

In turning our attention to the 2021-22 school year, we want to inform you of necessary precautions we are taking to ensure the safety and health of our community. The measures we are taking will be continually reassessed as time progresses, and we assure you they will be in accordance with CDC and IDPH recommendations, as well as government mandates. We will communicate these changes to you as soon as we adopt them.

We are so grateful for our community's flexibility and resilience. Your support allowed us to open successfully and safely last year, and we are optimistic about the upcoming months. As always, we are prioritizing the health and safety of our staff and students and your children's developmental needs.

Vaccination and Covid Testing

We highly recommend that all parents, teachers, staff, and eligible children be vaccinated as soon as possible. Vaccination continues to be the best means of keeping our community safe and getting through to the end of the pandemic. Currently, we are not mandating vaccines for anyone, but our decision will be revisited as more information and updates become available. We do not expect to require Covid vaccines for our students, but again this decision is subject to government mandate (and as with all vaccines, there are always exceptions for medical and religious reasons).

An individual's vaccination status is private. Our goal is to keep everyone safe and healthy to the best of our abilities, and weekly Covid testing of any faculty and staff members who are not vaccinated is required. Currently, there are no plans to test students on a regular basis.

Masks, Hand Washing, and Social Distancing

According to a recent government mandate, all adults and children over the age of 2, regardless of vaccination status, must wear masks when inside. Please send your child with two extra masks to keep at school. At this time, we can be unmasked when out of doors. If you would like your child to continue to wear a mask when outside, please call our office, and we will share that information with your child's teacher.

We will continue to follow recommendations for handwashing and cleaning of high-touch surfaces.

Social distancing is now defined as three feet. Children and adults will maintain this space between them in the building, as well as outdoors.

Illness Policies

We will be following [IDPH school illness guidance](#) as we did last year. Currently symptoms of Covid include: ***Fever (100.4 or higher), new onset of moderate to severe headache, shortness of breath, new cough, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, new loss of sense of taste or smell, fatigue from unknown cause, muscle or body aches from unknown cause.***

If your child has any of these symptoms, there are currently three options for them to return to school:

1. Get tested, provide a negative test result, and return to school when symptoms are resolved, and child is fever-free unmedicated for 24 hours
2. Get a doctor's note with an alternative diagnosis and return to school when symptoms are resolved, and child is fever-free unmedicated for 24 hours
3. Stay home for 10 days, and child is fever-free unmedicated for 24 hours

Please notify the office of any Covid test results as soon as possible. If your child was absent from school due to illness, please call the school office to speak to the school nurse before returning to school.

We will not be requiring you to submit a daily health screening at the start of the year, although we do ask that you as parents screen for symptoms, including temperature, at home each morning. If anyone begins to feel unwell while at school, he or she will be required to go home immediately. Even with a negative Covid test, we do not want anything that may be contagious circulating in our school buildings. We need to be able to continue in-person throughout the year, as that has shown itself to be the greatest gift for all of us.

If your child has any symptoms of illness not included on the list, please keep them home until they have been symptom-free and fever-free unmedicated for 24 hours.

Quarantine/Closing of Classes/Close Contacts

If someone in a classroom tests positive for Covid, we will follow IDPH guidelines ([IDPH school guidance FAQ](#)) to determine if close contact occurred and quarantine is necessary. If a classroom has to close temporarily because of exposure, you will be notified immediately. Of course, we hope this will not happen, but if it does, it will not be longer than a period of two weeks, and during this time we will shift to remote learning.

If your child was exposed to someone with Covid outside of school, please notify the office immediately, and depending on the details of the exposure and the individual's vaccination status, we will determine the correct course of action in accordance with IDPH recommendations.

Arrival and Dismissal

For the time being, all children will be dropped off and picked up at their classroom's outside patio door. Please walk your Young Children's Community and Primary children to their classrooms. Elementary and Secondary Level children will walk themselves to their classrooms and will be picked up at the school parking lot entrance at dismissal time. Parents will be allowed in the building, wearing a mask. Please do not congregate inside the building or outside on school walkways, to facilitate social distancing during drop-off and pick-up times.

Water, Refreshment, and Lunch

As we did last year, we will continue to ask each child to bring their own water bottle and refreshment. For those staying for lunch, we ask that they bring it in a basket as they did last year, with placemat, napkin, plate, cup, and silverware (when needed). We will be eating outside as often as possible, weather permitting.

Outdoor Spaces

As mentioned before, masks are not required out of doors. We will be encouraging outdoor work for the children, as well as eating outside on our well-designed patio spaces. Additionally, a new Elementary patio has been built to create extra space for the children to work and eat outside their classroom.

Looking Forward

As we come together as a community, we must once again show each other kindness and compassion. Respectful communication allows us to learn from one another and align our interests for the needs of your children. Please do not hesitate to call the office with your questions or concerns. We are always open for discussion.

This year will bring new challenges, as well as new reasons for hope and joy. Our school continues to be a respite and a source of inspiration and learning, for your children and for us during this time. Our students are free to learn, explore, socialize, and grow. As adults, we best serve our children by accepting the reality of the world's condition, while also sharing our confidence and hope for a radiant future. Let's remember how fortunate we are to be able to come together again as a community. We will get through this and be stronger for it!

"The child is endowed with unknown powers, which can guide us to a radiant future. If what we really want is a new world, then education must take as its aim the development of these hidden possibilities." ~Dr. Maria Montessori