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## COVID-19 Preparedness Plan, 2021-2022 School Year –

The following guidance is intended to provide students, families, staff, and guests pertinent information regarding Covid-19 protocols for its employees, students, and guests.

Schools received communication on July 28, 2021, Minnesota Department of Education Commissioner, Heather Mueller, providing guidance to districts in the following document: [Best Practice Recommendations for COVID-19 Prevention in Schools for the 2021-22 School Year \(PDF\)](#).

New Discoveries Montessori Academy is committed to providing a safe and healthy setting for all. The following COVID-19 Preparedness Plan is in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and exists as a resource for students, families, staff, and guests. To mitigate the potential for transmission of COVID-19 in our school and in the communities we serve, students, families, staff, and guests must all participate in a cooperative effort to establish and maintain everyone's safety and health.

We understand the volatility of the COVID-19 pandemic and will respond with appropriate safety measures if local conditions change, or if guidance from our local, state, or federal authorities require a change in our plan. If this occurs, we will communicate the changes with our families and update our plan accordingly.



## OPERATIONS AND ACADEMICS

### Face Coverings

- Face coverings are recommended for all staff and students while in a school building or school facility; however, they are not required. Essential visitors will be encouraged to wear a face covering during the student day when in a school facility. For visitors attending indoor or outdoor activities outside of the school day, a face covering is recommended; however not required.
- According to [Best Practice Recommendations for COVID-19 Prevention in Schools for the 2021-22 School Year \(PDF\)](#) face coverings are required for anyone riding on school transportation. [According to the CDC](#), the following are exempt from this requirement:
  - A child under the age of 2 years.
  - [A person with a disability](#) who cannot wear a mask, or cannot safely wear a mask, because of the disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. 12101 *et seq.*);
  - A person for whom wearing a mask would create a risk to workplace health, safety, or job duty as determined by the relevant workplace safety guidelines or federal regulations.

### Safe Physical Distancing

- Safe physical distancing will be practiced to the extent possible.
- Indoors
  - Students, staff, and visitors should strive to maintain a minimum of three feet or if possible six feet of physical distancing.
  - Students will remain in “cohorts” to the extent possible.
- Visitors attending indoor or outdoor activities will be encouraged to sit as family units and practice safe physical distancing to the extent possible.

## Screening for Covid-19, Isolating, and Reporting of Illness

- Staff are required to self-screen each day before arriving to work for any Covid-19 symptoms and stay home if ill (see appendix i). Staff must report their absence to the front office. Staff will be contacted by district administration for further information and guidance. In the event of feeling ill at work, staff must report to their direct supervisor if they are experiencing Covid-19 symptoms and need to leave work. Staff should isolate themselves in the building in the event they cannot leave work immediately.
  - Staff exhibiting one or more common Covid-19 symptoms (new loss of taste or smell; difficulty breathing; fever of 100.4 F or higher; new onset or worsening cough) must isolate themselves from school/school activities for the recommended MDH period from the onset of symptoms or receive a negative Covid-19 test.
- Students (with help from parents/guardians) are to screen each day for Covid-19 symptoms before arriving for school or school activity (see appendix i). Students are to remain home if ill. Parents/Guardians should call the school office staff to report an absence due to illness. In the event of feeling ill while at school, students will go to the health care office.
  - Students exhibiting one or more common Covid-19 symptoms (new loss of taste or smell; difficulty breathing; fever of 100.4 F or higher; new onset or worsening cough) must isolate themselves from school/school activities for the recommended MDH period from the onset of symptoms or receive a negative Covid-19 test.
  - Students and Staff will have their temperature checked at the start of every school/workday.

### Screening for Covid-19, Isolating, and Reporting of Illness (*continued*)

- When school administration is notified of a confirmed case of Covid-19 involving a staff member or student in one of our school programs or school activities, administration will gather information and follow Minnesota Department of Health and Minnesota Department of Education guidelines. Staff and students who are confirmed to have Covid-19 must isolate themselves from school/school activities for the recommended MDH isolation period. Staff must report their absence through the absence management system.
  - Administration will inform staff and students if they are a close contact while attending a school program or activity to a person who tested positive Covid-19.
  - Students and staff identified as close contacts while attending a school program or activity will not be required to quarantine; however, they should watch closely for symptoms and may want to test 5 days or later after contact (it can take up to 14 days from exposure to show symptoms).
- Updated information regarding applicable isolation and quarantine periods is located on the MDH website:  
<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/close.html>
- Per Minnesota Rule 4605.7070 as indicated in [Best Practice Recommendations for COVID-19 Prevention in Schools for the 2021-22 School Year \(PDF\)](#) NDMA Administration will report confirmed cases of Covid-19 to the MDH.



## Food Service and Nutrition

- **Safe Physical Distancing and Hygiene**
  - Students will be asked to practice safe physical distancing to the extent possible while eating meals at school. Students will remain in their cohorts while eating, whether in the multi-purpose room or in the classroom.

## Transportation

- Children of the same family will be asked to share a seat(s).
- One student will sit per seat to the extent possible.
- Students will be assigned seats on school buses and school vehicles.
- Buses and vans will be disinfected regularly.
- All people on school transportation must wear a face covering. Please see previous section "Face Coverings" for exemption information.

## Cleaning and Hygiene Protocols

- Routine building cleaning will be established following the [CDC Routine Cleaning](#) guidance. Students and staff will be reminded of good handwashing practices, covering faces when coughing or sneezing, minimizing touching of surfaces, and minimizing sharing of materials.
- Social distancing will be practiced. Signage to remind students and staff of social distancing and good hygiene practices will be conspicuously placed in each school building.

### **Cleaning and Hygiene Protocols** *(continued)*

- Personal protective equipment is strongly recommended for staff providing direct student support services to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in situations that involve close, physical, or prolonged contact. This PPE will be made available to staff by the school district.

### **Workplace Building and Ventilation Protocol**

- Operation of the building in which the workplace is located, includes necessary sanitation, assessment, and maintenance of building systems, including water, plumbing, electrical, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems. The maximum amount of fresh air is being brought into the workplace, air recirculation is being limited, and ventilation systems are being properly used and maintained. Steps are also being taken to minimize air flow blowing across people.

### **Drop-off, Pick-up and Delivery Practices and Protocol**

- Families may drop-off or pick up materials for students in the main office of each building. Buildings may have designated areas for drop-off of materials for families' convenience.
- Commercial deliveries will follow building procedures to contact the main offices or building managers to schedule deliveries.

### **Communications and Training Practices and Protocol**

- This COVID-19 Preparedness Plan will be communicated via email to all workers and any necessary training will be provided. Additional communication and training will be ongoing.
- All staff, students, visitors, and families will be advised not to enter the school buildings, facilities, or transportation if they are experiencing symptoms or have contracted COVID-19.

## COVID-19 Daily Checklist

### **Complete this daily self-checklist prior to coming the start of your school/workday**

Do you have:

- *One* of the following symptoms:
- new onset or worsening cough
- difficulty breathing
- fever (100.4 F or higher)
- new loss of taste or smell

If you have at least one of the more common symptoms of Covid-19, stay home:

- Report if you have Covid-19 symptoms or Covid-19 exposures to The NDMA Office. Based on what you report, you will be contacted by the school staff with further instructions. Please be as detailed as possible in the absence comment; information will be held confidential, but it will help Administration ensure all Employees and Students are as safe as possible.

**Stay home if any of the following are true:**

- If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 and need to complete the isolation period; or
- If any health department or doctor or other health care provider contacted you, and said you should stay home; or
- If you are symptomatic (have at least one more common symptom of COVID-19 as listed above) and/or are currently waiting for COVID-19 test results.