

Dear Newport Montessori School Families & Staff,

Mother Nature has certainly brought us a hot and sunny summer! I hope you have been enjoying the summer in whatever way that has felt healthy and peaceful to you. At NMS, our Back to School Committee has been working hard to make plans for returning to school in person. We are committed to providing a positive learning experience for your children within the bounds of safety. We have been vigilant in our communications with all school stakeholders (parents, students, teachers, board members) to keep everyone informed at each stage of planning for the start of school on September 1st.

As we proceed and you choose to send your student to school, please be aware that you are entering into a compact with the larger school community; a compact that acknowledges your willingness to value the health and safety of everyone in the community above considerations of convenience, politics and personal views.

Our Back to School Committee has formed the details of our plan based on recommendations from the NH Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Public Health Services and the NH Department of Education. Key recommendations include physical distancing and other protective measures. Please be advised that our goal is to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and that no matter what protocols we put in place there is still a potential for one of our students or staff to become infected with the virus.

Screening and Arrival at School:

NMS is asking families to screen their student daily for symptoms of COVID-19 prior to arriving at school. If any of the COVID-19 symptoms are present, even if mild, and/or if you must answer yes to any of the screening questions (see below) we ask that parents keep their student home and inform the head of school of the symptoms. If the student has a prior history of an illness which also manifests itself with any of these same symptoms, and has provided information through our online enrollment Family ID system, the student may come to school. For any **new** occurrence of symptoms we ask that the student's primary care physician be consulted and the student not return to school until given permission by the PCP; upon return please provide a written notification from the PCP allowing the return to school.

Newport Montessori School has a staggered arrival. Morning care students are dropped off as early as 7:30; Upper School (grades 1-8) arrive between 7:45 and 8:15; Primary students (prekindergarten and kindergarten) arrive between 8:10 and 8:30.

Primary (prekindergarten and kindergarten) and Lower Elementary Students (grades 1 and 2) will be dropped off at the main entrance door. A school administrator will be

positioned outside to take the temperature of your student using a no contact thermometer prior to your student exiting the vehicle.

Upper Elementary (grades 3, 4, 5) and Junior Classroom students (grades 6, 7, 8) will enter through the lower doors of the school. A school staff member will be positioned outside to take the temperature of your student using a no contact thermometer prior to your student exiting the vehicle.

All students entering the building will use hand sanitizer using the touchless sanitizer stations positioned near the entrance doors.

COVID-19 Screening Questions:

*Does your student have signs or symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as fever above 100.3, cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat?

*In the last 14 days, has your student had contact with someone with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, or who is under investigation for COVID-19, or is ill with respiratory illness?

*In the last 14 days, did you travel internationally or to a U.S. community with community-based spread of COVID-19?

These questions are subject to change under CDC recommendations. Should changes be made, parents/guardians/staff will be notified as soon as possible.

Symptoms of COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- For the latest update visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

Campus Safety:

To minimize exposure and mitigate the spread of illness, we plan to:

Use physical distancing:

- Use table dividers where possible
- Assign seats of students where possible
- Keeping students and their teachers in “pods” by group when possible

Modify certain activities:

- Specialty classes (music, Spanish, art, PE, assembly) will take place outside for the start of school. When colder weather arrives, some classes will remain in their regular education classrooms for specials with the specials teachers moving from room to room throughout the school day
- Field trips will follow state mandates and guidelines

Mitigate Potential Spread by:

- Reinforce the Montessori handwashing/fingernail washing lessons at all grade levels
- Provide hand sanitizer and asking students to use hand sanitizer when transitioning within the building & entering and exiting the building
- Provide antiseptic wipes, supervising students wiping down desk areas at the end of day, or at the end of use by individual students
- Custodian will wipe sink faucet handles, door handlings, and stairwell railings as part of daily cleaning
- Common areas will be cleansed daily by custodian and staff
- Limit contact with parents and guests while at school; staff members will be at the entry and exit doors for parental pick up, negating the need for parents to enter the building to pick up a student. For afterschool student families, please press the intercom button near the main door. A staff member will bring your student and his/her belongings to the door
- It is not the intent to keep parents out of the school building. If you need to enter the building you will follow the same protocols outlined for visitors (see below)
- All visitors will be required to answer screening questions, have a temperature check using the touchless infrared thermometer, wear a mask, and hand sanitize upon entry.
- Our school events, which can be found on the PTO calendar distributed to students on the first day of school, will be evaluated and modified on a month by month and event by event basis; some events may need to be cancelled

Limit exposure to other students and or staff by those who may be ill by:

- Asking parents to check temperatures of students before arriving at school
- Keep students home if they have a fever (100.4 or higher), including mild illnesses, and to notify the school of the circumstances of their absence.

- If a student presents with any symptoms of COVID-19, the family must contact their student's Primary Care Physician (PCP) and provide medical documentation of being cleared by the doctor before returning to school
- Students who develop symptoms of COVID-19 while at school will be evaluated by a staff member, isolated in the Head of School Office, and be required to wear a mask while parents are being contacted to pick the student up from school. All protocols listed above regarding contacting their PCP and receiving written medical clearance upon returning to school will need to be followed.

Face Coverings/Masks:

- We are carefully monitoring health requirements and currently do not plan to require masks. Masks may be required for special events or situations when distancing cannot be maintained
- Staff will wear masks/face coverings when appropriate
- We will support any student who wishes to wear a mask
- All visitors to the school will be asked to wear a mask/face covering

Exposure plan:

- Parent or staff member to inform the director as soon as aware of the situation
- Parent or staff member to contact their PCP
- Head of School/Director will contact DHHS. DHHS will advise on next steps.
- Communication will be made by email and/or our electronic notification system (School Info App) as instructed by DHHS

Support: The following steps will be followed in the event that a student or staff member needs to stay home per instructions from PCP or DHHS for more than 2 school days.

- Teachers will provide classroom instruction through Zoom, MRX (our Montessori Records Xpress software system), and possibly Canvas if students are unable to attend traditional in-class instruction due to illness or fever. Classroom instruction will be on the same time schedule as in-classroom instruction.
- All students will need access to their own computer, smartphone or tablet for use during stay at home instruction. If the family is unable to provide, they are to notify the school at the beginning of the school year. The school has a limited number of computers available that can be loaned out to students.
- Teachers who cannot attend due to potential exposure or health risk issues may teach using the online resources outlined above. School administration will provide supervision of the classroom as needed.
- We are committed to continuing to provide high-quality academic instruction following guidelines and mandates.

Dismissal and Departure from School:

NMS has a staggered end of school day schedule.

For primary students leaving at 12:30 please ring the school intercom at the main door of the school. A staff member will bring your student and his/her belongings to you. Please remember this will take a few moments as students will need to change into outdoor shoes and collect items at their cubbies/lockers prior to walking to the front door with the staff member.

For primary students leaving at 2:30 and 3:15 please follow the procedure outlined above.

For Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, and Junior Classroom students, teachers will walk with students to their designated dismissal location outside of the school. In inclement weather, students will remain in their interior designated dismissal location. Staff will monitor the arrival of the parent/guardian and dismiss the student upon your arrival.

For students remaining after school for Fitness Club, Robotics, of After School Care, the supervising teacher will monitor the arrival of parents and guardians and dismiss your student to you.

Love, respect, and caring for all humanity form the foundation for all Montessori philosophy and curriculum. It is through this lens that we will be working with students to help them understand the changes that must be implemented this year. In that vein, we are looking for your full cooperation and a shared commitment to make appropriate choices in your personal lives to help keep all Newport Montessori School community members healthy and safe. Your integrity, honesty and compliance with all of these requirements are crucial to continuing in-person learning for everyone.

Our Back to School Committee is committed to meeting throughout the school year to address changes to guidelines, policies, and mandates that may arise as we move through the school year. A heartfelt thank you to each member of our Back to School Committee:

Ashleigh McFarlin, Board of Directors & Banking
Kate Sargent, Board of Directors, Educator & Parent
Todd Bersaglieri, Educator
Diane Brenker, Educator
Dominique Aldridge, Educator
Dr. Susan Mooney, Physician & Parent
Sean List, Attorney-At-Law, Backus, Myers & Branch
Mike Correa, Insurance, McCrillis & Eldredge
Christy Whipple, Head of School & Educator