



RACINE MONTESSORI SCHOOL
A CERTIFIED GREEN SCHOOL - EST. 1963

2021-2022

Covid-19 Health & Safety Policies/Procedures

Racine Montessori School

Covid-19 Health and Safety Guidelines

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Overview

As we enter the third school year affected by COVID-19, we reflect upon past policies and procedures that successfully allowed our in-person learning models to continue throughout the 2020-2021 school year without compromising the health of our students and staff. Through the efforts of staff, parents and students in our school community, we were able to continue our mission of providing a strong Montessori education to the children in our care in a healthy, safe way.

We have all been flexible, understanding and respectful of the individual needs of our staff and families and grateful for the recommendations of the medical professionals who have spent countless hours to interpret data, develop best practices and gain knowledge about the virus that has brought chaos to our global communities. It has been a difficult time in all of our lives but we have moved forward.

This document explains the policies and procedures we will employ to mitigate the continuing COVID-19 related risks at school. We have taken into consideration the guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Academy of Pediatrics, the Wisconsin Department of Public and Private Instructions and the review of the Racine Health Department. Racine Montessori School has and will continue to collaborate, share information, and review plans with local health officials to help protect our whole school community. You will be notified of all changes to the following policies and procedures.

School plans are designed to complement other community mitigation strategies to protect high-risk populations and the healthcare system and therefore minimize disruption to teaching and learning.

In summary, RMS has concluded that beginning the 2021-2022 school year under these conditions is in the best interest of the community and that each RMS family will make its own decision about the balance of risk, and what is best for their children. The information in this document will provide clarity around the practices and procedures RMS has established to minimize exposure to our community but in no way warrants that COVID-19 or other communicable disease infection will not occur through participation in our programs.

Program Summaries

Academic Year: September 1, 2021- June 1, 2022

Hours

Primary Program Hours: 8:30-11:30

Extended Day Program: 8:30-2:30

Elementary and Adolescent Program Hours 8:30-3:30

Parent Contact/Communication

Each teacher has a school email address for parent communications. Teachers will respond to emails within 24 hours during the week. During in-person classes, teachers do not respond to phone messages during the day. Time-sensitive contact with teachers can be facilitated by calling the main office 262-637-7892 and/or emailing meredithgonzalez@racinemontessori.com.

Parent Visits/Observations

Due to restrictions in place to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, regular parent observations and visits to the school are suspended. Office may allow parents into the building as needed. Masks will be required.

Parent Health Screening Before 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 following RMS pre-screening each day at home. There will be no additional health screening upon your children's arrival at school so please carefully screen for symptoms before you leave your home.

For the wellbeing of the children, a child **MUST NOT** be sent to school when ill. If a child becomes sick during school, the parents will be notified. All parents are required to have an alternate care system in place in the event of illness. **There is no infirmary on the school grounds.**

PLEASE follow these steps to promote a healthy environment for all the children.

No child should be sent to school with the following:

FEVER: must be absent for **24 hours without fever reducing medications** before returning to school

COLDS: accompanied by colored nasal discharge, sneezing, coughing, congestion

FLU: vomiting, body aches, fever (see above)

RASHES: that have not been diagnosed by your child's physician as non-contagious

STREP THROAT EAR INFECTIONS

SORE THROAT PINK EYE

DIARRHEA INFECTIOUS DISEASES

THE SYMPTOMS LISTED IN THE FOLLOWING SECTION THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH COVID-19

Symptoms Which are Consistent with COVID-19

The symptoms listed below are considered consistent with COVID-19 when one of the symptoms marked with a (^) or two of the other symptoms are present above baseline for that individual. **When a child presents these symptoms or combination of symptoms the parents should keep their child home and consult their child's physician to check for COVID 19.**

One of these symptoms

- Cough^
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing^
- New loss of taste or smell^

Two or more of these symptoms

- Congestion or runny nose,
- Fever or chills
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Headache
- Fatigue Muscle or body aches
- Sore throat
- 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 country. A negative COVID-19 test result taken at day 7 will allow re-entry into the program.

Staff Screening

Staff Self-Screening Prior to Arrival at School

Staff members will conduct pre-screening prior to arrival at school. If a staff member self-identifies as having symptoms listed in the previously stated RMS screening criteria, she/he will contact the administrator, not come into work, and follow the procedures outlined in this handout.

Health Screening During the School Day

- Staff will conduct and log the temperature checks of each child and adult in the community during the lunch hour.
- 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 any point during the day, the child will be isolated, and parents will be required to pick up their child.

Assisted Drop off

- All parents must enter through the back entrance to the main parking lot and proceed to the drop off line at the side of the building. Adolescent students can be dropped at the back of the **main parking lot** near the crosswalk closest to their building.
- Walk-up arrivals cannot be facilitated during this time. The front gate will remain locked for drop off and pick up.

Entrance to the Classrooms

Children will be directed to enter the building through a specific door and route to their classroom. This is an effort to limit exposure to children in other student groups. Teachers and assistants inside the building will ensure that children arrive in the classrooms, change into their classroom footwear and wash their hands once they enter the classroom. **During the first weeks of school, teachers for the Primary and Lower Elementary students will be waiting for the students outside or near the entrances until we feel they are able to get to their classrooms on their own.**

Assisted Departure

- Departure for Primary students will take place at 11:30, Extended Day at 2:30 and Elementary and Adolescents will take place at 3:30.
- Walk-up departures cannot be facilitated during this time.
- Please enter the parking lot by making a right hand turn into our 24th street entrance. A map will be sent out with the safest route to use for gaining entrance into our lot.
- Once you enter the lot, staff will announce your arrival by walkie talkie to your children's classroom teacher.
- **Wait in your car** and your child's teacher will send your child out to the staff member who will be directing children to their vehicles.
- If your child stays for childcare, you can park along the side of the building and ring the buzzer by the door so that we can bring your child out to you.

Face Coverings

Face coverings are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is asymptomatic and unaware of their infection or the wearer is a pre-symptomatic individual, in which case he/she is considered to be highly contagious at least 2 days before the onset of symptoms. Face coverings are not surgical masks, respirators, or other medical personal protective equipment. Staff will receive training and information on the correct removal of PPE, including masks and gloves.

Staff

Staff will be required to wear face coverings while indoors regardless of vaccination status.

Elementary and Adolescent Students

Children will be required to wear masks while indoors regardless of vaccination status. We ask that all children bring two clean face coverings to school every day to be used while inside of the building. Staff will oversee the use of masks by students. Expectations are that elementary-aged children will be capable of wearing face coverings throughout the day when indoors with the exception of lunchtime. There will be a separate area in the hallway near each classroom if a mask break is needed for an older child. Teachers will make an effort to have additional outdoor time.

Primary and Extended Day Students

The younger children in our Primary classrooms will be masked while indoors but will be able to have mask breaks within the classroom, if needed, by working at an individual table physically distanced from other children.

Parents and Service workers

Any adults that enter our building during school hours will be required to wear a mask regardless of vaccination status.

Physical Distancing Strategies and Cohorting

Racine Montessori School does not expect that young children will distance themselves from other children or adults while at school like the elementary children are capable of doing. Young children learn by engaging with their environment, which includes the other people in it.

However, Racine Montessori School will employ the following strategies for limiting the spread of COVID-19 in our communities:

- Classroom communities will not mix. Children will continue to have assigned entrances and exits from the building and will have separate areas for recess.

- The teachers will remain with their scheduled groups each day. In the case of illness, a designated substitute for the group will assist with caregiving.
- Physical distance between children in the classroom will be maintained as much as feasible.
- At nap time, children's naptime mats will be spaced out as much as possible, with alternating head to toe arrangements to increase the distance between children.
- Specialists will work with only one classroom at a time instead of meeting with multiple classrooms at a certain grade level.

Isolation and Quarantine Periods

The following isolation and quarantine periods apply to students and staff who are not close contacts to a COVID-19 case. School-based health care providers should use these criteria, in consultation with the local health department to determine when students and staff can return to in-person instruction:

Students and staff who test negative for COVID-19 infection and have symptoms:

- The individual has been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.
- If diagnosed with another condition, the individual must complete the exclusion period for the diagnosed disease as listed on the Wisconsin Childhood Communicable Diseases Wall Chart. An alternative diagnosis is not required.

Students and staff who test positive for COVID-19 infection and have symptoms:

- The individual must isolate at home for at least 10 days since the first symptoms began AND be fever free without the use of fever-reducing medications for 24 hours AND with improvement in symptoms. Repeat testing is NOT recommended for making decisions about when people can return to work or school.
- Siblings, household members, and other close contacts should follow the Close Contact to a COVID-19 Case..

Students and staff who test positive for COVID-19 infection but have no symptoms (are asymptomatic)

- The individual must isolate at home for 10 days after the day the sample was collected.
- Siblings, household members, and other close contacts should follow the Close Contact to a COVID-19 Case.

Students and staff who are not tested for COVID-19 infection but meet the symptom criteria described above in Exclusion from In-person Instruction:

- The individual must remain home for at least 10 days since the first symptoms began AND be fever free without the use of fever-reducing medications for 24 hours AND with improvement of symptoms. ●
- Siblings and household members should follow the Close Contact to a COVID-19 Case below.
- If diagnosed with another condition that explains the symptoms, such as influenza or strep throat, no isolation or quarantine of close contacts is necessary.
- Follow guidance from the health care **while symptomatic:**

Students and staff who develop COVID-19 symptoms during quarantine and test positive for COVID-19 infection while symptomatic can return to in-person instruction and school activities after meeting the following:

- **The individual must isolate at home for at least 10 days since the first symptoms began AND be fever free without the use of fever-reducing medications for 24 hours AND with improvement in symptoms.**
- **Repeat testing is NOT recommended for making decisions about when people can return to work or school.**
- **Siblings, household members, and other close contacts should also follow the Close Contact to a COVID-19 Case to determine quarantine length, improvement of symptoms.**
- **Must quarantine for 10 days from the date of last exposure before returning to school or day care. If the exposure is to a household member and the case cannot properly isolate away from others at home, the last date of contact may be the last day of isolation for the case. Unvaccinated siblings and household members and other close contacts should also follow this chart to determine quarantine length.**

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 is 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).

COVID-19 Cases in School

If COVID-19 symptoms begin while at school, the child must be sent home as soon as possible. The child will be brought to a separate room where 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 notify the administration of symptoms exhibited and the administrative staff will take the child to the designated isolation location in the main building.
- Office staff will contact parents to arrange for the child's early departure.
- The office staff will continue to supervise the child until the parent arrives.
- The child's parents will be provided with information regarding the child's return to school.
- 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.

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, at a minimum all “close contacts”, meaning those being closer than 6 feet apart for more than 15 minutes with the person who was infectious, who have not been fully vaccinated against COVID 19 will be required to self-quarantine for 10 days per the CDC guidelines. The school or/and the Racine Health department may however decide to close down the whole classroom community after accessing each individual situation. The following actions will be taken by school administration:

- Notify the Racine Health Department.
- Notify staff and parents/caregivers that a member of the classroom community has been diagnosed with COVID-19 using a form letter provided by the Racine Health Department 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.
- Follow the directives of the Racine Health Department to close the specific classroom community for 10 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 or any other directives given by the Racine Health Department.
- Complete disinfecting procedures

Close Contact

An individual is considered a close contact if any of following is true: ● Were within 6 feet of a positive person for more than 15 minutes total in a day. ● Had physical contact with the person. ● Had direct contact with the respiratory secretions of the person (i.e., from coughing, sneezing, contact with dirty tissue, shared drinking glass, food, or other personal items). ● Lives with or stayed overnight for at least one night in a household with the person.

These close contact criteria apply regardless of mask use, face shields, or physical barriers, such as Plexiglas or plastic barriers. The only exception is if a health care worker in a school setting is wearing the proper personal protective equipment. When an individual’s symptom, contact, or test status changes, their quarantine or isolation requirements should be reassessed

<https://safeyoutube.net/w/gmFT>

Close Contacts to a COVID-19 Case

The following isolation and quarantine periods apply to students and staff who are close contacts of a confirmed or probable COVID-19 case. School-based health care providers should use these criteria, in consultation with the local health department, to determine when students can return to in-person instruction

Students and staff who remain asymptomatic during their quarantine period and are either not tested or test negative for COVID-19 infection by PCR test:

- Must quarantine for 10 days from the date of last exposure before returning to school or day care.
- If the exposure is to a household member and the case cannot properly isolate away from others at home, the last date of contact may be the last day of isolation for the case.

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. Racine and State Health Department may conduct any necessary contact tracing of COVID-19 reported cases.

Communication

Racine 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

Racine Montessori School administrative staff will monitor absenteeism among children and staff. 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 Wisconsin State Department of Health and the Racine Health Department.

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 eating or handling food
- After using the toilet or helping a child use the bathroom
- After contact with bodily fluid
- After playing outdoors.
- After handling garbage
- Before touching their eyes, nose, or mouth because that's how germs enter our bodies.

Follow Five Steps to Wash Your Hands the Right Way

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

We will teach these five steps for handwashing.

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 will also wash their own hands.

As always, liquid hand soap and hand sanitizer are available for use in our classrooms. Hand cream is also available to those with dried skin due to the increase in hand washing. Hand sanitizer will be used regularly by adults in the classroom but not a required practice for our children.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Our Environments

Racine Montessori School will use the following procedures to ensure the cleanliness of our community environments.

These procedures include the following:

- Electrostatic Spraying Technology will be used to disinfect and sanitize our environments at the end of each day after the children are out of the environment. The electrostatic charge ensures that even the hard to reach places are coated evenly and effectively. All disinfectants used in these sprayers will be nontoxic and safe for children and food prep areas. See the material safety data sheet for product information. <https://www.wintersteiger.com/download/?file=5630.pdf>
- Staff will clean surfaces using a non-toxic, food-grade disinfectant on a daily basis.
- 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 will not undergo additional cleaning or disinfection procedures rather they will be alternated with other similar materials.

Clean and Disinfect Bedding

Each child's bedding is kept separate and stored in individually labeled storage. Cots and mats are labeled for each child. Bedding will be sent home on Friday to be cleaned.

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

Areas used by the individuals with COVID-19 will be closed off and left undisturbed for 24 hours before they are cleaned and disinfected to minimize the potential for exposure to respiratory droplets. Outside doors and windows will be opened if possible, 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 will follow CDC's guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Products

Racine Montessori School uses disinfecting products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19. We have also taken the time to research and ensure that our cleaning products are non-toxic and food/child safe.

Virtual Learning

Although Racine Montessori School will not be offering a remote learning option during the 2021-2022 school year, should a classroom or individual student need to quarantine, they will be receiving instruction/ materials from the classroom teachers.

Live Zoom or Google meet lessons will be scheduled during whole classroom quarantines and assignments will be given using Googleclassroom or Seesaw depending on the classroom involved. During individual quarantines, teachers will determine the best way to offer the child continuing opportunities for lessons and instruction.