, nearly 100% of whom are now vaccinated. However, the challenge now involves teaching 168 students, who are not vaccine-eligible at this time, amidst the growing delta variant spread. The current COVID picture has forced us to revise some areas of the plan we had set forth and shared in June. While the goals remain the same - safety and in-person learning prioritized to meet the educational and

social/emotional needs and well-being of our students and staff - we must continue to carefully monitor the still-growing community spread, hospitalizations and deaths as well as the level of adult vaccination in our county and town (most of our families reside in Manchester).

Our most powerful tool against serious COVID infections and wide viral spread remains the highly effective vaccine. Making sure that all of those around our young students are vaccinated is key to helping them stay healthy and helping our school remain open. If you or anyone in your family has not received the vaccine, please contact us for assistance in doing so.

Beyond that, and following all national, state, and Manchester Health Department guidance on schools, we will continue to implement as many meaningful mitigation measures as we can in our setting, all the while keeping a close eye on this evolving COVID situation. Of course it is our hope that during this year, COVID infection rates will decrease significantly, and we will be able to let up on some of the mitigation measures we will have in place this fall.

It is now well understood that returning to school for in-person learning during the pandemic is not risk-free; the nature of this virus makes that impossible. Working with the Manchester Health Department directly to analyze our unique educational program, we have designed our 2020/21 mitigation practices to allow for collaborative learning – the heart of our public Montessori program.

The Current COVID Picture

While the spring of 2021 brought a lot of positive COVID news – a decrease in cases, hospitalizations and deaths due to COVID, and an increase in vaccination levels among those who are currently eligible, this summer we have seen a significant uptick in cases, hospitalizations and a slowing in the numbers of eligible NH residents seeking vaccination.

As of this writing, the Manchester Health Department reports that Manchester is now experiencing a ‘Substantial Level of Risk’ of community transmission. This is the highest risk level in the NH measuring system of COVID risk which looks at infection rates per 100,000 people. Public health officials expect this trend to continue, with more cases per day, and an increase in test positivity due the fast-spreading delta and the slow growing vaccination levels in our city and county. While these are not the only metric used to measure risk in our school setting, we have been directed by both the NH DHHS and the Manchester Health Department to increase mitigation levels, when community infections rate are at or above substantial. Additionally, vaccination levels in our school setting impact the protocols we will have in place at the start of and during the 2021/22 school year. Just as this current increase in cases combined with our students who are not yet eligible for vaccination requires increased COVID safety measures, we are hopeful that a drop in cases and student access to vaccination will help us dial back mitigations later this year.

The fact that we are seeing this level of community infection, and because our students are not vaccine-elidable, requires that we consider broad evaluation of our plans, just as a drop in community infection and ability of our young students to access the COVID vaccine will impact our mitigation measures down the road.

This updated plan written with the current COVID conditions in plain view, includes beginning the year with mandatory masking for all when indoors at Mill Falls, as per the urging of the Manchester Health Department, at the guidance of the NH Department of Human Services and following the strong guidance of the CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics. That combined with the many other measures explained on the following pages will round out our current opening plan.

Plan Development

This opening plan was developed in part to satisfy ESSER (federal COVID grant) funding requirements, and importantly to communicate with the Mill Falls Community the expectations for the coming school year.

It was developed and modified by the Mill Falls School Administration in partnership with the Manchester Health Department, state and federal guidance, and with input from Mill Falls Staff, School Board and Parents. We thank each of our partners and stakeholders for their input, and for their ongoing care of themselves, our students, and our greater community.

When planning the best use of the ESSER III funds to support our students and staff, Mill Falls invited all members of our School Community, including Staff, Families, Outside Service Providers and the Board of Trustees to engage in an extensive survey intended to collect ideas about how best to prioritize the design and use of our ESSER funding in the 2021/22 school year. The needs identified for ESSER funding include learning materials to identify and fill learning gaps; professional development, resources and activities to support student and staff mental/emotional health and well-being; COVID-specific cleaning /disinfecting supplies and additional materials to support our healthy and safe school environment, programming to support and bolster our public Montessori Programming, and so much more! The details of those plans are mapped out in our spending plan which will be published on our website by August 23rd as required to access the ESSER funds.

The following pages outline our school start plan, utilizing the most up-to-date information we have to work with at the time of this writing. This revision of our original June 2021 plan is being shared with our school families in August 2021, and is intended to be paired with our Family Handbook. The plan will be reviewed by the School Administration and communicated with the Board of Trustees at least every six months during the ESSER funding period (likely more often as the COVID situation evolves), to ensure we are continuing to deliver the best practices/services and doing so with safety at the fore. Any changes will be communicated to our families in a timely fashion.

While the requirement for ESSER funding is that our plan be reviewed at least every 6 months during the ESSER funding period through September 30, 2023, unless otherwise directed, we will be revising our start-of-the-year mitigation strategies in early January.

We thank you for your review of the plan and for the ongoing role EACH member of our Mill Falls Community plays in overall school safety and in the engaging education of our wonderful students. The plan is posted on our website in the Parent dropdown menu item: Family Handbook & Safe School Plan (www.millfalls.org/parents/).

Wishing everyone in our Mill Falls Community a wonderful and healthy end of summer and start of the new school year. Together we can do this!

~ The Mill Falls Admin Team

Solidarity among human beings is very beautiful, arising from antiquity and projecting itself as it does into the future, binding the past to the present and the present to the future, for all eternity.

- Dr. Maria Montessori

Teaching & Learning Model in 2021/22

Mill Falls Charter School will resume full-time / in-person learning for our Lower and Upper Elementary students (grades 1-6) on September 2, 2021, and for our Kinders on Friday, September 3rd. Mill Falls will not be providing remote learning options in the 2021/22 School Year as per NH Department of Education guidelines, unless there is a COVID emergency that requires a flip from in-person to remote learning.

Special Education & Intervention

All Special Education services provided by the Mill Fall Staff (as per agreements with the students' sending districts) will continue as detailed in their IEPs. Likewise, all Intervention plans will continue to support those students who are determined to be at risk or below grade level. If a child is well, but in quarantine due to exposure, Special Education services will continue. The details of this will be shared with individual families if/when this becomes necessary.

ELL Services

All ELL services will continue based on annual assessment and related student needs.

Social / Emotional Wellness

Mill Falls will focus on student and staff wellness in a number of ways familiar in our Montessori setting and related to our Grace, Courtesy and Respect curriculum, and will also implement some new practices. We will continue to provide staff with professional development opportunities to support the mental health of their students and themselves. We also added a new staff Social Worker position to support and assist children and staff navigate student social and emotional learning.

Lunch & Recess

Lunches will return to the classroom as they were in our pre-COVID design. Last spring, we enjoyed the option of taking lunch outdoors and will aim to provide that option when the weather and schedules permit. Recess and lunch will remain as a classroom-cohorted activity at least for the start of the school year. This will be re-evaluated as we learn more about the COVID infection rates, vaccination options for our students, and evolving guidelines. Lunch will be unmasked time, and masks will be optional during outdoor recess.

Technology

Over the course of the last year, we acquired a sufficient number of student Chromebooks to provide 1:1 technology to our students. With the return to full-time / in-person learning, we expect that technology use will return to an age-appropriate level and be accessed as a shelf work or research tool in accordance with student learning. If there is a need for students to be learning from home, we will offer technology for use in the home.

Attendance Expectations

We will follow our usual attendance expectations during the Full Day/5-Day In-Person learning period as presented in our Family Handbook.

Addressing Potential Instructional Gaps

Last spring our students engaged in the annual State Assessments – SAS – as well as our regular end-of-year internal benchmark assessments in math, reading and writing. Internal benchmark assessments (also known as interim assessments) alongside the state SAS provides data to help our staff assess student academic gain (or loss). They utilize this information as they tailor instruction to their students'

individual academic needs. This is the core organizing principle of our public Montessori program. Our multi-age, multi-grade Montessori classrooms provide us with great flexibility to meet the children where they are and determine a path for them toward expected academic growth. Instruction is differentiated with the goal of catching students up who are behind and maintaining annual growth for all.

We will be working with our Student Progress Data Analyst, Colleen LaCroix, and Montessori Math Coach, Bill Maier, as part of our 'Math Boost' program this year. In addition, we will be acquiring some new math resources for intervention and student practice. These programs and resources will be paid for with ESSER III funds. We will also use ESSER III funds to acquire some newer language resources, and some intervention and special education materials which will be geared to especially support our struggling students at each level in targeted academic areas.

Further, we will continue our work with our Montessori Consultant, Elizabeth Slade, owner/operator of Public Montessori in Action, aimed at improving all Montessori systems and instruction delivery.

After School Activities, Child Care & Community Events

It is our goal to re-introduce after school activities, childcare programming, and safe community events during the 2021/22 School Year. However, given the current infection rate, these programs will continue to be suspended. This will be re-evaluated later this fall; but will not begin at the start of the school year.

Bus Transportation

The 2021/22 bus plan has just been shared with us by the Manchester School District (MSD) and their busing partner the Manchester Transit Authority (MTA). Manchester resident-students enrolled at Mill Falls are able to take the bus to and from school as per charter law. The MSD and MTA have decided to discontinue their use of 4 hubs across the city, and have now created routes that will pick up and deliver students to neighborhood bus stops planned to be within 1-2 miles of their homes. Our buses will be shared with students from the Mount Saint Mary and Mount Zion Schools. The MTA will release the routes shortly and Mill Falls will share that information with families who have registered for busing. Anyone who does not utilize the bus for 10 days will be removed from the roster.

If you need to add your child to the bus roster, please contact Jen Avery at our front office at office@millfalls.org. While busing is a necessity for some families, some families may be able to arrange alternatives that reduce stress and enable parents to rotate picking up and dropping off when possible.

As a reminder, Mill Falls does not have any control over busing protocol, COVID safety, systems, routes or times that the MSD/MTA will use to transport students.

Safety & Mitigation Methods/Protocols:

In the 2021/22 School Year, Mill Falls will continue our layered approach to COVID safety protocol and mitigation. Some of our systems around COVID safety will continue to be equal to or – to the extent allowable - more stringent or slightly different than what other settings may employ. This is due in large part to the design of our learning model and the age of our students. And, of course, linked to our focus on the safety and well-being of all members of our Mill Falls Community.

The Manchester Health Department (MHD) has been an invaluable resource to us since the beginning of the pandemic. As one of two large city public health departments in the state, MHD is responsible for the investigation of communicable disease cases in its jurisdiction. MHD maintains 24/7 emergency operations and the Director has a direct line of communication with the Department for off-hours reporting/consultation. MHD follows NH Department of Health and Human Services (NH-DHHS) guidance on the investigation and mitigation of communicable diseases and also has a keen understanding of the unique challenges found in the state's largest city. They report on Manchester-specific COVID details, work with us to provide vaccination opportunities for our staff and families, and will continue to assist us as we navigate COVID in the coming year.

There are many methods of mitigation aimed at preventing the spread of COVID. Our detailed work with the MDH has been specific to our educational setting and has included careful and ongoing review of evolving CDC and state guidelines. This has informed our 2021/22 mitigation planning and protocols.

The following are the measures which will be in place at the start of the 2021/22 School Year. All mitigation efforts listed below will be reviewed/revise/revisited as needed, in accordance with the best available science and guidance from CDC or NH DHHS and in partnership with the Manchester Health Department.

COVID Vaccination of Staff

In the spring, as soon as the COVID vaccine was made available to educators, Mill Falls hosted two MHD vaccination clinics to provide vaccines to our staff. As of this writing, nearly 100% of our staff are fully vaccinated. Vaccinating those eligible people that surround our young learners is the number one thing we can do to help reduce the spread of COVID. With the recent news and recommendations for boosters, we can expect to continue our work with MHD in this area. It is also our hope that they will partner with us to provide vaccines for younger children once they are eligible.

Cohorting

Cohorts are a consistent group of students who stay together for the duration of the school day. This includes learning time as well as lunch, recess, and transitions. Cohorting, a national and local guidance for schools with limited space, seeks to minimize exposure to large, mixed groups. It also facilitates contact tracing and potential quarantining measures in the event there is exposure to known COVID case(s). Mill Falls Students will continue to be organized in this fashion, limiting nearly all of their interactions while at school to their classroom cohort. Ideally, the COVID situation will improve, and our students will be able to mix more freely, but that is not currently recommended. This practice will be re-evaluated during the year.

Masking

As stated earlier in the plan's introductory pages, given the current and evolving COVID situation which includes broad community spread of COVID and especially the highly infectious delta variant, it has been determined that all staff and students will be required to mask indoors; masks will be optional outdoors.

- It is expected that students and staff will provide their own well-fitting masks, but we will have disposable masks available as needed.
- Children will have unmasked time during lunch and snack. If a child needs a break from masking, he/she will be able to do that, in a safely designated space.

- This will echo the Montessori philosophy that emphasizes student independence and self-advocacy/agency based on each child's needs.
- Parents are also expected to wear masks during drop off and pick up and at any time they are on campus.
- Recent research has highlighted the benefits of wearing multi-layered masks, which we also strongly recommend.
- *Please note, gators and bandanas are not permitted.*

Hand Washing, Sanitizing & Respiratory Etiquette

As part of our Grace, Courtesy and Respect Curriculum, Montessori-style lessons will be taught in proper sanitizing procedures. Hand washing is one of the strongest defenses against the spread of illness generally, and requires at least 20 seconds with soap and water. When soap and water are not readily available, we will use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, as per CDC recommendations.

Lessons in hand washing and reminders will aim to keep good hygiene practices at the forefront of everyone's mind. Students will be expected to wash or sanitize their hands upon arrival at school and several times throughout the day. Trash cans and single use tissues are available in bathrooms, next to sinks and in classrooms.

All students, staff and contracted service providers should engage in hand hygiene at the following times:

- Arrival to the building, and any time they re-enter the building;
- Before and after eating, handling food;
- After using the toilet;
- After coming in contact with bodily fluid;
- Before and after handling facial coverings/face shields;
- After playing outdoors;
- After handling garbage;
- Before and after cleaning;
- After staff breaks;
- After assisting students with handwashing, staff should also wash their hands;
- Before and after administering medication or medical ointment.

We will continue to encourage the use of hand lotion to support healthy skin for students and staff.

Mill Falls will have signs reminding students and staff of healthy practices such as coughing/sneezing into one's elbow, frequently sanitizing/washing hands for at least 20 seconds, and staying home when sick.

Water Fountain / Bottle Filling Station

Students and staff may access the water bottle filling station, but the water fountain function will remain closed. Students are expected to bring in refillable water bottles to school daily.

Cleaning Protocols

Thorough caretaking of the learning environment has always been an important element of the Montessori classroom. In the Age of COVID it needs to be even more of an important responsibility between the adults and children.

- All high-touch areas will be cleaned regularly during the school day.

- At the end of each day, our contracted cleaning company will perform environmental cleaning and disinfection of high-touch areas (including door handles, light switches, tables, chairs, faucet handles, toilet handles) as part of their all-school nightly cleaning regimen. They will follow the current best practice of cleaning before disinfecting. They will utilize EPA/CDC approved cleaning supplies (DECON-30, a food-safe and EPA approved COVID disinfectant, or similar product).
- We will continue to consult the EPA/CDC guidelines as understanding of the virus and related cleaning guidelines continue to evolve.

Air Quality Control & Ventilation

Our modern building, built in 1989, is equipped with a well-maintained HVAC system. It includes enhanced MERV filtration and fresh air flow 24-hours a day. In addition, each classroom, office and gathering spaces have HEPA air purifiers.

Distancing Protocol

In June 2021, the Manchester Health Department did a site visit which included a review of our unique learning environment. Given our style of learning, it was determined that distancing is not consistent. It has been determined that our classrooms will once again be designed as they were in pre-COVID times. Collaborative learning and small group lessons and work with shared materials – the essence of the Montessori Model and our mission- will be designed as it was before COVID, providing ample opportunity for authentic Montessori learning to take place. Distancing will be observed when possible.

Ongoing Monitoring of COVID in our Community and State

As we've learned, the COVID crisis continues to evolve, and we must be responsive to these changes. Additional and significant changes in infection rate, hospitalization and/or deaths due to COVID will require another round of re-evaluation of these protocols. We will continue our ongoing and aggregate review of the levels of community infection rates in Manchester, as well as vaccination levels COVID hospitalizations and deaths, all in partnership with the Manchester Health Department.

Quarantining

In late June, after the state's due date for our original reopening plan, the Governor announced changes to public health guidelines for quarantining after exposure. At this time, only those who live with a person who has tested positive for COVID is required to quarantine. Those who have been vaccinated or are within 90 days of a past COVID infection and live with someone who has tested positive are not required to quarantine but are required to wear a mask in public for 10 days after the last exposure to the person in their home who is COVID positive.¹

Please see the attached NH DHHS one-pager about quarantining at the end of this document.

The state now advises that anyone who has been exposed be observed carefully for the development of symptoms and seek testing 2-5 days after exposure. This is a significant shift from previous quarantine protocol. Public schools are not currently permitted to have a more stringent quarantine protocol than the public health guidance. However, there is a provision for situations where there are multiple cases in

¹ As per the NH DHHS guidance: Close household contact is defined as any individual who lives and sleeps in the same indoor shared space as another person diagnosed with COVID-19 (either a temporary or permanent living arrangement), leading to close contact and potential repeated exposure to the person with COVID-19. This includes situations where there may be temporary but prolonged exposure such as occurs as sleep-over events, shared camp cabins, vacation rentals, etc.

a class or school-wide (an outbreak or cluster).² We will work with public health officials to navigate that situation should it arise. **Should anyone who has been exposed develop symptoms**, they will be required to seek medical assessment and a rapid or PCR test, and if positive, follow the isolation protocol (see below).

Isolation

Should a student or staff member (even those who are vaccinated or previously infected) test positive / be diagnosed with COVID, he/she will be required to follow the isolation protocol of 10 days, improvement of all symptoms including no fever for 24 hours, unmedicated, before returning to school. *Please see the attached NH DHHS one-pager about isolation at the end of this document.*

Parent Partnership in Student Wellness:

It is the responsibility of our families to ensure that students are well when they come to school.

Daily Wellness Checks:

The following is our plan for the start of the new school year:

- **Student Daily Self-Screening:** We will continue daily use of the ConvenientMD online self-assessment. Families will be expected to conduct this self-screening daily BEFORE arriving at school.
- **Student Temperature-Taking** will be expected to be completed daily AT HOME as part of the ConvenientMD online self-assessment before students arrive at school as part of the Daily Self-Screening.
- **Staff Daily Self-Screening:** Staff will continue to conduct their own self-screening daily.

Experiencing the Presence of New and Unexplained COVID-Compatible Symptoms:

Occurrence of any of the symptoms below while a person is at school suggests the person should seek diagnostic testing.

- Temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher
- Chills
- Stuffy nose
- Sore throat
- Cough (change in the baseline cough in students with chronic cough due to allergies or asthma)
- Difficulty breathing (for students with asthma, a change from their baseline breathing)
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- New loss of taste or smell
- New onset of severe headache, especially with a fever

Important Reminder: It is expected that students who become unwell at school, will be picked up by parents/guardians within 30 minutes of receiving a call from the Front Office. This will play a role in minimizing potential spread of COVID or other illnesses.

² The NH DHHS guidance defines a **cluster** in a school setting as multiple cases comprising at least 10% of students, teachers, or staff within a specified core group OR at least three (3) within a specified core group meeting criteria for a school-associated COVID-19 case; with symptom onset or positive test result within 14 days of each other, AND NO likely known epidemiologic link to a case outside of the school setting. NH DHHS defines an **outbreak** as multiple cases comprising at least 10% of students, teachers, or staff, within a specified core group OR at least three (3) cases within a specified core group with symptom onset or positive test result within 14 days of each other who were not identified as close contacts of each other in another setting (i.e. household) outside of the school setting; AND epidemiologically linked in the school setting or a school-sanctioned extracurricular activity. They define **core group** as a cohort group, classroom, before/after school care, after school program, etc.

Feeling Sick? Stay Home:

Both students and staff will be asked to stay home if they are feeling unwell. Anyone with COVID-related symptoms will be asked to seek testing (see above).

- **Contact your doctor:** Staff and students who have symptoms should also contact their primary care physician for further instructions.
- Anyone who has **seasonal allergies or history of migraines/headaches** will need to have a letter on file with us by or BEFORE the first day of school.
- Please note, unexplained COVID-related symptom onset in documented allergy sufferers may still require that the child be sent home and seek medical assessment before they are welcome back to school.
- **Should a child with documented history of allergies or migraines/headaches present with COVID-related symptoms, he/she** will be evaluated for COVID risk and sent home until there is an improvement of symptoms (no fever, coughing) before being allowed back into the building.
- **Should a student be diagnosed with something other than COVID by a doctor, he/she** may return to the building once they have had 24 hours free from fever and/or vomiting, and other symptoms have improved, as per our established wellness protocol in our Family Handbook.

Known or Highly Suspected Exposure:

Persons with known or highly suspected COVID exposure, will be expected to be observed closely for COVID symptom development and seek PCR testing 3-5 days after exposure. Seeking testing before 3-5 days will likely not capture true COVID status.

Seek Testing

COVID Testing is reserved for anyone, regardless of vaccination status, exhibiting new and unexplained COVID-19 compatible symptoms (outside of known seasonal allergies, history of headaches as noted, by a required letter on file). **In the event of a positive COVID test**, we will work with public health officials notifying them of the positive case and discussing any further permissible and required action.

What type of testing to Pursue?

- Persons with COVID-related symptoms may seek either rapid or PCR testing.
- Persons with known or suspected exposure who are asymptomatic shall seek PCR testing.
- Should a person with symptoms elect not to test, they will be required to follow the 10-day isolation (for illness) or 10-day quarantine (for known exposure).
- Any non-vaccinated person(s) living with someone who has been diagnosed/tested positive for COVID is required to quarantine for 10 days AFTER the exposure and provide a negative PCR test before being welcomed back to school.
- Any person who is vaccinated or within 90 days of COVID infection are not required to quarantine but must be masked when In public settings.

Contact Tracing

We will continue to work in collaboration with the Manchester Health Department to conduct contact tracing in the event of a cluster or outbreak of COVID in our school setting. The state health department has said it is no longer conducting contact tracing. According to the current guidance by the NH DHHS, a person would be considered a close contact in our setting would be defined as follows:

- If facemasks are consistently and correctly used, then a close contact would include persons sitting within 3 feet adjacent on either side, in-front, or in-back of a person with COVID-19 (for each classroom, including during lunch and snack breaks, or on a bus) for a cumulative time of 15 minutes or longer over a 24-hour period.
- The entire classroom, if students are allowed to interact in close contact in an uncontrolled fashion. A reminder that we are not permitted to quarantine a whole classroom for a single case.

Academic Support during Quarantine or Isolation

During quarantine due to known exposure to someone with COVID in the household, or if a student is feeling well (not sick/asymptomatic) and the family chooses for the student to self-quarantine after known exposure, a student:

- Will be provided with practice work;
- May access online learning resources;
- Will check in with our Student Resource Support Assistant
- Will not be provided with live lessons from their classroom teachers.
- Access to their classroom teachers will be based on teacher availability.

What happens when a child is waiting for the result of their PCR COVID test?

- This will be treated like a sick day/s;
- No lessons or new follow-up/practice work will be provided.

What happens if a child has COVID-related symptoms, but declines a test?

If a student displays unexplained COVID-related symptoms and the family declines a COVID test, the child will need to isolate at home for 10 days after the symptoms first appeared.

- These will be treated as sick days.
- No lessons or new follow-up/practice work will be provided.

LIMITING FACILITY ACCESS

Visitors & Volunteers

Given the elevated community spread as of this writing, and the fact that the delta variant can be spread by vaccinated individuals, visitors and volunteers will not be permitted into the building until further notice. We are hopeful that we can design some volunteer opportunities outside of our facility as a means of engaging our families and volunteers!

A wellness check will be performed when anyone outside of our staff/student/provider groups must enter the building for repairs or maintenance, with the exception of emergency personnel, indicating that they have no signs or symptoms of COVID.

Meetings

Special Education meetings and parent meetings will be held virtually until further notice.

Safety Drills

Fire and safety drills will continue to occur according to regulations.

CONCLUSION

As part of our ongoing tracking of COVID's impact on our community and programming, Mill Falls will continue to partner with the Manchester Health Department and take guidance from the NH Division of Public Health Services and the CDC regarding re-opening protocols, screening, travel, self-quarantine and self-isolation for staff and students, and any other related practices. Our procedures will continue to be updated based on the ever-evolving understanding of COVID and infection rate impact on our elementary school setting and vaccination rates among students and staff. We will also continue to seek input from educators, students, families, and community partners.

It is our every hope that we will remain open to In-person throughout the school year. However, due to the ongoing threat of COVID infection and the size of our small school staff, there is possibility of an emergent shift to Remote Learning Period at any point which may be forced either by infection or significant illness. We will communicate any such development to our school community as quickly as possible, should this emergent situation occur, and we will partner with public health officials in the process.

This plan is intended to provide members of the Mill Falls Community with an overview of Mill Falls' Safe School Opening for September 2021. This document shall be paired with our Family Handbook to provide the complete information and orientation to Mill Falls Families. As noted in the introduction, we will review the plan in early January 2022, and again thereafter at least every 6 months as required by ESSER, but likely more frequently as the COVID pandemic continues to evolve.

Our aim has been to create a plan that is easily understood by all. However, should you need any assistance in reading the plan, please contact us at office@millfalls.org.

Attachments:

- NH DHHS guide to self-quarantining (due to exposure)
- NH DHHS guide to isolation (due to COVID infection)

Additional resources may be found here:

- CDC guidance for K-12 schools and childcare programs: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html>
- American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) guidance for K-12 schools: <https://www.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/>
- NH Universal Best Practices: <https://www.covidguidance.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt381/files/inline-documents/sonh/universal-best-practices.pdf>

Quarantine Guide for Unvaccinated People Exposed to COVID-19 in their Household

If you are unvaccinated and have been identified as a household contact to someone diagnosed with COVID-19, then you are at risk of developing COVID-19 in the 14 days after you were exposed, and you should follow these instructions.

Household Contact: any individual who lives and sleeps in the same indoor shared space as another person diagnosed with COVID-19 (either a temporary or permanent living arrangement), leading to close contact and potential repeated exposure to the person with COVID-19. This includes situations where there may be temporary but prolonged exposure such as occurs as sleep-over events, shared camp cabins, vacation rentals, etc.

1 Stay Home (Quarantine) for 10 days from last exposure*

- You should stay at your home and avoid other people for 10 days after your last close contact with the household member with COVID-19 while they are considered infectious (their 10-day isolation period). You can begin your 10 day quarantine period sooner if the person with COVID-19 sleeps in a different room than you and you can avoid ongoing close contact in your home.
- You should not go out in public places - not even to the grocery store or to run errands. Please do not visit with other people outside of your home, and do not invite others into your house to visit. Keep your distance from others in your household (at least 6 feet).
- [Wear a facemask](#) to protect those around you.

As long as you don't develop [symptoms of COVID-19](#), you can stop quarantine after 10 days have passed starting from the day of your last exposure to the person with COVID-19.

2 Get tested*

- Get tested 5 – 7 days after your last exposure to a person with COVID-19. This should be a test that detects active infection using a PCR-based test on a nose swab. You can find testing locations on our [COVID-19 testing guidance](#) webpage.
- A negative test does NOT mean that you can end quarantine early (you still need to quarantine for 10 days), but a test does help to identify infection early even if you're not showing symptoms, and it can help prevent spread and protect others around you.
- If you test positive for COVID-19, then you need to follow the instructions found in the [Isolation Guide](#).

3 Monitor for symptoms

- Take your temperature. You should do this twice a day for 14 days after your last exposure (even if you end your quarantine after 10 days), and take your temperature anytime you feel like you might have a fever.
- Monitor yourself closely for other potential symptoms of COVID-19 such as respiratory illness (cough, sore throat, runny nose, shortness of breath), body symptoms (fatigue, chills, muscle aches), change in taste or smell, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea, even after you end your quarantine.
- If you develop any symptoms of COVID-19: Seek medical advice and get tested – call ahead before you go to a healthcare provider's office or emergency room. Tell them you were recently exposed to someone with COVID-19 and have symptoms.

4 Take care of yourself

Reach out to your healthcare provider or seek emergency care if you have any concerns about your health. Social isolation can be lonely. Connect with others through phone, video chat, text, and email. Seek help from others to safely provide you and your household food and supplies you need while in quarantine. If you need support to maintain isolation, call 211 (TTY: 603-634-3388).

If you have a medical emergency, call 911. Tell them that you are under quarantine for COVID-19 exposure.

Please review these resources to help keep your home clean and protect others:

[What to do if you are sick](#) | [Caring for yourself at home](#) | [Cleaning and disinfecting your home](#) | [Coping with stress](#)

*You do NOT need to stay home (quarantine) for 10 days but it is recommended that you be tested 3-5 days after exposure (or if you develop symptoms), and to wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days after exposure or until you receive a negative test result if:

- You are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and more than 14 days have passed since you received the last recommended dose of a COVID-19 vaccine series
- You have previously tested positive for active COVID-19 infection (by PCR or antigen testing) in the last 90 days (if you had a previous infection that was more than 90 days ago, then you still need to follow all of these instructions).

This document is available online at:

<https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/covid19/documents/self-quarantine-covid.pdf>

8/5/21

Isolation Guide for People Who Have COVID-19

If you have [symptoms of COVID-19](#), you should be tested so you can know if you actually have COVID-19.
If you test positive for COVID-19, please follow these instructions.

1 Stay home

Self-Isolation: You must stay at your home and avoid other people, including those you live with. You may not go out in public places - not even to the grocery store or to run errands. You may not visit with other people outside of your home, and you may not invite others into your house to visit.

If you have symptoms of COVID-19 with your positive test, you must stay at home until:

- At least 10 days have passed since your symptoms first started

AND

- At least 24 hours have passed since you had a fever (without using fever-reducing medications like acetaminophen or ibuprofen), **and** your symptoms are improving

If you do NOT have symptoms but have a positive COVID-19 test, you must stay at home until:

- At least 10 days have passed since the date of collection of your positive COVID-19 test, assuming you don't develop symptoms. If you develop symptoms then follow the instructions above.

2 Tell your contacts

Household Contacts:* Tell your household contacts about your COVID-19 infection. They will need to [self-quarantine](#) for at least 10 days starting the day after their last exposure to you while you were able to infect them, which is usually for ten days after the start of your symptoms (or 10 days from your positive test date if you don't have symptoms). If you don't stay separate from other people in your household while in isolation, then they may need to self-quarantine for [longer than 10 days](#). You should also clean your home and follow CDC [recommendations](#) to protect others.

Contacts Outside Your Household: We encourage you to tell non-household contacts about your COVID-19 infection if you were in close contact with them at any point during the two days before you developed COVID-19 symptoms (or two days before you tested positive, if you don't have symptoms) through your last day of isolation. "Close contact" means you were closer than 6 feet to the person for more than ten total minutes while you had COVID-19. These people should monitor themselves closely for symptoms and, if they develop symptoms, isolate and seek testing.

- You may provide your non-household contacts the public health [Self-Observation Guide](#) which has further instructions on monitoring for signs and symptoms for COVID-19 and seeking testing.
- If you have questions about talking to your non-household contacts or if you think you may have become ill as part of a potential outbreak, please call the NH Department of Health and Human Services at 603-271-4496.

3 Take care of yourself

Support While in Isolation: Reach out to your healthcare provider or seek emergency care if you have any worsening of [symptoms](#). Isolation can be lonely. Connect with others through phone, video chat, text, and email. Seek help from others to safely provide you and your household food and supplies you need while in isolation. If you need support to maintain isolation, call 211 (TTY: 603-634-3388).

If you have a medical emergency, call 911. Tell them that you have COVID-19.

Please review these resources to help keep your home clean and protect others:

- [What to do if you are sick](#) and [Caring for yourself at home](#)
- [Cleaning and disinfecting your home](#)
- [Coping with stress](#)

***Household Contact:** any individual who lives and sleeps in the same indoor shared space as another person diagnosed with COVID-19 (either a temporary or permanent living arrangement), leading to close contact and potential repeated exposure to the person with COVID-19. This includes situations where there may be temporary but prolonged exposure such as occurs as sleep-over events, shared camp cabins, vacation rentals, etc.

This document is available online at:

<https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/covid19/documents/self-isolation-covid.pdf>

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