

Keystone Montessori School

Sharing the Responsibilities 2.0

2021-2022 Supplement to the Keystone Family Guidebook

Protocols and procedures in this supplement supersede those outlined in the Keystone Family Guidebook

These protocols and procedures may be revised depending upon local conditions.

Revised September 23, 2021

Introduction

This supplement is intended to detail the protocols and procedures that will be in place as we return to school once again amid the Covid-19 pandemic. In spite of the availability of vaccines this virus is continuing to thrive and mutate. While we have learned a lot over these past many months, we continue to be confronted with surges in case numbers and mountains of ever-changing advice

Our mission at Keystone involves keeping the best interests of the children first and foremost in our thoughts and actions. In order to manage the continuation of school operations this year, it is essential that all of us recognize that there exists a shared responsibility between the school and the families. We must all collaborate to protect the health of our entire school community. Everyone must be careful with their choices, be aware of the impact their choices may have on others, be honest in their dealings with the school and other families, and be willing to make the sacrifices necessary to protect the health and well-being of the entire school community.

Monitoring of local conditions and case numbers will continue throughout the school year. Adjustments to this supplement may become necessary. We will respond swiftly and responsibly if the need arises. We will be diligent with our daily cleaning procedures and we will commit to safe practices as much as is feasible. What we cannot do, however, is guarantee that Covid-19, or some other communicable disease won't enter our community. We will, however, continue to present our best, most conscientious efforts.

Vaccination

In order to keep children safe, and change the course of the Covid-19 pandemic, all eligible adults should get vaccinated.

Home Health Assessment Continues to be Important!

At the end of this supplement is a Home Health Assessment. Please place this form in your home where it is easily available to you each morning. Every morning before school please assess your child for possible Covid-19 symptoms. If your child has some of the symptoms of Covid-19, a fever of 100.4°F or higher, or has been in close contact with someone who has Covid-19, **DO NOT BRING THE CHILD TO SCHOOL.**

IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT SICK INDIVIDUALS STAY AT HOME!

Morning Arrival (8:15-8:30 AM)

Please note that the morning car line is our longest car line and it is important we have everyone's cooperation, in order for this now lengthy process to move as quickly and safely as possible.

Arrival by foot or bicycle will be permitted. Parents are responsible for getting their children to the front door safely.

During car line the staff will not be available for lengthy discussions with parents.

A late arrival is disruptive! If you do arrive late, please ring the doorbell just one time. Late arrivals will need to wait patiently until someone has the opportunity to answer the door. It may take several minutes before late arrivals will be able to enter the school. The front door camera will provide a visual reminder that someone is waiting.

Early Departure

Children who need to leave school early in order to attend an appointment will not be able to return to school that day. Please do not plan to pick your child up during the primary classrooms' scheduled rest time, 1:00-2:30 PM.

Departure (Noon or 3:00 PM)

For the noon dismissal, the departing children will be dismissed from the stairway. Physical distancing will be respected.

For the 3:00 PM dismissal, the children will be dismissed individually from their own classrooms. The staff will use walkie-talkies to coordinate the dismissal process. Patience on the part of all drivers and staff will be greatly appreciated. During the car line the staff will not be available for lengthy discussions with parents.

Departure after 3:00 PM

The driver should ring the doorbell and wait outside the car.

A staff member will escort the child to the car, and the driver can assist the child into the car.

Handwashing

Handwashing has always been a very important factor in keeping the KMS community healthy. Automated soap dispensers and paper towel dispensers are being used. Staff members will demonstrate, supervise, and reinforce proper handwashing procedures.

Children will wash hands:

Each morning upon entering the classroom

After every visit to the bathroom

After coughing or sneezing into the hands

After snack

Before and after lunch

After rest time

After outdoor playtime

Hand-sanitizer

Hand-sanitizer will be available for those unusual times when washing hands with soap and water is not possible. Staff will administer hand sanitizer when it is necessary. Please do not send in hand sanitizer clipped to your child's belt, lunch box, or work bag.

Montessori All-Day

Rest mats will be arranged head to toe and will be placed as far apart as is feasible.

Handwashing requirements will continue throughout the day along with significant monitoring.

Afternoon snack will take place in the child's classroom.

Visitors

At the present time we will not be able to accommodate visitors or parents inside the building during school hours. This may change as conditions improve.

Observations, joining in on a child's birthday celebration, and parent-child lunch dates will be not available. This may change as conditions improve.

Face Masks

Face masks will be required for all children over the age of five years, and all staff while inside the building. Children younger than five years of age are encouraged to wear masks as well, but it will for the moment remain a parental option. Efforts will be made to see that face masks are worn consistently and appropriately. Mask breaks will be available.

The face mask requirement will depend upon local conditions and regulations, and may be revised as needed.

Physical Distancing

Physical distancing will be practiced as much as is feasible.

Teachers will modify their prepared environments to allow for more open spaces.

Children will be encouraged to have sufficient space when lining up, such as when waiting to use the bathroom, getting ready to go outside, and getting ready to come inside.

Children will also be encouraged to have sufficient space between their work and someone else's.

The two primary classes will play on the playground at the same time. They will be encouraged to respect each other's space and will wash their hands upon returning to their classrooms.

The elementary children will play on the playground at a time that is separate from the primary children. They will be encouraged to respect each other's space and will wash their hands upon returning to their classroom.

All children who stay after 3:00 PM will play outside at the same time.

Ventilation

Air purifiers will be used daily in all classrooms. Filters will be checked monthly.

A/C units will be used daily, either for cooling or for air circulation. Filters will be checked monthly.

Classroom hall doors will be left open.

Testing

Proper and adequate testing continues to be vitally important in mitigating the spread of Covid-19. A PCR test result is considered by the Mecklenburg County Health Department to be the most accurate test. If a child is exhibiting symptoms of Covid-19, parents should have their child properly tested with a PCR test.

If a Child Exhibits Covid-19 Symptoms at School

If a child exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 at school, he will be isolated immediately and the parents will be notified. A prompt pickup by a parent will be expected. **Parents need to make sure that their voicemail is sufficiently empty and can receive messages.** The child will be supervised by a staff member during this isolation period. The child will be encouraged to put on a mask. Physical distancing will be practiced. Cleaning and disinfecting of the room used for isolation will be done some time after the child leaves.

If the child is not evaluated by a medical professional or is not tested for COVID-19, then it will be assumed that the child has the virus, and will need to remain home for 14 days. Mecklenburg County Health Department, as well as the school's child care consultant will be notified of the situation and they will offer guidance.

Returning to School After Positive PCR Test Results

Child may return to school if the parents can answer 'yes' to **ALL** three of the following questions:

1. Has it been at least 14 days since symptoms first appeared?
2. Has child been fever free for 48 hours **without** using fever reducing medicines?
3. Has it been at least 48 hours since the child's symptoms have improved, including cough, shortness of breath, headache, diarrhea, or vomiting?

Returning to School After Being in Close Contact with a Person Diagnosed with COVID-19

While the recommended quarantine period is 14 days, Mecklenburg County Health Department has offered two options for reduced quarantine periods for close contacts. Parents will need to notify the school of the option that they are going to use when the occasion arises.

Option 1. 10 days of quarantine after the last day of exposure, and **no symptoms at all during those 10 days with daily monitoring.**

Option 2. 7 days of quarantine after the last day of exposure, **no symptoms at all during those 7 days with daily monitoring**, and a negative PCR test result. The PCR test must be taken no earlier than the 5th day after the last day of exposure. Written test result documentation needs to be shared with the school prior to the day the child is to return to KMS.

With both of these options, the child is still at risk for developing and spreading Covid-19. The child will therefore need to wear a face mask while in school, and will have to have snack/lunch without a table companion until the full 14-day quarantine period has been completed. Parents need to prepare the child for this temporary change in their child's classroom routine.

Daily close monitoring of symptoms is crucial to the success of these options. Children's symptoms may be very subtle so parents need to be aware of even the slightest indicators such as the sniffles, a slight cough, or lack of energy.

A fully vaccinated individual who does not have symptoms and who does not live in a congregate setting, does not have to quarantine. The fully vaccinated person must have a PCR test 3-5 days after exposure, and wear a mask for 14 days after exposure, regardless of a negative PCR test result and asymptomatic conditions.

Returning to School After COVID-19 Symptoms but Negative PCR Test Results

Child may return to school once parents can answer 'yes' to the following questions:

1. Has it been at least 48 hours since the child had a fever **without** the use of fever-reducing medicines?
2. Has the child been free of Covid-19 symptoms for at 48 least hours?

Family members

Due to the close nature of families, if a child develops Covid-19 symptoms, all the children in that family should remain home until all receive a negative PCR test result and all are free of symptoms. If other family members (including nannies, baby sitters) develop Covid-19 symptoms, the children should not return to school until those family members have received negative PCR test results as well and are also free of symptoms.

Returning to School After Travel

Parents need to be cautious in choosing where and when to travel. During the course of the trip, they should continue to monitor their child's health for symptoms of Covid-19, and have their child tested before returning to school if symptoms have developed. Waiting several days after the conclusion of the trip before returning to school is strongly encouraged.

Communication with Parents

Parents will be notified when the school is informed that a child or staff member has been diagnosed with or has tested positive for Covid-19. Confidentiality will be respected. Mecklenburg County Health Department, as well as the school's child care consultant will be notified of the situation and they will offer guidance.

Parents will be notified when the school is informed that a child or staff member has been exposed to Covid-19. Confidentiality will be respected. Mecklenburg County Health Department, as well as the school's child care consultant will be notified of the situation and they will offer guidance.

Preparing the Children for the School Year

It is the responsibility of all parents to prepare their children for the school year. Parents also shoulder the responsibility of helping to keep the school community healthy by:

- Ensuring that children are well-rested and well-nourished
- Continually reinforcing proper handwashing at home
- Continually reinforcing proper usage and disposal of tissues at home
- Continually reinforcing proper coverage of a sneeze or cough, by coughing or sneezing into an elbow or shoulder
- Establishing and reinforcing the good habits of keeping fingers out of noses and mouths
- Sheltering children from news reports
- Minimizing extra-curricular activities outside of school because of possible exposure to Covid-19
- Instructing children about the proper care, handling, and placement of face masks.

Conclusion

Once again, we are faced with a school year of changing conditions. And once again we will work diligently to not only provide a safe environment for the children, but also a joyful school experience. We will most likely face some challenges and unusual scenarios, but we will find appropriate responses, and make any changes that are warranted.

As we experienced last year, this effort must be a joint effort between families and the school. Everyone has a part to play and everyone needs to demonstrate patience, honesty, and understanding. In dealing with an event of such enormity, perfection is not part of the equation, compassion, common sense, and cooperation are.

Resources

Center for Disease Control website

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services website

NCDHHS: StrongSchoolsNC

NCDHHS: ChildCareStrongNC

Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center

Yale Medicine website

CIDRAP (Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy), University of Minnesota

Home Health Assessment-Sharing the Responsibility

To Be Completed Every Morning Before School

1. Has child/children been diagnosed or had close contact in the last 14 days with someone diagnosed with COVID-19? Close contact is defined by NCDHHS as “within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes”.

If ‘yes’, the child should not come to school, and needs to quarantine for 14 days, or choose one of the options listed on pg.5-6 for shortening quarantine after close contact.

If ‘no’, the child may come to school if not experiencing any symptoms listed below.

2. Does the child exhibit any of these symptoms? If ‘yes’ to any of these symptoms the child should stay home and the parent should consult with the health care provider. The school should be notified.

Fever or chills

Diarrhea

New cough

Nausea or vomiting

Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

Headache

Fatigue

Congestion

Muscle or body aches

Sore throat

New loss of taste or smell

Congestion or runny nose

3. Has any health department or health care provider been in contact with you and advised you to quarantine?

If ‘yes’ child should stay home and the school should be notified.

If ‘no’ the child may come to school.