



BETH MONTESSORI

SUPPLEMENTAL COVID-19

HANDBOOK

2021-2022

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This supplemental handbook covers logistics, procedures, and policies specifically related to COVID-19, and includes the following topics:

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As a reminder, this information can continue to develop; we will update you accordingly.

1. Introduction

Beth Montessori is doing everything in its power to operate in the safest manner possible. We are responsible for the health and well-being of our children, our staff, and our community. And we do not take this responsibility lightly.

In order to make the best decisions, we continually monitor and stay up to date with the most updated information. We rely on guidance from the following reliable sources:

- California Department of Public Health
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- California Department of Social Services/Community Care Licensing
- County of San Diego Health and Human Services
- California Department of Education
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- Consultation with experts in relevant medical fields

As a Licensed “Child Care Center” our official regulatory agency is the California Department of Social Services/Community Care Licensing, and we must therefore follow their rules and regulation. Many of the following policies are based on their requirements. And because the children in our care are still UNVACCINATED, their health and safety is at the core of all these policies.

You may notice that many of these policies differ from the ever-changing world of the vaccinated adults. Which is why we want to emphasize that because our children are not vaccinated, the same rules you might be used to, do not always apply. Especially now that there are new variants on the rise and the long term efficacy of the vaccine is under study, we must continue to be patient and cooperative. The pandemic is not yet over.

2. Community Commitment

Beth Montessori is doing everything in our power to keep our community safe. And as a community, it is important that this be a team effort built on trust and cooperation. With that said, we are calling on our Beth Montessori Families, to take on the commitment of being safe while outside of the school. Your commitment, honesty, and continued vigilance is what will make the difference in keeping us all safe. In an effort to protect the community at large, we will be asking all our participating families to commit (through a signed document) to the following safety measure while outside of school:

- Continue to respect and practice social distancing, while on campus.
- Continue to wear a face mask, while on campus,
- Wear a face mask in indoor public spaces, to the best of your ability.
- Avoid large social gatherings.
- Keep playdates to a minimum, planning them carefully and being particularly prudent with mixing children from different “cohorts”.
- Keep extra-curricular activities to a bare minimum.
- Avoid Traveling on commercial flights, and be respectful of our travel policies.
- **Maintain TRANSPARENCY and HONESTY about your exposure to COVID-19 and about your child’s/family’s health and symptoms.**
- **ADHERE TO THE POLICIES IN THIS SUPPLEMENTAL COVID-19 HANDBOOK 2021-2022**

3. Sanitation, Disinfecting, & Ventilation

We will implement and follow best practices for cleaning and sanitation, creating a detailed cleaning schedule. All cleaning supplies used will be EPA-registered and in compliance with Health and Licensing agencies. Classroom materials will be disinfected throughout the day, especially those materials with high usage. Materials may be limited/restricted in class to better keep up with cleaning. Materials that come into contact with bodily fluids will be removed for thorough disinfecting.

We have hired a cleaning company that has provided us with a non-toxic disinfectant that can be sprayed throughout the day (<https://www.aquaox.com/>). The guides will be using this product to clean and disinfect the classroom materials on a daily basis. They will be spraying materials as needed throughout the day, and then disinfecting everything thoroughly at the end of each day.

Additionally, Maria, our on-site Janitor will also be supporting the daily disinfecting routine of all common spaces, including bathrooms, gates, handles, door knobs, faucets, etc.

The Playground will also be sanitized between each classroom's use.

Lastly, there is our nightly Janitorial Service that will also be cleaning and disinfecting daily (<http://www.acejanitorialsd.com/>).

As for ventilation, all our classrooms have an outdoor space that can be utilized on a daily basis to promote fresh air and constant airflow into the classroom. The classrooms all have

more than one door and many windows, all of which will be kept open. Additionally, each classroom has an independent AC unit that pulls fresh air from the outside, so the same air will never be recirculated.

4. Class Sizes and Stable Cohorts

Community Care Licensing has allowed us to reopen at full capacity.

Toddler Classrooms can now have 12 students

Primary Classrooms can now have 24 students

Each classroom will be a “Stable Cohort” of children, that will not mix with any other cohort. Children may not visit other classrooms or mingle with other children. Siblings who are in the *same program* will be placed in the same classroom.

Classrooms may not mix on the playground. We will create a schedule for each classroom to have its own time on the playground.

Additionally, in order to limit exposure, teachers may not travel from classroom to classroom. Each teacher must stay with their students throughout the day, including to supervise lunch. A dedicated staff member will give breaks to classroom teacher. All staff will wear masks throughout the day. In addition to frequent hand washing, staff will have access to hand sanitizer to use in between lessons with children.

Because current safety regulations do not allow us to mix children from different classrooms, this presents a challenge in the way we operate our Extended Care program. Therefore, Extended Care can only be offered until 3:00pm, for those families who communicate their need to the office.

5. Snacks and Food Preparation in the Classroom

To reduce the accidental spread of germs, we are removing the use of our glass cups, and are instead asking each child to bring their own Thermos/water bottle, **clearly labeled with their name.**

We have also removed the cold-food preparation activities from the classroom (for example, cutting an apple, spreading cream cheese, etc.). Therefore, each child is now responsible for bringing their own snack. Snacks should be in a separate snack container in their lunch box, labeled “snack”, so the child knows what to pick out at snack time.

Even though we are removing the snack preparation activities, Cooking will still be an important part of our curriculum. We will continue offering baking activities and Challah baking. We are calm that once baked, there is no risk of contagion, as all baked goods will be packed, by the Guide, using gloves.

6. Drop Off and Pick Up Logistics

Our Morning Drop-off will run from 8:15-8:45am. This should allow enough time to spread out everyone’s arrivals.

Our drop-off and pick-ups will both take place at our Front Gate. You must park in the lower parking lot and walk up to our front gate. Please do not park in the turn-around or in

Handicap spots (unless you have a Handicap Placard). Our walkways and stairs will be marked to indicate the direction and flow of traffic, so that we have a designated route to enter and one to exit.

As you walk and once at the Front Gate, we ask that parents respect social distancing guidelines, and keep 6 feet away from each other. There will be markings on the floor to guide you.

Parents will *not be allowed inside the gate/building*.

Adult and children over the age of 2 must wear masks at drop off and pick up.

This is particularly important given that it is a time when groups can accidentally congregate.

Designated staff will assist during drop off. These staff will take both the child's and the adult's temperatures and conduct health checks.

As the children come in, we will have them sanitize their hands at the front gate, and then proceed to wash their hands as soon as they enter the classroom. We will also have a disinfecting mat, for them to wipe their feet before entering the school. Staff will escort children to each classroom's entrance.

For pick up, parents should follow the same routes as they did for drop off. Staff will escort children to the front gate.

PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN PEN in order to Sign-in/Sign-out your child.

Once you pick up your child, please refrain from congregating in the stairs/parking lot.

Daily Health Screening

Staff, children, and adults will have their temperature taken and recorded upon arrival at school using a no-touch thermometer. The children will be checked for runny nose and any signs of illness. Children or staff with a 100.0°F degree temperature or higher will be sent home. Children and staff who show signs of illness will be sent home.

We will not allow sick children or staff to be at school.

7. Face Coverings

Face masks must be worn by BOTH ADULT AND CHILDREN (over the age of 2) during drop off and pick up procedures.

Staff will be required to wear masks at all times, while with the children and around each other.

Per Licensing requirements, Children over the age of 2 are required to wear a mask WHILE INDOORS. We will be STRONGLY ENCOURAGING CHILDREN OVER THE AGE OF 2 to wear a mask for as long as they can tolerate it. We know that this may be difficult for some children and will respect individual thresholds, in which case we will not obligate

a child to wear a mask. Be aware that the official recommendations state: Never to place face coverings on babies or children under 2 because of danger of suffocation.

Licensing does allow the children to take off their masks while OUTDOORS on the playground, as long as our stable cohorts are maintained.

Parents, we would like to remind you that you are your child's role model, and they will want to follow whatever you do. Help to set the example for your children, and wear a mask anytime they, as unvaccinated individuals, are obligated to do so (i.e. during drop-off; at the grocery store; in indoor public places; etc.). This will make it much easier for your child to wear a mask when necessary.

8. Handwashing

Teachers will instill good habits by monitoring student handwashing, doing it themselves, and talking about its importance. Twenty-second hand washing will be required of students before meals, after restroom use, and at regular intervals throughout the day; including after being outside and anytime their hands are in their mouths.

Hand sanitizing/washing will occur before entering any classroom, while inside a classroom, and before leaving the classroom for any reason. In addition, hand sanitizer will be available and utilized at various locations around the school.

9. Physical Distancing

Each classroom will practice physical distancing to the best of their ability. Tables and chairs will be assigned per child. Children will gather their work from the shelf and return to their assigned table to work. But obviously at this age, a strict implementation of social distancing is difficult, which is why there is now more emphasis on masks and stable cohorts.

During lunch, when the children can not wear a mask, they will be seated at their own assigned table/chair, and at a relative distance from each other.

Naps

Children who nap should bring a clean sheet and blanket on Monday in a new, reusable bag (that can be used, consistently each week). Each child will have their own assigned mat. Mats will be socially distanced and positioned with heads in opposite directions. Each day, the assigned mat, sheet and blankets will be stored in separate compartments (that will also be assigned). At the end of the week, sheets and blankets will be sent home for cleaning and mats will be sanitized.

10. ILLNESS POLICY:

When children are sick, they should not be in school. Period.

This is true even before COVID came into the equation. But now more than ever, we will be extremely strict with our Illness Policies.

[Students may not come to school if they exhibit any of the following COVID-19 symptoms below:](#)

- Fever (Temperature of 100.0°F or above)
- Congestion or runny nose
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Loss of taste and/or smell

Any child exhibiting any of the above symptoms, cannot be at school. And in order to return to school, Community Care Licensing requires that we follow the following [Decision Tree](#).

In summary, if a child present any of the above symptoms, a child can only return to school after they:

- 1) Provide a negative PCR test
- 2) Have had 24 hours pass:
 - a) With no fever (without the use of fever-reducing medication)
 - b) AND symptoms are improving.

It is vital that we also monitor the health of other members of your household as well. Please be mindful of your own health status and be prudent anytime you have a doubt about you or any of your family member's health.

Even before COVID, our school's Illness policy has always been clear about having sick children remain home. Now more than ever, we must be strict and prudent in keeping sick children home. Please be ready to cooperate with this very important part of our policy.

And please remember, YOUR HONESTY AND TRANSPARENCY REGARDING YOUR CHILD'S OR FAMILY MEMBER'S SYMPTOMS IS VITAL TO ENSURING THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF OUR COMMUNITY AT LARGE.

Immunizations and the Influenza Vaccine

The State of California and Licensing Regulations mandate that all children who attend a childcare setting must remain up to date with all required Immunizations.

The Influenza vaccine has always been recommended, but never mandatory. These unprecedented times require unprecedented measures. And so, Beth Montessori is, for the first time ever, **STRONGLY RECOMMENDING that all our children get their Influenza Vaccine**. This recommendation was firmly backed by the medical professionals we have consulted.

Travel Policy

As we mentioned in our Community Commitment, we kindly ask that our families avoid traveling on commercial flight whenever possible.

If you must travel, please make sure to let us know your travel plans so that we can evaluate your child's return.

Children who board a commercial flight (domestic or international), must follow the following protocol before returning to school:

- 1) Obtain a Negative PCR, which must be collected on or after the 6th day* after their return.
- 2) AND stay home to self-quarantine for a full 7 days* from the date of their return (even if they receive immediate PCR results indicating they are negative).

*The day you land is day 0. The day after, is day 1, and so on.

These travel policies are subject to change.

If a Student, Family Member, or Teacher Tests Positive**

**Even if Staff Members are fully vaccinated, we must still address this possibility in our policies.

Beth Montessori will not allow COVID Positive students or staff members to return to school until they have met the CA Dept. of Public Health's criteria to discontinue home isolation.

If a child or staff member tests positive, the whole classroom/stable cohort must quarantine for a period of 14 days. If this occurs, Beth Montessori will provide a Distance Learning routine during that period of time.

If a relative/family member of a child or staff member tests positive, then only the child/staff member must quarantine for 14 days. This 14-day quarantine is mandatory, regardless of their COVID test coming back negative.

If you or your children know that you came in "close contact" (= within 6 ft for a period of 15 minutes or more) with a person with COVID-19, your child should stay home and quarantine for a period of 14 days from last day exposure. It is our protocol to proactively close the classroom until an exposed child can provide a negative test, and in this way evaluate/mitigate any potential spread to the school.

In consultation with our county health department and other medical advisors, we will determine case by case if any particular situation requires quarantine/closures beyond what was mentioned above.

11. Parents and Visitors on Campus

Visitors to campus will be extremely limited. At some point, we would like to allow parents to have greater access to our school, but for the time being we must continue to place our safety protocol first.

As for coming to observe through the observation windows, in order to limit the amount of adult traffic, we will be limiting the number of parents who come observe. So please contact the office ahead of time and we will gladly schedule you in.

For the time being all school tours will be done virtually.

12. Tuition Policy

Some common questions have been:

“What is the Tuition Policy should the school be mandated to close?”

“What if I start feeling uneasy with the local climate and I want to pull my child out, will I still be responsible for tuition?”

In both cases the tuition policy will remain as it was in our Enrollment paperwork:

“PARENTS OR GUARDIANS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ENTIRE YEAR’S TUITION.” The paperwork also clearly states that the “Deposit is non-refundable”.

Beth Montessori has always tried our best to be reasonable when it comes to the very complicated financial impact this pandemic has had on our families. However, we have also had to adjust to many factors affecting our own financial feasibility. It is for this reason that we must be strict in our financial policies, in order to maintain our stability. We must therefore share this commitment with the sole purpose of provide the best learning environment for our children.

“An education capable of saving humanity is no small undertaking; it involves the spiritual development of man, the enhancement of his value as an individual, and the preparation of young people to understand the times in which they live.”

- **Dr. Maria Montessori** | Education and Peace

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END OF HANDBOOK

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