

# Montessori Community School

## Virtual Town Hall: Parent Q & A

August 20, 2020

### **Sanitation:**

#### **1. Will the sanitation process be repeated throughout the school year?**

Yes, the classrooms will be sanitized periodically throughout the year when the children are not on campus.

#### **2. How will play structures be cleaned in between uses?**

Play structures will be cleaned between each cohort use using a product called Floquat which can be sprayed on as a mist. Floquat is an EPA approved disinfectant for school use.

### **Health:**

#### **3. What are symptoms of COVID-19?**

Symptoms include, but are not limited to, fever, dry cough, shortness of breath, and diarrhea. Other symptoms may include new loss of taste or smell, sore throat. Parents should consult with their child's pediatrician if any of these symptoms are present.

#### **4. Can children with chronic conditions wear masks?**

All children are required to wear masks throughout the school day. Exceptions include two-year-olds, while eating or drinking, and nap times. Those with chronic conditions, such as asthma, should also wear masks, and will be monitored by their teacher. "Mask breaks" will be offered to all children as needed.

#### **5. Are COVID-19 symptoms different in children than they are in adults?**

COVID-19 symptoms are generally the same for both adults and children. The CDC's list of symptoms is updated as more information is learned. [\(Link here\)](#) There is the rare possibility that children can develop MIS-C (Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children) as a result of COVID-19.

#### **6. What happens if my child is sick?**

Please refer to the Revised Sick Child Policy, which will guide parents' and school's response. The MCS Family Handbook and the Revised Sick Child Policy were sent to families in the fall packet. As always, your child should stay home if they exhibit any signs of illness. Call the MCS Office to inform the school of your child's absence.

### **Mask Wearing:**

#### **7. How will children wear masks all day? How are they expected to keep them on? Will teachers help them (Preschool)? Where will students put their masks when not wearing them (snack, lunch, mask breaks)?**

Children are expected to manage their masks independently. Teachers will remind the children about proper wearing and removal of their masks. Children will be instructed on how to safely take "mask

breaks” in appropriately-distanced areas. If a child forgets their mask, or if the mask becomes soiled, MCS will provide a mask. During snack and lunch times, children are safely distanced so they can remove their masks.

**8. Are face shields as effective as masks? Does the science show that one is preferable (i.e. masks over face shields)?**

Face shields are not an approved substitute for a face mask and may not be worn in place of a face mask. Shields may be worn in addition to a mask if desired by a parent. The child must be able to independently manage both their mask and the shield.

**9. Are masks to be worn outside during playground time/recess/PE?**

Yes. Children may take mask breaks as needed during physical exertion, but must be safely distanced from others. PE and recess will not include physical contact or competitive games.

**10. Will teachers be wearing face shields and masks?**

All staff are required to wear face masks. All teachers have access to face shields and may wear them, in addition to their face masks, when they feel necessary.

**11. If a child in the Cottage turns three within the school year, will they be expected to wear a mask after their birthday?**

When children in the Cottage program turn three, they may wear a mask if their parents desire, and if the child can independently manage their mask.

**12. How can parents prepare their child to wear a mask?**

Children should practice wearing masks at home. Parents can model how to put on and take off a mask. Other tips include having the child participate in the selection of a mask that they like, practice the independent management of their mask, wearing it in a public setting, and even having the family all wear their masks at home for short periods of time.

**13. How often will MCS assess that it is necessary for children to wear masks?**

MCS will follow the current recommendations on health and safety, including mask wearing, from the CDC, DOH, and DHS.

**Exposure:**

**14. What happens if a family has two children at MCS and one of the children is in a classroom that needs to suspend on-campus learning due to exposure? Will the other child or classroom also need to suspend on-campus learning?**

In the event of a positive COVID-19 case among the children, their parents, or the MCS staff, MCS will inform the DOH of the presence of a positive case on campus and will follow their guidance as to classroom closures. It is possible that one or more classrooms will be closed and will transition to distance learning. Families that are directly affected by the closure of the classroom as well as families of the broader school community will be informed about the school’s status.

**15. Are there things that families can do, outside of school, to help keep our MCS community safe?**

The DOH recommends that families remain in their family bubble as much as possible to limit exposure. Families should follow current state guidelines for social gatherings. Just as MCS is taking measures to ensure the safety of our children, staff and families, we hope that members of each MCS household will make a personal commitment and also exercise good judgment to reduce the spread of the virus.

**16. What should families do if a family member has been exposed to COVID and they are waiting to hear test results?**

Follow the Sick Child policy, which is updated to incorporate current CDC and DOH guidelines. If a household member is awaiting test results, please inform the MCS office. In the event of exposure, the child must remain quarantined for 14 days, starting from the last day of infectivity of the COVID-19 positive patient.

**17. What is the procedure when there is a confirmed COVID-19 case (staff, child or household member) at MCS?**

In the event of a positive COVID-19 case among the children, their parents, or the MCS staff, MCS will inform the DOH of the presence of a positive case on campus and will follow their guidance as to classroom closures. It is possible that one or more classrooms will be closed and will transition to distance learning. Families that are directly affected by the closure of the classroom as well as families of the broader school community will be informed about the school's status.

**School Logistics:**

**18. Will all children have outdoor playground time?**

Yes. Outdoor playground time will be staggered by classroom cohorts throughout the day.

**19. Will there be an updated Reopening Plan?**

As the guidelines from CDC, DOH and DHS are updated, MCS will revise their Reopening Plan. The most current version will be posted on our website.

**20. What is the school's philosophy regarding teaching children about how to prevent getting sick from a functional health/wellness perspective versus wearing a mask as a preventative measure?**

Personal hygiene and safety are part of the lessons of Practical Life inherent in the routine Montessori lessons. This year, students will be instructed on the additional steps to be taken to maintain good health, including mask wearing, in the era of COVID-19.

**21. How are Elementary special classes being held this year?**

Elementary specialists, such as Music, Art, computer/coding, and Hawaiian Studies will be held in a block format throughout the year. Each elementary cohort will meet with one specialist for a 4- to 5-week period twice a year. Details about the schedule will be provided by the elementary classroom teachers.

**22. Is After School Care being offered?**

Yes. After School Care is being offered in all programs and is available with prior enrollment. The same school day cohorts will be maintained throughout the afternoons with the After-School Care groupings. Occasional care is not currently available for any of our programs.

**23. Are extracurricular classes being offered?**

Limited extracurricular classes are being offered during the Fall semester. More information is available through the office.

**24. Will children be able to see the classroom in advance of their first day of school?**

Yes. On Wednesday, August 26, all students and parents, both new and returning to MCS, are invited to join a Classroom Orientation, via Zoom, to get acquainted or re-acquainted with their teachers, their classmates, and the classroom environment. Parents will receive a Zoom invitation from their classroom teacher.

**Cohorts/Distancing:**

**25. Approximately how many children are in each cohort? Are cohorts being used in place of smaller class sizes?**

Each classroom is its own cohort, and there will be no cross-deployment of cohorts. Each teacher will be arranging their classroom and creating a rotating classroom schedule to meet distancing guidelines.

**26. Will cohorts remain the same every day? Will teachers rotate between cohorts?**

Each classroom is its own cohort, and there will be no cross-deployment of cohorts. Each cohort consists of the same staff and children every day. Children involved in the After-School Care program will remain with their school day cohort of classmates, but will encounter a new group of teachers in the afternoon.

**27. How will the teachers handle comforting students regarding all of the new social distancing requirements?**

We recognize that some children may feel some anxiety about returning to school. While teachers will not practice some of the typical methods of comfort, such as hugs, they will be especially mindful of and address children. Our classroom teachers will begin the school year by educating the children in their classrooms about COVID-19 and other communicable diseases, differentiating their instruction appropriate to their developmental level. In addition, Kylie Dunn, the School Counselor, will be providing lessons that will support our students' psychological and emotional wellbeing, understanding their own stress, and developing skills for maintaining perspective and balance in their lives. Please contact Kylie Dunn if you have further questions or concerns. Kylie Dunn: [kylie@montessorihawaii.org](mailto:kylie@montessorihawaii.org)

**28. Will six feet distancing be maintained at lunch?**

Yes, safe distancing will be maintained at lunch in all programs, including the Two-Year-Old, Preschool & Kindergarten, and Elementary programs.

**Suspension of On-Campus Learning/Distance Learning:**

**28. How will the school decide to suspend on-campus learning in a classroom or the entire school? Are MCS status levels only dependent on what happens on campus or does it also consider what is happening in the community?**

MCS has created a color-coded status system based on what is happening both in the wider community and events on the school campus to determine the school's activity level and operations. The Board of Trustees and Head of School will determine the current status by following the guidance of government mandates based on what is happening within the MCS community and the State of Hawaii. Please see the MCS Reopening Plan 2020-2021, which is available on the school website, for more details.

**29. Will any programs remain open for parents who are essential workers, if the rest of the school closes?**

At present, only the Two-Year-Old Program will be an on-campus program. The Preschool & Kindergarten and Elementary Programs will begin the year off-campus in Distance Learning mode. There is no plan at this time to offer a separate on-campus program for essential workers.

**30. What is the school's ability to offer on-campus and distance learning at the same time?**

The school will not be offering on-campus and distance learning concurrently at this time.

**31. What are the plans for distance learning, if necessary? (Schedule, method, materials, packets)**

The MCS Distance Learning Plan 2020-2021 will provide an overview and will be shared with families prior to the first day of Distance Learning. Each classroom teacher will provide specific details, including a Zoom link, daily schedules, method, materials, etc.

**32. Are teachers already prepared for distance learning?**

Yes, an Academic Committee has been meeting on a regular basis to plan for the event of Distance Learning should it be necessary. The Committee has reviewed the Distance Learning Plan from Spring 2020 and the results and feedback from parent surveys were incorporated to create a more robust learning plan.

**33. Will a child at home, either sick or due to exposure, be able to join their class via Zoom?**

Yes, if a whole class is in Distance Learning (DL) due to exposure or illness, all children in that class will be included in the Zoom group. If the school or classroom has returned to on-campus learning, there will be no Distance Learning provided for individual students.

**Mental Health:**

**34. Are there resources for children who may be suffering from fears or anxiety?**

Our School Counselor, Kylie Dunn, is available to provide support to our students and families. The following organizations provide resources that may also be of help:

AACAP - American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

AAP - American Academy of Pediatrics

APA - American Psychiatric Association