**COVID-19 Prevention Strategies for MCNS**

**September 2021**

MCNS will follow all rules by the state of CT and guidance from Chatham Health, the Office of Early Childhood (OEC), and the CDC. This policy will change as the information from these groups is updated with the evolving COVID-19 pandemic.

**Mask Usage**:

Everyone age 2 and older will be required to wear a mask while inside, whether or not they are vaccinated. Exceptions are provided for children including those with documented medical conditions (such as suffering from severe chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) such as might be seen with cystic fibrosis, severe emphysema, heart failure, or significant facial burns that would cause extreme pain or interfere with the healing of a skin graft), disability, or special educational needs. Mild or intermittent respiratory or other common conditions such as asthma are generally not considered contraindications to the wearing of face coverings. In order to qualify for an exemption, MCNS must receive a letter of mask exemption from the child’s pediatrician . Masks are able to be removed to eat/drink and for mask breaks where children are outside or in a designated area away from other children.

Masks are not required outdoors, except when children are seated or playing closely together. Children will be masked during pick-up time when seated on the bench outside of the school as proper social distancing cannot be guaranteed.

If classes are performed outside, children will be placed at least 3 feet apart, facing the same direction so as to encourage social distancing so the children can take their masks off.

**Vaccinations**:

Anyone entering the school on a regular basis (defined as more than once per semester), will be required to be vaccinated or submit weekly proof of a negative test. Vaccination status or test results must be submitted and on file prior to entry to the building. This includes, but is not limited to: Teachers, Substitutes, Board members, Cleaning crew, Consultants, etc. (Please see Executive Order 13D from Governor Lamont, issued on August 19, 2021 for more information). Acceptable proof of vaccination bust be maintained on file in the school and shall include one of the following: (1) CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card or photo of the Vaccination Record Card; (2) Documentation from a health care provider or electronic health care records; or (3) State Immunization Information record. Personal attestation shall not be accepted as an acceptable form of proof of a COVID-19 vaccination.

**When to Keep Your Child Home**:

Children and adults must stay home if experiencing any signs of a new illness, including the following symptoms:

* Fever (temperature 100 ºF or higher)
* Diarrhea, vomiting, or stomachache
* Sore throat, congestion, headache
* Cough (for a child with chronic allergic/asthmatic cough, see if there is a change from their usual cough)
* Loss of taste or smell

Children will be allowed back to school after consulting their doctor and producing a doctor’s note, or if they produce a negative COVID-19 test and have gone 24 hours with no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications. As always, children must be fever-free without the use of fever-reducing medications and not had vomiting or diarrhea for at least 24 hours before returning to school.

In most instances, if a child is COVID-19 positive, they can be around others after

* 10 days since symptoms first appeared **and**
* 24 hours with no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and**
* Other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving

Children who test positive for COVID-19 but do not have symptoms can be around others 10 days after their first positive COVID-19 test.

If a child gets sick at school, they will be separated from other students in the hallway, with teacher supervision, and their parents/guardians notified to come pick them up.

**Quarantining:**

If a child attending MCNS, a household member, or anyone they have been in close contact with tests positive for COVID, the family must inform both the teachers and Board as soon as possible.

If anyone in the class tests positive for COVID, the entire class will need to quarantine for 10 days and may then return to school if they do not have any symptoms. The teachers will provide alternative learning activities at home during this time.

If anyone is exposed to COVID outside of school, they will need to quarantine for ten days, or quarantine for seven days and have a negative PCR test, on or after the fifth day of quarantine, and have no symptoms to return to school.

**Cleaning and Disinfecting**:
MCNS will be cleaned by a cleaning crew on a weekly basis, every Sunday after 1pm. Cleaning crew will use the checklist on the door to the supply closet for details on what needs to be cleaned.

After school ends each day, teachers will clean and disinfect door knobs, faucets, counters/tables, chairs, and any other areas that are frequently touched.

Toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized will not be used. Toys that children have placed in their mouths or that are otherwise contaminated by bodily fluids will be set aside until they are cleaned by hand with water and detergent, rinsed, sanitized, and air-dried. Play with plastic or play foods, play dishes and utensils, should be closely supervised to prevent shared mouthing of these toys.

Machine washable cloth toys and dress-up outfits will be rotated out after each class session.

Frequent handwashing and use of hand sanitizer before playtime with shared objects will be encouraged so as to prevent transmission of any viruses from shared toys.

**Food/Drinks**

Tables and chairs will be cleaned before and after eating.

Children will be seated as far apart as possible while eating/drinking. Depending on space availability, teachers will aim to seat children 6 feet apart, but if space does not allow 6 feet distance, they will place children 3 feet apart. When possible, children will be taken outside for snack and/or lunch time.

**Handwashing**:
Everyone will practice proper handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Hands will be washed upon entering the building, before and after playing with shared toys, prior to and after eating, after using the bathroom, and at various other times throughout the day. Teachers will remind and supervise children with washing their hands frequently and assist when necessary. At times when hand washing is not possible, hand sanitizer will be used with teacher supervision.

**Visitors**:
In typical times, MCNS loves to have parent/grandparent visitors. However, due to COVID-19 we are currently limiting nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations. As guidance on COVID-19 continues to evolve, the Board will revisit the issue of visitors to hopefully be able to allow visitors in the future. If you need to talk with a teacher or have classroom concerns in the meantime, please contact the teachers directly to set up a time to talk.

**Air Filtration**:
Outdoor instruction/play will be used as often as possible, weather permitting, to provide fresh air. When inside the classrooms, at least 2 windows will be opened to encourage fresh air flow. A window air conditioning unit may be used as long as the blower is aimed away from people (i.e., up at the ceiling, or if a plexiglass shield is used to redirect the air flow up and away from people). Fans can be used as long as they are pointed outside of a window, but fans will not be used to circulate air around the room.