



COVID-19 Reopening Plan 2020 - 2021

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Elizabeth Ann Clune Montessori School of Ithaca COVID-19 Reopening Plan

The “New Normal”

EACMSI reopened our campus on September 8, 2020. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has created a serious health crisis for all of us, we have created our reopening plans keeping in mind first and foremost the safety, health, and wellbeing of our entire community.

The information provided in this document is obtained from a combination of sources. Federal agencies, governmental entities, industry consultants, legal firms and other independent schools have helped us formulate a plan for our community. EACMSI will do our best to communicate with you and be transparent. As information and conditions evolve and guidance changes by either the local, state or federal authorities, we will update this plan and share any changes with our community.

Return to School Agreement:

All students, teachers and staff should have the expectation that the entire EACMSI community will consider their health and wellbeing as a top priority. Although EACMSI cannot guarantee that there will be no exposure to COVID-19 the school will make every effort and follow all guidelines to prevent exposure while on campus.

It is equally important that all members of our community willingly comply with rules and policies designed to keep our community safe and healthy. This means thinking of others and adjusting our behavior with sensitivity and respect even when it is inconvenient. All members of our community must:

- **wear a mask when on campus.** It is possible to transmit the virus prior to showing any symptoms. Face covering over the nose and mouth will significantly reduce the possibility of exposure and reduce community spread. (NYS guidelines ask that masks be worn in all public places).
- **wash and disinfect hands frequently.** There will be hand sanitizing stations in all classroom areas.
- **practice physical distancing** - 6 feet minimum. We will practice 8 feet of distance wherever possible.
- **follow screening guidelines** for symptoms of illness each day. These will be submitted electronically for all students and adults each morning prior to entry into the facility.
- **stay home when not feeling well.** Any individual with a fever of 100+ degrees F or a, cough, shortness of breath, loss of taste or smell, stomach upset, aches, chills or any other sign of illness will not be permitted to enter the building.
- **comply with self-quarantine rules (parameters below)** regarding exposure to COVID-19 and recent travel.
 - Quarantining for 14 days if entering or returning to the Ithaca area from International locations or States experiencing widespread transmission in new COVID19 cases, or identified as “hot spots” by federal, state, or local authorities.
- **Inform EAC Administration** if a member of your family has been in close or proximate contact with an individual who tested positive for COVID19.

If everyone follows these precautions, we can reduce the possibility of exposure and infection within our community. This will lead to an increase in on campus instruction rather than remote learning.

EACMSI COVID-19 Reopening Plan

There are four sections to the EACMSI COVID-19 Reopening Plan:

- Reopening School for In-Person Instruction
- Monitoring of Health Conditions
- Containment of Potential Transmission of COVID-19
- Closure of School Facility and In-Person Instruction, Learning Resumes Remotely.

In-Person Instruction:

Preparing the Facility:

Over the summer we installed UV filters on all the furnace ductwork and AC units throughout the facility to insure clean circulation of air in each classroom. Windows will also be opened regularly to increase air flow. All classroom spaces is equipped with NYS approved disinfectant for COVID-19 removal on surfaces and wall mounted hand sanitation stations. Sinks with soap for hand washing are also available.

Each classroom will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected nightly, Monday - Friday. High touch surfaces such as door handles, light switches, faucets, toilet seats and handles will be disinfected mid-morning and mid-afternoon. In addition, tabletops will be disinfected before lunch and at the end of the day by the classroom teacher or assistant.

Classroom Model:

We have implemented a Small Pod model throughout campus from Primary Level through Middle School. Each Pod consists of one teacher, one assistant and will range between 10 and 17 students depending on the classroom space and level. Each classroom Pod has its own outside entrance/exit so there will be no close contact in hallways. School will be in session Monday - Friday from 8:30 - 3:30. All students will spend the entire day with their Pod and use a designated bathroom that will not be shared with other Pods. This will insure minimal cross contamination of students and staff.

Inside the classroom each student has a designated workspace with materials/tools that will not be shared with any other student or adult. Acrylic dividers are available in each pod to add flexibility to the set-up of the classroom environment each day and for those who might be sharing a workspace. Each workspace is at least 6 feet apart from each other - 8 feet wherever possible. Should we be mandated to increase the distance between students at any time during the school year (which would reduce available spaces on campus) it is our priority to have primary students (age 3-6) on campus at all times.

Students and staff wear masks all day. The mask must be securely placed over nose and mouth prior to entering the building until they exit the facility. There will be mask breaks when sitting for lunch. Students and staff will eat lunch in their pod classroom, in their designated area, properly socially distanced. There will be no sharing of food. Students will need to provide lunch and snacks for themselves along with bringing a water bottle each day labeled with their name.

EACMSI asks that each student wear a new washable mask for each day of the week, Monday - Friday with a spare in their backpack. The school will provide additional masks for any student or staff who need one on a given day. Masks must be securely placed over the nose and mouth and around the ear. Please do not use bandanas, neck gators or scarves as a mask for a full day of school! A good test of the quality of your mask is to try and blow out a candle with it on. If you can it is not protective enough for the school environment.

There will be no extracurricular activities, Before School or After School care. There will be no assemblies or large group gatherings on campus. These may exist as ZOOM events throughout the year.

EACMSI will NOT ALLOW VISITORS into any building on campus without an appointment. It is important to reduce the number of people moving in and out of our facility during the day. We do want to address any and all needs you may have! We will be answering the phone and responding to email regularly. We will begin development of an observation model in October to allow you visibility into your child's classroom.

All visitors with an appointment must follow the guidelines; answer some COVID-19 questions, wear a mask, and sanitize their hands upon entry.

Monitoring of Health Conditions:

Each day a parent/guardian must answer an electronic questionnaire related to COVID-19 exposure. This includes temperature check, travel, and possibility of close contact to an infected individual. These logs will be kept for a month then deleted. Upon arrival at school either by bus or car, each student will be wearing a mask and prior to entering their pod they will have their temperature checked again by an adult with a Non-Contact Forehead Thermometer.

The teacher or assistant must receive the questionnaire and a normal temperature check in order to allow the student into the classroom.

After entering, changing shoes and putting their jacket, backpack and lunch away in their cubby area, each student will wash their hands waiting the appropriate marked distance from the student in front to complete the process, then return to their designated area, ready to begin the instructional part of the day.

If a student or family member has **traveled outside the U.S. or to a state within the U.S. with widespread transmission of COVID-19, (5% or higher daily infection rate using a 14-day rolling average)** that student needs to quarantine for 14 days, learning remotely prior to returning to in-person instruction. More information is available on the NYSED website.

- **If a student or teacher or staff member tests positive for COVID-19**, regardless of whether they are symptomatic or asymptomatic, the entire pod will be sent home and resume school remotely. The student/teacher/staff and class may return to school upon completing at least 10 days of isolation from the onset of symptoms or 10 days of isolation after the first positive test if they remain asymptomatic.
- If a student/teacher or staff member has had close or proximate contact with a person with COVID-19 for a prolonged period of time **AND is experiencing COVID-19 related symptoms**, the entire pod will be sent home and resume school remotely. The student/staff and class may return to school upon completing at least 10 days of isolation from the onset of symptoms.

- The New York State Department of Health considers a **close contact** to be someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 10 minutes starting from 48 hours before illness onset until the time the person was isolated.

- If a student/teacher/staff has had close or proximate contact with a person with COVID-19 for a prolonged period of time **AND is NOT experiencing COVID-19 related symptoms**, the entire pod will be sent home and resume school remotely. The student/teacher/staff and class may return to school after they quarantine for 14 days.

- If a student/teacher/staff is **symptomatic upon arrival at school or becomes sick with COVID-19 symptoms while at school**, absent close or proximate contact with a person with COVID-19, the student/staff must be separated and moved to the Nurse's Isolation Room and sent home immediately along with the entire pod and may return to work upon completing at least 10 days of isolation from the onset of symptoms OR upon receipt of a negative COVID-19 test result.

The nurse will be responsible in conjunction with the Tompkins County Health Department (TCHD) for monitoring and tracking the number of positive cases within the EACMSI community. This will help determine if positive cases are increasing beyond an acceptable level established by the Health Department.

Containment of Potential Transmission of COVID-19:

The school has established the Nurse Isolation Room which will isolate a student or staff member if necessary. There is a curtain in the space that will separate the potential infected person along with a window on the door so that the space can be monitored.

Students/teachers/staff suspected of exposure will be moved to the Nurse's Isolation Room and **picked up immediately**. They will leave with instructions on the necessary steps to take in order to return to school. The Nurse isolation Room will be closed and thoroughly sanitized prior to re-opening.

If a classroom pod has a positive case of COVID-19, the pod will be sent home and continue school remotely. The classroom and its associated bathroom will be closed and thoroughly sanitized prior to the re-entry of the students and staff.

Closure:

If the school needs to reduce or close in-person education, it will be done in consultation with the TCHD. Guidance from New York State currently states:

“Schools will remain open when there is less than 5% daily infection rate in Tompkins County using a 14-day rolling average. School will close when there is a 9% daily infection rate in Tompkins County or higher using a 7-day rolling average.”

What EACMSI does between 5% and 9% will be based on metrics we see within our school community. Should we be mandated to increase the distance between students at any time during the school year, or phase out levels to remote learning, it is our priority to have primary students (age 3-6) on campus if possible at all times. Should multiple pods be closed because of infection, EACMSI may close the entire In-Person Instruction on campus and resume our Distance Learning Curriculum until such time that we see a safe reduction in infection within the community.

Any decision to close In-Person Instruction for any pod or level will be communicated right away to that pod/level. All students would need to be picked up from school as soon as possible.

Off-site Pod Cohorts

Students will remain with their cohort if our facility is forced to close, although some teachers may decide to integrate their pods for certain subjects or experiences. (Keeping the pod structure mostly intact will allow for smaller group instruction and collaboration and more individualized support between home and school, as needed. It will also help preserve the intimacy developed onsite.)

Remote All Year Students:

There are some students who will be remote all year even if/when regulations allow our facility to be open. Fully remote students will be assigned to a pod cohort and will be integrated with their onsite peers via technology.