



Dixon Montessori Charter School
2021-2022
Safe Return to School Plan

Message from the Executive Director

Dear DMCS Parents & Guardians:

Welcome back to school! We will be returning to full time in person instruction on Wednesday, August 11th, 2021. The past year and a half has been tough. Thankfully, we have learned a lot about combatting COVID-19 in schools since the beginning of the pandemic. Safely returning to in-person learning in the new school year is a priority at DMCS, and it is supported by local, state and federal officials. Vaccination is currently the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic, and the city of Dixon continues to be a leader in Solano County (almost 70% of our 12+ population) in regards to vaccination rates.

In addition, please know that DMCS has gone to great measures to keep students and staff safe. Our campuses and operating procedures will not look the same as pre-pandemic. All classrooms have upgraded ventilation systems and added air purifiers, installed hand sanitizer pumps and other safety supplies, and adapted to continuously evolving safety guidance. We are confident that our school is the best and safest place for students to learn and grow.

Procedures continue to evolve. As of now, masks are still required when indoors in K-12 schools, according to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). Staff is required to wear masks unless they are in their room alone, or eating.

Students will be able to remove their masks outdoors. DMCS will have snack and lunch outdoors unless it is raining. When we must eat in the MPR, we will keep our students in their stable groups, and practice physical distancing as much as possible. Additionally, we have dedicated time to practice hand hygiene before eating.

Most students at DMCS are under the age of 12, and are not eligible for vaccination at this time. Therefore, we follow guidance that emphasizes implementing multi-layered prevention strategies (e.g., using multiple prevention strategies together consistently) to protect people who are not fully vaccinated, including students, teachers, staff, and other members of their households. We have stressed multiple prevention strategies throughout the pandemic.

Welcome back!

Ben Ernest
Executive Director
Dixon Montessori Charter School

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DMCS Values & Commitment to Families

Our mission is to ensure that students will achieve their individual greatest potential in a nurturing environment that inspires discovery, academic excellence, and positive social contribution. DMCS has worked diligently to prepare our campus for our children's safe return. Adhering to state guidelines and local public health directives, we have taken measures to prepare for a return for the 2021-22 school year. At DMCS, we recognize that COVID-19 places extraordinary responsibility on all of us. Our values of collaboration, integrity, sustainability, enthusiasm, and innovation will guide us in our response to COVID-19 this school year.

Returning to Campus

When students are welcomed onto campus this year, things will look different. The DMCS has been rethinking the day-to-day use of facilities and school operations to limit staff and student exposure to COVID-19 in accordance with the latest public health information and best practices. The newest state guidance released on August 2, 2021 updated many of the procedures experienced by students who attended our hybrid model of in-person learning during the spring, so even these students will notice a difference when at school.

We thank you in advance for talking to your children and explaining that school will be different, and it is okay for things to be different. The changes we are making indicate that good things are happening to keep everyone safe so we can return to schooling again.

Physical Distancing

Recent evidence indicates that in-person instruction can occur safely without minimum physical distancing requirements when other mitigation strategies (e.g., masking) are implemented. This is consistent with CDC K-12 School Guidance. Dixon Montessori staff will use common sense physical distancing when appropriate.

Cleaning and Hygiene

Cleaning

We've implemented heightened cleaning and disinfecting measures to ensure the health and well-being of staff and students. We will clean classrooms and common areas once every day.

Classrooms or common areas will be disinfected when an individual who contracts COVID has been in the area within 24 hours. Employees will be provided soap/cleaner/disinfectant to use in their areas, when necessary.

According to the January 14, 2021 document released by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), “frequent disinfection, which was thought at the beginning of the pandemic to be a key safety component, can pose a health risk to children and students due to the chemicals used and has proven to have limited to no impact on COVID19 transmission.” Disinfection with specified products, is recommended for schools after a case has been identified in the school, in the spaces where the case spent a large proportion of their time (e.g., classroom, or administrator’s office if an administrator). With this updated guidance, the district and school sites have moved to cleaning as the primary method and using disinfecting less frequently and when appropriate.

Hygiene

- Staff and students are trained on proper hand hygiene, including hand washing and use of hand sanitizer.
- Hand washing/sanitizing is reinforced daily with time allotted to wash hands regularly.
- Students and staff are instructed on protocols for coughing, sneezing, etc. while protecting others.
- Visual reminders to increase hygiene procedures are provided and posted for staff and students

Health Monitoring and Contact Tracing

At this time, temperature checks and/or health screening will not be conducted when students enter the school. We ask your family to conduct health screenings for their child(ren) before leaving for school each morning. This could include checking your child’s temperature, assessing for symptoms consistent with COVID-19, and asking your child “do you feel well Today?” Staff members will monitor student health throughout the day and the nurse will conduct temperature checks if a child appears to not feel well or develops symptoms while at school.

What Happens When a Person is Showing Symptoms?

At Home

If your child is showing symptoms of influenza or COVID-19 they must stay home and call in sick. When calling in sick it is important to let Tami or Maribel know that there are influenza or

COVID symptoms. All students who stay home sick should take a COVID-19 test. We have tests available for free at the school, please contact the nurse to ask for a test.

At School

Any student or staff exhibiting a fever or any of the COVID-19 symptoms at school will be sent to the school nurse and she will immediately send them home. The guidance also states that if anyone in a student or staff member's household has tested positive for COVID-19, all household members and close contacts of the individual are required to quarantine at home for a specified period of time (based on their last known contact with the individual, and the individual's ability to meet requirements for returning to work or school).

Any staff members or students with symptoms of COVID-19 infection shall not return for in-person instruction until they have met CDPH criteria to return to school for those with symptoms:

- At least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications; and
- Other symptoms have improved; and
- They have a negative test for SARS-CoV-2,
 - OR a healthcare provider has provided documentation that the symptoms are typical of their underlying chronic condition (e.g., allergies or asthma)
 - OR a healthcare provider has confirmed an alternative named diagnosis (e.g., Streptococcal pharyngitis, Coxsackie virus),
 - OR at least 10 days have passed since symptom onset.

***Students and staff members from the class or space are not likely to be close contacts at school because of our layered mitigation efforts. A close contact would follow these criteria: No mask and within six feet for 15 minutes or more per day. If a student is not a close contact they may continue to attend class. If a student or staff member is a close contact they must follow the Quarantine procedure in the "What happens to learning..." section of this document.

Considerations for Partial or Total Closure

Currently, the state of California does not allow for distance learning during the 2021-22 school year. Based on communication received from the state, any decision to mandate a partial or total closure of schools will be decided by state and local health officials.

What Happens to Learning if a Class or School is Quarantined or Closes?

The intent of DMCS is to ensure a safe and effective learning environment for our students and staff. The recent guidance provided by the CDPH allows for students exposed to COVID-19 to

remain on campus, if mitigation strategies are followed. It is mandatory for students and staff to wear masks indoors, in accordance with state guidance.

Below you will find the most recent CDPH and Solano guidance on quarantining and isolating: Quarantine recommendations for: unvaccinated close contacts who were not wearing masks or for whom the infected individual was not wearing a mask during indoor exposure.

- For these contacts, those who remain asymptomatic, meaning they have NOT had any symptoms, may discontinue self-quarantine under the following conditions:
 - Quarantine can end after Day 10 from the date of last exposure without testing; OR
 - Quarantine can end after Day 7 if a diagnostic specimen is collected after Day 5 from the date of last exposure and tests negative.
- To discontinue quarantine asymptomatic close contacts must:
 - Continue daily self-monitoring for symptoms through Day 14 from last known exposure; AND
 - Follow all recommended non-pharmaceutical interventions (e.g., wearing a mask when around others, hand washing, avoiding crowds) through Day 14 from last known exposure.
 - If any symptoms develop during this 14-day period, the exposed person must immediately isolate, get tested and contact their healthcare provider with any questions regarding their care.

COVID-19 Testing

Testing at School and Parent Consent

DMCS now has the ability to administer antigen tests to students and staff at NO COST. Dixon Montessori has a full time nurse conducting tests at school. Our tests are free, take 15 minutes, and provide clear results. We encourage parents to follow these procedures when a test is needed.

How to Sign up for a Test and Give Parental Consent to Test

1. Call Nurse Wendy and schedule an appointment
2. Visit www.mynavica.abbott
3. Create an account
4. Agree to the terms and conditions
5. Enter email address
6. Enter Verification Code that was sent to your email address
7. Create a password
8. Enter your Information-click next
9. Primary use choose Education: K-12

10. Save the QR code and present it to our nurse in order to test.

How is the CVESD PCR (NAAT) and ANTIGEN COVID-19 testing done?

The staff or student will be instructed to pull down their mask to expose their nostrils and keep their mouth covered by their mask. They will be handed a nose swab so they may self-swab each nostril, rotating the swab to touch the nasal walls at least 5 times. The swab should not be inserted more than 1 inch into the nostrils.

For the two-week testing program, asymptomatic students will first be tested with the Antigen BinaxNow Tests. If a student tests positive with the Antigen test, then confirmatory PCR (NAAT) Tests will be administered. For students who have been exposed to a positive case and remain on campus for the Modified 10-Day Quarantine, Antigen tests will be conducted, and if a student tests positive, then will be given a confirmatory PCR (NAAT) per county and state requirements.

Symptomatic students can be brought to the Nurse's Office or one of the schools scheduled for testing. They will be given a PCR (NAAT) test, in order to return to school.

Follow the Procedures Below if Your Child or Someone in the House is Sick or Tests Positive for COVID-19

What Happens When a Student is Exposed to COVID-19 at Home?

If a student is exposed to COVID-19 at home the School assumes that the exposure is ongoing and therefore will ask the student to quarantine until 14 days after their last exposure to the positive case while they are infectious. Your child may have a 24-day quarantine period. For example: An individual is typically infectious for 10 days. On Day 11, the student's quarantine period would begin.

- Fully vaccinated people do not have to quarantine after close contact with a positive case, unless they become symptomatic.

My child is sick and/or tested positive with the COVID-19 virus

If your child tests positive for COVID-19 through either PCR (NAAT) Test or antigen test, they may return when:

- It is at least 10 days from their symptom onset or the date they tested positive if asymptomatic and
- They are without a fever for 24 hours with no fever reducing medication and
- Their symptoms are improving.

My child is sick and tests negative for the COVID-19 virus

If your child gets sick and tests negative for COVID-19 through a PCR (NAAT) Test, they may return when:

- They are without a fever for 24 hours with no fever reducing medication and
- Their symptoms have been improving for 24 hours and
- They provide proof of the negative PCR test results to the school site.

My child has symptoms that are a result of a chronic pre-existing condition

- If your child has a pre-existing condition, which has previously been reported to the school, call the school nurse for further directions.
- Students who have a pre-existing condition may return to school with a note from their healthcare provider. The note MUST:
 - Be signed by a licensed MD/DO/NP/PA who manages the condition.
 - Confirm the chronic diagnosis (cite labs, date of record when diagnosed with the condition, etc.).
 - Include the provider's contact information.
 - Explain how the symptoms are unrelated to COVID-19.
 - Be accompanied by a signed consent (from the parent/guardian) for the school to interact with the MD/DO/NP/PA.

My child is sick and can not/ will not take a COVID-19 test

If your child gets sick and you or your healthcare provider decides not to have them get a polymerase chain reaction (PCR/NAAT) to determine if they have COVID, they may return when:

- It is at least 10 days from their symptom onset and
- They are without a fever for 24 hours with no fever reducing medication and
- Their symptoms are improving.

Actions to take when your child is at home sick

Families that have a sick child at home are recommended to do the following:

- **Stay home:** Do not allow your child to leave your home, except to get medical care. As much as possible, others in the family should stay home. If ANYONE in the house tests positive for COVID-19, no one should leave the house except to seek medical care.
- **Take care:** Make sure they get rest and stay hydrated.
 - Stay in touch with your doctor: For medical emergencies, call 911 and report your child's COVID-19 diagnosis during the call.
- **One point of contact:** If at all possible, separate your child from other people and pets in your household. Try to have one person only care for your child, so others are not exposed.

- **Use a face covering:** If your child is over 2 years old and can wear a face mask without finding it hard to breathe, have them wear one when the caregiver is in the room. Do not leave your child alone while they are wearing a face mask. The caregiver should also wear one when in the same room.
- **Separate bathroom use:** Have your child use a separate bathroom from other people, if available. If that is not possible, clean and disinfect the bathroom often.
- **Monitor their symptoms:** Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, shortness of breath, runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, new loss of taste/smell, headache, body aches, and/or poor appetite. Consult with your child's healthcare provider for ways to monitor their symptoms.
- **Follow care instructions:** If your doctor or local health department has provided specific instructions, follow these directives.
- **Wash hands often:** Everyone in your family should wash their hands well and often.
- **Clean often:** Use regular household cleaners or wipes to clean things that get touched often (doorknobs, light switches, toys, remote controls, phones, etc.).

Outbreaks

As students and staff return to school, DMCS will be proactive. We understand even a single positive case among students and staff could potentially develop into an outbreak. Because outbreak circumstances and work practices vary, DMCS will request assistance from the local health department, and will contact Solano County Public Health if there is an outbreak or possible outbreak.

Contact Tracing

When any member of the DMCS community becomes ill with COVID-19, the School Nurse will work with the county to identify those with whom the individual has been in close contact and assess the significance of the exposure. Notifications will be made to all necessary constituents including site staff, teachers, and parents.

Vaccinations

The California Department of Public Health strongly recommends that all persons eligible receive COVID-19 vaccines. Currently, children under 12 are not eligible for the vaccine since trials for that group are still underway. Once vaccinations are available for children under 12, we will inform our community of the location of vaccination clinics in Dixon and Solano County. As additional guidance is provided by federal, state and local public health agencies, DMCS will align our guidelines to conform with the applicable agency. For additional information regarding the COVID-19 vaccine, please visit the California Department of Public Health's website at <https://covid19.ca.gov/vaccines/>

Personal Protective Equipment and Other Safety Supplies

To help contain the spread of COVID-19, DMCS has procured and purchased supplies and equipment to protect students and staff. DMCS will continue to budget for and distribute additional supplies to individual sites in a timely manner.

DMCS is committed to providing safety equipment and supplies to help prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus, including but not limited to:

Hand Sanitizer

Hand sanitizer will be located in classrooms and common areas such as lunch areas, multipurpose rooms, front offices, and priority locations identified by the admin team. However, it is still recommended that staff and students use hand washing with soap and water as their primary method of hygiene. Mass handwashing stations have been installed at three locations on campus.

Masks

The CDPH announced on July 12, 2021 new mask guidance for schools as follows:

- Masks are optional outdoors for all in K-12 school settings.
- Students are required to mask indoors, with exemptions per CDPH face mask guidance. Adults in school settings are required to mask when sharing indoor spaces with students.
- Persons exempted from wearing a face covering due to a medical condition, must wear a nonrestrictive alternative, such as a face shield with a drape on the bottom edge, as long as their condition permits it.
- Schools will provide a face covering to students who inadvertently fail to bring a face covering to school to prevent unnecessary exclusions.
- In limited situations where a face covering cannot be used for pedagogical or developmental reasons, (e.g., communicating or assisting young children or those with special needs) a face shield with a drape (per CDPH guidelines) can be used instead of a face covering while in the classroom as long as the wearer maintains physical distance from others. Staff must return to wearing a face covering outside of the classroom.
- Visitors will be provided with a mask if needed, but are encouraged to supply their own masks.

How to Select Your Child's Mask

When selecting a mask, there are many choices. Here are some do's and don'ts.

DO choose a mask that:

- Is two ply cloth or three ply disposable
- Made for children to ensure proper fit.

DO NOT choose a mask that:

- Is made of fabric that makes it hard to breathe (i.e., vinyl, plastic, etc.).
- Has exhalation valves or vents which allow virus particles to escape.
- Are intended for healthcare workers, including N95 respirators.
- Please note that scarves, ski masks, gaiters, and balaclavas are not a substitute for masks.

Acrylic Shielding and Protective Barriers

Acrylic shielding for placement in the front office, the nurse's office, and desk partitions are available for use in classrooms when necessary. These shields will provide another layer of protection if COVID numbers increase. These will be provided in addition to the face covering requirements if a teacher chooses to use them.

Ventilation

The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads in droplets that are exhaled by someone who has the virus. Ventilation can reduce the number of viral particles in a specific area by diluting them and thus help decrease the risk of exposure.

DMCS is committed to improving air quality in classrooms by using the following strategies:

Fresh Air: Encourage teachers and staff to introduce fresh outdoor air as much as possible, for example, by opening windows where practicable. If opening windows poses a safety or health risk (e.g., by allowing in pollen or exacerbating asthma symptoms) to persons using the facility, we consider alternatives such as maximizing central air filtration for HVAC systems or using the provided air purifier.

Systems Maintenance: We replace and check air filters and filtration systems per manufacturer guidance to ensure optimal air quality.

Systems Upgrades and Improvements: We have supplied each classroom and common area with an air purifier utilizing a MERV 13 filter and a HEPA Filter air purifying system.

Child Nutrition and Meal Services

Meals for breakfast and lunch will be provided for free to all students in the 2021-22 school year. Parents may provide lunch from home if they choose.

Breakfast: Students can walk up to the service line and select one entree, one of any fruit choices, and one beverage container.

Lunch: Students select one entree, one of any fruit choices, one vegetable choice and one beverage container.

Water Bottles: All students should bring a water bottle to school. Filtered, no touch water bottle filling stations are located in three areas of the campus.

Student Arrival/Departure

The school will allow parents to drop off and pick up their child on the school campus, following health and safety guidelines. Parents are expected to leave campus immediately following dropping off or picking up their child. If local or state guidelines change the school may revise this practice, accordingly.

Special Education IEP

DMCS is committed to providing the highest level of academic support to all students and will continue to comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to ensure students have access to their education as indicated on their individualized education program (IEP).

504

DMCS will continue to implement all 504 plans, and teams may develop updated plans that identify precautions/ exceptions are necessary for working with students with significant support needs or who may be unable to comply with mask mandates due to documented disability.