



Dear MA Families and Friends,

I hope this message finds you and your family with at least a few summer adventures in your pocket and you have been able to find some time to recoup as needed. I have definitely put in some dedicated time on my road bike, in my running shoes (even attempted a triathlon last Saturday!) as well as fishing with my family.

Regulations for the upcoming school year were recently released and have already been updated again! As things change, we will be updating our Parent COVID guides over the next week. In the meantime, there are a few key items we wanted to share with you. Most importantly - the entire school will be open, five days a week, starting on Tuesday, September 7, and we can't wait to see all of you!!

Vaccination rates among our teaching staff continue to be very high and we understand that the education sector is likely to go mandatory with an announcement from the provincial government expected today. Regardless, we are well on our way to reaching 100%.

School Wide:

- Please keep in mind that we use a multi-layered approach for risk management. One element isn't the key piece in the puzzle. It is how they all work together.
- As mentioned in the final Buzz in June, the school day will be shifting to 15 minutes earlier with drop-offs starting at 8:30 am and school starting at 8:45 am and as such, pick-up will start at 3:30 pm and end at 3:45 pm.
- Staggered drop-offs by cohort are not required at this time, however please be mindful of providing space to others. Please take note of level/location specifics below.
- Masks are required indoors for all staff and students in Years 1 to 8. They are strongly encouraged for our Casa students and not recommended for Toddlers. Elementary students need to have their mask on outside when they arrive at school in order to make their way into the buildings.
- Masks are not required to be worn outside for students or staff, however if there is mixing of cohorts outside (which is allowed), masks are required at Elementary as we don't believe the students will be able to keep distanced from their peers in another cohort. If they are outside with their cohort only, masks are not required.
- Field trips, with protocols in place, will return.
- The school invested over \$50,000 in our Air Sniper units in every classroom and common spaces last August. They served us very well last year and will continue to be utilized.
- Cohorts are required, however given how our classrooms are set up, each classroom will serve as its own cohort. See specifics by level below.
- Daily screening with the provincial school tool is required by all staff and students. The tool will guide you as to action steps required if you are symptomatic.
- Early and Extended hours will resume as usual, however, **if you are requiring a drop-in use of Early or Extended hours, you must give staff 24 hours notice** to use these programs to be sure we can accommodate the student based on protocols in place. The bulk of these programs happen outside, where cohorts are allowed to be mixed. If your child is in Elementary, they will need to be



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masked when they enter the courtyard. If there is inclement weather, the programs will be moved inside and the students will be distanced in our indoor spaces by cohort. By opening up these programs to the usual hours, it makes these programs more challenging for the school to run with higher numbers. For this reason, if this is not a program you absolutely require due to your work schedule and environment, please hold off on registration for your child.

- Our lunch programs will continue under the restrictions that are provided.
- We will only implement our home-based learning program if we are mandated to be closed by the provincial government. We do not have the staff or resources to offer a hybrid system concurrently. We will be able to move swiftly to these processes if required and you will receive communications accordingly.

Elementary and Junior High Student Specifics:

- Cohorts: Upper Elementary will go back to two groups (UE1 and UE2) instead of three. Junior High will be one cohort instead of two, as they are isolated from the rest of the school and already have the highest vaccination rate; paired with all the other school protocols in place, they have the best capacity to function this way. Cohorts are allowed to mix outside and we will require students to wear masks outside during this time as we don't believe students will be able to maintain distance from their peers in another cohort. If they are outside with their cohort only, masks are not required. This is subject to change based on local public health guidelines. Lower Elementary will resume as last year with three classes. The LE classes will also resume the use of the doors for arrival - LE 1 the back silver doors closest to the Courtyard gate, LE 2 the back door to the Library, and LE 3 the back doors closest to their classroom that go directly to their cubbies downstairs.
- To support the flow of people, we are asking that LE parents park on Piccadilly and UE park on Kenneth for drop off and pick up. If you have students in both levels, park on the LE side and have your UE student walk over, if possible.
- The Elementary lunch program will begin three days a week for the first two weeks of school, to allow us to get processes down in the new kitchen area and make adjustments where needed, before launching into 5 days a week. Lunch order forms are now digital and payments can be made online or in person at the office. The Junior High lunch program will also continue and we are in the process of reviewing the new guidelines for students to be involved with food preparation. Parents will receive an update on this from Shawn Butler in the coming weeks as this program traditionally starts at the end of September.

Toddler and Casa Student Specifics:

- Screening procedures are the same as last year. After completing the provincial screening tool, results will need to be recorded through the provided Google form. Parents will receive the link to this form before school begins.
- Cohorts will align with usual class placements with the following exception: at **Waterloo Toddler**, although two separate classes for the bulk of the day, they will bubble as one larger cohort to be able access shared spaces in the building. Please see your August Toddler classroom letter for specific drop off and pick up times for Toddler 1 and 2. **Oxford St:** to facilitate your drop off and pick up



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flow, the window will be extended to 20 min. rather than 15 min. Drop off will go to 8:50 am and pick up to 3:50 pm.

- Early and Extended Hours: Parents may now enter buildings to drop off and pick up their child for these programs. **You must be masked and use hand sanitizer upon entry.** We ask that you maintain distance from other parents and be as brief as possible. Please check your child's classroom letter for specifics on your location's processes as these can be different due to space available.

Thank you for your continued support and patience as we Montessori through the pandemic again this fall. As always, we will continue to update you on any changes or modifications we receive. **More details will be available in the Parent COVID Guides that will be released next week, and will be available in the Parent Portal and on our website: <https://montessori.on.ca/covid/>**

Enjoy the final weeks of summer! We know you have been missing that community feel that is the heart of MA. While we have the nice weather and can do things outside, we endeavour to inject some of this into your lives. Stay tuned...

Be well,

Tina Sartori
Executive Director