



Living Montessori Education Community
DYNAMIC PLANNING GUIDEBOOK



**SAFE
START**

2020/2021

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Key Terms

- At-Home Learning:** Education provided virtually
- CDC:** Center of Disease Control and Prevention
- DCYF:** Washington State Department of Children, Youth and Families
- DOH:** Washington Sate Department of Health
- On-Site Learning:** Education & childcare provided at school
- OSPI:** Office of Superintendent of Public Institution
- Pods:** Two separate classes treated as a group. The children within these separate classrooms intermingle in very limited & specific circumstances
- WFIS:** Washington Federation of Independent Schools

Introduction

Safe Start for Fall 2020 – The Dynamic Planning Guidebook is developed as an evolving document to keep our community up to date on the school’s preparation, considerations and plans for the 2020-2021 school year.

The Washington State Governor, Washington State Department of Children, Youth and Families, The Department of Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction give our school guidance and direction. It is important to point out that some agencies provide guidance while others give mandates. The guidance is taken into consideration and implemented as it is feasible, realistic and developmentally appropriate. We are committed to following all mandates and implementing the guidance as it supports our students best. During the summer months we have refined our practice with the new protocols and recommendations. We are confident that we are well prepared to manage the Safe Start opening this fall.

Living Montessori does not follow the Bellevue School district or any other Washington State School Districts’ decision to close campus and

move to distance learning. The logistics of opening public schools are more complex than those of independent schools like ours. By virtue of our size, Living Montessori is void of such circumstances. The nature of our program, the ability to mobilize fairly quickly, our oversized classroom spaces and many other particulars afford us the ability to meet current protocols and give our students the advantage of on-site, hands-on learning. While we are confident in our ability to provide students with the on-site program, we understand that each family’s circumstances are unique. In order to meet the needs of all families, we are offering at-home learning for primary and elementary student and limited virtual learning and support for any Early Education student. Our school is committed to advocating for and serving all children.

There is a lot of conflicting information and families are often torn between safety and education. Perhaps you can have both, if your situation allows. It is our sincere hope that you find the resources here useful as you make difficult decisions for your children, or that you feel confident in having your children continue their attendance in school.

Goals

With our school’s purpose and the Montessori Pedagogy in mind, Living Montessori is committed to offering meaningful academic experiences for all of our students whether At-Home Learning or On-Site Learning is chosen. The health and safety of our education community is paramount. The emotional and mental health of our students is also vitally important and is seriously considered in our Safe Start for fall planning.

LOGISTICS & DELIVERY

Schools, working together with local health departments, have an important role in slowing the spread of diseases and protecting vulnerable students and staff. Additionally, schools and childcare facilities are imperative for many working families. During the 2020 school closure, Living Montessori Education Community was deemed an essential service as we provided child care for many families during a time of great need. Along with maintaining a stable and safe environment for our students, we continue to provide a robust educational experience with as little disruption as possible. We are making every effort to meet the required 450 hours of instruction for kindergarten students and 1000 hours for students grade 1-6.

Staff Training Events

As a result of remaining open through the pandemic, our staff members have been thoroughly trained on processes to ensure safety with a focus on supporting children and families during these unreliable times and transitions back to school. More training is scheduled prior to September including technology training to support At-Home Learning during closures or as needed. Employee education is to continue throughout the school year.

It is important for our community to uphold its traditions to maintain stability for the children. We have planned upcoming school events with Safe Start protocols in mind. Some modifications include video chat for conferences and curriculum nights, as well as a contained classroom celebration for the Fall Carnival. Future events are under consideration and are to be adapted as needed based on the mandates at the time of the event.

Communication

Regular communication between your family and the school is important as we support fall's Safe Start. We are committed to sending families the most updated information possible while guidelines and information changes. Look to the Weekly Bulletins for minor updates including calendar changes and Bloomz for quick alerts and specific classroom information. All important program changes, or major updates are sent through email.

Equity

Schools must determine the most equitable way to educate all children. This could mean, for example, accommodating children who need to quarantine while On-Site Learning is available and vice versa, accommodating children on-site if the school moves to distance learning.

Classroom Placement

We have made it a priority to place children with the teacher or the classroom community they had in the previous school year to the best of our ability. It is also our intention to place siblings within the same pod but not necessarily the same classroom. However, we cannot guarantee placement in either circumstance due to planning logistics.

Contractual Changes

All contractual change requests should be sent to our admissions department. Change fees and other fees may apply.

Financial Implications

Tuition was set with a number of assumptions including enrollment. It did not factor in loss of revenue due to Covid-19 and the increased expense to mitigate the health and safety of our community. Additionally, tuition has not increased as is typically done annually. All tuition will therefore remain the same.

On-Site Learning

The On-Site Learning Program allows students to benefit from the use of Montessori materials, in-person connection with teachers, and socialization with peers. All safety mandates are to be followed. It is our intention to remain open unless child care is required to close. If we are required by mandate to close, every class has access to At-Home Learning.

At-Home Learning

Our At-Home Learning is based on the developmental needs of the students it serves. The primary At-Home Learning Program has a dedicated teacher who works with our At-Home students full time. The elementary At-Home Learning Program allows students to be more integrated in to the classroom while working with their teacher and classmates who are attending on-site.

Commitment

Please be aware that it is our greatest desire to offer stability to all of our students. Whichever program you choose, be prepared to stay with your choice for the term selected. Moving back and forth between At-Home and On-Site will not be allowed except at the change in term. Change requests from At-Home Learning to On-Site Learning must be made no later than December 4, 2020.

Extended Care

In order to minimize the mixing of students, our extended care groups are based on our pod system (see page 7). Our first priority is to maintain classroom groupings to the best of our ability. If there is an abundance of extended care children in one classroom, a child may be placed in an aftercare group within their pod. Staffing is to remain as consistent as possible. After careful consideration and much puzzling, we have determined that we need to open before care at 8:00 AM as we have all summer. By opening at 8:00 AM, we prevent mixing of pod groups in the morning. If you need support with this constraint please contact us.

Mealtimes

The organic meal program continues including snacks and lunch for all Academy students. To avoid gatherings, lunches are served in the classrooms instead of the cafeteria. Children are spaced appropriately throughout the classroom and adults serve the meal as opposed to family style dining.

Field Trips

Some annual field trips are canceled for the upcoming school year. The cancellations include Seattle Children's Theatre as well as our Oxbow Farm field trip. Unused field trip funds are returned at the end of the 2020-2021 school year.

The elementary overnight field trip is to continue barring any unforeseen restrictions. Additionally, the Seattle Science Center has offered an in-house experience. Chaperone opportunities are limited and eliminated in some cases.

Specialty Enrichment

We are exploring the idea of offering [Specialty Enrichment](#) based on interest by pod and the availability of our program vendors. Thus far woodworking, capoeira and dance have confirmed their availability. We are also offering private piano lessons.

Enrichment

Creative arts, yoga and foreign language may be limited or adjusted to minimize crossover. Teachers offering any of these classes follow the DOH safety protocols.

Outdoor Activities

With five playground areas to choose from, we can comfortably accommodate all students by staggering outdoor schedules without combining classrooms. Furthermore, all classes are encouraged to spend additional time and offer outdoor learning.

On-Site Learning

The On-Site Learning Program allows students to benefit from the use of Montessori materials, in-person connection with teachers, and socialization with peers. All safety mandates are to be followed. It is our intention to remain open unless child care is required to close. This is the most unlikely scenario. However, if we are mandated to close childcare, every class has access to some level of developmentally appropriate At-Home Learning.

At-Home Learning

At-Home Learning for Early Education students varies depending on what is realistically feasible for the students of each level. All Early Preschool students and their parents have opportunities of daily connection with their teacher and class via videoconferencing. Learning packets are prepared by the school and available for those students. Additional resources that are developmentally appropriate are being considered to foster brain development and engagement. Providing resources to families is the most appropriate way to support infants and toddler programs. Parents receive more details if close is inevitable.

Extended Care

In order to minimize exposure, our extended care groups are based on our pod system (see page 7). Our first priority is to maintain classroom groupings to the best of our ability. However, students in before and aftercare may combine with other pods due to staffing.

Mealtimes

The organic meal program continues including snacks and lunch for all Early Education students except infants whose meals are supplemented from home with prior arrangements. All children eat their meals in the classrooms with developmentally appropriate physical distancing. Using the DOH guidelines, only teachers serve meals.

Outdoor Activities

With five playground areas to choose from, we can comfortably accommodate all students by staggering outdoor schedules without combining classrooms. Furthermore, all classes are encouraged to spend additional time and offer outdoor learning.

Specialty Enrichment

All Early Education Specialty Enrichment classes are canceled for the remainder of 2020 and may resume in January of 2021.

Enrichment

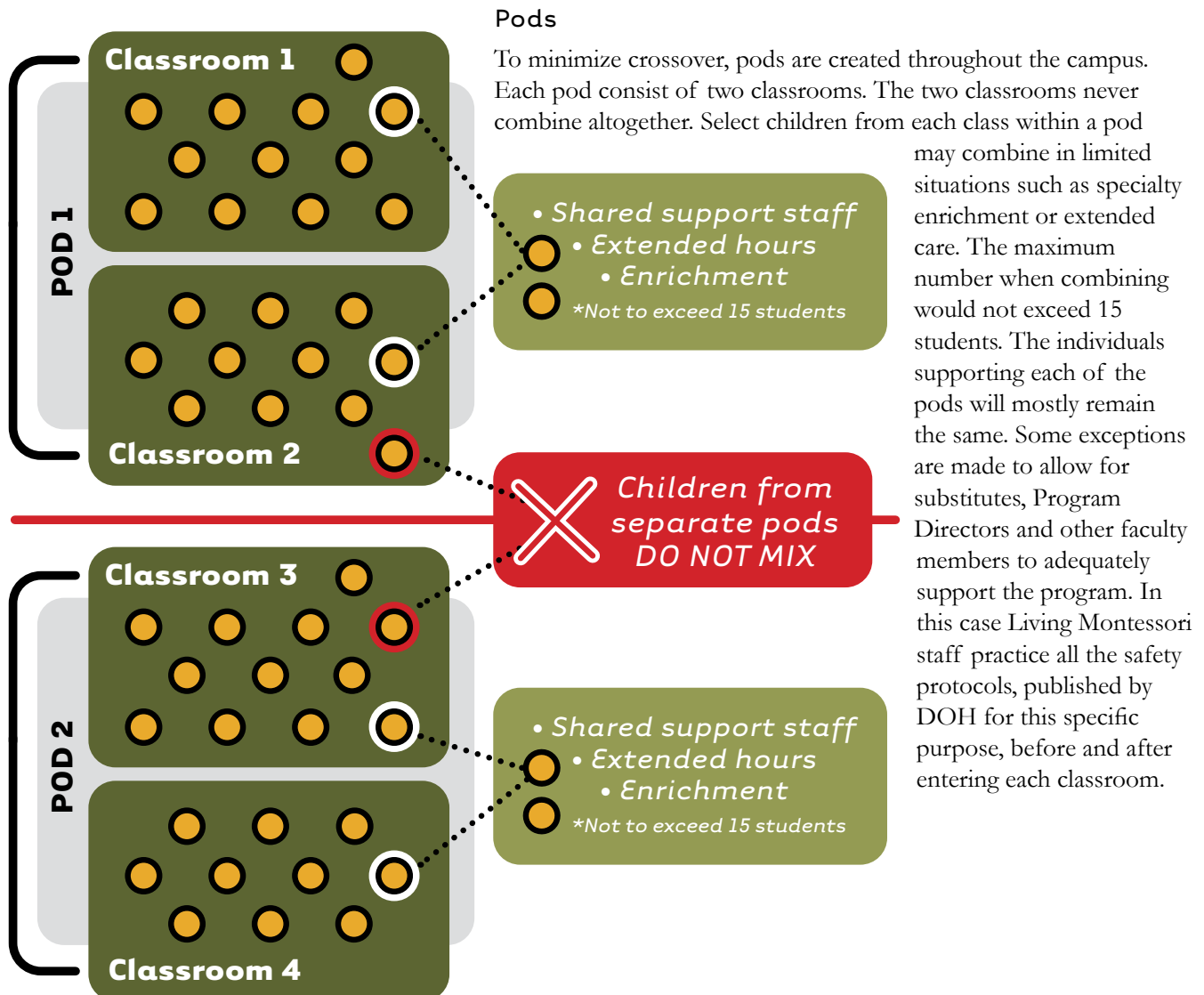
Creative arts may be limited or adjusted to minimize crossover. Teachers offering any of these classes follow the DOH safety protocols.

Physical Distancing

Taking advantage of our oversized classrooms (according to the 6' distancing formula) and our abundant total indoor square footage, we have established strategies to naturally encourage physical distancing to the extent that it is developmentally appropriate. Strategically placed workspaces and traffic flow structured classrooms supports children's movement naturally and position them to adequately distance from one another. Teachers also gently guide and redirect children where appropriate to encourage physical distance. An important Montessori Principle is to control the environment not the students. By planning our environments carefully students still enjoy freedom of movement while observing safe practices that are developmentally manageable.

Class Size

Although the physical distancing formula supports 20 to 28 students in most Academy rooms, in September we have approximately 16 students in each of the Primary and Elementary (ages 3 to grade 6) classrooms. In December, an assessment will determine if the school can safely reach the ultimate goal of 20 students in each Primary and Elementary classroom which is ideal for students. Early Education has 12-14 students in each of the Early Preschools classrooms, and 8 in the Infant-Toddler classroom. This is the number that supports independence and maximized learning opportunity from the environment and currently recommended by DCYF. As we continue to plan for fall, we remain open to make adjustments based on the mandates and student need for distancing.



Hygiene

All individuals must wash hands upon entering the facility. As an alternative, adults may choose to use hand sanitizer. Students receive lessons on hand washing and apply these skills as they wash between transitions, after bathroom breaks, before mealtimes and throughout the day as needed. Students also receive lessons on safe nose blowing and tissue disposal, covering coughs or sneezes and other practical life skills that support health and safety. Materials, surfaces and high-touch areas in classrooms are sanitized frequently during the day. Items that go in the mouth are placed in a separate bin and sanitized before returning to the shelf. Additionally, all high touch surfaces such as doorknobs, faucets, light switches, sign in and out pads are disinfected several times a day. Nightly janitorial staff thoroughly cleans and disinfect the facility including all bathrooms.

Arrival & Departure

All Academy families must use the carline drop off between 8:00-8:55 AM (students seated behind passenger seat with belongings in bag or backpack). Late drop off past 9:00 AM is not permitted without prior authorization. Appointments are accommodated until 10:30 AM with prior authorization only. No arrivals past 10:30 AM will be permitted. We understand that occasional late arrivals are unavoidable, however, we will refuse entry to families who arrive late consistently. All individuals spending extended periods of time in the building are screened for illness through temperature checks and health [questions](#). During 3:00 PM dismissal, Primary pods are brought to two separate carlines. Elementary carline runs from 3:15-3:30 PM. Extended care families enter the building to pick up and use social distancing. No changes are made in the current Early Education procedure.

Quarantine & Closure

Student Quarantine

If a student comes in contact with a confirmed case they are to remain home for 14 days and watch for the following symptoms: fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose nausea or vomiting or diarrhea. Contact the child's physician for further guidance if symptoms are present. Inform the school of the status so the school may provide further instruction. Student may need to be tested. Distance learning opportunities are available if student is well enough to participate.

Pod Quarantine

Individuals in each pod remain within their assigned pod unless absolutely necessary. If there is a positive Covid-19 test result within a pod, the affected pod quarantines for 14 days and moves to At-Home Learning for that time period.

All School Mandatory Closure

In an all school closure, every class moves to At-Home Learning within two days, supported by our teachers. Over the summer we have considered other tools and activities to ensure a high level of engagement during At-Home Learning periods.

Face Coverings

All individuals over the age of five are required to wear a mask indoors. Staff members use masks indoors and outdoors unless alone. Children (5+) remove masks while eating and for outdoor recesses. No masks are to be worn by children two years of age or younger. To support language development, infant/toddler teachers use shields or masks unless a child is struggling to understand language. In these cases, the mask may be removed momentarily.

Parent or Family

Member Quarantine

If a child comes in contact with a parent or a family member who has tested positive for Covid-19, the school must be informed. In this case, the child then needs to remain home for 14 days. Watch for symptoms listed under Student Quarantine. Student may need to be tested.

Staff Quarantine

If a staff member tests positive for Covid-19, the staff member remains home for a minimum of 14 days. The school then contacts DOH for further guidance on additional quarantine measures within our community. A pod or school may quarantine.

Mandatory K-12 Closure Only

K-12 moves to distance learning within two days of closure. Kindergarten students may join an existing Primary At-Home Learning group. Elementary students join the Elementary At-Home Learning program. Kindergarten students who are in the primary classroom may come for childcare. They remain with their class and teachers. Elementary child care is also available.