



Hatfield Montessori Preschool

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HATFIELD MONTESSORI PRESCHOOL

COVID-19 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

JUNE 2020

PREAMBLE

Ensuring the health and safety of the children, staff and parents in our school community is of paramount importance when school reopens, following the easing of COVID-19 national lock down regulations. We are committed to compliance, cooperation and protecting those within our school community.

This document is developed with reference to:

1. Standard Operating Procedures and Guidelines for an Early Childhood Development, Programme and / or Partial Care Facility that provides an After-School Service, on Measures to Address, Prevent and Combat the Spread of COVID-19. (Dept of Social Development; 23 June 2020)
2. Circular regarding preparation and planning for the reopening of early childhood development programmes, and / or partial care facilities that provide an after school service, subject to the announcement of a date by the Minister of Social Development (Dept of Social Development; 21 June 2020)
3. Direction by the Minister of Employment and Labour in terms of Regulation 4(10) of the Regulations R480 of 29 April 2020 issued by the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs in terms of Section 27(2) of the Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act no 57 of 2002)
4. The World Health Organisation's (WHO) "Key Messages and Actions for COVID-19 Prevention and Control in Schools" (March 2020)
5. Covid-19 Recovery Proposals 23 April 2020 Final 2.1 (NAISA)

PLEASE NOTE:

The scientific knowledge of COVID-19 continues to evolve. Therefore, Policies and Procedures may need reviewing as new information becomes available from the relevant Government authorities.

Protocols and Plan of Action

In line with regulations and recommendations detailed in the documents mentioned above, we will implement the following plan of action:

1. Heather Napier (Principal) will act as the COVID-19 Compliance Officer, responsible for ensuring all policies, procedures and plans of action are followed.
2. Every member of the school community, as well as every visitor, is required to strictly adhere to the COVID-19 rules, regulations, policies, protocols, and procedures. The school shall have the right to refuse entry to any person not willing to comply with any aspect of the regulations and/or policies, procedures, and protocols.
3. The school reserves the right to make changes as required by law, and/or for practical purposes. Notification of any changes will be communicated to all parents via email / community sms.
4. All staff, including cleaning and maintenance staff, will undergo training in all policies, procedures, and protocols prior to the re-opening of school.
5. The school will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected prior to reopening. Each staff member has been supplied with Personal Protective Equipment, including fabric face masks, face shield and hand sanitiser. Clean running water and soap is available for hand washing.
6. No sick children, teachers or other staff will be allowed at school. In particular, anyone who has a temperature, cough and/or difficulty breathing will not be allowed at school without a medical certificate explaining the nature of the problem (eg. allergies).
7. On arrival at school daily, and within a designated screening area at the school entrance, all staff and parents will complete a screening form for COVID-19 symptoms. Parents will also need to complete a daily screening form for their child/ren. Each child's temperature will be taken by means of a non-contact thermometer, and their hands and shoes will be sprayed with sanitiser. Parents are requested to wait until the temperature reading has been confirmed as normal (below 38°C) before leaving their child/ren at school.
8. Only **ONE** parent may enter the school parking area for dropping off or fetching of their child/ren.
9. Parents may not enter the school classroom or veranda area unless absolutely necessary, and then only with permission from the Principal, and in full compliance with protocol (wearing a face mask, temperature checked, hands and shoes sanitised, and physical distancing of 1.5m maintained).
10. After screening, a teacher will accompany a child into the classroom and go with them to the bathroom where they will wash their hands with soap and water before doing anything else. Thereafter the child may put away their bag in their locker.
11. Children may bring only essentials items to school in their bags, so as to limit the amount of "stuff" traveling between school and home each day. Essentials include a change of clothes and their school communication book.
12. All adults are required to wear a fabric face mask and / or face visor at all times whilst on the school property.

13. According to the Dept of Social Development's Standard Operating Procedures, only children of 7 years and older **must** wear a face mask at school. Therefore, children of 3 – 6 years of age are not required to wear a face mask whilst attending school. However, they are required to wear a face mask when arriving at and when departing from school each day. Should parents prefer their child/ren to wear a face mask whilst at school, then that choice will be respected.
14. It is important to note that should a child become ill or develop symptoms during the school day, then s/he would be required to wear a face mask for the purpose of moving between the Isolation Room area, bathroom area or for exiting the school property. Parents are therefore requested to supply the school with two face masks that can be kept and used at school when and if needed. The child's name needs to be clearly marked on each mask.
15. As part of our daily Grace and Courtesy presentations, the children will be shown how to correctly put on and take off a face mask, as well as how to wear it correctly over their nose and mouth.
16. Children and staff will be required to wash their hands at least every two hours during the school day. Clean water and soap will be provided and proper hand washing for at least 20 seconds will be monitored. Disposable paper towel will be used for hand drying. The use of fabric towels is prohibited. Hand sanitiser will be used between hand washes, and after sneezing or using a tissue.
17. The children's temperatures will be checked and recorded daily on arrival at school, as well as at 10:30, 12:30, 14:30 and 16:30.
18. Any child who develops a fever (38°C or above) or possible COVID-19 symptoms (eg a cough, sore throat, difficulty with breathing) will be isolated immediately in a dedicated COVID-19 Isolation Room, accompanied by a teacher. Parents will be contacted and are required to fetch their child as soon as possible (ideally within 30 minutes and no longer than 45 minutes from the time of being contacted).
19. Daily Grace and Courtesy lessons will be presented to remind the children of correct hand washing and sanitising procedures, as well as correct hygiene etiquette for sneezing, coughing, using and disposing of a tissue and maintaining a safe distance of 1m from others.
20. The school will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected at the start and end of each day. Classroom tables, chairs and learning materials both inside the classroom and outside will be cleaned regularly during the school day.
21. All food preparation activities that were carried out in the Practical Life area, as well as baking, will be suspended until further notice.
22. Drinking cups will be clearly labelled with a child's name and will be for that child's use only. This is the routine that the children are used to at school. Until further notice, the children will not be allowed to serve themselves at snack time – they will be served with bread, spread and fruit.

23. Children staying for After School Care will still be provided with a cooked lunch prepared at school. Good hygiene and safe food handling practices will be monitored and maintained in the preparation and serving of food. Appropriate distance between the children at snack time and lunch time will be maintained to prevent the sharing of food and/or utensils.
24. Each child will be provided with a cup, side plate, bowl and spoon with their name on and for their sole use at snack and lunch times.
25. The bathroom / toilet area will be thoroughly cleaned at the start and end of each day, sanitised after each use and cleaned at least every two hours.
26. Physical distancing will be encouraged at play times as far as possible. Children are advised to stay 1m apart from others. Adults in the environment need to maintain a physical distance of at least 1.5m apart. When sitting for group activities, such as story time, children will be seated at least 1m apart. We will use developmentally appropriate ways of reinforcing this such as markings on the floors etc.
27. Outside playtimes will be staggered so that there are a controlled number of children outside at any given time, with ample space for physical distancing. In addition, lessons may take place outdoors to allow for more space in the open air, weather permitting.
28. Any visitors to the property will be met at the gate. Should they need to come onto the property for a delivery, they will be required to complete the visitor's screening form, providing us with their name, ID number, contact phone number and car registration. All visitors must wear masks when on the property. Only essential visitors will be allowed on the school property.
29. Initial contact with prospective parents will be made via telephone / WhatsApp call. School tours for prospective parents will be conducted on a Saturday morning, in allotted time slots, and with strict adherence to safety protocols.
30. All parent and community meetings, fundraisers and/or gatherings are cancelled until further notice. Technology will be used for communication in the interim.
31. Morning drop offs will be staggered to prevent numbers of parents and children arriving at school together. Times will be discussed with parents to best suit their needs. Parents are requested to stick to these time slots in the interests of making the morning arrival and screening run smoothly and safely for all concerned.
32. Parents collecting their child/ren before 1pm may do so at the main classroom entrance. Parents are requested to use the veranda gate for afternoon collecting of children. Parents may not enter the school classroom or veranda area unless there is a specific need to do so and only with permission. Children will be asked to wash their hands with soap and water before collecting their bag and leaving school.
33. While dropping off and collecting children, parents should not congregate at the gates and must please maintain physical distancing of at least 1.5m and wear face masks. Please leave promptly once drop-off / collection has taken place.

34. School reopening days will be staggered over three weeks. There will be a new intake each week, starting on a Monday. Preference will be given to Grade R children returning first. Thereafter, in line with Montessori principles, we will practice vertical grouping (ie mixed ages) returning together in an intake. Parents will be asked as to which intake they would like to use for their child/ren returning to school.
35. Parents using transport providers to drop off / fetch their child/ren from school, have the responsibility to ensure that the transport provider follows the required Department of Transport Regulations and hygiene protocols with regards to Learner Transport.
36. Absenteeism will be monitored and recorded and, if any trends appear, local health authorities will be contacted immediately for advice.
37. Our extramural activities, Soccer Starz and Yoga, are suspended for the time being. They will be reintroduced once staff and children are reintegrated into the school routine, and will operate under strict safety protocols.
38. Accurate and reliably sourced COVID-19 information will be shared within the school community. We will not entertain fake news, unqualified opinions or fear-mongering with regards to the coronavirus and COVID-19. Discrimination towards those who have become infected with Covid-19 and recovered from it is not acceptable, and will be addressed and discussed should it arise.
39. Teachers will be particularly alert for any negative emotional or social changes in the children's behaviour, particularly as a result of anxiety or stress related to COVID-19 and appropriate measures will be taken to address this. Parents will be informed of any concerns.
40. There will be opportunities for the children to share any coronavirus / COVID-19 questions, concerns, anxieties and experiences they may have. We hope to support all aspects of a child's wellness – physical, social, emotional, cognitive and spiritual, through discussion, learning materials, stories etc.
41. Staff will be trained in COVID-19 safety measures and protocols prior to school reopening.
42. It is recommended that, on arrival home from school, hands are immediately washed thoroughly with soap and water, clothes changed and shoes sanitised / removed.
43. We are committed to the safety and wellness of every person in our school community. We will endeavour to do our best to uphold Montessori principles and support appropriate child development under these unique and challenging circumstances. We value each person's commitment to do his/her part in keeping safe during this pandemic.

Addendum 1: These checklists, provided by WHO in reference document, will be placed strategically throughout the school and used by the appropriate people.

With thanks to the South African Montessori Association and Samantha Streak for providing guidelines for this document.

ADDENDUM 1

Checklists extracted from the World Health Organisation's (WHO) "Key Messages and Actions for COVID-19 Prevention and Control in Schools (March 2020)

Checklist for School Administrators, Teachers and Staff

1. Promote regular hand washing and positive hygiene behaviours and monitor their uptake.
 - Ensure adequate and clean toilet facilities.
 - Ensure soap and water is available at age-appropriate hand washing stations.
 - Encourage frequent and thorough hand washing (at least 20 seconds).
 - Place hand sanitisers in toilets, classrooms, halls and near exits where possible.
2. Clean and disinfect school buildings, classrooms and especially water and sanitation facilities at least once a day, particularly surfaces that are touched by many people (railings, lunch tables, equipment, door and window handles, toys and teaching and learning aids etc).
 - Use sodium hypochlorite at 0.5% for disinfecting surfaces and 70% ethyl alcohol for disinfection of small items, and ensure appropriate equipment for staff.
3. Increase air flow and ventilation where climate allows (open windows, use air conditioning where available etc).
4. Post signs encouraging good hand and respiratory hygiene practices.
5. Ensure refuse is removed daily and disposed of safely.

Checklist for Parents / Caregivers and Community Members

1. Monitor your child's health and keep them home from school if they are ill.
2. Teach and model good hygiene practices for your children.
 - Wash your hands with soap and safe water frequently. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser with at least 60% alcohol.
Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
 - Ensure that safe drinking water is available and toilets are clean and available at home.
 - Ensure refuse is safely collected, stored and disposed of.
 - Cough and sneeze into a tissue or your elbow and avoid touching your face, eyes, mouth and nose.

3. Encourage your children to ask questions and express their feelings with you and their teachers. Remember that your child may have different reactions to stress; be patient and understanding.
4. Prevent stigma by using facts and reminding children to be considerate of one another.
5. Coordinate with the school to receive information and ask how you can support school safety efforts (through parent-teacher committees etc).

Checklist for Students and Children

1. In a situation like this, it is normal to feel sad, worried, confused, scared or angry. Know that you are not alone and talk to someone you trust, like your parent or teacher, so that you can help keep yourself and your school safe and healthy.
 - Ask questions, educate yourself and get information from reliable sources.
2. Protect yourself and others.
 - Wash your hands frequently, always with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
 - Remember to not touch your face.
 - Do not share cups, eating utensils, food or drinks with others.
3. Be a leader in keeping yourself, your school, family and community healthy.
 - Share what you learn about preventing disease with your family and friends, especially with younger children.
 - Model good practices, such as sneezing or coughing into your elbow and washing your hands, especially for younger family members.
4. Don't stigmatise your peers or tease anyone about being sick; remember that the virus doesn't follow geographical boundaries, ethnicities, age or ability or gender.
5. Tell your parents, another family member, or a caregiver if you feel sick, and ask to stay home.