



WICHITA MONTESSORI
SCHOOL

REOPENING HANDBOOK

2020-2021



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Greetings from the Head of School

It is a great honor and privilege to guide you through this journey. I have had many leadership opportunities throughout my life, but nothing will compare to what we are currently experiencing. I am grateful to work with such a dedicated team of teachers and staff. Please know that maintaining a safe and healthy learning environment while providing high-quality education is our top priority.

- - - Sarah Walden



Wichita Montessori School has been diligently monitoring developments related to COVID 19. We are following up with guidelines from the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE), the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), and the Kansas COVID Workgroup for Kids (KCWK). To keep a safe healthy learning environment, the WMS community must work collectively to ensure we are strictly adhering to the guidelines recommended by health care professionals and local state officials.

School Calendar

WMS will open Tuesday, September 8th for all students of all grade levels. As of today, August 11th, we are planning to resume all programs fully on campus. To compensate for the postponed opening date, our school times have been extended. There will not be a staggered start for Primary or Kindergarten.

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8:00 am – 3:05 pm

Drop-off: 8:00 am -8:15 am

Pick-up: 3:05 pm – 3:15 pm

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8:00 am – 11:35 am

Drop-off: 8:00 am – 8:15 am

Pick-up: 11:35 am – 11:45 am

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7:30 am

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3:15 pm – 5:45 pm



Parents, Volunteers & Visitors

We are limiting the number of adults who enter the school building. If a parent would like to meet with a teacher or staff member, it is advised to first attempt a Zoom meeting. If that will not suffice, then a face-to-face meeting will be scheduled. Even though we are grateful for all WMS parent volunteers, it is in the best interest of the children and staff to minimize the number of people entering the school. There may be alternative ways to volunteer other than physically being at school.

If a visitor or parent does enter the building, their temperatures will be checked and they will be asked several screening questions. A logbook with the times of visitors will be written down for contact tracing purposes.

Arrival and Dismissal

Arrival and dismissal procedures will be altered this year to limit exposure. During both arrival and dismissal, your child will be picked up and dropped off from your vehicle. Students will be screened with daily temperature checks and parents will be responsible for filling out a daily Screening Questionnaire.



The parking lot will look different this year. There will be no cars parked alongside the school building. Parents will not park their cars during drop off or pick up; there will be a car line that needs to be followed. Please enter the parking lot at the east end, turn right immediately, heading down the hill (parallel to Douglas Ave) where you will see a teacher stationed to greet your child. Form a single line and remain in your vehicle. Students of all grade levels regardless of pick up time will be greeted in the same way. á

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ô That route is now intended for only The Independent School faculty and families. As you follow the flow of WMS cars, you will be asked to pull up, and a teacher wearing the proper PPE will come to your car window and take your child's temperature. Please keep your child in your car until they have been given the clearance to enter the school building, and we ask that parents remain in the car unless the child needs assistance.

At this point, depending on the child's age, a teacher might escort them to the designated entrance door and to their classroom where another teacher will be waiting for them. We will have three separate entrances for specific cohorts. The 3rd, 4th, and 5th year students will enter from the TIS Business entrance, the Primary and Kindergarteners will enter from the Kindergarten entrance, and the 1st and 2nd year students will enter from the Lower School's back entrance. (Note: It hasn't yet been finalized whether the 3rd year classroom will be upstairs with Upper Elementary or downstairs with Lower Elementary. Depending on where their classrooms are will determine which entrance door they will use). An instructional video of arrival and dismissal will be made available before the first day of school. Early arrival will still be offered at 7:30 am for Kindergarten and Elementary students. Please arrange in advance with our office if you will use this service. Details regarding drop off procedures for early arrival will be specified in our "Back to School" packet.

If you arrive late during school for drop-off and don't see any teachers out to greet your child, please call our office, 316-686-7265, and one of the staff members will come to greet your child with the same screening procedures. If you anticipate you will be late for pick-up please contact the office.

Screening:



We ask that all parents sign the Covid19 Acknowledgment and Disclosure which agrees to support the WMS safety and health protocols and agrees to keep their children home in case they have COVID-like symptoms. This document will be sent out with the back to school packed and must be submitted before the first day of school along with the other medical record.

We must screen every person entering the building as long as the pandemic remains a viable threat to the safety and well being of our students and teachers. For students to be allowed to enter the school temperatures must not exceed 100 F.

Covid-19 Student Screening Questionnaire

1. Within the last 14 days has your child been diagnosed with COVID-19?
2. Does your child live in the same household with, or have had close contact with someone who in the past 14 days has been in isolation for COVID-19? Close contact is less than 6 feet for 10 minutes or more.
3. Has your child had any one or more of these symptoms today or within the past 24 hours? Fever (100 F), cough, shortness of breath, chills, muscle ache, loss of taste or smell, vomiting, or diarrhea?
4. Has your child taken any fever-reducing medication within the past 24 hours?
5. In the last 14 days have you traveled internationally or to a U.S. city or state that is on a coronavirus quarantine travel advisory?



If you have answered for any of these questions in order to protect the other students and staff, your child will not be permitted to enter the facility.

Students, faculty, and staff will be screened daily, and are the only adults permitted to enter the building without prior arrangements.

WMS is still working on the specifics of how this survey will be accessible to parents. We are planning on having these questions available to parents via an app for them to complete at home each morning. More information will be revealed as soon as the details are finalized.

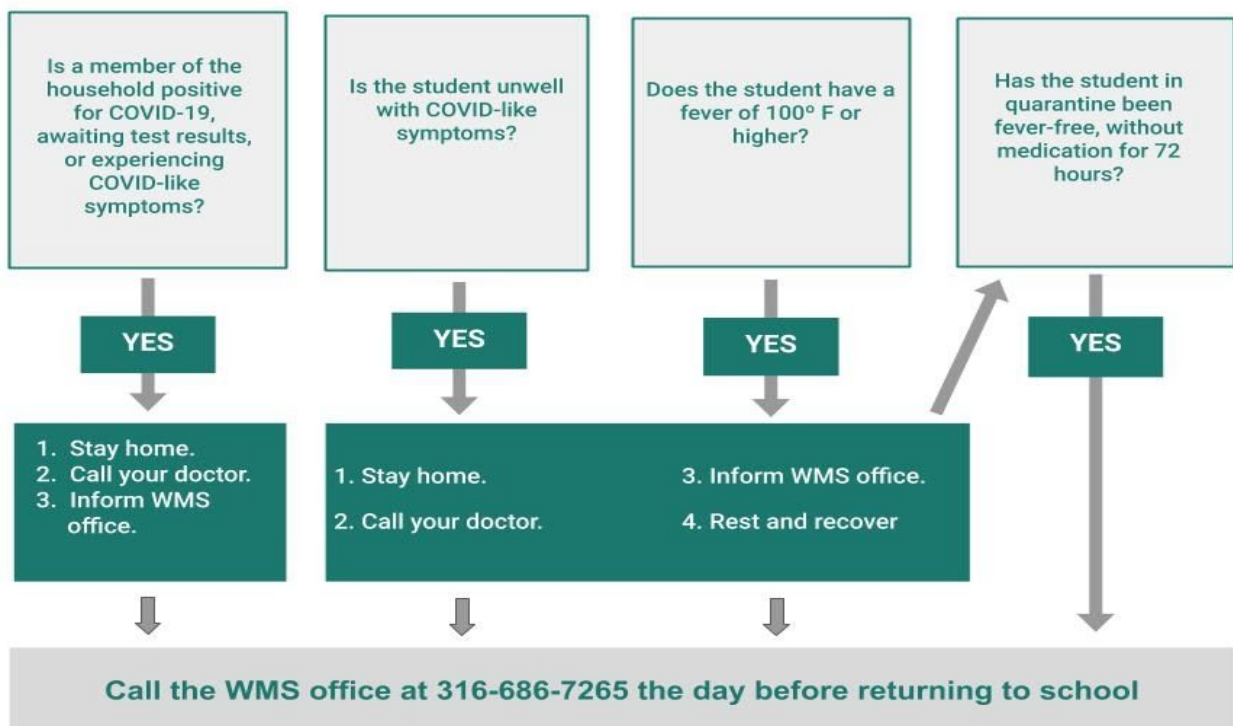
Exposure:

If a member of the Wichita Montessori School community becomes aware of exposure to a positive case of COVID-19 they should notify our school office. If the school becomes aware that a COVID-19 positive individual has been on our campus, we will immediately inform all faculty, staff, students, and families that may have been directly exposed to the individual. Depending on the level of exposure, a confirmed case of COVID-19 could mean that a whole cohort will be asked to quarantine for two weeks.

WMS will immediately notify the local health department and our local licensing surveyor if a student or staff member in our school has tested positive. The local health department will help determine a course of action for the facility. In the event a child becomes ill during the school day, we are providing a quarantine zone. This area will be near the office for supervision but away from other students. Parents will receive a call to pick up their children promptly.

Quarantine:

Deciding When to Stay Home



Covid-Positive Students and Employees

Students, faculty and staff who test positive for COVID-19 must be isolated. All COVID- positive cases must spend a **minimum** of 10 days in isolation. Persons should not be released until they feel well and have no fever (without fever-reducing medication) for at least 72 hours. *Note: A lingering cough should not prevent a case from being released from isolation.*

A case that is fever free and feeling well on day 2 may be released from quarantine on day 10.

A case that is fever free and feeling well on day 6 may be released from quarantine on day 10.

A case that is fever free and feeling well on day 14 may be released from quarantine on day 17.

Household Contacts:

Students, faculty and staff exposed to a COVID-positive case outside their own household must quarantine for 14 days **after** the person who tested positive is fever free and feeling well. *This means that household contacts may need to stay home longer than the initial case. This is because exposure is considered ongoing within the house.*

A case is well 3 days after onset. Case is released from isolation on day 10. Household contact must remain quarantine until day 24.

A case is well 7 days after onset. Case is released from isolation on day 10. Household contact must remain quarantined until day 24.

A case is well 14 days after onset. Case is released from isolation on day 17. Household contact must remain quarantined until day 31.

Exposure Outside the Home

Students, faculty and staff exposed to a COVID-positive case outside their own household must quarantine for 14 days. Exposure is defined as being within 6 feet of the case for 10 minutes or more, or exposure to secretions like coughing or sneezing.

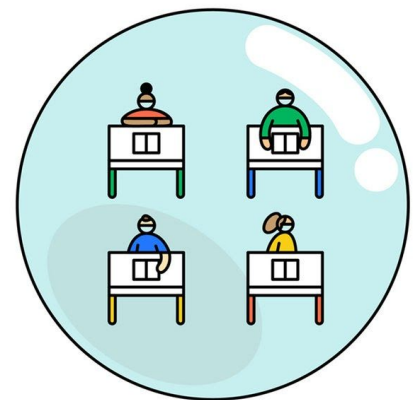
Quarantine 14 days after COVID-positive exposures outside of the household.

Physical Distancing:

The transmission of COVID-19 is primarily through respiratory droplets by persons in close proximity. Physical distance, or social distancing, is one method for mitigating risk. The standard measure for social distancing has been 6 ft. Students and teachers will try to maintain a social distance of 6 ft. when feasible.

Classrooms will be arranged to maximize the space between the students. Desks will be 6 ft apart when there is enough room for that. All desks will be facing the same direction. The teacher's desk will be placed at least 6 ft. from the students.

We will be navigating traffic patterns in some places to limit crossovers. Decals will be placed in hallways to guide the students for proper physical distancing. Students will be given designated times to go to the restrooms and if applicable to the lockers.



Face Coverings:

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Masks are recommended but not required for our youngest students. Whether your child wears a mask during class time in their cohort or not, we are asking ALL students to bring clean masks every day, as masks will be required when students are transitioning outside of their classroom (ie. to music).



Parents may choose to send their children to school wearing masks all day when not social distancing, eating lunch, PE, or outdoors. This is a difficult age to expect all day mask-wearing, but the teachers will give frequent reminders and help as much as possible. All classes will be taking frequent breathing breaks outside as much as possible.

A sick student will be required to wear a mask while they are waiting for their parents to pick them up, this includes Primary and Kindergarten students.

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- Masks will be required for all students in Elementary (1st – 5th year) when social distancing is not possible.
- Students may remove masks if they are distanced by 6ft or more.
- Students will not be required to wear their masks if they are at recess outside, PE, or lunch.

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- Staff and teachers will be wearing masks throughout the day.
- There may be times when a teacher will wear a face shield for example when teaching phonics or languages.
- “We must balance the risk of viral transmission with the ability to provide quality education to all children in the state of Kansas, which is also important for each student’s long-term health and well-being” (KCWK).

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- All parents and visitors will be required to wear a mask in the school at all times.

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- The CDC does not recommend the use of face shields as a substitute for a mask as there is not enough evidence to suggest that it is as effective as the mask.

- There are instances however where a face shield may be used such as during a class where phonics or languages are taught. Kindergarteners and Primary may also use face shields when they have their one-on-one lessons with their teachers.



Masks are not required for persons with a medical health condition, mental health condition, or disability that prevents wearing a mask. Proof of medical exemption from your healthcare provider will be required.

Teachers will guide students on proper mask-wearing and age-appropriate signage will be displayed throughout the school to guide children on how to wear their masks correctly.

Cohorts:

We are limiting the number of students who are exposed to one another by using “cohorts.” The usage of cohorts was recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and the American Academy of Pediatrics to minimize the crossovers among students. The breakdown of cohorts will be as follows:

- Primary
- Kindergarten
- 1st and 2nd
- *3rd, 4th, and 5th

*Enrollment will determine whether 3rd year will be in Lower or Upper Elementary

These cohorts will be together for some of their specials, which would include PE, music, art, science, and recess. The required safety drills are still mandatory and we will be practicing them by cohorts.



Specials and Outdoor Usage:

All specials (music, art, and PE) will be utilizing outdoor classrooms as much as possible. Outdoor transmission of the virus is known to be much lower than indoor transmission. If the weather doesn't permit outdoor classrooms, music will be adapted to where students will not be singing. Vocal music will only be taught outdoors, as it is considered to be a high-risk form of aerosol transmission.

Lunch and Snacks:



WMS will no longer offer snacks for Primary or Kindergarten students as we did in previous years. This year we ask parents to bring in pre-packed snacks for their children. Lower and upper elementary students will bring in snacks as they have every year.

We are encouraging parents to send their child's lunch in disposable lunch bags. If parents would prefer to send a lunch box, we ask that it is disinfected daily. Students will be eating lunch at their desks in their classrooms.

This year The Independent School is not offering hot lunches. We will not have that option for our students. Also, Pizza Lunch has been suspended this semester. We will reevaluate the situation at the end of the semester.

After School Care:

For now, we are still invited to join Panther Care at The Independent School. Panther Care provides after school care for those parents of elementary-aged children. Montessori students will not be in their own pods. They will be grouped according to grade level. We are considering an After School Program at Montessori for 1st through 5th-year students to limit outside exposure. If this is something you are interested in, please contact the office.

For Primary and Kindergarten students, WMS offers our own After School Program which is run from our building and provides care until 5:45 pm. We will be offering this service to The Independent student of the same age group as we have in previous years. They will not be grouped with WMS students, they will be in their pod.

Hygiene Protocol:

Due to the COVID 19, KDHE has suspended the practice of toothbrushing in childcare facilities. Toothbrushing ability varies by age and number of children in care, and the risk of contracting the virus will outweigh the benefits. We will not require toothbrushing for Primary and Kindergarten students this year.

Hand Washing Procedures

- Children will be asked to wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or use a hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
- They will wash their hands frequently during the day.
- If students cough or sneeze into their hands, they will be asked to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer.
- Hands should be washed before and after they eat, after they return from outside, and whenever they touch their face.
- There will be a hygiene station in each classroom.
- No-touch soap and paper towel dispensers are being installed in the bathrooms and classrooms.

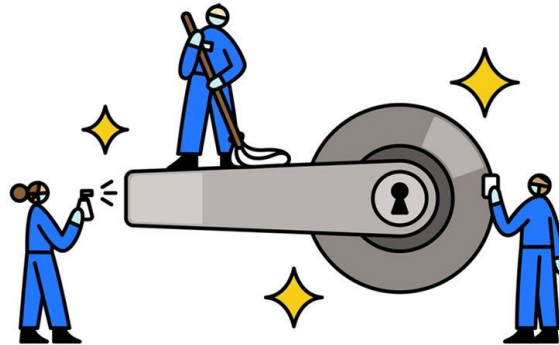


Age-appropriate signage will be displayed throughout the school to promote proper hand hygiene.

We are going to limit the sharing of supplies as much as possible. Many students will be provided with their own sets of materials. A back to school meeting via Zoom and will be scheduled to go more in-depth on how each classroom will be handling hygiene, supplies, and social distancing.

Sanitizing and Disinfecting Procedures:

The WMS maintenance staff will continue to sanitize all high-touch items on campus daily. Our cleaning and disinfecting routines will be intensified. High-touch items include items such as doorknobs, light switches, handrails, electronic devices, countertops, desks, chairs, and cubbies. Our maintenance staff will clean after 6:00 pm. All areas of the building will be disinfected using an electrostatic sprayer three times a week. HVAC filters will be changed more frequently. UV-C sanitizing lights are being installed in our HVAC system.



Additionally, faculty and staff will be provided with cleaning products to manage individual spaces during the school day. Cleaning products used during school hours will be practiced in a safe routine to ensure the protection of all children in the school.

- No-touch soap and paper towel dispensers are being installed in the bathrooms and classrooms.
- Water fountains will be disabled for direct drinking. Instead, the bottle filler option will be enabled. We are adding water bottle fill stations in Primary and Upper Elementary. We do encourage students to bring their own refillable water bottles from home. Water bottles must be taken home and cleaned daily.

Distance Learning:

How does WMS decide to close the campus? As a private, independent school, WMS is able to make decisions about campus closures independent of local public schools, unless specified by state or federal government. When considering the appropriate time to implement distance learning, WMS will utilize information provided by the organizations listed above. The safety of our staff and students is our top priority.

WMS understands the importance of being prepared for the possibility that one student, one class, or the entire school may need to move to distance learning in the event of a pandemic related illness, on-campus exposure, or a state-wide mandate. Last spring when COVID-19 shocked us all and ripped us from our normalcy, WMS faculty worked endlessly to continue to offer an excellent education in an online platform for all students. We did the best we could with the lack of time we had. Even though it was not a perfect platform, it was positively received by many WMS parents and students. We were told by parents that our distance learning platform was of high caliber. This time around we are more prepared for a similar scenario, even though we don't wish for it. In-person teaching is a more effective method of teaching children than online, especially when teaching the Montessori method.

Distance Learning During a Quarantine:

We have decided to offer only in-person teaching when there is no mandate for us to close. We will not be offering parents a choice between in-person or remote learning if our school is running in the building. In the case where a child becomes ill with Covid-19 or is exposed to it and will need to quarantine, we will be offering the child a combination of Zoom classes and assignments if they are well enough to participate. These Zoom classes will not be one-on-one classes. They will be live-streaming with their in-school classmates during school hours.



Training Staff and Students:

Faculty and staff will receive professional training by our Maintenance Director on hygiene and cleaning procedures before the beginning of the school year. All students will receive training during the first week of school. The students will receive proper hand hygiene guidance that is consistent with their age. “Peace zones” will be created for children to go relax and unwind. There will be discussions with their teachers on emotional and social topics to keep them feeling safe. We want to eliminate any stigmas on the virus and help the students feel comfortable during this unstable situation.

How WMS Parents Can Help “Stop the Spread in Children” Suggestions From the CDC

- Clean hands often, using soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid being around people who are sick.
- Keep a distance between your children and other people.
- Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces daily in your households, such as tables, hard-backed chairs, doorknobs, light switches, remotes, handles, desks, toilets, and sinks.
- Launder items including plush toys and try to wash all items with warm water.
- Consider postponing visits or trips to see older family members.
- Consider changing your travel plans to reduce the risk of contracting the virus.
- Make sure to practice with your children preventative behaviors such as washing hands.

How WMS parents can approach “Talking to Children” suggestions from the CDC

- Remain calm.
- Reassure children they are safe.
- Make yourself available to listen and to talk.
- Avoid language that might blame others and lead to stigma.

- Pay attention to what your child is reading or watching.

We expect WMS parents to recognize that COVID-19 is an evolving pandemic. We are constantly seeing this monstrous virus take different turns. Health care professionals haven't yet deciphered this virus and therefore their recommended guidelines keep altering. Due to the likelihood of that occurrence, our guidelines may also change. We highly value your feedback and your concerns and welcome your suggestions. There will be a "Back to School" parent meeting for each grade level via Zoom and more details and questions can be discussed here.

We are looking forward to having our students, teachers, and staff back in school together for this new school year. We miss our students and WMS families!

See you on September 8th!

