

Austin Montessori School

Operating Plan Fall 2020

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Overview

Through the continued work of our school's administration, Risk Management Team, and Board of Trustees, we have put together a plan for fully reopening our campuses for the Fall 2020 semester. This document represents an overview of our planning and protocols for the Fall.

Attending school involves daily human contact among children and staff, who will then be in contact with others in their own homes. We acknowledge, therefore, that reopening AMS campuses entails some increased risk of contracting the COVID-19 virus for all concerned. Our decision to reopen our campuses recognizes that for AMS families and staff, that risk is balanced against the educational, social, economic and other costs of remaining closed. Also, our school must reopen with new health and safety protocols, many of which have already been successfully implemented over the summer, to ensure we do everything we can to responsibly mitigate that risk to the extent possible.

This document explains the policies and procedures we are employing to mitigate COVID-related risks at school at each level. Our approach is built around intensive new health monitoring and screening practices, as well as new classroom/school day procedures designed to reduce the number of contacts during the school day by limiting group sizes and interactions. We believe reopening with these new protocols is an important step in living responsibly with this virus.

Additionally, this plan represents a "long view" of the virus and its implications for our school. That is, we believe our plan is sustainable over the course of the entire school year and will enable us to seamlessly transition from being on campus to distance learning when necessary. The plan also outlines a flexible approach to the school calendar, identifying holidays, in-service days, and summer 2021 as potential make-up days for days not spent on campus for some levels. We have created these policies with the acknowledgment that we are very likely going to be navigating a changing landscape, thus:

- Our policies must be flexible and nimble in responding to new information, and we must be willing to refine approaches when specific policies are not working.
- It is critically important that we develop strategies that can be revised and adapted according to the level of viral transmission in the school and the greater community and based on close communication with state and/or local public health authorities.

As such, the plan should be considered dynamic and subject to refinement as we move forward.

In sum, AMS has concluded that reopening our campuses under these conditions is in the best interest of our children, families, and staff. The information in this document will provide clarity around the practices and procedures AMS has established to minimize exposure within our community but in no way warrants that COVID-19 or other communicable diseases will not occur through participation in our programs.

Program Summaries

Youngest Children's Community Program Summary

Classroom Capacity

We are able to accommodate all children enrolled in our Youngest Children's Communities and maintain the recommended increased space per child. Children will continue to stay in their individual communities with fixed regular staff.

Hours

Hummingbird Garden

Arrival: 8:00 - 8:15 am

Departure: 3:15 - 3:30 pm

Butterfly Garden

Arrival: 8:15 - 8:30 am

Departure: 3:00 - 3:15 pm

Flexible Calendar

During any *campus closure* for COVID-19, we will implement a flexible calendar and add days into the year in order to make up some of the missed days on campus. In this scenario, we will use available in-service, conference, and extended holidays, including summer, to make up days. Calendar adjustments will be communicated as needed.

At Home Learning

During campus closures, AMS will provide resources and support for families to support learning at home. AMS At Home Learning will include:

- Parent-guide conferences to discuss each child's progress and provide suggestions on how best to continue the child's learning at home.
- Parent Community Zoom gatherings each week.
- Office hours each day to be responsive to parent questions. Appointment sign-ups will be provided.
- Plans, ideas, and packets of resources for age-appropriate activities at home.

Parent Communication

Email and phone

Each guide has a school email address for parent communications. Guides will respond to emails within 24 hours during the week.

Conferences and Observations

Conferences will be held by the guide via zoom as needed or as requested by the guide or parent. Regular parent observations can be accommodated using the observation booths for each community.

Parent Gatherings

Parent gatherings will occur via zoom and will be communicated to families at least 1 week in advance.

Children's House Program Summary

Classroom Capacity

Based on the current TEA guidelines and supporting recommendations from the CDC, the classroom capacity is 45 square feet per child. In order to operate in compliance with these guidelines, our class sizes (cohort groups) will be no more than 22 children. Children will continue to stay in their individual communities with a fixed regular staff and not mix with other cohort groups. This will require us to create a fifth Children's House community on our Sunset Trail campus - Juniper Cottage. Juniper Cottage will be located at 5002 Sunset Trail.

The community outdoor environments will be utilized extensively for children's work spaces. The outdoor environments will be prepared to be used as work spaces for many work choices while the child is at school.

Hours

Great Northern Campus

Pomegranate Cottage

Arrival: 8:00 - 8:15 am

Departure: 3:15 - 3:30 pm

Sunset Trail Campus

Redbud Cottage

Arrival: 8:15 - 8:30 am

Noon Departure: 12:00 - 12:10 pm

Departure: 3:00 - 3:15 pm

Laurel Cottage

Arrival: 8:15 - 8:30 am

Noon Departure: 12:00 - 12:10 pm

Departure: 3:00 - 3:15 pm

Cypress Cottage

Arrival: 8:00 - 8:15 am

Departure: 3:15 - 3:30 pm

Magnolia Cottage

Arrival: 8:00 - 8:15 am

Departure: 3:15 - 3:30 pm

Juniper Cottage

Arrival: 8:00 - 8:15 am

Departure: 3:15 - 3:30 pm

Early Arrival and Casita

We will not be able to provide early arrival or Casita after 3 pm under the current conditions. Families can choose “Casita” from 12-3 pm and children will remain in their community for lunch and nap.

Flexible Calendar for regular year Children’s House communities

During any *campus closure* for COVID-19, we will implement a flexible calendar and add days into the year in order to make up some of the missed days on campus. In this scenario, we will use available in-service, conference, and extended holidays, including summer to make up days. Calendar adjustments will be communicated as needed.

At Home Learning

During campus closures, AMS will provide resources and support for families to support Learning at Home. Learning at Home will include:

- Parent-guide conferences to discuss each child’s progress and provide suggestions on how best to continue the child’s learning at home.
- Parent Community Zoom gatherings every other week.
- Office hours each day to be responsive to parent questions. Appointment sign-ups will be provided.
- Plans, ideas, and packets of resources for age-appropriate activities at home.
- Regular, virtual check-ins with the children.

Parent Communication

Email and phone

Each guide has a school email address for parent communications. Guides will respond to emails within 24 hours during the week. Guides do not respond to phone messages during the day. Time-sensitive contact with guides can be facilitated by calling the main office and/or emailing info@austinmontessori.org

Conferences and Observations

Conferences will be held by the guide via zoom as needed or as requested by the guide or parent.

Regular parent observations cannot be accommodated at this time.

Parent Gatherings

Parent gatherings will occur via zoom and will be communicated to families at least 1 week in advance.

Elementary Program Summary

Classroom Capacity

Based on the current TEA guidelines and supporting recommendations from the CDC, the classroom capacity is 45 square feet per child. In order to operate in compliance with these guidelines, our class sizes (cohort groups) will be no more than 22 children. Children will continue to stay in their individual communities with a fixed regular staff and not mix with other cohort groups. This will require us to create a fifth Elementary community on our Sunset Trail campus. The new community will be located in the former Clubhouse space and will host a community of 6-11-year-olds. The Association Montessori International (AMI) recognizes two elementary instructional models: a 6-12 classroom or a 6-9, 9-12 split (Early and Upper Elementary). The AMI Montessori Elementary curriculum is a six-year curriculum, thus all of our guides are trained to work with 6-12 year-olds.

The community outdoor environments will be utilized extensively for children's workspaces. The outdoor environments will be prepared to be used as workspaces for most work choices while the child is at school.

Hours

Great Northern Campus

Birdsong Community

Arrival: 8:15 - 8:30 am

Departure: 3:00 - 3:15 pm

Sunset Trail Campus

Arrival and departure for the elementary at the Sunset Trail campus will be staggered with arrival beginning as early as 8:00 am and departure ending as late as 3:30 pm.

Early Arrival and Clubhouse

We will not be able to provide these programs under the current conditions.

Flexible Calendar

During any period of extended *campus closure* for COVID-19, we will implement a flexible calendar and add days into the year to make up some of the missed on-campus days. In this scenario, we will use available in-service, conference, and extended holidays, including summer, to make up days. Calendar adjustments will be communicated as needed.

AMS at Home Learning

During any necessary campus closures or whole classroom quarantines that occur over the course of the year, students in the Elementary will transition to AMS at Home Learning.

AMS at Home Learning will strive to reproduce the components and structure present when school is in session on campus and in person. Small group lessons are balanced with engaging independent work. Components of AMS at Home include:

- Daily, guide-led gatherings
- Small group lessons
- Regular feedback and guidance of children's work in individual meetings
- Zoom work periods following lessons with the guide for help and work support
- Guides help facilitate collaborative projects and connect children with each other within and across groups to Zoom and facilitate big work
- Provide student accountability
 - Weekly student check-ins
 - Individualized check-ins
 - Work plans are created and checked - work turned in via Google Classroom
 - Children presenting work or projects

Playground/Outdoor Spaces

The community outdoor environments will be utilized extensively for children's workspaces. The outdoor environments will be prepared to be used as workspaces for most work choices while the child is at school. Cohorts will each have access to playgrounds and equipment on a set rotation so that we can avoid mixing groups.

Parent Contact/Communication/Resources

Email and phone

Each guide has a school email address for parent communications. Guides will respond to emails within 24 hours during the week. Guides do not respond to phone messages during the day. Time-sensitive contact with guides can be facilitated by calling the main office and/or emailing info@austinmontessori.org

Conferences and Observations

Conferences will be held by the guide via zoom as needed or as requested by the guide or parent. Regular parent observations cannot be accommodated at this time.

Parent Gatherings

Parent gatherings will occur via zoom and will be communicated to families at least 1 week in advance.

Early Arrival and Club Mundi

We will not be able to provide these programs under the current conditions.

Food

Students will bring lunches, with all necessary utensils, each day. We will not begin food preparation until we have had more time to evaluate the added requirements for safe food handling and ensure that our community is prepared and trained in the [safe food practices that mitigate COVID-19 risks](#).

Trips

At this time, the traditional Gaines Creek trips are canceled for reasons of safety; however, the Gaines Creek team will be monitoring the COVID-19 situation and exploring opportunities to provide similar experiences.

Parent Communication

We will continue to stay in close contact with parents via the MyAMS portal.

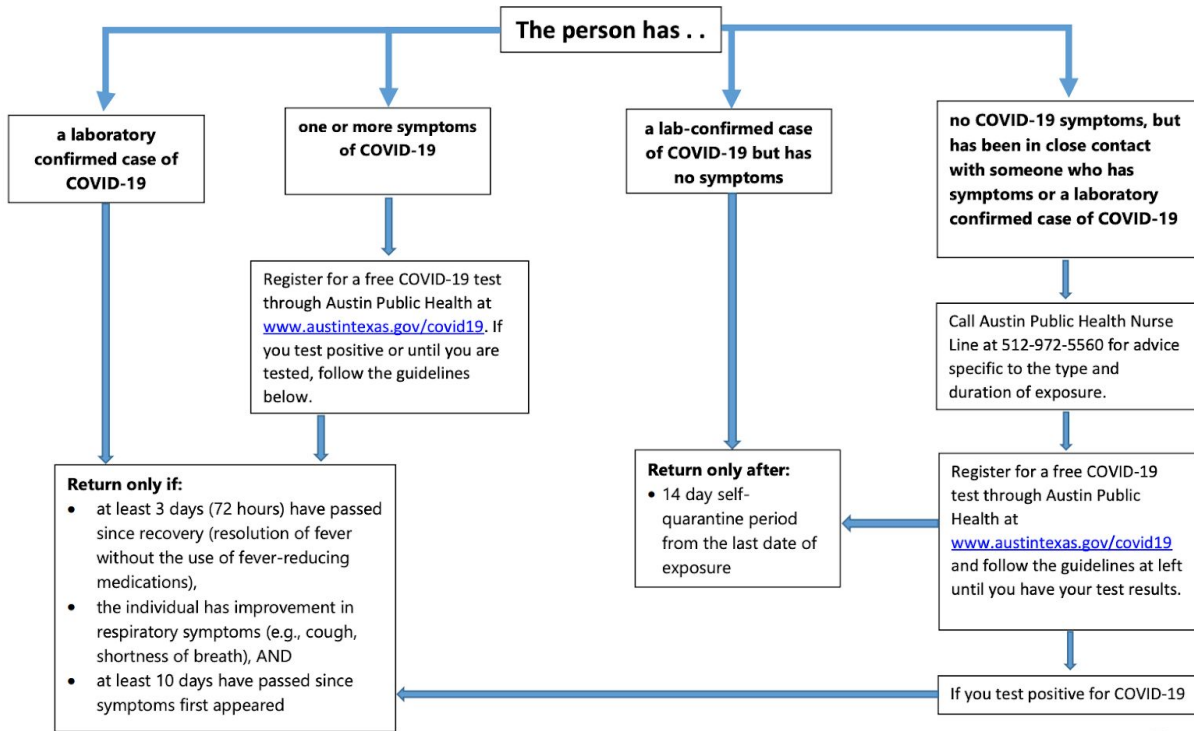
Staff will provide guidelines to parents for establishing an at-home learning environment to support their students and we encourage you to check in with the AMS guides as needed.

Health and Safety

Austin Public Health Flowchart for exposure, symptoms, and cases

These flowcharts provide clarity for steps to take in the event of exposure, symptoms or confirmed cases of COVID-19. For more details regarding the AMS policy and procedure, visit the section in this document [COVID-19 Symptoms, Exposure and Cases in School Community](#)

When can a child or staff member return to campus?



5/29/2020



Training

Staff must be familiar with and receive ongoing training regarding State, CDC, and City of Austin recommendations and requirements.

[State of Texas Minimum Standard Health Protocols](#)

[CDC Guidance for Schools and Child Care](#)

All staff will be trained on all topics in this operating plan. In addition, staff will take the following training:

[Special Considerations for Infection Control during COVID-19](#)

[Providing High-Quality Experiences during COVID-19 for Emergency Child Care Settings](#) (Early Childhood)

Face Coverings

Face coverings are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected but does not have symptoms. Face coverings are not surgical masks, respirators, or other medical personal protective equipment.

Staff

Staff will be required to wear face coverings at the following times:

- Assisted arrival and departure
- When performing health screening of staff and children
- When working in the classroom except during presentations that require clear articulation and visibility of mouth such as:
 - Early Childhood language exercises and presentations
- When assisting an ill child or staff member

Early Childhood Children

Early Childhood children will not be required to wear face coverings.

Elementary Children and Adolescents

Elementary children and adolescents will be required to wear face coverings at the following times:

- During arrival and departure
- Inside the buildings

Parents and visitors

Parents are required to wear a face-covering at assisted arrival and departure and at any other time while on campus. We are currently not able to accommodate regular on-campus visits by parents or other guests. Visitors will be limited to emergency and governmental personnel and parents, on a limited basis.

Physical Distancing Strategies

Early Childhood

Austin Montessori School does not expect that young children will distance themselves from other children or adults while at school. Young children learn by engaging with their environment, which includes the other people in it. Austin Montessori School will employ the following physical distancing strategies in our early childhood communities:

- Communities will consist of stable groups of no more than 12 children in the Youngest Children's Communities and 22 children in the Children's House Communities. Stable means that the same children and their consistent adults are in the same group each day.
- Children shall not change from one group to another during the day.
- Groups shall not mix with each other.
- The guide and assistant will remain with a single group each day. In the case of illness, a designated substitute for the group will assist with caregiving.
- Each child will have a designated work table and floor space so that children can be spaced as far from each other as possible while engaged in activities at school.
- The physical distance between children will be increased in daily work locations, group gatherings, naps, meals, and snacks.

Elementary

Austin Montessori School will employ the following physical distancing strategies in our elementary communities:

- Communities will consist of stable groups of no more than 22 children. Stable means that the same children and consistent adults are in the same group each day.
- Children shall not change from one group to another during the day.
- Groups shall not mix with each other.
- The guide and assistant will remain with a single group each day. In the case of illness, a designated substitute for the group will assist with caregiving.
- The physical distance between children will be increased in daily work locations, group gatherings, meals, and snacks.

Adolescent

Austin Montessori School will employ the following physical distancing strategies in our adolescent community:

- We are limiting the number of adolescents on-campus to not more than 30 divided into two separate cohorts on any given day, with a third cohort working off-campus each week.
- Adolescents will not change from one group to another.
- Cohort groups shall not mix with each other.
- The physical distance between adolescents will be increased in daily work locations, group gatherings, meals, and snacks.

Healthy Hand Hygiene

Washing hands can keep you healthy and prevent the spread of infections from one person to the next. All children and staff will engage in hand hygiene at the following times:

- Arrival to the classroom and after breaks
- Before and after each work choice
- Before and after eating or handling food
- After using the toilet or helping a child use the bathroom
- After coming in contact with bodily fluid
- After playing outdoors
- After handling garbage
- Before touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.

Follow Five Steps to Wash Your Hands the Right Way

(<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>)

Follow these five steps every time.

1. Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds.
4. Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
5. Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

After assisting children with handwashing, staff should also wash their own hands.

Use Hand Sanitizer for Adults When You Can't Use Soap and Water

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to get rid of germs in most situations. If soap and water are not readily available, you can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands in many situations.

How to use hand sanitizer

1. Apply the gel product to the palm of one hand (read the label to learn the correct amount).
2. Rub your hands together.
3. Rub the gel over all the surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry. This should take around 20 seconds.

Health Screening

Daily employee and child health screenings are important to help reduce the transmission of COVID-19 at school.

Health and Temperature Screening Protocol

All children and staff who meet any of the criteria below will be denied entry:

- Temperature over 100.0°F.
- Any of the following symptoms if the symptom is of greater intensity or frequency than what is normally experienced:
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Chills
 - Repeated shaking with chills
 - Muscle pain
 - Headache
 - Sore throat
 - Loss of taste or smell
 - Diarrhea
- In the previous 14 days has had contact with someone with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19;
- Is under investigation for COVID-19; or
- In the previous 14 days, has traveled to another state or another country.

Staff

Self-Screening Prior to Arrival at School

Staff members will conduct [self-screening](#) prior to arrival at school. If a staff member self-identifies as having symptoms listed in the screening criteria above, she/he will contact the designated administrator, not come into work, and follow the procedures in the section: [COVID-19 Symptoms at School - Staff](#).

Staff Screening at School

A designated Administrative Staff Member will conduct and record Staff Health Screening for each staff member upon arrival at school. [Staff Screening Procedure](#)

Child

Parent Screening of Child or Adolescent Prior to Morning Arrival

Parents are encouraged to be on the alert for signs of illness in their children and to keep them home when they are sick. Parents are required to conduct the [pre-screening each day at home](#). Parents who have not completed pre-screening prior to arrival must complete it prior to the child entering the program.

Screening of Child at School

- Upon arrival, a staff member will take your child's temperature using a contactless thermometer. [Temperature Check Procedure](#)
 - If the child has a temperature of over 100.0°F, the staff member will verify the temperature with another contactless thermometer and oral thermometer as needed.
 - A child with a temperature of over 100.0°F will not be admitted.
- Staff will conduct and log the temperature checks of each child and adult in the community three times each day. (At arrival, before lunch, prior to departure)
- Staff will make a visual inspection of the child for signs of illness which could include flushed cheeks, rapid breathing, or difficulty breathing (without recent physical activity), fatigue, or extreme fussiness. If the child exhibits any of these symptoms at arrival or at any point during the day, the child will be isolated and parents will be required to pick up their child.

COVID-19 Symptoms, Exposure, and Cases in School Community

This section provides details and procedures for the COVID-19 Symptom, Exposure, and Diagnosis within the school community. See the [Austin Public Health flowchart](#) for a visual overview of the process.

COVID-19 Symptoms at School - Children

If COVID-19 symptoms begin while at school, the child must be sent home as soon as possible. Sick children will be kept separate from well children and staff contact will be limited as much as reasonably possible, while ensuring the safety and supervision of the child until they leave.

- Classroom staff will follow these isolation procedures:
 - Classroom staff will offer the child a disposable face mask but will not require the child to wear it.
 - Classroom staff will take the child to the designated campus isolation location.
 - The classroom staff will inform the office staff of the symptoms exhibited.
 - Office staff will contact parents to come to school to pick up the child.
 - Parents will be provided the [Parent Procedure for Symptoms at School](#) handout.
 - Once a parent has left with the ill child, the isolation room is cleaned and sanitized by office staff.
- Materials, toys, and furniture touched by the child who is sent home will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.
- Families are encouraged to coordinate decision-making around the child's care with the family health care provider if there are specific health concerns, chronic disease, or complex social or emotional dynamics in the home.
- In the case of a child who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and does not get evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, the child is assumed to have COVID-19, and cannot return to the community until the individual has met the criteria for return under [Children or Staff with Positive Case of COVID-19](#)

- A child who has exhibited symptoms that could be COVID-19 can return to school if the parent has obtained a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on a negative COVID19 test and an alternative diagnosis.

COVID-19 Symptoms at School - Staff

Staff is encouraged to monitor their health and required to perform daily health screenings for symptoms of COVID-19. Staff is encouraged to stay home if they are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 and to contact their healthcare provider.

- Staff exhibiting new or worsening symptoms of possible COVID-19 at school should:
 - Put on a disposable face covering
 - Leave the classroom
 - Complete the [Texas Health Trace COVID-19 Self Checker](#)
 - Obtain a COVID-19 test - [Test Collection Sites](#)
 - Follow the recommendations of their healthcare provider
- In the case of a staff member who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and does not get evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, the individual is assumed to have COVID-19, and the individual may not return to work until the individual has met the return criteria for [Children or Staff with Positive Case of COVID-19](#)
- If the staff member has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to work before completing the above self-isolation period, the individual must obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for the return based on a negative nucleic acid COVID19 test and an alternative diagnosis.

COVID-19 Exposure - Staff and Children

If a staff member or child has been identified as close contact to someone outside the classroom community who is diagnosed with COVID-19, that staff member or child will be required to self-quarantine for 14 days per the CDC guidelines. Close contact means being closer than 6 feet apart for more than 15 minutes the person was infectious.

COVID-19 Exposure - Parent

If a parent has been in close contact with someone outside the classroom community who is diagnosed with COVID-19, the parent should self-quarantine for 14 days per the CDC guidelines. The child is not required to quarantine unless the child has been in close contact with someone who is diagnosed with COVID-19. Close contact means being closer than 6 feet apart for more than 15 minutes while the person was infectious.

Positive Case of COVID-19 in the Classroom Community - Children or Staff

If COVID-19 is confirmed in a child or staff member in a classroom community, all persons regularly in that community will be required to self-quarantine for 14 days per the CDC guidelines. The following actions will be taken by school administration:

- Notify the Texas Department of State Health Services and Child Care licensing, as required.
- Notify staff and parents/caregivers that a member of the classroom community has been diagnosed with COVID-19. Confidentiality will be maintained.
- Notify the school community that a child in the school (not their community) has been diagnosed with COVID-19. Confidentiality will be maintained.
- Close the specific classroom community for 14 days to allow self-quarantine for all children and staff in the classroom community who have been in close contact with the person diagnosed with COVID-19 (per CDC guidelines) *
- Complete disinfecting procedures

*Decisions about extending closure will be made in consultation with the Texas State Department of Health.

Children or Staff with Positive Case of COVID-19, who have exhibited symptoms and who have stayed home (home isolated) can return to school/work when the following criteria are met: (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.htm>)

- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications); and
- The child or staff member has improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and
- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared, or Negative results of an FDA Emergency Use Authorized COVID-19 molecular assay for detection of SARS-CoV-2 RNA from at least two consecutive respiratory specimens collected ≥ 24 hours apart (total of two negative specimens)

Quarantine and Isolation - Definitions

From the CDC:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine-isolation.html>

Quarantine

Quarantine is used to keep someone who might have been exposed to COVID-19 away from others. Quarantine helps prevent spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms. People in quarantine should stay home, separate themselves from others, monitor their health, and follow directions from their state or local health department.

Isolation

Isolation is used to separate people infected with the virus (those who are sick with COVID-19 and those with no symptoms) from people who are not infected. People who are in isolation should stay home until it's safe for them to be around others. In the home, anyone sick or infected should separate themselves from others by staying in a specific "sick room" or area and using a separate bathroom (if available).

Contact Tracing

Contact tracing is a strategy used to determine the source of an infection and how it is spreading. Finding people who are close contacts to a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, and therefore at higher risk of becoming infected themselves, can help prevent further spread of the virus. Those contacts might include family members, co-workers or health care providers.

School staff has been asked to keep a daily list of people they are in close contact with and sign up at [Texas Health Trace](#) if they have been in close contact with someone in the Classroom Community that has tested positive for COVID-19 OR if the staff member is diagnosed with COVID-19.

Communication

Austin Montessori School will communicate:

- With families, if their child has been in close contact with someone at school who has then tested positive for COVID-19.
- With staff, if they have been in close contact with someone at school who has tested positive for COVID-19.
- With the entire school community if a classroom community has been closed temporarily due to COVID-19 exposure.

Monitoring Absenteeism

Austin Montessori School administrative staff will monitor absenteeism among children and staff using Transparent Classroom. Any unusual patterns will be considered when evaluating the need for temporary or long-term building or campus closure. Decisions about extending closure will be made in consultation with the Texas State Department of Health.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

Austin Montessori School follows the national standards for cleaning, sanitizing and disinfection of educational facilities for children provided by [Caring for Our Children \(CFOC\)](#)

Austin Montessori School follows this [Cleaning and Sanitization Practice](#) and has a detailed plan for each community, including staff responsibilities, in the Cleaning and Sanitization binder.

These efforts include the following:

- Staff will routinely clean, sanitize, and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched, especially materials, as detailed in the Cleaning and Sanitization binder.
- All bathrooms will be cleaned and disinfected regularly throughout the day, at a minimum bathrooms should be cleaned and disinfected three times per day.
- Electrostatic Spraying Technology will be used to disinfect and sanitize our environments at the end of each day. The electrostatic charge ensures that even the hard to reach places are coated evenly and effectively.

Clean and Sanitize Materials

- Materials that cannot be cleaned and sanitized will not be used.
- Materials that children have placed in their mouths or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretions or excretions will be set aside until they are cleaned by hand by a person wearing gloves. These materials will be sanitized prior to use by the next person.
- Machine washable cloth materials will be used by one individual at a time and will be laundered before being used by another child.
- Children's books, like other paper-based materials such as mail or envelopes, are not considered high risk for transmission and do not need additional cleaning or disinfection procedures.

Clean and Disinfect Bedding

Each child's bedding is kept separate and stored in individually labeled bins. Cots and mats are labeled for each child. Bedding is cleaned at least weekly.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Procedures if an infected person (staff or child) has been in a school building:

Close off areas used by the individuals with COVID-19 and wait 24 hours before beginning cleaning and disinfection to minimize the potential for exposure to respiratory droplets. Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.

Staff will clean and disinfect all areas used by the ill persons, focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces. Staff must follow [CDC's guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting](#)

Cleaning and Disinfecting Products

Austin Montessori School uses disinfecting products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19.

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/pdf/ReOpening_America_Cleaning_Disinfection_Decision_Tool.pdf

Food Preparation and Serving

Austin Montessori School will not serve family-style snacks or meals. Each child will bring their own lunch from home.

Individual snacks prepared for the children will be prepared by an adult in the campus commercial kitchen following food service guidelines.

Staff will ensure children wash hands prior to and immediately after eating

Staff must wash their hands before assisting children and after helping children to eat.

Food serving and preparation equipment, including those items used in individual practical life lessons for children, must be washed and then sanitized in the campus sanitizing dishwasher(s) between uses.

Vulnerable / High-Risk Groups

Based on currently available information and clinical expertise, older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions might be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19. To protect those at higher risk, it's important that everyone practices healthy hygiene behaviors.

Appendix

Resources

Austin Montessori School has and will continue to collaborate, share information, and review plans with local health officials to help protect the whole school community. School plans are designed to complement other community mitigation strategies to protect high-risk populations and the healthcare system and minimize disruption to teaching and learning.

This document was compiled using the COVID-19 guidelines and recommendations for schools and childcare programs published by the CDC, AAP, State of Texas, and the City of Austin. AMS operating procedures meet or exceed the minimum standards of care and will be updated as new information or additional guidelines are made available.

[AAP COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-entry](#)

[State of Texas Minimum Standard Health Protocols](#)

[CDC Guidance for Schools and Child Care](#)