

## Montessori Pathways School

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## Updates from July 22, 2020

Dear Montessori Pathways Families,

Most of the school districts have made their decisions on how the beginning of the school year will look like in public schools. Some of the schools will go with blended education (in-person + remote learning), some of them will go with full remote learning at least in the beginning of the school year.

As a private school that has a very small community, more flexibility and ability to follow the state's reopening guidelines, Montessori Pathways will be offering full in-person education beginning August 27 unless school closure will be required due to another state emergency situation. In this case, we will be offering remote learning until further notice.

However, we take the COVID situation seriously and do not want to put our faculty, students and their families at risk. Therefore, we ask our families to read all of our updates attentively and follow all of our rules and requirements respectfully.

*Please understand that all students and teachers' families have their own circumstances and health history, and coming to school every day can make them feel unsafe and uncomfortable if some of us simply ignore school's requirements. Let's be protective of and respectful to each other.*

### Face Covering – Constant Question

We keep receiving more and more phone calls from prospective families about our program and all of these conversations begin with the question "Will kids be required to wear masks at school?"

We do not want to say that yes, all kids will be wearing masks all day long, knowing that for some of them it is simply impossible and not realistic. At the same time, we do not want a scenario where parents think that masks are not required at Montessori Pathways and all families from our community who do not take the COVID situation seriously will come to us. The health and safety of our Pathways Community is absolutely our priority.

Based on our observation of the kids over the last 4 weeks, most of the kids are tolerant of masks if they have a proper explanation, presentation, and great role modeling from us, adults.

### Therefore, we would like to clarify our "Mask Policy"

- a) All teachers must wear masks while in the building.
- b) Since kids are not required to wear masks while outside, outside work, presentations, story time, and explorations should be encouraged by teachers as much as possible.
- c) The kids are highly encouraged to wear masks in the building unless there is any condition that is listed in the "Exceptions to Use of Face Coverings" part of our protocol.
- d) Increased social distancing will be considered for students who are not able to tolerate either a face covering or a face shield due to sensory or other issues.
- e) Physician's note documenting the medical condition is required for any student who is not able to wear a face covering due to their health condition.

- f) If student works alone in his/her assigned spot that is 6 ft apart and feels that he/she needs a break from face covering, the mask may be taken off for a while and put in zip-lock bag.
- g) As soon as student needs to move around the classroom in a way that might affect the social distancing requirement, the mask must be on.
- h) If a student will choose and would like to participate in a close contact partner work or teamwork, he/she will be required to wear a mask.
- i) If a student participates in individual or small group presentations, the mask is required.
- j) All students must have at least 2 additional masks in a labeled zip-lock bag at school in case of displaying any symptoms of illness. In this case, the child will be isolated from the group and will be required to wear a mask until picked up from school.

*Many parents are very concerned about kids wearing masks at school. There is no judgment. Everything that is new and unknown and, especially, if it is related to our kids, makes us very suspicious and concerned. We all see that things are not getting better. It is time to actively step up and do something. It is always easier to say "no". But what if our openness will help us improve the situation? No pressure. Just let's think about it and start with more studies.*

["Five Myths about Face Masks and Kids: What Experts Say Parents Need to Know"](#)

["Face Masks: How to Help Kids Adjust"](#)

## **Emergency Travel Order Updates**

On Thursday, July 2, Chicago Department of Public Health Commissioner Allison Arwady, M.D., issued an Emergency Travel Order directing travelers entering or returning to Chicago from states experiencing a surge in new COVID-19 cases to quarantine for a 14-day period from the time of last contact within the identified state. This includes both Chicago residents returning from travel to a designated state, and travelers arriving in Chicago from a designated state.

As part of our continuous effort to ensure the health and safety of our Montessori Pathways community, our school is strictly following the recommended guidelines: **If your family has recently traveled to any of the states currently experiencing a rise in COVID-19 cases, your child will need to quarantine for 14 days upon your return.**

**Chicago officials updated the travel order once again on Tuesday, adding Kansas to the list and bringing the total number of states requiring quarantine to 18.**

### States Currently Covered by the Order

Travelers from the following states should quarantine upon arrival in Chicago:

**Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Nevada, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Utah**

The list will be updated every Tuesday and go into effect the following Friday at 12:01 a.m. You can check this list here: <https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/sites/covid-19/home/emergency-travel-order.html>

**CDPH Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady said Tuesday, "WISCONSIN is getting "very close" to making the list, and could be added as soon as next week". She said one factor could be less people wearing masks in the state.**

**We know that a lot of families are traveling to Wisconsin now. Please take the above information into consideration while planning your vacation.**

## Friends and Family Gatherings / Going Out:

According to the CDC:

- The *more people* an individual interacts with at a gathering and the longer that interaction lasts, the higher the potential risk of becoming infected with COVID-19 and COVID-19 spreading.
- The higher the level of community transmission in the area that the gathering is being held, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spreading during a gathering.

At Montessori Pathways, we do our best to keep the school's environment clean and safe and avoid the students' and staff's exposure to people from outside as much as possible.

We understand that each family has their own lifestyle and beliefs. However, **we expect our families to remember the increased possibility of spreading COVID-19 at our school before planning any vacation, party, family or friends gathering, or going out.**

**Any thoughtless and careless action may lead to someone's illness and, as a result, to school closure.**

### REMINDERS:

1. Parents are **required** to practice social distancing and **wear a mask** for drop off / pick up. Please help our teachers feel safe and respected.

2. On the 1st and 15<sup>th</sup> of each month, or upon returning after each break in school attendance, every family is required to fill out the **"Montessori Pathways Families' Self-Declaration" form** (see attached) electronically and email this form back to the school on the required day. Students will not be allowed in the school without this form.

**Please fill out "Family Self-Evaluation Form" and return it to school every time when we ask you to do so.** You do not need to print this form out. You can fill out this form online and email it to the school.

*We appreciate your understanding and cooperation.  
Montessori Pathways Team*

