



# **2020-2021 Reopening and Contingency Plan**

**Sept. 15th, 2020**

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## **1) Introduction**

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Casa di Mir Montessori school has constructed plans for providing strong educational programming for this upcoming fall return to school. This document is intended to offer clarity to our families, students, staff, and board members, and other stakeholders who are invested in the success and progress of our school's mission:

“Our mission is to provide an authentic Montessori education in a nurturing school community. With a strong emphasis on academics, creativity and peace education we provide a learning experience that promotes confidence, individual responsibility and a strong sense of global citizenship.”

During this unprecedented time of pandemic, the school has reassessed our systems, programming, staffing, communications, and health and safety measures to ensure we continue to provide a strong program while addressing this unique moment in history. We have planned for multiple scenarios in order to be able to respond quickly and effectively to a shifting landscape. We know that we must plan for flexibility and be ready to adjust as needed, keeping the health of our community first and foremost in our plans.

While creating these plans, every effort has been made to meet the needs of our diverse population and to honor the varying perspectives and tolerance for risk. In our planning, we've relied on directives from federal, state, and county health departments to inform, guide, and shape these reopening plans. The administrative leadership team has worked tirelessly this summer in planning for the new school year. Faculty have spent their vacation time rearranging furniture to modify their classroom spaces in light of physical distancing mandates. We are tremendously grateful to staff, faculty, parents and board for their support during this challenging time. It is a joy to witness the flexibility, resilience and compassion in our community!

## **2) Guiding Principles**

Using the recommendations from our national, state, and county organizations, Casa di Mir used the following principles to guide the development of these plans:

- a) Communicate information to parents, staff and board in a consistent and timely manner
- b) Minimize the risk of illness for the members of the Casa di Mir community
- c) Comply with all public health directives and guidelines
- d) Work towards equitable opportunities for all of our students
- e) Offer the best Montessori program possible with robust support for all students
- f) Leverage our resources to maximize the safety and education of our community members
- g) Ensure the continuity of the school's mission

### **3) Program Scenarios-**

The school has laid out policies and procedures for the following scenarios for the 20-21 academic year:

A) **Distance Learning-** On-Site Classrooms are closed

B) **Modified Program-** Combination of Hybrid (On-site/ Off-Site), Full-time On-site and Distance Learning with on-site students organized in small pods

With the dynamic status of the virus, the school will keep a close eye on developments in our local community, and in particular, in Santa Clara County. Because of the shifting status of COVID-19 locally, the school may decide, on the advice of public health officials, to shift between Distance Learning and Modified Programming until we can resume a full return to normalcy. Casa will ensure continuity of education through our Distance Learning program, via online classes and meetings, as described in the Instructional Programming section. In addition to a mandate to Shelter-In-Place, several other factors must be considered when deciding to close campus, and shift to Distance Learning:

1. Closure of all schools in Santa Clara County
2. Faculty willingness to teach on-site (tolerance for risk)
3. Demand for distance learning exceeds demand for on-site learning
6. Illness in staff or community

The academic year will start on Aug. 31. All Levels from Kindergarten through 8th Year will start as Distance Learning programs, while the Preschool pods (non-Kinder pods) will begin the year with a Modified Program, on-site. Casa di Mir has built a system designed for flexibility. These Modified Programs – small groups (pods), new classroom configurations, added safety measures, and intensified cleaning and sanitization efforts - allow us to shift from Distance Learning to on-site education (Modified Programs) as soon as we are able.

Distance Learning for K-8 will continue through Oct. 2nd. During that time, we will monitor public health data in order to make the decision to either roll into our Modified Program on-site or to continue Distance Learning for another 5 weeks. Our goal is to allow students on campus as soon as feasible. The school has initiated the process of applying for a waiver through Santa Clara County Department of Public Health. If the waiver is granted, it may allow the school to re-open campus regardless of whether Santa Clara County is on the “monitoring list,” though as stated, other considerations must also be included in such a decision.

#### **4) Health and Safety**

Health and Safety protocols have been designed to promote the health and safety of our students, families and staff, which is our top priority. These protocols were developed with the guidance and recommendations from federal and local public health officials, as well as the county office of education. While no school can guarantee the absence of any risk, our school is committed to ensuring that we adhere to the protocols described herein to the fullest extent possible in order to minimize risk.

#### **Campus Access**

##### **A) Distance Learning**

For our Distance Learning programs, students will not be on campus, as all lessons and meetings will occur on-line. Staff and faculty will be allowed and encouraged to be on-site to provide lessons and material preparation. The Front Office will be staffed from 8-4:00. Any adult entering the campuses must complete our Health Screening protocols and follow the school's health and safety practices.

##### **B) Modified Program**

Staff, faculty and small pods of students are able to be on campus according to the modified program plans. All students and adults entering the premises will have a health screening and temperature check and be required to follow health and safety protocols. Entrance to campus will be limited to drop-off and pick-up. Parents/Guardians may not congregate at school and can only enter the school when essential.

## **Health and Safety: Prevention and Mitigation for Modified Program**

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The best way to prevent the Corona Virus from entering the school community is strict adherence to health and safety guidelines from our local and state Public Health Departments and the CDC. In order for our community to maximize our health and safety, the school expects these practices and protocols to be followed.

### **Daily Health Screening:**

Casa will be using a digital application called Health Champion for daily health screening. Parents will be required to complete health screening questions in the app, including recording the child's temperature, each day by 7:50 am. Detailed instructions will be sent to parents and staff. Daily Health Screenings will include the following:

1. Within the last 14 days, have you been diagnosed with COVID-19?
2. Do you live with, or have you been in close contact with, someone who in the past 14 days has tested positive for COVID-19 or been in isolation for COVID-19? (Close contact means less than 6 feet apart for 15 minutes or more)
3. Have you had any of the following symptoms in the last 3 days?
  - a. Fever or chills
  - b. Cough
  - c. Loss of taste or smell
  - d. Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
4. Have you had any of the following symptoms in the past 3 days that cannot be explained for any other reason?
  - a. Fatigue
  - b. Muscle or body aches
  - c. Headache
  - d. Sore throat
  - e. Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
5. Enter temperature into application or temperature will be taken before entering campus by designated staff health screeners.

All staff are to conduct regularly '*visual wellness checks*' throughout the day. These checks include a general overview of a child's health: eye health, tiredness, coughing, mucus, or abnormal fatigue, etc. Any symptom of concern will result in the administration being notified, and executing our illness on-site protocols.

We expect increased communication about the status of allergies during this time. Case by case, we will need to understand the symptoms of allergies and ask for a note from the medical care provider as to how to move forward.

All staff/faculty are currently using our app to report their daily health screening, by 7:50 each morning, Monday through Friday. Even during Distance Learning where remote work occurs off-site, all staff are expected to submit a daily health screening.

Anna Chan is the school's point person for coordinating and supervising health screening of students and staff. She is responsible for tracking and ensuring that daily required screenings are completed, and will communicate with administration as necessary.

### **Physical Distancing/Maintaining Pods:**

Learning physical distancing starts in the home. Casa will partner with parents and continue the learning at school. The Modified Program is based on small pods to limit contact. This plan 1) supports physical distancing, as much as practicable, and 2) supports staff in implementing mitigation and prevention strategies for each age group. These pods will be maintained throughout the day both indoors and outdoors. The number of each Pod was decided based on the available square footage in the environments allowing for manageable physical distancing among faculty and students.

Physical distancing will be encouraged in pods, in the facility and on the playground. Teachers have arranged classrooms for 6'+ distancing of desks and work spaces and have considered the flow of movement through the classroom. Outside play is scheduled for single pod use, and pod-specific equipment is dedicated to each group for outside play. Movement through the halls and bathrooms will be monitored by staff for physical distancing. Staff have displayed signage within the entryways and exits of the classrooms to support physical distancing while transitioning, including red tape on the ground, marking 6 ft. spacing for visual support.

Additional staff have been scheduled to supervise the transitions to and from carlines to encourage physical distancing. The times for drop-off in the am have been extended to create more physical distancing ease.

Students will have an assigned individual work space, cubby and in Elementary and Middle School, a bin to house their materials and belongings.

As part of training, Staff and Faculty held discussions and created understanding around healthy interactions during a time of physical distancing. Considerations and lesson needs were identified for (but not limited to):

How to line up? How to pass someone in the hallway? How to greet someone in the morning? How to wait for someone to leave an area before you enter their space for a material? How to play outside with friends?



All shared spaces, such as Business Offices and Break Rooms (Kitchen, etc.) will have limited capacity of adults allowed at one time. Employees are prohibited from eating in the Break Room, and instead are expected to eat outside when possible, or at their individual work stations.

**Limiting parents and visitors on campus:**

There will only be a limited number of parents and guardians admitted on campus, and only if essential. Adults should not enter campus unless absolutely necessary. If entry is essential, the parent must check in at the Business Office. The parent will stay in the Office while a health screening is completed by a staff member, and the visitor must sign-in (name, purpose, time in/out). The parent must wear a facial covering, and wash their hands outside or use a hand sanitizing station prior to entrance. Such visits will be kept brief and supervised, and physical distancing protocols must be followed. No handshakes, hugs, or physical contact between adults will be allowed.

Visitors or vendors must enter at the Front Office door (Business Office) and undergo a health screening before entering the school building. Visitors and vendors will be limited to only essential business.

**Face Coverings:**

All adults are required to wear face covering while on campus.

Preschool and Kindergarten age children will be encouraged, but not required to wear face coverings in class. Face shields may be worn over a face covering, but when worn alone do not provide adequate protection. Young children (P/K and K) are required to wear face coverings when moving through the building and at drop off, until they enter the classroom.

For Elementary and Middle School pods, facial coverings are required. A clean cloth mask or new disposable mask must be worn each day. Face shields may be worn over a face covering, but when worn alone do not provide adequate protection. Masks will be expected to be worn while on-site, except for the following:

- eating or drinking while in their designated work space
- while outside during recess or other activity, respecting physical distancing practices

Students in grades K-2 may take short breaks from facial masks, under supervision, and the child must stay seated at their workstation, more than 6 ft. away from others. Students in grades 3 - 6 may not remove their face coverings unless they are eating or drinking, or outside and physically more than 6 feet apart from others.

During transitions, such as during drop-off and pick-up, as well as getting to the carline area, all students will be required to wear face masks.

**Community Care Agreements:**

Recognizing that we all have a shared responsibility to protect the community, parents will be asked to sign a 'Community Care Agreement'. This agreement includes responsibilities around minimizing exposure while outside of the school community by avoiding large gatherings. It also emphasizes the parents' role in helping children understand the importance of facial coverings and physical distancing to prepare the child for being on campus.

### **Tracing Contacts:**

Using Health Champion, students and staff will report symptoms, and answer a question as to whether they have been exposed to a person who has tested positive for COVID19. Should the health screening process flag a potential exposure or ill student or employee, Anna Chan will be responsible for activating the school's response system. The student or employee will be required to stay home, and with no fear of reprisal, and the school's protocols, described on pages 13 to 16 will be followed. Additionally, the school will contact Public Health for advice and guidance on next steps.

### **Testing for Staff:**

All school employees will be tested for COVID19 on a regular basis. Each month 50% of all staff and faculty will undergo testing, followed by testing of the remaining 50% the next month. Using this plan for routine screening, all employees will be tested at least every two months.

### **Hygiene Practices:**

*Handwashing-* The science continues to point to the best strategy for prevention of Coronavirus is frequent and effective handwashing. The school has installed additional handwashing stations on campus and hand sanitizer is available in each classroom. Students and staff will be expected to increase the frequency of handwashing throughout the day:

- At arrivals and departures
- After playing outside
- After sharing surfaces or tools
- When using the restroom
- After blowing nose, coughing, and sneezing
- Before and after eating

Routines and training in handwashing for staff and students will be reviewed regularly, using a process that eliminates or minimizes touching surfaces.

*Bathroom Use-* will be monitored and metered for physical distancing, handwashing, and almost no-touch use.

#### **Suggested routine for limited touching while washing hands:**

- Use your arm to turn the lever and rinse your hands
- Use your arm to turn the lever off
- Apply/take soap and suds up while singing Happy Birthday
- Use your arm to turn the water on to rinse (Singing Happy Birthday!)
- Turn off with your arm

- Dry hands with a paper towel
- Use a paper towel to open the door
- Upon leaving, toss the towel in the trash

*Sneezing and Coughing-* Children will be taught to use the inside of the elbow or a tissue.

*Clothes-* Each day, the school expects students to arrive on campus with clean clothes; ie. pants and a shirt.

*Eating-* Individual snacks and lunches will be eaten at each child's dedicated and individual work space. The students will be asked to stay seated during this time. When possible, students may be scheduled to eat outside, while practicing physical distancing. There will be no student use of microwaves or refrigerators during the day, and lunches must come with all needed equipment (napkins, placemat, and utensils) ready to eat. Full day students will bring their own additional snacks to sustain them for the longer day. There will be no shared foods or snacks provided by the school, including in the preschool pods.

*Student Materials-* The classroom 'Welcome Letters' will offer a list of individual student supplies that parents are expected to provide their student both for on-site learning and for Distance Learning. On-site learners will need a set for home and a set for school.

*Shared Classroom Materials-* As a Montessori school, teachers and students use hands-on materials. As such, classroom's are limiting the number of materials on shelves. The school has adapted and staffed accordingly to ensure the cleaning and sanitizing of materials in between use. Once a material (ex. The pink tower) is used, the work will be placed on a cart within the classroom, so it can be sanitized between uses.

### **Outdoor Activity:**

Each Program requires different systems and equipment based on the developmental needs of the age. K-8 pods will each have a dedicated collection of equipment assigned to that pod. Equipment will be cleaned regularly. This equipment will be chosen based on the needs of the age group, and likely will involve some degree of sharing within the pod. Therefore, handwashing is critical and students will wash hands before and after recess time. For the preschool age pods, cars and trikes will be allocated to each pod and cleaned between use, as will the high-frequency touch points on the play structures. Use of outdoor space will be staggered.

Lessons and activities will be held outside to the greatest extent possible, with a minimum goal of 10%, conditions permitting. The lower campus (K-3) has limited outdoor space that can be used on a rotating basis. The upper campus (4-6) has more expansive outdoor space, which can be utilized for lessons and classroom discussions.

### **Facilities and Cleaning:**

Frequent cleaning and sanitizing will occur for high-touch areas throughout the day by Casa staff. Such high-touch areas include door handles, keys, bathroom faucets, etc. Professional cleaners, the school's custodial vendors, will clean and sanitize at the end of each day, with particular focus on high-touch areas, desk/table tops. Special emphasis will be given to clean and sanitize prior to the mid-week pod switch.

One of the best ways we can mitigate further spread of germs is to increase our attention on cleaning frequently touched surfaces. The school is staffed to help with such sanitizing and cleaning 3 extra times throughout the day. The professional cleaners will come in daily to do this work, too. This equates to 4 times daily that we're addressing often touched areas, such as these.

- doorknobs
- keys (as appropriate)
- faucet knobs/handles
- sink surfaces
- toilet seats
- toilet handles

The HVAC systems on lower campus have been upgraded with MERV 13 filters, and will allow for high-functioning flow of air. They have the capacity to simply bring in outside air as well. Doors will be open where possible and when it is safe to do so. For upper campus rooms, the facilities are being upgraded from MER8 filters to MERV13.

#### **Cleaners and Disinfectants:**

Staff has received training on how and when to utilize these following solutions. As needed, we'll be using paper towels to wipe down surfaces, and not washable fabrics, such as micro cloths:

*Cleaners* (in spray bottles)-

- Seventh Generation**- All purpose cleaner
- (Option) **Simple Green**- general cleaner

*Sanitizers* (in spray bottles)-

- Hypochlorous Acid**- general disinfectant in a spray bottle
- Pure Green 24**- general disinfectant
- Hydrogen Peroxide**- general sanitizer

All solutions used have been checked to make sure they're approved for use in school environments, as well as cross-referenced against the EPA's list of **Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19)** to ensure their effectiveness in sanitizing.

## **Health and Safety: Response to Illness On-Site or In Community**

The school has developed protocols to respond to the following situations: a child or employee experiences symptoms of COVID-19 at home or at school, tests positive for COVID-19, is exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19, or tests negative for COVID-19. The school has developed these protocols in consultation with the County Department of Public Health and legal counsel specializing in COVID-19.

During this time it is critical for parents to be prepared in case their child(ren) develops symptoms of COVID-19 or tests positive for COVID-19. Parents are strongly advised to make plans for back-up care, if needed, should their child or a family member become ill.

The School will maintain lines of communication with the following entities for ongoing monitoring of COVID-19 in our community and for guidance in case of exposure in the School community.

- California Department of Public Health Care Services 916-440-7548
- Santa Clara Public Health Dept. 408-792-5040
- Santa Clara Community Care Licensing 408-324-2148

### **Protocol for Students/Staff Who Become Ill at Home or at School (Suspected Case):**

- Students or staff members exhibiting one or more symptoms associated with COVID-19 *at home* will be instructed to stay home.
  - Illness must be reported to the front office on Lower Campus and health screening on the Health Champion app should be completed.
  - If a teacher must be absent, a substitute teacher will be assigned to the pod, or the pod may move to distance learning until the teacher is able to return.
- Students or staff members exhibiting one or more symptoms associated with COVID-19 *at school* will be sent home or isolated immediately.
  - Staff members may drive home, or receive assistance with transportation, as necessary.
  - The School will separate the student from others in a designated isolation room/area, direct the student to wear a face covering or medical mask, if feasible, and will notify the student's parent/guardian. Students who are isolated due to illness will be supervised and given food, water (if requested), and comfort.

- A parent or designee must pick the child up no more than 30 minutes after being notified of the child's illness by the school.
- Students who are sent home due to exhibiting symptoms associated with COVID-19 will be provided with extensions to turn in assignments, and will be provided with remote learning academic support.

The School may seek emergency medical attention on behalf of the student or staff member if the COVID-19 symptoms become severe, as indicated by persistent pain or pressure in the chest, confusion, or bluish lips or face.

Testing will be required, as soon as possible, for any student or staff member who develops one or more symptoms of COVID-19. Testing will also be required if a student or staff member is exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. (*Exposure is defined as being less than 6 feet from a person with confirmed COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes.*) Proof of a negative test result will be required **OR** the parent/guardian/staff member may provide a note from a physician giving an explanation for the symptoms and reason for not ordering COVID-19 testing.

Further information about whether the student is safe to be around others per CDC criteria for discontinuing home isolation, which can be found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/end-home-isolation.html>, as it may be amended from time to time.

**If a Student or Staff member tests positive for COVID-19, or there is exposure to a confirmed case of COVID-19:**

**Notification -**

- The parent/staff member must notify school administration immediately if the student, staff member, household member or close contact tests positive.
- The parent/staff member is required to notify School immediately upon learning there has been exposure to a confirmed COVID-19 case.
- The School will notify the County of Santa Clara Public Health Dept. immediately of any positive COVID-19 test result, while maintaining confidentiality as required by state and federal laws. ([coronavirus@phd.sccgov.org](mailto:coronavirus@phd.sccgov.org) & 408-885-4214) The School will follow County Health Department instructions with regard to the closing of one or both campuses.
  - In the event of a campus closure, students will move to the Distance Learning Model temporarily.

- The School will send an exposure notice to the community, maintaining confidentiality as required by state and federal laws.

#### **Response -**

- Close off areas used by any person who is ill, and do not use before cleaning and disinfecting. If possible, wait 24 hours (or as long as possible) before cleaning. Use proper personal protective equipment when cleaning and ensure a correct application of disinfectant.
- The student or staff member's pod will go into quarantine for 14 days, and all of the stable pod will be instructed to get tested about 7 days after last exposure.

If the pod is not required to quarantine, a substitute will be assigned to the pod. If quarantine is required, the pod will transition to Distance Learning.

- Provide information regarding close contacts to the County of Santa Clara Public Health Dept. via secure fax or email.

*Note: No action is needed if a person has not had close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19, but instead has had close contact with persons who were in direct contact.*

#### **Return to Campus (after positive result) -**

- Symptomatic individuals who test positive for COVID-19 can return at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared, AND at least 3 days with no fever AND improvement of other symptoms.
- Asymptomatic individuals who test positive for COVID-19 can return 10 days after their positive result.
- Students' parent/guardian or staff member must complete the Certification for Returning to School/Work after COVID-19 Symptoms, Positive Test Result, or Exposure form prior to returning to School.

#### **Return to Campus (after negative result) -**

- Symptomatic individuals who test negative for COVID-19 may return to School 72 hours (3 days) after resolution of fever and improvement of symptoms.
  - Proof of a negative test result is required **OR**
  - The parent/guardian/staff member may provide a note from a physician giving an explanation for the symptoms and reason for not ordering COVID-19 testing.

- Asymptomatic non-household close contacts to confirmed COVID-19 cases, who test negative at least 7 days after exposure, and remain asymptomatic, can return 14 days after the date of last exposure to the case.
- Asymptomatic household contacts should remain home 14 days after the COVID-19 household member completes their isolation.
- Proof of negative test results must be provided to the school.



## **5) Instructional Programs**

Casa di Mir recognizes the importance of maintaining a strong program during this time, including critical elements of Montessori. In planning the continuation of programs, we have identified the following items as key aspects to sustain during a shift from one program to another (Distance Learning, Modified, or Full Return to Campus).

- Maintain core parts of our curriculum
- Support and maintain the 'prepared environments'
- Foster social-emotional learning among peer groups
- Maintain the relationship between student and teacher
- Collaborate and support families to work with the school and their child
- Continue to inspire the love of learning
- Support students in pursuing and meeting academic goals
- Maintain Montessori philosophy across the learning platforms; ie. developing a child's independence, guiding towards appropriate challenges, and allowing for choice within a child's work
- Maximize inclusion of peers

### **A) Distance Learning**

If the whole school is participating in the Distance Learning model, Casa's campuses will be closed and no Distance Learning students will be on campus. Students will be expected to attend the Distance Learning program. In laying out these guidelines, consideration is given to the balance of needing predictability and structure, as well as making space for the flexibility required to 'follow the child' as is our pedagogical mandate.

Students will be expected to be available for classes scheduled between 9:00 am and 2:00 pm. For each Program Level, the schedule will vary based upon students' developmental readiness. Major tenets to consider when teachers schedule their lessons are: length of attention-span for the age, spreading the lessons appropriately through the day to give screen breaks, opportunities/space for open-ended work period, and additional time for teachers to connect with children as needs arise.

Main/Group Lessons- these core curricular instruction times will be held from 9-2:00 pm.

Check-Ins- these meetings will be held for socio-emotional connections, maintaining strong relationships, connecting with parents, and/or follow-up discussion with an individual child. These Check-Ins will generally be held between 2-4:00 pm.

## Distance Learning Programs-

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### **Full-Time Preschool/Kinder**

Whole Group Activities (may be incorporated with lessons and/or home support):

- Music and Movement
- Mindfulness practice
- Arts/Crafts
- Practical Life
- Read Aloud (daily)
- Group work periods; multiple per week

Whole Group Lessons:

- Cultural (Science, Geography)
- Spanish (PK)- x1 a week

Individual/Small Group Language

- Math

*Kinder-Focused Lessons:*

- Writing
  - Six Traits
  - Journal
- Junior Great Books
- Individual Reading Practice
- Spanish- x1 a week

Check-in (20-30 min., at least once a week; parents can join)

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### **Lower Elementary**

Whole Group Activities (a variety to be incorporated in a given week)

- Mindfulness
- Community Building & Socio-Emotional Skills
  - Spirit days
  - NVC
  - Zones of Regulation
  - Self-regulation
  - Conflict resolution
- Read aloud
- Journal writing
- Group work periods; multiple per week

Group Lessons

- Cultural
- Writing

#### Co-curricular Classes

- Art
- Music
- Spanish

#### Individual/Small Group

- Math & Geometry
- Spelling
- Literature (2nds/3rds)
- Reading (1<sup>st</sup> years)
- Writing feedback
- Skyscrapers - Key Lessons
- Cursive

Check-in (20-30 minutes, at least x1 a week (parent can check in at this time, too))

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### Upper Elementary

Whole Group Activities (a variety to be included in a given week):

- Mindfulness
- Community building & skills (social development work)
  - Spirit days
  - NVC
  - Conflict resolution
  - Games
- Read aloud
- Group work periods

#### Group Lessons

- Cultural
- Math/Geometry
- Writing

#### Co-curricular

- Art
- Music
- Spanish

Individual Check-ins (20-30 minutes, scheduled once every 2-week period; parents may join, if needed)

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#### Follow the Child and Spontaneity

Because the UE children are quite developed in their independence and areas of individual interest, space and time on schedules will be encouraged for spontaneous learning, in the form of:

- Prepared Choice projects (research)
- Book Club
- Group projects
- Individual or small group meetings to follow up on students' spontaneous projects and choices. Throughout the week, such conversations/meetings will be happening to follow up on work, answer questions, meet individual needs.
- Spelling/vocabulary
- Literature

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### **Middle School**

*The first two weeks will have a unique schedule for Digital Boot Camp.*

#### Whole-Group

- Community Meetings
- Social Activities/Games

#### Whole-Group and Small-Group

- Humanities (Social Studies, Literature, Writing)
- Math
- Science
- Life Skills, Production, and Exchange
- Group Projects
- Communal Work Time (Study Hall)

#### Co-Curricular

- Spanish (x2 a week)
- Modified PE
- Elective Packs!

#### Individual Check-ins

- Once a week with each teacher (2 check-ins each week)

Adolescents have a level of independence that allows them to continue with independent/individual follow up work and assignments after class and throughout the week. Adolescents are learning to organize and manage their time and their work appropriately. We use Google Classroom for all assignments and information for our classes. Students will learn how to use Google Classroom and everything else they need to know to make distance learning a success during our Digital Boot Camp the first two weeks of school.

Elective Packs! About every month, students will be able to select an "Elective Pack" to try out a creative self-expressive activity or skill and report back on what they tried, what skills they gained, and what they learned.



## **B) Modified Programs-**

In the Modified Program model, some programs will be attending school on campus. The Modified Program includes a combination of full-time, on-site schedules; hybrid schedules, which are a combination of on-site and off-site learning; and full-time Distance Learning. To follow safety guidelines and allow for physical distancing, the number of children in each classroom, or pod, will be reduced. Pods will be kept from mixing as much as practicable. For more detailed information on the new health and safety protocols, see “Health and Safety, Prevention and Mitigation.”.

### **Preschool 5-Day, On-Site Program**

All Preschool pods attending on-site will include children who are of ‘preschool’ or ‘pre-kinder’ age. (Kindergarteners will have their own classroom space this year.) This instructional program will follow the elements and expectations of our normal Montessori program for this level, with some modification of procedures to follow health and safety protocols. Children who require a nap will nap in their own pod. Sleeping arrangements will meet our licensing requirements of being 3-6 ft. apart, with head to toe configurations.

### **Preschool Hybrid Program**

All Preschool pods on a hybrid schedule will have a combination of on-site and off-site instruction. Students on a hybrid schedule will have 2-3 days on-site, and 1-2 days off-site, depending on their pod schedule. The pod guide on-site will also guide the child’s learning on their days off-site. On-site instruction will focus on maximizing hands-on instruction with Montessori materials, with an emphasis on lessons in core curricular areas. Special attention will also be given to social-emotional learning and connection. Off-site instruction will focus on lessons more easily adapted to online learning platforms:

- Music and movement
- Art/craft
- Practical life lesson/activity
- Read aloud
- Mindfulness practice (incorporated with another lesson time)
- One-to-one check in OR one-to-one lesson (for any student with 2 off-site days)

### **Preschool/Kinder 5-Day Distance Learning Program**

We are able to continue to offer a limited number of students full-time, Distance Learning. The Preschool and Kinder Distance Learning pod will include children in the 3-6 year old age range. A description of this instructional model is included in the Distance Learning Program section.

The Child Care Licensing Program (CCLP), which provides oversight and enforcement of our Preschool Program, allows for up to 12 children in a pod, provided we adhere to the guidelines provided. We will not exceed this number in the Preschool pods.

### **Kindergarten, 5-Day, On-Site Program**

The Kinder pod will include children who are in their Kinder year. This instructional program will follow the elements and expectations of our normal Montessori program for this level, with some modification of procedures to follow health and safety protocols.

Because Kinders have been separated from the preschool students, they do not fall under the purview of the CCLP. The number of children in the Kinder pod is determined by the available space and the ability to adhere to physical distancing protocols and safety measures provided by state and local organizations. (California Department of Public Health, the California Department of Education, and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention)

### **Lower Elementary (Hybrid)-**

The Lower Elementary (LE) pods will receive on-site instruction on Monday-Tuesday, or Thursday-Friday, with an alternating Wednesday on-site. Off-site instruction will occur on the days not on campus, and will be guided by the on-site pod teacher. On-site instruction will follow the elements and expectations of our normal Montessori program for this level, with a focus on maximizing hands-on instruction with materials, core curricular elements, and social-emotional learning. There will be some modification of procedures to allow us to follow health and safety protocols.

Off-site instruction will include selected lessons from each of the following areas:

#### Community building/social skills

- Morning Circle/connection each day
- Practical life activities and guidance (support needed at home)
- Spelling
- Journal writing/sharing
- Read aloud
- Independent research
- Group work time

#### Small Group Lessons

- Art
- Music
- Spanish
- Literature
- Writing

Individual Check-Ins (20 minutes, scheduled once every other week)

### **Upper Elementary On-Site**

These pods will include both mixed age, as well as a single grade level pod, as needed. The Upper Elementary program will follow the elements and expectations of our normal Montessori program for this level, with some modification of procedures to follow health and safety protocols.

**Elementary (LE/UE) Distance Learning**

We are able to offer a limited number of elementary students continued full-time, Distance Learning. The elementary Distance Learning pod may include children from the 6-12 year old age range. The description of this instructional model is included in the Distance Learning Program section. At this plane of development, when social connection is a driving force for children, a concerted effort will be made to support children in meeting the need for connection with their on-site peers.

**Middle School On-Site (Not Available Through the Waiver)**

The Middle School pod will include both 7th and 8th Years. The Middle School program will follow the elements and expectations of our normal Montessori program for this level, with some modification of procedures to follow health and safety protocols.



## **Program Transitions**

Transitions between learning models may be prompted by public health directives, circumstances on campus, or by parent request. As a small private school, we have the ability to be flexible and nimble, which is a real plus in this fluid environment.

### Shift from Modified Program on-site to Distance Learning Program

Due to conditions outlined previously in this document, it may be necessary to close one or both campuses, and shift to Distance Learning. The school may suspend educational services for 3-5 days in order for teachers to handle the logistics involved in making this shift. To the extent possible, the student will remain with the same teacher, regardless of the learning model.

Certain events may trigger closing on-site instruction. Through consultation with our local health officers, the school may shift to Distance Learning based on the number of cases, and the percentage of the teachers/students/staff that are positive for COVID19. At this time, shifting away from on-site instruction may be appropriate when there are multiple cases in multiple pods, or 5% or more of the total teachers/staff/students test positive within a 14-day period.

Parents may request a mid-year change in the learning model for their child. The school will do its best to accommodate, but cannot promise to meet all requests. When transitions or requests for changes occur, the following factors will be considered:

- Teacher-Student Relationships
- Peer relationships
- Academic, social, and emotional needs of the child
- Family schedules
- Staffing and space availability

## **Staffing for Each Program**

### **Distance Learning Staffing**

In the Distance Learning model, student learning will be led by the pod Guide. Co-curricular lessons with the Specialist Teachers will continue.

If allowed by the public health department, the school will maintain regular office hours to ensure that a communication hub is maintained. During any periods of Distance Learning, office hours may be limited to 9am -2pm.

A tech support point person will support parents and staff in troubleshooting any technical issues that arise during distance learning.

### **Modified Program Staffing**

During this unique time, staffing will be adjusted to meet the needs of students and teachers.

**Preschool:** In these pods, the school will maintain a 12 to 1 student/teacher ratio. Assistants are staffed to support the maintenance of health, safety and cleaning protocols.

**Elementary/MS:** Typically, the student/teacher ratio is 15 to 1, or better. The school has created small pods that will remain static and maintain physical distancing. Each pod has a dedicated Guide, and assistants will be tasked with supporting the maintenance of health, safety and cleaning protocols.

**Co-Curricular Specialists:** Spanish, Art, PE and Music will continue, but Aikido is suspended during the pandemic.

### **Illness in any of the Programs:**

If a teacher is ill, whether the pod is on-site or off, one of the following will happen:

- The co-teacher or assistant will act as substitute
- An outside substitute teacher will be assigned
- A member of the admin staff (with teaching experience) will substitute
- If healthy enough, the teacher will guide the pod in distance learning
- Pod will be guided by the teacher typically assigned to all Distance Learners
- Student will engage in independent study with assignments sent home by teacher or designee

## 6) Student and Parent Support/Services

### **Student Support:**

Check-Ins- Check-ins, most often scheduled from 2:00-4:00, will be used for a variety of purposes, but most importantly, to sustain connection, dialogue, and maintain the relationship between Guide (teacher) and student. Especially during a time of remote learning, this connection is critical, and can also be used for parents to connect, as needed. This is one method used to keep in touch with the student's social-emotional state.

Group Work Periods- One critical tenet of a Montessori classroom is the maintenance of an open-ended time, called Work Periods, in which children make independent work choices. Under normal programming, Work Periods often comprise a bulk of classroom time. When shifting into Distance Learning or Modified Programs, we hold that these times are still important to maintain. In order to foster more connection with peers, as well as collaboration, the Programs will offer open-ended work periods where children can work together on their choices, in real-time, in varying frequency through the week.

Spirit Days- Within the Elementary and Middle School programs, there are common days given to encourage community building and classroom culture, often called spirit days. These may include events like crazy-hair day, etc. and will be continued with renewed importance during a return to Distance Learning. Community celebrations help to bring togetherness and joy, and are perhaps even more essential to ease the sense of isolation that children may experience.

Community Activities- Various events, such as celebrations and spirit days, will be scheduled at each level to help create opportunity for connection between and inclusion of pod-mates.

### **Parent Support:**

#### Communications for each program

While each program will necessarily offer different communications about their work during this year, there are various expectations held for regular outreach:

- Student Updates- Focusing on the specific developments of each child at the preschool, kindergarten and elementary levels, these updates will be published 3 times per year, and sent via email.
- Parent/Teacher Conferences- November and March meeting to discuss student progress
- Newsletters- Monthly pod newsletters will be sent via email.
- Office Hours- Some teachers may choose to hold office hours, during which students or

parents may connect for discussion, as needed.

- Montessori At Home- A document entitled “Montessori At Home,” will be distributed during the “Get to Know You Week” of Aug. 24. This guide is intended to help you prepare the environment for your child to succeed as independently as possible, when at home this year.

#### Transition Communications-

As we transition from Distance Learning to Modified Programs, Program/Pod-specific communications will be initiated:

- 1) Newsletter Update (Reminders for what to expect, as we ready for On-Site instruction)
- 2) Back to School Night #2 (a parent event on Zoom; readying for logistical needs of being On-Site)

#### Parent Meetings-

- Parent Orientation
  - School-wide procedures and policies
  - Orientation to program models
  - Tech Talks
- Back-to-School Night
- Community Check-ins, as needed
- Parent Education Nights- 2 per year, with guest speakers on parenting topics
- COVID-19 Updates, as needed- next scheduled on Oct. 1, 2020