



June 1, 2020

Dear Families,

As we close out this highly unusual and downright unimaginable school year, I know you're wondering about next year and how to garner certainty in these unpredictable waters. While the intensity over the last three months has varied for each of us, discomfort, fear, and struggle have affected us all. The purpose of this letter is to share more information with you, as we will continue to do over the coming weeks. We hope that our families, as well as our teachers and staff understand that flexibility will likely remain a key piece in navigating our future together as a school community.

As you probably know by now, the Texas Governor announced that Licensed Childcare Centers will be allowed to reopen with this next phase of reopening Texas. The Health and Human Services Department has laid out new guidelines and regulations for us to follow in order to do everything we can to provide quality care for children and families with the utmost attention to the health and safety of our community members.

As we were anticipating, the new guidelines require a redesign of our programs. We know that there is a chance that by the time school is scheduled to start in August they will again change the guidelines and regulations. For now, we are working on a redesign of our program to meet the current guidelines and will adjust as we go, as needed, where we deem safe, and/or where possible, with your input and advance notice of changes.

Our sincere hope is that we will still be able to accommodate all returning families who wish to return to school as well as all new families whom we have already enrolled. However, we are also aware that some of you may not be comfortable with a return to campus and of course we understand, and will have no hard feelings if you choose to withdraw your enrollment. We have extended our deadlines from June 1 to June 15 to give you additional time to make your decision and payments.

What will the school year look like? Oh, how I wish I could give you a solid picture! What we can do is share what is being accomplished in preparation for an ever-changing set of

requirements. We continue to look to state guidelines, CDC recommendations, local public health directives, and lessons learned from schools across Austin as we determine scenarios that can work for our students and community.

Some of the changes so far are as follows (subject to change):

- Classrooms are limited to ratios and square footage per child based on recommendations of the CDC and state guidelines.
- There will be no food preparation so parents will need to provide snacks for their child(ren).
- No extracurricular activities until further notice.
- Limiting parents on campus; at-car drop-off and pick-up procedures with health screens and interviews. More information will come about how to make this a successful transition for families and children.
- Staggered pick up and drop off times
- Strict adherence to limiting attendance to healthy individuals
- Enhanced hand hygiene protocols for children and staff
- Intensified cleaning and disinfection regimen
- Additional health and safety training for all staff
- Designated isolation area for ill children until they can be picked up
- Elementary children (6 and over) and all staff will be required to wear face masks

If you are interested, you can read the guidelines for Licensed Childcare Centers, including [Minimum Standard Health Checklists](#) to help guide both care providers and [families](#) navigating our return to school. You can also read the [CDC's Interim Guidance for Administrators of US K-12 Schools and Child Care Programs](#).

As we work on our plan for fall 2020, it has been neither easy nor intuitive, since the conditions and variables continue to change. At the end of this letter is a snapshot of what we're thinking, which includes four possible scenarios. As you read these, please remember these are not our "final" thinking. Conditions will shift again. Our overarching goal is to ensure the health and safety of our students and staff, while we deliver connected and meaningful learning experiences.

Although school is closed for summer, we're committed to keeping you updated. I will continue the weekly email from my front porch. Please let us know if you have questions or if we can help in some way. It is our honor to work with your children in our school and our positive and mutually encouraging relationships with students and families make the work an absolute pleasure.

Sincerely,

Sarah Critchfield
Director

POSSIBLE SCENARIOS FOR FALL 2020

SCENARIO 1:	SCENARIO 2:	SCENARIO 3:	SCENARIO 4:
Social distancing has contained the spread of COVID-19. School starts, on schedule with new class ratio guidelines in place.	Social distancing guidelines allow for some percentage of our population to be on campus at the same time.	Social distancing has made promising inroads but has not yet contained the spread of COVID-19 to the level required for school to open on campus on schedule.	Mid-year resurgence or intermittent resurgences of COVID-19 that require social distancing and the closing of campus.
GOAL: Keep the community healthy. Positively contribute to internal and public health to avoid a resurgence.	GOAL: Maximize in-person instructional time and minimize class sizes.	GOAL: Ensure quality Montessori remote learning is ready and accessible to all immediately.	GOAL: Respond promptly to reduce the length of resurgence. Keep consistency and forward momentum in teaching and learning. Return to in-person instruction ASAP.
ACTION PLAN: Enhance daily deep cleaning procedures, presence of hand sanitizer, education and daily routines for handwashing, sanitizing, and reducing germ transmission. Reconsider schedules and large group configurations to reduce resurgence likelihood (circles, morning gatherings, lunch, recess, staggered schedules, etc.) Arrange for options with Montessori material use and shift away from supply sharing. Require sick/symptomatic	ACTION PLAN: Develop possibilities such as: Creative use of space on campus to spread students and teachers out more physically. Use of outdoor classrooms. Staggering school days or morning and afternoon sessions five days per week.	ACTION PLAN: Implement immediately, a rigorously prepared and robust program to support measurable academic progress as well tenets of Montessori pedagogy. Ensure frequent communication with students and families for a supportive launch and continued partnership.	ACTION PLAN: Shift efficiently to remote teaching and learning, with a modified/simplified schedule that eases transition to/from in-person/remote learning.

<p>students, faculty, and staff to stay home. Check temperatures and have isolation strategies for anyone who displays symptoms and are waiting to be picked up. Have a quickly accessible and implementable plan for remote teaching and learning for anyone needing to self-isolate.</p>			
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