

## **Introduction & Welcome**

First, we would like to thank all those who were able to take the time to listen to and participate in our Town Hall events earlier this week. For those who were not able to make it as well as those who would like to revisit the information presented, this document is a transcript of the prepared statements, as well as the question and answer section that followed. We also want to emphasize that this is a dynamic, evolving process and while this document does represent the most up-to-date information we have, it is important to make it clear that all answers and decisions are subject to change should we receive new guidelines, mandates or proclamations from educational experts, Public Health or Governor Inslee. We thank everyone in advance for taking the time to read through each section.

## **MCH Task Re-Entry Force Team**

We would like to take a moment to formally introduce the staff on our Re-entry Task Force, as well as our parent and community partners, who have offered to lend their unique expertise to the task force. This team also includes members of the Educational Leadership team and my Business Office team. These individuals have been instrumental in the creation of this document, and we wanted our families to have a better understanding of the people involved in making these decisions.

Marc Cobb, Middle School Program Director

Nicole Champoux, Elementary Program Director

Melissa Brooks, Early Childhood Program Director

Kim Berude, Infant Toddler Program Director

Angela Spayde, Student Support Director

Angela Imes, Controller

## **Parent & Community Partners on the Re-Entry Task Force**

Sarah Armstrong - New parent in the community, communications expertise

Mason Wallace, Local Medical Provider, Medical Expertise

Jeremy Syme, A long time MCH parent & our PA Board President, Technology Expertise

Cari Benn, A parent in our Upper School, Legal & Governmental Policy Expertise

Taryn Rathbone-Daub, A new parent to MCH in the EC, Infection Disease Expertise

Nancy Kaplan, A new parent to MCH in the Middle School, Health Expertise

## **Re-Entry Goal Statement Summary**

Our Task Force developed a Re-Entry Goal Statement, which is summarized as follows:

**The CRTF will prioritize the delivery of the following components necessary for re-entry:**

- **A top-tier Montessori educational program**
- **Specific guidelines that protect everyone's health and safety**
- **Keeping our community connected**
- **Protecting the long-term viability of the school**

## **Staging Model**

To guide us through the process of re-opening in a safe, planned manner, the CRTF has developed a staging model that will guide our decision making as we navigate the pandemic throughout this coming summer and school year.

The team carefully decided to use the word “Stages” versus “Phases” to help avoid confusion around how we describe our planned steps of re-entry versus what the language that local government is using to describe their work towards restarting the economy. To be clear, our “stages” do NOT mirror the governments published “phases”.

Currently, we have identified 4 possible stages that describe how we may shift and move throughout the upcoming school year as we navigate the pandemic. Our view is that this modeling is much like a dimmer or a doorknob handle, it’s not a linear model but a dynamic and responsive model, that allows us some flexibility to respond to the pandemic as things evolve throughout this next year.

Before outlining this model, it is important to note that there are several social distancing measures that will remain constant between Stages 1 to 3. We know these limitations will be disappointing as these are all things that create such a unique experience at MCH and most of us hold near and dear. We all need to keep in mind that none of this is permanent. This is all considered part of a larger risk mitigation strategy that limits the spread of exposure.

### **During Stages 1-3 the following permanent programming changes will be made:**

- No large or small community events
- No field trips
- No educational enrichment onsite events
- No visitors on campus
- No observations in classrooms
- No parents in classrooms
- No afterschool clubs
- No cross-programming activities

Please note that in Stages 1-3, we use the word “cohort.” For our purposes, a cohort will be defined as follows: a cohort is a group of people made of a specific set of students and faculty. These cohorts will not change throughout the school year. More details on why the cohort model is the recommended model can be found below in the first section of our Q&A. Here is an outline of Stages 1 through 4:

### **Stage 1**

This is the stage we have been in for the past several months. During Stage 1, Stay Home orders have been issued for schools due to high community transmission and threats to our health care system.

A note on our position: as Montessorians and global citizens, MCH does not take its responsibilities lightly when it comes to making decisions that are in the best interest of the greater community. We stand by Governor Inslee's decision making over the last several months and we are proud of our community for standing with us and doing the right thing by leaning into the School at Home program, and for working with us to make it as successful as possible. While we recognize how difficult this has been for each and every one of us, we do believe we made the right decision for our school community and the greater local community to stay closed during the remainder of the 2019-20 school year.

Moving forward, we feel like we've learned enough to be able to safely offer care for some families in our community who are considered Essential Workers, in which one or more parents must report to a physical work location outside of the home in order to provide essential services to the greater community. Work from home options are not available for these families, and childcare is an absolute need.

For all other members of this community not in the Essential Workers group, campus will be closed, and faculty will implement School at Home version 3.0.

### **Stage 2**

Our re-entry to our campus for summer care is closest to what this stage will look like. Case counts are decreasing, deaths are decreasing, hospital capacity is not at risk, and the economy is gradually re-opening.

The community will be able to re-enter the campus in some capacity. The cohort model will be in place and we will not be operating our before and after care programming in the same capacity as we have in the past. To clarify, this is to ensure that classrooms are not merging during before or after care services, which would compromise any cohorts in which those students were a part. Our decisions on group size will determine what re-entry will look like.

Our hours of operation will likely be 7:30am-5:00 pm in the Lower School, which will allow us to honor individual student schedules in the Lower School. Please note that the length and timing of those schedules will be adjusted in order to aid in more staggered arrival and dismissal windows, as well as a shortened operational window for the school overall. Additionally, we will not be able to make exceptions to the start and finish of our school day, as this will adversely affect our faculty and staff schedules.

**In the event of a cohort member tests positive for COVID-19, that cohort classroom will be shut down and all members of the cohort will be required to quarantine** based on the guidelines listed below in the Exclusions and Quarantine section of the Q&A (pg. 12).

### **Stage 3**

In Stage 3, case counts are very low to non-existent, hospital capacity is not at risk, the economy has fully reopened but a vaccine is not available and herd immunity is not established.

We will return to normal classroom capacity but still have a cohort model five days a week. This means that students from different classrooms will still not interact with one another on campus, and before and after care will continue to happen in the child's classroom. However, reduced daily schedules will likely still be in place and our hours of operation would most likely remain 7:30-5:00.

## **Stage 4**

Moving into Stage 4 will require one of the two following realities, ideally both: 1) a reliable, consistent vaccine has been developed and is universally available to all members of the community, or 2) scientists and public health experts have determined that herd immunity exists and the risk of continued virus spread is low to non-existent. Everything about school returns to our pre-pandemic model.

In conclusion, it is important to emphasize this staging system is intended to be a dynamic and evolving model based on the most up to date information at the time, which will dictate when we move from one Stage to the next. Details may change as we receive more guidance related to mitigating risks for viral transmission of COVID in group settings.

## **Questions and Answers Section**

The following questions and answers were stated during the meeting and were based on summarizing the questions submitted to MCH by the parent community prior to the Town Halls. Questions that were similar in nature were synthesized into one question, for the sake of keeping this as succinct as possible. We have also grouped these questions into distinct topics, to help keep the questions and answers organized.

## **Program Modifications**

### **How many children will be in each classroom (compares to state guidance)?**

- MCH has not made a final decision on this question, as the details informing how to make it are quite complex and come from several different sources. Information from these sources is constantly evolving and is not always available at the time of making decisions.
- The current guidance on group size is coming from WADoH. However, it is not law, it is guidance only. The laws we follow are regulated and enforced by DCYF (Department of Child, Youth and Family Service). It is unclear at this point whether DCYF will be taking a position to support guidance from WADoH or if they are even legally able to do so without either a mandate or proclamation coming from the Governor stating that they have the right to do so.
- Other resources we have for public health guidance are the CDC and WHO, who have both issued guidance for K-12 schools and childcare programs.
- Additionally, we also rely on many industry experts and partners who have been instrumental in providing guidance through this crisis.
- Consistent from all these organizations is a recommendation that when possible, schools should be adopting “cohort grouping” models to mitigate the risk of COVID transmission within a school community. The idea is that these “cohorts” are consistent groupings of students and staff, and come with the following expectations:
  - The cohorts do not mix with other cohorts in any capacity;
  - No merging of students from different cohorts for before or after care
  - No shared playground time between cohorts
  - No cross-programming activities between cohorts or programs
  - No after school clubs

- The idea behind “cohorts” is that you can limit the spread of viral transmission in a community by isolating “cohorts” if someone in the cohort classroom is infected with the COVID virus.
- This model mitigates the need of shutting down the entire campus for an extended period of time during a COVID outbreak.
- It’s important to note that the entire campus may still be closed briefly for deep disinfecting, should we need to shut down a particular cohort classroom.
- The biggest decisions we have to make is how many students and staff will exist in each “cohort” classroom.
- This is referred to as classroom density and is one of several social distancing strategies schools need to make decisions on.
- To illustrate the difficulty of merging the different recommendations, here is where each of the above-mentioned agencies stand on cohort sizing:
  - DOH guidelines limit group sizes to 10, including staff.
  - OSPI issued regulatory guidance on 6/11 for public and private schools that does NOT define classroom group sizing for public or private elementary programs.
  - The CDC does not define a specific number in the “cohort” model.
  - Industry experts in education are recommending that rather than fixating on a specific number of students, to instead focus on reducing previous classroom capacities by 21-38% of the original classroom size.
- As you can tell, when all guidance is taken together, there is no clear consensus on a specific number of students being recommended in each classroom.
- Most classroom capacities are determined by a square foot model (e.g., 35 square foot per child).
- Private school public policy and advocacy group are currently working with Public Health and the governor’s office to address the current group size limit as they will not be financially sustainable for Early Learning programs.
- The big issue here is timing.
- Early learning programs need to make decisions now for next year.
- Our decisions will impact our ability to honor existing enrollment agreements as well as impact our short- and long-term viability.
- We may not be able to wait for the state to address this issue and update regulation.
- They have been slow in releasing and updating guidance.
- Ultimately, we have to make one of two choices:
  - Choose not to follow the current guidance from the WADoH and instead follow other industry expertise on reducing classroom densities, OR
  - We implement hybrid schedules in which students switch between campus time and distance learning in order to honor existing enrollment agreements and to meet state guidelines.

### **Example Under an Alternate Density Reduction Model**

If we have to implement an alternative model, the following is a range of possibilities, based on the 21-38% range suggested by industry experts. Here are a few examples of what those percentages mean, based on what we know about enrollment for next year in the I/T and EC programs:

#### **Infant / Toddler Examples**

- 30 Toddlers and 6 Infants enrolled in the Infant/Toddler Programs for next year.
- Density reduction for Toddlers of 21% = 34 students (Average of 11 kids per classroom – will go up or down depending on the size of the class)
- Density reduction for Toddlers of 38% = 27 students (Average of 9 kids per classroom – will go up or down depending on the size of the class)
- Density reduction for Infants of 21% = 7 infants
- Density reduction for Infants of 38% = 6 infants

#### **Early Childhood Examples**

- 90 children enrolled in the Early Childhood Program for next year
- 117 is our full capacity
- Density reduction of 21% = 92 students (Average of 18 kids per classroom – will go up or down depending on the size of the class)
- Density reduction of 38% = 72 students (Average of 14 kids per classroom – will go up or down depending on the size of the class)

### **DOH's Current Regulatory Guidelines of 8 kids and 2 teachers**

If we go in the direction of hybrid scenario and follow the current guidance of 8 students and 2 teachers per classroom. We are exploring the following hybrid model options. In any of these options, classrooms will be split up into two Cohorts, called A and B. When describing the time on and off of the campus, the two Cohorts will never be in on campus at the same time and will rotate as described below.

The 2/3 Model – 2 Days on campus, 3 Days School at Home – In this model, Cohort A is on campus for M/T – Wed is a deep clean, and Cohort B is on campus for Th/F.

The 5/5 Model – 5 Days on and 5 Days off (deep clean on the weekend) – In this model, Cohort A would be on campus for 5 days with a deep clean over the weekend; Cohort B would then come on to campus for 5 days while Cohort A was in School at Home, continuing to switch.

The 4/10 Model – 4 Days on and 10 Days off (Deep Clean on Friday and a 10-day window to monitor for possible exposure and development of COVID symptoms) – In this model, Cohort A would be on campus for four days, M-Th, with deep cleaning on Friday while Cohort B is in School at Home. Cohort B would then come onto campus the following M-Th, while Cohort A is in School at Home. This allows for a full 10 days of being off campus for each cohort after being on campus for four days, allowing for additional time for members of the cohort to potentially display symptoms of the virus.

**Will my child have the same teacher and classmates as before the closure? Will we have any say about who they are with? How soon will we know this?**

- This is going to be tricky and we may need to do some shuffling depending on how we address classroom density.
- We will be very careful and thoughtful in our consideration when making these adjustments, but we cannot guarantee that there won't be some movement this upcoming year.
- Unfortunately, the nature of this situation will be so complex that parents will not be able to weigh in on that decision making.
- However, please know it is usually a process where the Head of School, the program director and the previous and new teaching staff all contribute to the conversation to make the best possible decision for each child.
- Notifications concerning changes for the summer will happen no later than the last day of the school year; notifications for the 2020-21 school year will happen by mid-August.

**What will the student to teacher ratios be (please provide by program)?**

- This depends on the group size we decide on for each classroom, but there will be a minimum of 2 teachers, including a Montessori Certified Lead and an Assistant.

**Summer Program Modifications**

**What will MCH's hours and days of operation be for the summer program?**

- Our operational hours will be 7:30-5:00 pm Mon-Fri.
- Everyone will be able to attend Mon-Fri.

**Will there be outdoor time and water play?**

- We will definitely have an increase in outdoor time, as this is consistent with recommendations from experts on mitigating exposure.
- However, there will be no water play during the summer. There is too great a chance for close physical and social interaction, making it near impossible for staff to maintain social distancing. Additionally, please note that the playground climbers are what facilitate water play during typical summer care and will need to remain closed.

**What services will be offered 1) during the summer and 2) during the school year (e.g., specialists)?**

- MCH will continue to have most specialists when possible.
- How the specialists interact with students will look different:
  - Specialists will not enter classrooms.
  - It may be possible to conduct their classes in person in an outdoor environment with social distancing properly in place.
  - It is also possible they will host live Zoom sessions on a monitor inside the classroom.

### **Will the children receive lessons from their lead teacher during the summer?**

- Following typical summer camp practices, lead teachers will not be available to give lessons during the summer program.
- This summer will primarily be a care environment, as detailed above.

### **School at Home**

#### **Will school-at-home continue to be an option this summer?**

- There is a slim possibility; however, if we are able to offer this, it will not take place until later in the summer.
- The school's priority will stay focused on preparing for re-entry in the fall.
- If and when this becomes a possibility, we will let families know.

#### **Will school-at-home continue to be an option when the MCH campus re-opens?**

- Yes, it is our intention to allow families to choose between in person and school at home, based on each family's needs.
- Tuition will remain the same, as the amount of work required by faculty and staff will not change whether the student is on campus or remote.
- Staff and faculty will be fully prepared to implement this model, should Stay Home orders be issued by the governor or should a classroom cohort need to be shut down due to a COVID positive exposure.

### **Physical Distancing/ Facility Zoning**

#### **What does zoning mean?**

Zoning is how we determine how to physically move through our campus in order to ensure social distancing for example:

- Create specific zones for on-campus cohorts, limiting the possibility of crossover between groups as they move throughout the campus throughout the day.
- Using stickers, tape, and signage to identify where people should walk and designate how far apart they should be.
- Identifying locations for indoor and outdoor hand sanitizer stations.
- Installing outdoor sinks with soap dispensers where possible.

#### **How will the children be able to interact with each other? Will they face any limitations such as social distancing?**

- As the rest of this document lays out, our decisions on this topic were not easy, and contained many variables, including not least the social-emotional development implications. We really had to continually look at our goal statement and make sure we were considering all of these factors. In short, the answer is yes, social distancing measures will be in place at all levels, in developmentally appropriate ways.

- What we concluded is that it will need to look different by program and based on the age of the child. Our approach is a classic Montessori mantra – “Control the Environment, Not the Child”.
- Putting our detailed, carefully thought out risk-mitigation strategies into place allows us to still follow the unique development and needs for social interaction in a developmentally responsible way.
- Most importantly, our goal is to ensure that we don’t create a “prison-like” environment; based on what we know about the brain development of our younger students, much of their learning is experiential in nature and we are doing everything we can to ensure fear is not part of their experience at MCH.
- Finally, teachers and staff will use gentle redirection when children do not follow social distancing guidelines.

**What do activities like meals, circle and snack look like?**

- With smaller cohort group sizes, circles can be formed in a way that allows children to be six feet apart.
- Children won’t be eating meals communally; they will all have their own individual desk or space to eat meals and snacks separate

**Facility Management/Modification**

**Will children have access to the shared play structures and outdoor areas?**

- Cohorts will only access outdoor spaces within their individual groups and will not interact with other cohorts.
- Play structures will be off-limits until we receive clearer guidance from Educational and Public Health experts regarding viral load and transmission or have the ability to disinfect them in between use.
- As guidance is issued, we will update this policy.

**Is there enough room for all students? Will you have to reduce capacity or eliminate programs (e.g., half-day)?**

- Currently, based on the definition that public health has defined for cohort sizes, we do not have capacity for all of the students who are enrolled for next year in the Early Childhood program.
- We hope to be able to address this through either implementing a hybrid approach to scheduling or by implementing the density reduction model shared earlier which would then allow a 5 day a week approach throughout the school year.
- We also haven’t ruled out the possibility of needing to eliminate AM half day schedules. However, we are again trying to keep our community intact and making this decision would be a last resort.

## **Arrival/Dismissal & Screening**

**What will the drop-off and pick-up procedures be? Will there be more time allowed for arrivals and dismissals? What will the arrival screening process be like? Will parents pre-screen at home? Will the drop-off process change?**

- Yes, the drop-off process will change. Drop-off for Lower School Extended Care families who arrive prior to the arrival and dismissal windows will be at their classroom door.
- Prior to re-entering campus, we will provide visual instructions on how to navigate drop-off at your child's classroom. This will look different by program and by classroom.
- Parents will not be allowed to enter classrooms under any circumstances.
- Students will not be allowed to enter classrooms until they have been screened by staff.
- Arrival and dismissal windows will be longer to allow for screening, which is why families that have enrolled for an AM or FD schedules in the Lower School will have slightly shorter schedules.
- The driveway attendant will be using a walkie talkie system to notify classrooms when children arrive.
- During arrival and dismissal windows, assistants from each cohort classroom will receive and screen the children from their classroom at the car in the driveway. Parents cannot exit their vehicles during this process.
- Children will not be able to be dropped off late or picked up early, unless prior arrangements have been made with their teacher. If this is necessary, a specific procedure will be followed; however, we will strongly be discouraging this as it poses additional safety challenges for classroom management and necessary screening.
- Transparent classroom is currently developing an app parents can download on to their phone and use for sign-in and sign-out.
- This will be a touch-free sign in process so that parents use their own devices.
- Until this app is developed, we will have another touch-free process during summer.
- The app will include a health screening questionnaire that parents will need to complete prior to dropping their child off each day.
- The screening questions are from WADOH, and they screen for possible exposure to COVID for the child and any family members. If there are any symptoms or possible exposure the child will need to be excluded from care.
- Children will also be screened by a staff member in their cohort group for a fever and will not be allowed to enter the classroom until screened.
- Anything above 100.4 will require exclusion. If a child presents with a temperature of 100.4 or higher, a second temperature check will take place to confirm.

### **Will children and staff be screened during the day (e.g., temperature checks)?**

- Yes, staff and students will be screened for temp and symptoms twice a day. Once upon arrival and again 4 hours after arrival.

### **Exclusions and Quarantine**

#### **What criteria have been set to exclude sick children and staff from school?**

- We'll be following WADoH, DCYF and CDC guidelines on illness exclusions.
- Staff and children will follow the same guidelines.
- If a child is sick in any capacity, they need to stay home. If you are sick, please have a healthy person drive your child to school.

#### **What are the specific COVID exclusion criteria?**

- Keep your child home if they have potentially been exposed to someone with a confirmed case of COVID even if they are not sick.
- Monitor for 14 days for signs/symptoms of COVID related illness, defined as follows. Please note that this list was updated on 6/11/20, and includes symptoms I did not list during the town hall meetings, which have been highlighted.
  - A cough
  - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - A fever of 100.4°F or higher or **a sense of having a fever**
  - A sore throat
  - Chills
  - New loss of taste or smell
  - Muscle or body aches
  - Nausea/vomiting/diarrhea
  - Congestion/running nose – not related to seasonal allergies
  - Unusual fatigue

#### **When can my child return to campus after having suspected symptoms of COVID-19?**

The information in this response comes directly from the newly issued WADoH guidance on 6/11/20. New information is highlighted in yellow. A staff member or student who had signs of suspected or confirmed COVID-19 can return to campus when the following conditions are met:

- At least three days (72 hours) have passed since recovery – this is defined as having no fever without the use of medications and improvement in respiratory signs like cough and shortness of breath; AND
- At least 10 days have passed since signs first showed up, **OR**
- **It has been at least three days (72 hours) since recovery AND a health care provider has certified that the student does not have suspected or confirmed COVID-19.**

Please note this statement, taken directly from the guidance: “If a person believes they have had close contact to someone with COVID-19, but they are not sick, they should watch their health for signs of fever, cough, shortness of breath, and other COVID-19 symptoms during the 14 days after the last day

they were in close contact with the person sick with COVID-19. They should not go to work, childcare, school, or public places during the 14 days.”

#### **What will happen if someone in a classroom contracts COVID?**

- Classrooms will only be closed and quarantined **IF** there is a positive COVID-19 test result in the "cohort" group, including family members, and all members of the “cohort” will need to be quarantined for 14 days.

#### **Will you notify the class if someone in their classroom has symptoms of COVID?**

- Yes, we will send out illness notifications, so families can begin screening themselves and their children for possible COVID-19 symptoms.

#### **What is MCH’s plan to address future COVID-19 outbreaks and upcoming cold/flu seasons? How will the program change if the stay-at-home mandate is reinstated?**

- If there is a COVID outbreak at the school the Cohort model enables us to quarantine the cohort groups for 14 days rather than shut down the whole school. If we begin to have wide-spread community transmission, we will use our Staging Model to guide us in between Stages.

### **Health & Hygiene**

#### **How often will children wash their hands throughout the day?**

- Children and adults will wash hands when they arrive at the childcare, enter the classroom, before and after meals or snacks, after outside time, after going to the bathroom, after nose blowing or sneezing, and before leaving to go home.
- Young children will be helped to make sure they are doing it right.
- We’re getting creative to help children see that hygiene it’s important and not fear-based, and we are working on curriculum to be introduced to encourage and make hand washing culture fun, such as:
  - Ms. Amy is writing a new hand washing song
  - Posters and visual reminders will be installed
  - Routines will be implemented, and reminders will happen

#### **Will cleaning practices include removal of classroom water glasses, for example?**

- All classroom communal materials like glasses, plates, silverware, will be removed.

#### **How will the school be handling snack?**

- The school will NOT be providing snacks next school year.
- Each child will need to bring enough snacks to last them throughout the day.
- Snack items will need to be individually labeled or sent in a clearly labeled snack bag.
- Each child will also need their own reusable silverware, napkin and water bottle.

## **Cleaning & Disinfecting**

### **How will the classroom be cleaned throughout the day?**

- Teachers will be regularly cleaning and disinfected throughout the day.
- High touch surfaces like light switches, doorknobs, toilet, faucets, etc. will be disinfected several times a day.
- As materials are used by a child, they will be placed on an “already used” shelf instead of being placed back on the shelves in the classroom.
- Teachers will clean as they are able, and then return disinfected materials back to the work shelves.

### **Will the classroom be thoroughly cleaned at the end of each day?**

- Full janitorial staff will clean and disinfect at the end of each school day.
- We have also purchased a Clorox 360 machine and expect it to be delivered sometime in August. This machine rapidly disinfects environments through a fogger application process that can disinfect both soft and hard surfaces quickly and allow for safe re-entry into the space within minutes.

### **How will you address air quality?**

- Each classroom will be assessed for how to best address air quality concerns. This will be through a variety of solutions including using fans, open windows, air purification units, filters that catch and trap virus, updated air flow systems and more.

## **Personal Protective Equipment**

### **Will children, staff and parents be required to wear masks and/or gloves?**

- What we have learned so far about face coverings is that when it’s possible to wear them, they protect others from possible virus transmission. Based on OSPI guidance issued on 6/11, students are also allowed to wear a clear face shield as an alternative to a cloth mask. Adults will still be required to wear cloth masks.
- Our goal is to create a culture that encourages face coverings when able.
- Everyone that is over 2 will be encouraged to wear a face covering if they are able to do so safely. This includes all staff, parents and visitors on campus.
- Children under 2 will not be asked to wear them.
- A child’s age plays a factor in successful use of wearing a face covering
- Children must be able to independently remove their own masks.
- Individual development and health situations should be considered when making decisions for your child.
- Exceptions will be made for those members of our community that are unable to do so based on age and development, health issues or other mitigating factors.

- We will be creating fun opportunities for children to make their own face covering or ones for their friends in our practical life curriculum and welcome any parents that would like to assist us in the process by providing fun material, cutting out patterns etc.
- With the rigorous cleaning and hand-washing practices we'll be putting into place, gloves will NOT be needed.

### **Financial Implications**

#### **Will tuition change for the upcoming school year? (e.g., to account for distance learning, to account for reduced class sizes)**

- This is such a hard question. I hear and understand the perceptions and concerns about the value of what families are paying for when we are unable to provide in class instruction and care.
- In general tuition income covers the cost of operating the school and any profit margin in childcare and private education is extremely narrow, if not non-existent. This is why so many schools are non-profits.
- The tuition we set last year was based on assumptions of full enrollment and identified specific operational costs. Additional COVID mitigation costs were not factored into our budgeting models.
- None the less, we are looking at cash flow projections, attempting to creatively address our budget shortfalls by reprioritizing expenses. This would allow us to determine if there is any possible way we can discount tuition in some capacity when on-campus instruction is not possible. We hear your concerns related to the value differences between School at Home and on campus instruction and care; however, we cannot make a firm commitment on this right now. We're optimistic we will find a way to do something, even if it's just a little bit.

#### **Are you planning to modify the contract in any way?**

- If we make modifications, they will be via an addendum to the Enrollment Agreement.

#### **Can I modify the contract I have signed for the upcoming school year (e.g., move from full-time to half days)?**

- Yes, we will accept a change in contractual schedule through June 30<sup>th</sup>.
- For families looking to move from Full-Day to a Half-Day AM schedule, there is a slight possibility we will have to remove the Half-Day AM schedule option from our programming in order to remain financially viable.
- If this happens, families would be invited to move back into a full-day schedule or cancel their contracts without further penalty.
- However, please remember that the deposits are non-refundable in the event of withdrawal, even in these circumstances.

**If I choose to withdraw from MCH for any reason, what financial penalties will I incur?**

- It is important to state clearly here that our decisions are based on the most up to date information available to us. While we understand the difficulty families are facing in making their own decisions, we simply cannot give you answers that we cannot confirm. We are giving you as much information now as we can, so you can make a decision with the least amount of financial implications.
- For those families currently in a 12-month contract for the 2019/20 calendar year, if you choose to end your enrollment for the summer we will apply the same approach to splitting the financial impact of cancellation that we've been offering to families since the onset of the pandemic.
  - This has been a shared approach of a 50/50 split.
  - Essentially you would owe one month of summer tuition and we will absorb the income loss on the other month.
- If you choose to withdraw from your 2020/2021 contract after June 30th, your tuition liability in the Lower School upon separation will 15% of the total annual contract (roughly equivalent to 2 months tuition). We will not be able to discount this liability.

**Miscellaneous Additional Questions**

**How will you discuss these changes with children to increase their understanding but not spark fear?**

- We will be doing that through lots of social and emotional curriculum that we are developing.
- This will be through a variety of fun, engaging activities such as songs with Ms. Amy, colorful posters and more.
- Our goal is to help children learn these new behaviors without it feeling restrictive and scary.
- They'll talk about this at circles and the teachers will be gently re-enforcing these new expectations through regular programming.
- Grace and courtesy lessons have always been a part of the Montessori experience.
- These lessons are preemptively shared through direct instruction at circle time and teach children the rules of the classroom culture.
- We still want our children to come to school feeling full of joy and this will still be our focus as we continue to keep your child's health and safety in mind.

## Summary

The MCH staff and faculty would like to express our gratitude to parents in the community for their “partnership and involvement” in implementing School at Home. While this has always been a part of MCH’s Vision, I don’t think any of us anticipated the level of “partnership and involvement” our families would have to demonstrate this year. We couldn’t have done it without you, and we thank you from the bottom of all of our hearts.

Because of you, we’ve been able to keep our staff and faculty employed and their financial livelihoods have not been at risk, and no one had to claim unemployment. The school is still financially afloat, and we are optimistic about our short- and long-term viability.

This community has really modeled leaning into a crisis to get through it.

I also want to express my gratitude to my faculty and staff. They have demonstrated a growth mindset as they scaled hurdles they never imagined. I can honestly tell you that each and everyone of them has gone above and beyond to do their part in keeping this community connected and whole. They too have been instrumental in delivering the School at Home program and ensuring your children continued their Montessori experience.

Thank you for taking the time to read through this dense, important document, and for your support as we prepare to re-enter campus.

Be well,

Jennifer McConnell

Head of School