



Montessori
ACADEMY OF LONDON

COVID PARENT GUIDE

2021-2022

Toddler & Casa

Dear Toddler and Casa Families,

You have often heard us say that a Montessori education prepares our children for life. This has never been more true as we reimagine education for today's - and tomorrow's - world.

As we grapple with important things such as health and safety, constantly changing directives from authorities, curriculum models, and so much more, we remain committed to our Montessori principles. Together, with our talented faculty and staff, we have been able to adapt both creatively and responsibly.

We know there is a spectrum of comfort levels and beliefs when it comes to managing all aspects of your day to day existence and we can appreciate there are many perspectives in our community. *Please know that every decision that is made for MA and your children is done with deep thought and consideration.* We know parents' responses will vary to the decisions that are made over the next several months.

We hope this guide serves you well as you navigate the start to a school year like never before. Take a deep breath, you can do this!



Screening

- Every parent must screen their child daily, using this [online provincial screening tool](#), and staff members must self-screen. Parents must then log the results on the provided Google form before arriving at school. The tool will guide you as to action steps required if you are symptomatic. If your child fails the screening, they can't come to school.
- The link for screening results for your child's class will be available in the Parent Portal.
- As you arrive at school, your screening will be confirmed.
- If you arrive at school without completing the screening, a staff member will complete it, however this will delay other families entering the program until it is complete.
Tip: Set a daily reminder in your phone to complete this important step!
- Visitors to any location also need to have their screening results validated. (We kindly remind parents that they are not allowed in classrooms at this time.)

Early and Extended Hours

- If required, parents are able to enter buildings to drop off and pick up their child, however new guidelines state you must wear a surgical mask, distance from others and use hand sanitizer upon entry to the building. Your time in the building should be limited.
- Processes may vary by location, so be sure to check in with classroom teachers if you are going to be using these programs.
- These programs will return to the usual start times. Early Hours will begin at 7:30 am and Extended Hours from 3:45 pm to 5:30 pm. with the usual staffing complement.
- We will attempt to run these programs outdoors as much as possible.
- Students will be in mixed cohorts when outside participating in the program.
- The programs will be moved inside due to inclement weather 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.
- Occasional use of the program will require 24 hours notice to the teachers. We will not be able to accommodate "day of" requests.

Drop-off and Pick-up

- As mentioned in the final Buzz in June, the school day will shift 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.
- Parents are asked to wear a mask during drop-off and pick-up times once on the school grounds.
- Parents will say goodbye outdoors. Staff will be stationed inside to receive the students as they arrive.

- Drop off and pick up procedures vary by location. Please check your August Information letter on the Parent Portal for more information.

During the School Day

- Each classroom will be its own cohort, with the exception of Waterloo Toddler. The two classes will bubble to be able to access shared spaces in the building.
- Mixing of cohorts inside can only occur if 2m distance can be maintained. Mixing of cohorts outside is permitted and will occur during playtime.
- No outside visitors will be permitted to enter classrooms during the day, unless prior approval has been given by the school and/or are a regulating body to our programs. Screening procedures and other school protocols must be followed while on site, including wearing surgical masks.
- Hand hygiene will be paramount and scheduled into the day. Respiratory etiquette will be practised and closely monitored.
- Each classroom is equipped with an air purifying system which will sterilize the air every 10 minutes using Ultra Violet Germicidal Irradiation (UVGI).
- It is expected children and staff within the same cohort will come into contact at points during the day. It is the reason why they are cohorted, however physical distancing will still be encouraged and guided in the classroom in a Montessori-inspired way.
- In Montessori classrooms such as ours, minimal modifications are required. We've always had scattered tables spread apart, and the number of children at each table will be limited. Work done on floor mats provides a natural separation between children and offers increased space for the children to work in. We have removed all area rugs.
- The use of shared materials is now allowed among students as transmission of COVID-19 off of surfaces is no longer a concern, however hand hygiene will be of the utmost importance.
- Montessori methodology will be maintained.
- All materials and surfaces will be disinfected frequently as required.
- Each cohort has access to their own washroom, and surfaces will be disinfected as required.
- All of our staff have been provided Professional Development and Resources around working with re-entry of students back to school following a potentially traumatic experience such as COVID, and how to teach developmentally appropriate lessons for the new experience the children will have in their classrooms during phasing in. If more help is needed, please contact the School to receive more information around therapy or other outside sources of support.

Personal Belongings

- Personal belongings brought to school should be minimal. If brought to school, personal items, e.g. backpack, clothing, sun protection, water bottles, food, etc., need to be labelled and will be stored in cubbies/designated areas.

Masks

- Parents need to wear a mask outside to drop off your child as you are likely to come into close proximity to a teacher while doing so, especially if your child is upset.
- Under CCEYA guidelines, Toddler and Casa teachers have been mandated to wear masks and eye protection indoors (unless the teacher has an underlying medical condition or disability which inhibits their ability to wear one) when in close proximity to a child, such as when providing a lesson, tending to personal care, comfort, one-on-one assistance, etc. Staff need to wear a mask outside.
- Children who are of JK and SK age (intermediate and senior Casa students) are required to wear masks. If your child is wearing a mask to school, please provide something for it to be stored in that will not retain moisture. MA belt bags are available at the Main Office. Although they may be too big for our Casas to wear, it does provide a place to store masks when not worn.

Snacks and Lunch

- Snacks will be served by the teachers and limited to one child at the snack table at a time.
- For the time being, we are also unable to accept any outside food from homes to be shared with classmates, such as birthday snacks.
- The food program will continue under new guidelines and protocols we have been given. This includes no longer using family-style serving and teachers will be plating food, no sharing of food or utensils.

Playtime

New guidelines permit the mixing of cohorts in outdoor spaces, so different classes will be outside at the same time at certain locations. Hand hygiene will be in place before and after playtimes.

School Events, Assemblies, Field Trips

- Off-site field trips will resume with the guidelines we have been provided.
- We find ways to host events or assemblies where we can, under the guidelines we are given. This requires a balance between following the school guidelines and the Road Map to Reopening regulations.
- If you have any ideas on ways to continue to keep the community feel of the school going, while following restrictions, please let us know!

Illness at School

To ensure the health and well-being of all children, our current illness policy is still in place with the addition of the information provided below. Those who become ill while attending school will be required to leave. Likewise, staff who become ill while working will also be required to leave.

Outbreaks will be declared in collaboration between the school and the local public health unit.

Staff, parents/guardians, and children who are symptomatic or have been advised to self-isolate by the local public health unit, must not attend school. Asymptomatic individuals awaiting results may not need to be excluded and should follow the advice of public health.

Symptoms to look for include but are not limited to: fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, runny nose, nasal congestion, headache, and a general feeling of being unwell.

Children in particular should be monitored for atypical symptoms and signs of COVID-19.

The provincial screening tool is updated frequently based on what is happening with COVID cases and vaccine rates provincially.

The Middlesex London Health Unit COVID-19 Decision Tool for Child Care Centres and Parents/Caregivers is the most up-to-date tool you can use as a resource along with screening your child daily. Please refer to this document for guidance if your child is unwell. It is updated on a regular basis.

If a child displays a symptom/symptoms while they are in care at the school:

- The child will be isolated immediately from all other children, with one staff within a dedicated area and/or outside. If tolerated, the child can wear a mask.
- The staff supervising the symptomatic child must wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including a mask, eye protection and gloves if physical distancing is not possible.
- The parent/guardian must be notified to arrange for pick-up of the child as soon as possible. If the parent/guardian can not be reached, an emergency contact person will be contacted to pick up the child. Every effort will be made to keep the child comfortable until an approved person arrives to take the child home.
- If it appears that the child requires immediate medical attention, the child will be taken to the hospital by ambulance and examined by a legally qualified medical practitioner or a nurse registered under the Health Disciplines Act. R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 262, s. 34 (3).

Thorough environmental cleaning of the space that the child was isolated within will be conducted immediately once the child has been picked up.

- The local public health unit will provide any further direction on testing, isolation of close contacts and notification of families.

Symptomatic Child or Staff: Any child or staff with a symptom/symptoms must stay/return home. It is recommended that the symptomatic child or staff receive a COVID-19 test.

- **If the COVID-19 test is positive:** the parent/guardian of the symptomatic child or the symptomatic staff will be contacted by the Middlesex-London Health Unit regarding the positive test results and further direction. If required, the Middlesex-London Health Unit will contact the school to begin contact tracing and provide further direction. For all positive cases, the Middlesex-London Health Unit must be consulted and provide clearance for the child or staff to return to the school. Household contacts of cases should follow direction of the local health unit.
- **If the COVID-19 test is negative:** the formerly symptomatic child or formerly symptomatic staff cannot return to the school until they have been symptom free for over 24 hours.
- **If the parent/guardian of a symptomatic child refuses to have the child receive a COVID-19 test,** the child must remain in isolation for 10 days from the onset of the symptom(s) (unless longer is recommended by the Middlesex-London Health Unit) prior to returning to school and non-vaccinated household members must isolate for 14 days.
- **If the symptomatic staff refuses to receive a COVID-19 test,** the staff must remain in isolation for 10 days from the onset of the symptom(s) (unless longer is recommended by the Middlesex-London Health Unit) prior to returning to school.

When the school becomes aware of any confirmed cases of COVID-19 for any of the above individuals, the school will work with the health unit and notify any impacted families via email or phone call as soon as possible.

The Ministry of Health updated the COVID-19 Guidance: School Case, Contact, and Outbreak Management to include the following:

Fully vaccinated:

- Asymptomatic individuals, who previously tested positive (within the past 90 days who have since been cleared), high-risk contacts, household members of symptomatic individuals, or contacts of a confirmed or probable case:
 - DO NOT have to quarantine
 - SHOULD be tested as soon as possible
- Symptomatic individuals, who previously tested positive (within the past 90 days who have since been cleared), household members of symptomatic individuals or contacts of a confirmed or probable case:
 - MUST self-isolate for 10 days from their last exposure to the symptomatic individual until they receive a negative COVID-19 test result or are provided with an alternative diagnosis by a healthcare professional.

- SHOULD be tested as soon as possible.

Not fully vaccinated:

- Asymptomatic individuals, who previously tested positive (within the past 90 days who have since been cleared), high-risk contacts, household members of symptomatic individuals, contacts of a confirmed or probable case:
 - MUST self-isolate for 10 days from their last exposure to the symptomatic individual (regardless of negative COVID-19 test result).
 - SHOULD be tested on or after DAY SEVEN of their isolation period.

If tested before Day Seven of self-isolation, a repeat test on or after Day Seven is recommended.

Exposures:

- The isolation period and testing dates for asymptomatic individuals begins the day after their last known exposure date to a confirmed case.
- For symptomatic cases at/around the time of their positive result, the start of their isolation period is based on their symptom onset date.
- For unknown exposures, the isolation period should begin from the last exposure to the cohort.

If a sibling or parent is sick...

- While waiting for test results, all household members who are not fully vaccinated must stay home until COVID-19 has been ruled out.

Delayed Start

- If you are choosing not to start school right away, we are not able to provide a home-based learning program, however you may touch base with the classroom teachers to get suggestions on how to support your child. We are focusing our efforts on a safe and smooth transition back to the class and supporting those students with the care and support they need in person. We do not have surplus staff to provide a hybrid online classroom.

Possibility of a Future School Closure

- Both the Toddler and Casa programs were fully functional without any interruptions last year or school closures. We are hopeful we will realize similar outcomes this year. Closures at this level are mandated by the provincial government.
- If we are mandated to be closed, we will follow the directives given to us regarding programming. We already have the level-specific frameworks ready to go in order to quickly shift to a home-base learning program, if required.

- Parents will need to opt into the home-based learning program to have access to it, if mandated refunds are issued again. Parents who opt into the program will receive a different refund level.
- If the school has to close again, we have learned that staff will still be able to access their classrooms to support lessons being delivered, and ensure strong technology capabilities.