

Cedars Montessori School

Operating Plan Fall 2020

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to this new day in Montessori education where, activated by a world pandemic, we are called to be adaptive utilizing the Montessori method. This operating plan is a consolidation of the many developing resources for schools to assist you in returning to school under new conditions while continuing to offer adults and children a safe and vibrant Montessori learning experience.

This operating plan presumes that there will be at least a few weeks, maybe longer where we will be called to work both remotely and within the prepared environment of the school. It lays out the essential considerations for navigating this new approach without compromising our method and while continuing to value and support all members of our community.

One of the cohering elements of this plan is a shared curriculum. Having the guides, staff and families on the same page while students move fluidly between home and school is an assumed aspect of the success of this plan. This will accommodate long term planning that will ensure student growth within this new way of learning. When distance learning began in the spring it was something schools did in reaction to school closures and as a result, grew from everyone's best thinking in the moment. This meant that the goal was survival and maintenance of learner's skills. Now it is time to build a new plan that will be weatherproof as we enter the fall and allow for proactive considerations that will allow growth and development of learners' skills and abilities, honoring their whole selves.

CALENDAR & OPERATIONS

Opening Date

The 2020-2021 school year will begin as planned on Monday, August 24. Orientation information, parent night schedules will be announced early August.

This plan/document is reflective of the current conditions and it presents our plans accordingly for the 2020-2021 school year. As the start of school approaches, we know there will be adaptations to this plan, and we will keep you informed every step of the way. In order to reopen, Cedars Montessori School (CMS) is assessing information, acting decisively, and developing guidelines and procedures in service of our community.

If we are permitted to be open and can be on campus, we will be on campus. Our decision-making will be informed by local authorities, state authorities, and the CDC.

Our planning is based on information from the following sources:

- Austin Public Health & City of Austin
- Texas Education Agency
- Texas Department Health and Human Services Family and Protective Services
- Center for Disease Control
- World Health Organization

RISK REDUCTION

We are developing procedures to reduce risk wherever possible as we plan to return to our campuses. Cedars will complete a deep clean of all spaces before employees and students return, and will increase the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting once we return, with a particular focus on high-touch and high-traffic areas. Signage will be posted in common areas reminding individuals of health protocols (hand-washing, covering your cough, etc.). Increased access to hand sanitizer and hand-washing stations will be available throughout the campuses. All individuals will be expected to engage in social distancing whenever possible.

DAILY PRACTICES

One of the most significant considerations for this time is the health and safety of the community. There are five common daily practices of a safe return to serve as a guideline for your school.

Five Daily Practices of return:

- S**creening each day
- T**ogether we can do it
- A**lways have a face covering
- N**ecessary hygiene
- D**istancing

These spell STAND reminding us that if we hold these elements in mind for everyone in our community they will keep us standing. We must stand together.

SCREENING EACH DAY

In the past, it was not uncommon for adults to come to work at school sick or for children to arrive at school sick. Runny noses and mild coughs were par for the course in a typical school day with someone always nursing a cold or recovering from something. In this new day, we can no longer come to school sick. There must be a screening process that all employees and families complete each day.

The screening asks these simple questions:

- Do you or anyone in your household have a fever?
- Do you or anyone in your household have a cough?
- Do you or anyone in your household have a sore throat?
- Do you or anyone in your household have shortness of breath?
- Do you or anyone in your household have loss of taste or smell?
- Do you or anyone in your household have nasal congestion or a runny nose?
- Do you or anyone in your household have diarrhea or nausea?

[Staying home when sick](#) is a new responsibility to your community.

Another element of screening each day is at drop off. This will significantly slow both our arrival process and the rate of infection. The key is to plan for it. We are increasing our arrival window as needed allowing for a longer time for children to arrive at school in order for everyone to follow the screening procedures. We are assigning more adults to welcome children. Teachers will be in the classrooms greeting children while administrative staff will be doing arrival.

TOGETHER WE CAN DO IT

Our community must be fully informed and on the same page for this to work. It will be important to maintain a strong communication plan and both staff and families be in agreement in regards to the changes. We are creating a school culture that revolves around the needs of others in addition to oneself and it will mean that it will be more natural to stay home when anyone isn't well or we need to issue a reminder about using your mask. And there will be aspects of this new world that we will need to figure out as we go. Our strong school culture will support a nimble shift or an added element that will make the reentry smoother or more in line with our method. We all need to learn this together.

ALMWAYS HAVE A FACE COVERING

Everyone ages 3 and over entering the school building must have a [face covering](#) that fits over the mouth and nose and stays on without the use of hands. Face coverings should be washed at the end of each day and so people will want to own multiple masks to avoid doing laundry daily.

We will have clean disposable masks available in each classroom, should your child forget theirs.

We understand children may not be able to tolerate wearing a mask for long periods of time. We are offering accommodations to allow for mask breaks, including:

- A one-person mask-free area of the outdoor classroom that children may take turns using. There's a timer and a clorox wipe to clean the area after use.

NCESSARY HYGIENE

Hand washing is our strongest defense to the spread of illness and requires at least 20 seconds with soap. We will post pictures and diagrams for children to follow.

We are ensuring there is proper access to hand washing for all students and adults as well as hand sanitizer in all areas without a sink. Children will be taught how to manage their personal hygiene under these new conditions.

DISTANCING

At Cedars due to the ability to work indoors and outdoors (porches, etc) with consistent reminders everyone will adapt. We will be providing measurement lessons to understand “six feet” that will help children to support and practice social distancing.

CLASSROOM CONSIDERATIONS

- Space: Classrooms will be organized to accommodate 20 children at a time. In addition to arranging the room to allow for adequate distancing, we will have a mask-free area for key children to work in as a way to provide sensory relief. In addition, snack will now be a one-person activity since masks will be off in that area as well. It will be important to have individually packaged snacks that do not require utensils such as cheese sticks and pretzels so there is a lower risk of cross-contamination as well as a clear cleaning protocol between each student.
-Routines and Transitions: The following will be planned in advance and communicated to the children on their first day back:
 - Arrival routine
 - Snack
 - Getting assistance
 - Working together
 - Lunch
 - Silent reading
 - Dismissal
- Cleaning: Though cleaning has always been an important element of the Montessori classroom now it will need to be even more so a shared responsibility between the adults and children.
 - Primary: We will designate a table or shelf in the classroom where children place materials after use for cleaning. Adults will disinfect and return to shelf for a new learner to use.
 - Elementary: Following the use of a material each user follows the modeled way of cleaning the material prior to returning it to the shelf.
- Supplies: Rather than a supply shelf where children go to collect what they need in order to complete their work (paper, rulers, colored pencils etc.) everyone now has their own individual supplies (more information on supplies will be sent out the second week of August.):
 - Pencil box: pencils, hand sharpener, colored pencils, ruler, scissors, glue stick
 - Binder of paper or notebooks

TEMPERATURE CHECKS

All students will have their temperatures checked by a trained staff member upon arrival at school. If your child is sick, including exhibiting symptoms such as fever, cough, aches, diarrhea, etc. please keep them home. Any student who has a temperature of 99.6° or higher will not be permitted to attend school. Additional health screening questions may be asked of

each person upon arrival to campus. **Students who experience regular recurring allergy symptoms like runny nose and cough will be permitted to attend school with a doctor's note outlining their symptoms.**

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Our existing assisted arrivals departure procedures, with added procedures for health screening and hand hygiene meet the state's guidelines for social distancing and limited contact.

- Assisted arrival will be available for all Primary students.
- Assisted arrival will be available for all Elementary students.
- Walk up arrivals cannot be facilitated at this time.
- Late arrival or Early departure must be scheduled in advance with the main office: At the pre-arranged arrival time, please pull up to the curb and wait for a staff member to arrive.
- Parents must wear a face mask during assisted arrival and departure.
- Staff members will clean hands after each child's arrival and departure.

CONTAINMENT OF ILLNESS

- Any person exhibiting signs of illness, including symptoms such as fever, cough, aches, diarrhea, etc. will be sent home immediately.
- As appropriate, individuals exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 will be asked to seek testing and report the findings as soon as possible.
- An isolation room has been determined for students waiting to be picked up.
- Enhanced PPE will be provided for any employee who is directly caring for a student waiting to be picked up.
- There will be enhanced cleaning and sanitization of the isolation rooms after use.
- In the event of a confirmed COVID-19 case, Cedars will follow recommended protocols, including notifying health authorities and our community about the incident while keeping names confidential.
- Any spaces visited by a person who tests positive for COVID-19 will be additionally disinfected.
- Employees will be trained in contact tracing, as necessary.
- We will communicate frequently regarding updates to these policies. Other restrictions may be put into place based on guidance, including limiting items brought from home, meal preparation and consumption, etc.

SUPPLIES

Each child will be bringing their own designated and labeled supplies in a pencil bag/box: erasers, pencils, colored pencils, scissors, knitting/handwork items, glue sticks etc. Your child will not be limited to only these items; it is to ensure the health and safety in the first weeks as we join our cohort groups (more specifics will be sent out as return to school date nears).

VISITORS TO CAMPUS

Each visitor to campus will be screened for temperature and symptoms and will be required to wear a mask. During the first weeks of school, we will not be open for visitors and observations due to the health and safety of all of our families. When the time is appropriate based on guidelines, visitors will be limited to individuals providing services to students, emergency and governmental personnel, and parents on a limited basis.

POSSIBLE SCENARIOS

Broadly speaking, considerations for how we may return to school in the academic year 2020-2021 can be grouped into three categories:

- On campus full time
- Distance learning full time
- Part time hybrid with cohorts

Program Summary - On Campus Full Time

Based on the current TEA and Austin Public Health guidelines, and supporting recommendations from the CDC, the classroom capacity is 45 square feet per child. Children will continue to stay in their individual communities with a fixed regular staff. We will be dividing each classroom into two autonomous spaces using a dividing wall to further support social distancing with two cohorts in each community of no more than 20 children each. The guide and assistant will interact with both cohorts, but the children will not mix. Over the course of the week, the cohorts will switch sides in the prepared environment so that, over the course of a week, the children will have access to the fully prepared environment. The community outdoor environments will also be utilized extensively for each cohort's workspaces. The outdoor environments will be prepared to be used as workspaces for most work choices while the child is at school.

Elementary Hours Arrival: 8:10 - 8:20 am Departure: 3:20 - 3:30 pm	Primary Hours Arrival: 8:15 - 8:30 am AM Children Departure: 12:00 - 12:15 pm PM Children Departure: 2:30 - 2:45 pm
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Program Summary - Distance Learning Full Time

During any necessary campus closures or whole classroom quarantines that occur over the course of the year, students will transition to CMS Distance Learning.

During campus closures, CMS will provide resources and support for families to support Distance Learning which will include:

- Parent-guide conferences to discuss each child's progress and provide suggestions on how best to continue the child's learning at home.

- Office hours every Friday to be responsive to parent questions. Appointment sign-ups will be provided.
- Plans, ideas, and packets of resources for age-appropriate activities at home
- Regular, virtual check-ins with the children

Program Summary - Part Time Hybrid Model with Cohorts

Children will stay within their individual cohorts throughout the day/week. Therefore, we will be split into daily cohorts at this time so each child comes to school **5 days a week**, for consistency and structure.

DAILY SCHEDULE - PRIMARY

<p>Cohort A: 8:10-8:25 am: Arrival begins 8:30 am: Start of School 11:30 am: Dismissal</p>	<p>Cohort B: 12:15:-12:25: Arrival begins 12:30 pm: Start of School 3:30 pm: Dismissal</p>
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DAILY SCHEDULE - ELEMENTARY

<p>Cohort A: 8:10-8:25 am: Arrival begins 8:30 am: Start of School 11:30 am: Dismissal</p>	<p>Cohort B: 12:15:-12:25: Arrival begins 12:30 pm: Start of School 3:30 pm: Dismissal</p>
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FLEXIBLE CALENDAR

During any period of extended campus closure for COVID-19, we will implement a flexible calendar and add days into the year to make up some of the missed on-campus days. In this scenario, we will use available in-service, conference, and extended holidays, including summer, to make up days. Calendar adjustments will be communicated as needed.

EARLY ARRIVAL

We will not be able to provide early arrival under the current conditions.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

Email and phone

Each guide has a school email address for parent communications. Guides will respond to emails within 24 hours during the week. Guides do not respond to phone messages during the day. Time-sensitive contact with guides can be facilitated by calling the office and/or emailing elementary@cedarsmontessori.com or primary@cedarsmontessori.com.

CMS Distance Learning will strive to reproduce the components and structure present when school is in session on campus and in person. Small group lessons are balanced with engaging independent work. Components of CMS Distance Learning:

- Daily, guide-led gatherings
- Small group lessons
- Regular feedback and guidance of children's work in individual meetings
- Zoom work periods following lessons with the guide for help and work support
- Guides help facilitate collaborative projects and connect children with each other within and across groups to Zoom and facilitate big work.
- Provide student accountability
 - Weekly student check-ins
- Individualized check-ins
- Work plans are created and checked - work turned in via Google Classroom
 - Children presenting work or projects

PLAYGROUND/OUTDOOR SPACES

The community outdoor environments will be utilized extensively for children's workspaces. The outdoor environments will be prepared to be used as workspaces for most work choices while the child is at school. Cohorts will each have access to playgrounds and equipment on a set rotation so that we can avoid mixing groups.

CONFERENCES AND OBSERVATIONS

Conferences will be held by the guide via zoom as needed or as requested by the guide or parent.

Regular parent observations cannot be accommodated at this time.

PARENT GATHERINGS

Parent gatherings will occur via zoom and will be communicated to families at least one week in advance.

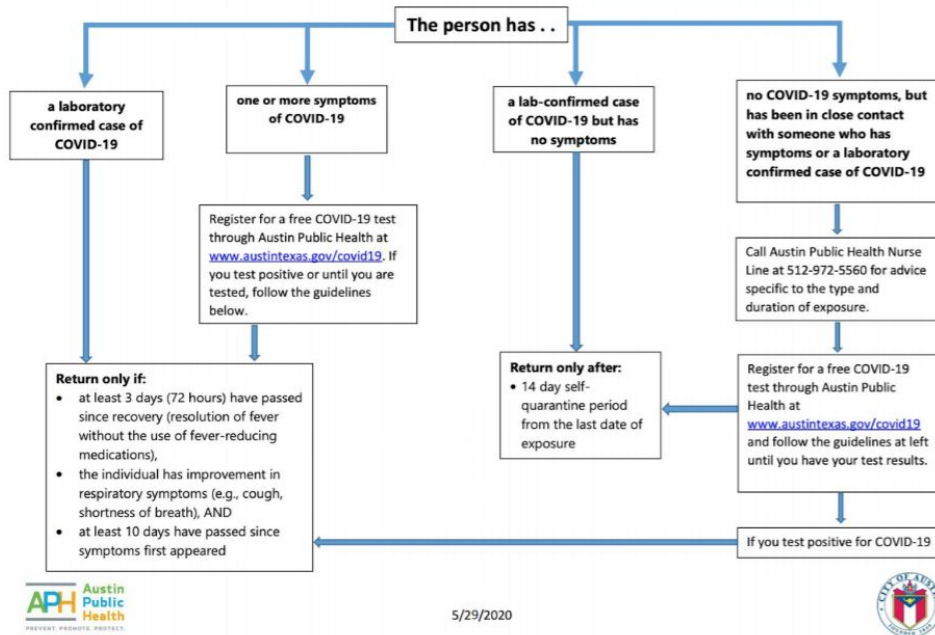
COMMUNICATION

An important part of Cedars Montessori School is the trust we have built and will continue to build with our community. This is now critical to ensure there is full participation in the screening process and there is a culture of honest talk- trusting that we can tell the truth (ie: my child is sick but I must go to work or I will lose my job) to thus reduce human to human transmission. Communication must then be the focus.

AUSTIN PUBLIC HEALTH FLOWCHART FOR EXPOSURE, SYMPTOMS, AND CASES

These flowcharts provide clarity for steps to take in the event of exposure, symptoms or confirmed cases of COVID-19. For more details regarding the CMS policy and procedure, visit

When can a child or staff member return to campus?



TRAINING

Staff must be familiar with and receive ongoing training regarding State, CDC, and City of Austin recommendations and requirements.

[State of Texas Minimum Standard Health Protocols](#)

[CDC Guidance for Schools and Child Care](#)

All staff will be trained on all topics in this operating plan. In addition, staff will take the following training:

[Special Considerations for Infection Control during COVID-19](#)

[Providing High-Quality Experiences during COVID-19 for Emergency Child Care Settings](#)

FACE COVERINGS

Face coverings are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected but does not have symptoms. Face coverings are not surgical masks, respirators, or other medical personal protective equipment. We view the use of cloth face coverings as an important way that we, as a community, can slow/stop the spread of the virus and protect each other. While indoors or in school vehicles, cloth face coverings will be required for adults who do not have health restrictions.

At this time, CDC recommends children 2 and older wearing face masks. However, as of today, August 4, students ages 3 and older will be required to bring a cloth face covering to school every day (we will have extras in case a child loses or misplaces their mask). Use of the covering will be determined based on physical distancing. Any concerns or questions about this requirement for your individual child can be brought to Sarah.

Staff will be required to wear face coverings at the following times:

- Assisted arrival and departure
- When performing health screening of staff and children
- When working in the classroom except during presentations that require clear articulation and visibility of mouth such as:
 - Early Childhood language exercises and presentations
- When assisting an ill child or staff member

Primary Children

Primary Childhood children ages 3-6 will be required to wear face coverings at the following times:

- During arrival and departure
- Inside the buildings
- Outside when close contact is require

Elementary Children

Elementary children will be required to wear face coverings at the following times:

- During arrival and departure
- Inside the buildings
- Outside when close contact is required

Parents and Visitors

Parents are required to wear a face-covering at assisted arrival and departure and at any other time while on campus. We are currently not able to accommodate regular on-campus visits by parents or other guests. Visitors will be limited to emergency and governmental personnel and parents, on a limited basis.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING STRATEGIES

Primary Children

Cedars Montessori School does not expect that young children will distance themselves from other children or adults while at school. Young children learn by engaging with their environment, which includes the other people in it. Cedars Montessori School will employ the following physical distancing strategies in our early childhood communities:

- Communities will consist of stable groups of no more than 20 children. Stable means that the same children and their consistent adults are in the same group each day.
- Children shall not change from one group to another during the day.
- Groups shall not mix with each other.
- The guide and assistant will remain with a single group each day. In the case of illness, a designated substitute for the group will assist with caregiving.
- Each child will have a designated work table and floor space so that children can be spaced as far from each other as possible while engaged in activities at school.
- The physical distance between children will be increased in daily work locations, group gatherings, meals, and snacks.

Elementary Children

Cedars Montessori School will employ the following physical distancing strategies in our elementary communities:

- Communities will consist of two stable cohort groups of no more than 10 children. Stable means that the same children and consistent adults are in the same group each day.
- Children shall not change from one cohort group to another during the day.
- Cohort groups shall not mix with each other.
- The guide and assistant will move between cohorts in a single classroom. In the case of illness, a designated substitute for the group will assist with caregiving.
- The physical distance between children will be increased in daily work locations, group gatherings, meals, and snacks.

HEALTHY HAND HYGIENE

Washing hands can keep you healthy and prevent the spread of infections from one person to the next. All children and staff will engage in hand hygiene at the following times:

- Arrival to the classroom and after breaks
- Before and after each work choice
- Before and after eating or handling food
- After using the toilet or helping a child use the bathroom
- After coming in contact with bodily fluid
- After playing outdoors
- After handling garbage
- Before touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.

Follow Five Steps to Wash Your Hands the Right Way

(<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>)

Follow these five steps every time.

1. Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds.

4. Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
5. Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

After assisting children with handwashing, staff should also wash their own hands.

Use Hand Sanitizer for Adults When You Can't Use Soap and Water

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to get rid of germs in most situations. If soap and water are not readily available, you can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands in many situations.

How to Use Hand Sanitizer

1. Apply the gel product to the palm of one hand (read the label to learn the correct amount).
2. Rub your hands together.
3. Rub the gel over all the surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry. This should take around 20 seconds.

HEALTH SCREENING

Daily employee and child health screenings are important to help reduce the transmission of COVID-19 at school.

Health and Temperature Screening Protocol

All children and staff who meet any of the criteria below will be denied entry:

- Temperature over 99.6°F
- 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
- In the previous 14 days has had contact with someone with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19;
 - Is under investigation for COVID-19; or
 - In the previous 14 days, has traveled to another state or another country.

STAFF

Self-Screening Before Arrival at School

Staff members will conduct self-screening prior to arrival at school. If a staff member self-identifies as having symptoms listed in the screening criteria above, she/he will contact the

designated administrator, not come into work, and follow the procedures in the section: COVID-19 Symptoms at School - Staff.

Staff Screening at School

A designated Administrative Staff Member will conduct and record Staff Health Screening for each staff member upon arrival at school. Staff Screening Procedure

CHILD

Parent Screening of Child Before Morning Arrival

Parents are encouraged to be on the alert for signs of illness in their children and to keep them home when they are sick. Parents are required to conduct the pre-screening each day at home. Parents who have not completed pre-screening prior to arrival must complete it prior to the child entering the program.

Screening of Child at School

- Upon arrival, a staff member will take your child's temperature using a contactless thermometer. [Temperature Check Procedure](#)
 - If the child has a temperature of over 99.6°F, the staff member will verify the temperature with another contactless thermometer and oral thermometer as needed.
 - A child with a temperature of over 99.6°F will not be admitted.
- Staff will conduct and log the temperature checks of each child and adult in the community two times each day. (At arrival, and mid-day)
- Staff will make a visual inspection of the child for signs of illness which could include flushed cheeks, rapid breathing, or difficulty breathing (without recent physical activity), fatigue, or extreme fussiness. If the child exhibits any of these symptoms at arrival or at any point during the day, the child will be isolated and parents will be required to pick up their child.

COVID-19 SYMPTOMS, EXPOSURE, AND CASES IN SCHOOL COMMUNITY

This section provides details and procedures for the COVID-19 Symptom, Exposure, and Diagnosis within the school community. See the Austin Public Health flowchart for a visual overview of the process.

COVID-19 Symptoms at School - Children

If COVID-19 symptoms begin while at school, the child must be sent home as soon as possible. Sick children will be kept separate from well children and staff contact will be limited as much as reasonably possible, while ensuring the safety and supervision of the child until they leave.

- Classroom staff will follow these isolation procedures:
 - Classroom staff will offer child a disposable face mask.
 - Classroom staff will take the child to the designated campus isolation location.
 - The classroom staff will inform the office staff of the symptoms exhibited.
 - Office staff will contact parents to come to school to pick up the child.
 - Parents will be provided the [Parent Procedure for Symptoms at School](#) handout.

- Once a parent has left with the ill child, the isolation room is cleaned and sanitized by office staff.
- Materials, toys, and furniture touched by the child who is sent home will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.
- Families are encouraged to coordinate decision-making around the child's care with the family health care provider if there are specific health concerns, chronic disease, or complex social or emotional dynamics in the home.
- In the case of a child who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and does not get evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, the child is assumed to have COVID-19, and cannot return to the community until the individual has met the criteria for return under Children or Staff with Positive Case of COVID-19
- A child who has exhibited symptoms that could be COVID-19 can return to school if the parent has obtained a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on a negative COVID19 test and an alternative diagnosis.

COVID-19 Symptoms at School - Staff

Staff is encouraged to monitor their health and required to perform daily health screenings for symptoms of COVID-19. Staff is encouraged to stay home if they are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 and to contact their healthcare provider.

- Staff exhibiting new or worsening symptoms of possible COVID-19 at school should:
 - Leave the classroom
 - Complete the [Texas Health Trace COVID-19 Self Checker](#)
 - Obtain a COVID-19 test - [Test Collection Sites](#)
 - Follow the recommendations of their healthcare provider
- In the case of a staff member who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and does not get evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, the individual is assumed to have COVID-19, and the individual may not return to work until the individual has met the return criteria for Children or Staff with Positive Case of COVID-19
- If the staff member has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to work before completing the above self-isolation period, the individual must obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for the return based on a negative nucleic acid COVID19 test and an alternative diagnosis.

COVID-19 Exposure - Staff and Children

If a staff member or child has been identified as close contact to someone outside the classroom community who is diagnosed with COVID-19, that staff member or child will be required to self-quarantine for 14 days per the CDC guidelines. Close contact means being closer than 6 feet apart for more than 15 minutes the person was infectious.

COVID-19 Exposure - Parent

If a parent has been in close contact with someone outside the classroom community who is diagnosed with COVID-19, the parent should self-quarantine for 14 days per the CDC guidelines. The child is not required to quarantine unless the child has been in close contact with someone who is diagnosed with COVID-19. Close contact means being closer than 6 feet apart for more than 15 minutes while the person was infectious.

Positive Case of COVID-19 in the Classroom Community - Staff, Children

If COVID-19 is confirmed in a child or staff member in a classroom community, all persons regularly in that community will be required to self-quarantine for 14 days per the CDC guidelines. The following actions will be taken by school administration:

- Notify the Texas Department of State Health Services and Child Care licensing, as required.
- Notify staff and parents/caregivers that a member of the classroom community has been diagnosed with COVID-19. Confidentiality will be maintained.
- Notify the school community that a child in the school (not their community) has been diagnosed with COVID-19. Confidentiality will be maintained.
- Close the specific classroom community for 14 days to allow self-quarantine for all children and staff in the classroom community who have been in close contact with the person diagnosed with COVID-19 (per CDC guidelines) *
- Complete disinfecting procedures

*Decisions about extending closure will be made in consultation with the Texas State Department of Health.

Children or Staff with Positive Case of COVID-19, who have exhibited symptoms and who have stayed home (home isolated) can return to school/work when the following criteria are met:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.htm>

- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications); and
- The child or staff member has improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and
- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared, or Negative results of an FDA Emergency Use Authorized COVID-19 molecular assay for detection of SARS-CoV-2 RNA from at least two consecutive respiratory specimens collected ≥ 24 hours apart (total of two negative specimens)

QUARANTINE AND ISOLATION - DEFINITIONS

From the CDC:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine-isolation.html>

Quarantine

Quarantine is used to keep someone who might have been exposed to COVID-19 away from others. Quarantine helps prevent spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms.

People in quarantine should stay home, separate themselves from others, monitor their health, and follow directions from their state or local health department.

Isolation

Isolation is used to separate people infected with the virus (those who are sick with COVID-19 and those with no symptoms) from people who are not infected. People who are in isolation should stay home until it's safe for them to be around others. In the home, anyone sick or infected should separate themselves from others by staying in a specific "sick room" or area and using a separate bathroom (if available).

CONTACT TRACING

Contact tracing is a strategy used to determine the source of an infection and how it is spreading. Finding people who are close contacts to a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, and therefore at higher risk of becoming infected themselves, can help prevent further spread of the virus. Those contacts might include family members, co-workers or health care providers.

School staff has been asked to keep a daily list of people they are in close contact with and sign up at [Texas Health Trace](#) if they have been in close contact with someone in the Classroom Community that has tested positive for COVID-19 OR if the staff member is diagnosed with COVID-19.

COMMUNICATION WHEN COVID-19 PRESENT

Cedars Montessori School will communicate:

- With families, if their child has been in close contact with someone at school who has then tested positive for COVID-19.
- With staff, if they have been in close contact with someone at school who has tested positive for COVID-19.
- With the entire school community if a classroom community has been closed temporarily due to COVID-19 exposure.

MONITORING ABSENTEEISM

Cedars Montessori School administrative staff will monitor absenteeism among children and staff using Transparent Classroom. Any unusual patterns will be considered when evaluating the need for temporary or long-term building or campus closure. Decisions about extending closure will be made in consultation with the Texas State Department of Health.

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

Cedars Montessori School follows the national standards for cleaning, sanitizing and disinfection of educational facilities for children provided by [Caring for Our Children \(CFOC\)](#). Cedars Montessori School has a detailed plan for each community, including staff responsibilities. These efforts include the following:

- Staff will routinely clean, sanitize, and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched, especially materials.
- All bathrooms will be cleaned and disinfected regularly throughout the day, at a minimum bathrooms should be cleaned and disinfected three times per day.
- Electrostatic Spraying Technology will be used to disinfect and sanitize our environments regularly. The electrostatic charge ensures that even the hard to reach places are coated evenly and effectively.

Clean and Sanitize Materials

- Materials that cannot be cleaned and sanitized will not be used.
- Materials that children have placed in their mouths or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretions or excretions will be set aside until they are cleaned by hand by a person wearing gloves. These materials will be sanitized prior to use by the next person.
- Machine washable cloth materials will be used by one individual at a time and will be laundered before being used by another child.
- Children's books, like other paper-based materials such as mail or envelopes, are not considered high risk for transmission and do not need additional cleaning or disinfection procedures.

Clean and Disinfect Bedding

Each child's bedding is kept separate and stored in individually labeled bins. Mats are labeled for each child. Bedding is to be cleaned by families at least once weekly.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Procedures if an infected person (staff or child) has been in a school building:

Close off areas used by the individuals with COVID-19 and wait 24 hours before beginning cleaning and disinfection to minimize the potential for exposure to respiratory droplets. Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area. Staff will clean and disinfect all areas used by the ill persons, focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces. Staff must follow [CDC's guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting](#)

Cleaning and Disinfecting Products

Cedars Montessori School uses disinfecting products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19.

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/pdf/ReOpening_America_Cleaning_Disinfection_Decision_Tool.pdf

FOOD PREPARATION AND SERVING

Cedars Montessori School will not serve family-style snacks or meals. Each child will bring their own snack and lunch from home.

Staff will ensure children wash hands prior to and immediately after eating.

Staff must wash their hands before assisting children and after helping children to eat.

VULNERABLE AND HIGH-RISK GROUPS

Based on currently available information and clinical expertise, older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions might be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19. To protect those at higher risk, it's important that everyone practices healthy hygiene behaviors.

PARENT RESOURCES

We will stay in close contact with parents through regular communication. We request your collaboration and open communication with us about any symptoms that may appear at home for any of your family members. Parents will be provided with guidelines for establishing an at-home learning environment to support their students. We will offer Parent Education and resources during the year, and we welcome your ideas and suggestions for topics for these sessions.

We can't wait to see you! We missed having everyone on our campus and we are really looking forward to the start of the new school year. Please be sure to monitor school emails this summer for updates and additional information.

Cedars Montessori School has and will continue to collaborate, share information, and review plans with local health officials to help protect the whole school community. School plans are designed to complement other community mitigation strategies to protect high-risk populations and the healthcare system and minimize disruption to teaching and learning.

This document was compiled using the COVID-19 guidelines and recommendations for schools and childcare programs published by the CDC, AAP, State of Texas, and the City of Austin. CMS operating procedures meet or exceed the minimum standards of care and will be updated as new information or additional guidelines are made available.

[AAP COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-entry](#)

[State of Texas Minimum Standard Health Protocols](#)

[CDC Guidance for Schools and Child Care](#)

If you have any questions, please contact Sarah at director@cedarsmontessori.com.