

2021-2022 NMS Covid-19 Health Policy

August 2021

Currently, the CDC is seeing a rapid and alarming rise in the COVID-19 case and hospitalization rates around the country. Delta is currently the predominant variant of the virus in the United States. The Delta variant is highly contagious, more than 2x as contagious as previous variants of the virus. Some data suggests the Delta variant might even cause more severe illness than previous variants in unvaccinated people. Across the country, pediatric cases of COVID-19 are skyrocketing alongside cases among unimmunized adults; child hospitalizations have now reached an all-time pandemic high.

The Newburyport Montessori School (hereafter “NMS”) values the safety and wellbeing of its staff, children, and families. For this reason, the school has updated our COVID-19 Health Policy. These policies are subject to change and will be frequently **updated** based on the recommendation and guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and (EEC) Mass Dept. of Early Education and Care.

Preventative health measures:

NMS is confident that if certain measures such as wearing a mask, respiratory etiquette (cover cough and sneezes), frequent hand washing / hand sanitation and environmental cleaning and sanitizing are widely observed, NMS can be operated in a safe and measured way.

All staff and students in Children’s house classrooms are required, to wear cloth face coverings (over the nose and mouth). Masks or face coverings will not be worn when napping, eating or outdoors. Masks or face coverings will not be used by anyone who has trouble breathing or is unable to remove their mask without assistance. When masks or face coverings are removed, they will be placed in a labeled plastic bin. Proper hand hygiene will be practiced immediately after handling a mask or face covering.

We cannot expect a group of Toddler & PreK children not to engage in interactive play or share materials. Parents or guardians should monitor the health of their child and not send them to the program if they are displaying any symptom of COVID. Parents or guardians should seek COVID testing promptly, and report results to the program given the implications for other children, families, and staff. Parents or guardians should protect any vulnerable persons who are members of the same household or come into frequent, close contact with infants, children and youth who attend NMS.

Parent drop-off and pick-up:

The pick-up and drop-off of children will be completed outside of NMS or at a designated entry unless there is a legitimate need for the parent to enter. We hope to invite you into the school for other reasons like parent orientation and conferences.

Illness:

Ill children and staff are required to stay home.

- NMS will communicate to parents the importance of keeping children home when they are sick.
- NMS will communicate to staff the importance of being vigilant for symptoms and staying in touch with the NMS Head of School if or when they start to feel sick.
- Any child or staff with a temperature of more than 100.0 will not be permitted to return to school until 24 hours after the fever has returned to normal without fever reducing medications. NMS will not allow a physician's note before the 24 hours.

Very commonly, a child might be present at NMS with cough and/or runny nose (mild respiratory symptoms) and the child is behaving normally with no fever. Children will be permitted to attend NMS if no other symptoms of illness are present.

Children or staff who become sick while at NMS will be sent home as soon as possible.

- The sick child or staff will isolate from well children and staff until they can be sent home by isolating in the staff room.

If a student or family member tests positive or is considered a close contact, you must notify the head of school who will follow up with the local BOH for further quarantine guidance.

Healthy Hand Hygiene:

All children, staff and anyone entering NMS will engage in hand hygiene at the following times:

- arrival to NMS and after breaks,
- before and after preparing food or drinks,
- before and after eating or handling food, or feeding children,
- before and after administering medication or medical ointment,

- before and after diapering,
- after using the toilet or helping a child use the bathroom,
- after coming in contact with bodily fluid,
- after playing outdoors,
- after handling garbage.

Hands will be washed with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If hands are not visibly dirty, alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol will be used if soap and water are not readily available.

- Children will be supervised when using hand sanitizer to prevent ingestion.
- Children will be assisted with handwashing, including infants who cannot wash hands alone.
- After assisting children with handwashing, staff will also wash their hands.
- Posters will be placed at all sinks describing handwashing steps near sinks.

Travel & Quarantine Guidelines:

We have tried to come up with a travel policy that aligns with CDC recommendations but also considers the type of travel that you will be doing while considering the high and low risk to that travel.

We will review this policy and adjust per the CDC's recommendations.

High Risk: traveling by plane or train and staying at a resort or hotel with much exposure to large crowds of people. Students and unvaccinated adults in the household must get test after the 3rd day back and can return to school with a negative result.

Medium Risk: if traveling by car to a destination and staying in a hotel or visiting an amusement park, etc. with some exposure to large crowds. Students and unvaccinated adults in the household must get a test upon return and can return to school with a negative test.

Low Risk: if traveling by car with your family members and staying with family or friends, with some attractions or crowds. No testing or waiting is necessary

This is the guidance from CDC for unvaccinated individuals for you to consider:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-during-covid19.html>