

Ruffing Montessori School



Operational Return to School Plan

Welcome and Overview

This guidebook, as an addendum to the Parent Handbook, is a consolidation of the many developing resources for our school to assist you in returning under new conditions, while continuing to offer our children a safe and vibrant Montessori learning experience.

We ask you to take some time to familiarize yourself with the important information contained in this guide. From what we have learned already, we know the healthier we keep our community the more days we will have in the prepared environment of the classroom. The measures we are facing may feel burdensome and even unreasonable, however, they will allow us time with Montessori materials in a setting that fosters development.

Families have sent a clear message: they want options for their children. Many are excited to return to our school, many are still unsure. All families will have a choice between face-to-face instruction and a remote learning model.

This guide outlines what Ruffing Montessori School (RMS) will be doing based on current recommendations, along with what we need you to do to maximize a safe and healthy learning environment for your child.

What Guides Decisions at RMS?

Decisions in the methods and procedures for opening our school are based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Ohio Department of Health (ODH), the Cuyahoga County Board of Health (CCBH) and the RMS Parent Task Force. Guidance from these groups are subject to updates. If and when the circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic change, our plan may also change.

Additionally, we follow closely The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) guidelines and their recommendation that states:

“Schools are fundamental to child/adolescent development and well-being and provide our children and adolescents with academic instruction, social and emotional skills, safety, reliable nutrition, physical/speech and mental health therapy, and opportunities for physical activity, among other benefits. Beyond supporting the educational development of children and adolescents, schools play a critical role in addressing racial and social inequity.”

We join together, unified in creating a plan, with confidence that we are capturing the needs of our school community. Adaptability and flexibility are

essential ingredients to our success, along with how well we effectively work together and communicate with one another throughout the year.

Limited Building Access

In an effort to protect the health and safety of our community, only essential visitors are allowed in our school. Essential visitors will be approved by the Administration ahead of access to the building. These measures, in minimizing the number of people on site, limit unintentional exposures in our school environment.

All efforts will be made to keep necessary visitors to a minimum, including the use of virtual or telephone meetings with families and guests. Necessary visitors are required to follow all face covering guidelines, temperature check before entering the building, and complete the screening questionnaire.

Facilities

Cleaning:

The RMS school building will be cleaned and disinfected throughout the day.

Custodial and Staff Cleaning During School Hours

- Clean and disinfect outside of lockers after student arrival.
- Clean and disinfect all restrooms in the classrooms and hallways, door handles and classroom sink areas at least once during school day.
- Clean and disinfect stair railings, exterior door handles and high touch surfaces throughout the day.
- Clean and disinfect classroom tables before and after eating lunch.
- Clean and disinfect educational materials between uses.
- Clean and disinfect computers between uses.
- Clean and disinfect "Mask Free Zones" between uses.
- Clean and disinfect both clinics throughout the day.
- Disinfecting during the day will be done with rags soaked in a disinfectant solution, not a spray.

Contracted Janitorial Cleaning After School Hours

- Clean all restrooms, classrooms, hallways and stairwells and disinfect using Electrostatic Spraying Technology each night.
- Vacuum, mop and disinfect classroom and hallway floors.

Our disinfectant is EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19. Further, a Clorox sprayer with hospital grade disinfectant will be used daily. Current cleaning and disinfecting protocols will continue to be reviewed and enhanced in terms of frequency and intensity.

Outdoor Areas:

1. Each class will be assigned an outdoor area that will be used as much as possible throughout the day.
2. Shade structures will be provided in these outdoor areas.

Health and Safety

Symptom Awareness and Knowledge

COVID-19 Symptoms:

As outlined by the CDC, the COVID-19 symptoms used in screening and determining metrics of health and safety (with or without being diagnosed with COVID-19) include:

- Fever of 100.0°F or higher
- Chills
- Shortness of breath
- Difficulty breathing
- Cough
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Headache
- Gastrointestinal symptoms (nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea)

Children must be free of any symptoms potentially related to COVID-19 to be at school. **Most importantly, children who are feeling unwell or have a temperature of 100.0°F or higher should not come to school.** No student or staff member shall be penalized for staying home in accordance with the CDC quarantine guidelines.

Home Symptom Screening Guidelines:

Knowing the symptoms and understanding how to screen your children along with us, using the symptom guide above, is an approach that can drastically reduce the spread of disease - thus providing a healthy space to continue learning in the classroom. Staying home when sick is a new responsibility to our community, one we are all motivated to do in order for our children to have more time in the physical Montessori environment.

- ✓ Check your child's temperature – Do not come to school if their temperature reads 100.0°F or higher.
- ✓ Children must be free of any symptoms potentially related to COVID-19 (listed above) to come to school.

Children are required to have the above health screening completed at home daily. All children should have their temperature taken at home before they leave for school.

If Symptoms Arise During School Hours

If a child begins to not feel well while at school, shows signs of illness, or becomes sick during the day, they must immediately tell a staff member who will notify the school nurse. If a staff member notices a child not feeling well while at school or observes a sign of illness, they will directly notify the school nurse.

After contacting the school nurse, children who are feeling unwell OR have a temperature of 100.0°F or higher will be held in an isolated health waiting area (with a staff member in appropriate PPE) and required to wear a medical mask. A staff member will contact the child's parents/guardians who will need to pick them up from school promptly **within 1 hour**. Emergency contacts will be called in the event the child's parents or guardians cannot be reached. The following is the pick-up procedure for a child experiencing COVID-19 symptoms while at school:

- Student must be picked up from school within 1 hour of parent being contacted.
- Students will be picked up at the door marked "Clinic Pickup" in the parking lot on the north side of the building.
- Parents must call the office at 440-333-2250 from their car when they arrive - the office will notify school nurse (or staff caring for student in the isolation room) of the parent's arrival.
- Students will be walked out to their car with their belongings by the school nurse or staff member (in appropriate PPE). Parents may not enter the school.
- Parents will be given written instructions, with referral to appropriate healthcare provider or testing site. Instructions will include parameters and procedures for returning to school. Parents will also sign a document saying they received these parameters and procedures.

Reporting of COVID-19

RMS will report suspected, presumptive, or positive cases of COVID-19 to the Cuyahoga County Board of Health and work with them for follow-up and contact tracing. RMS will work to protect any affected student's protected health information in accordance with law. In the event of a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the school, RMS will follow the directives of the Cuyahoga County Board of Health.

Diagnostic Guidelines for Returning to School

The resources above and below will help you know when to take responsibility and keep your child at home. If you have any questions regarding the best decisions about sending your child to school or keeping them home, please contact the school for guidance.

Refer to the table below when determining if your child is ready to return to the school environment. Please keep in mind **these are CDC guidelines that can change at any time.**

Safe Return to School

Students who have...	<u>EXPERIENCED AT LEAST ONE COVID-19 symptom, WITH or WITHOUT</u> being diagnosed with COVID-19	<u>TESTED NEGATIVE FOR COVID-19</u> after symptoms	<u>TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID-19</u> but DO NOT HAVE SYMPTOMS	<u>TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID-19</u> and HAVE SYMPTOMS	Been <u>EXPOSED*</u> TO COVID-19 and DO NOT HAVE SYMPTOMS
Can I send them to School?	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO
When can I send them back to School?	ONCE 10 DAYS HAVE PASSED since the first day of symptoms, child is fever free without medication for 24 hours AND respiratory symptoms have improved, OR child is cleared with appropriate documentation from their health care provider.		ONCE 10 DAYS HAVE PASSED since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test AND with appropriate documentation from their health care provider.	ONCE 10 DAYS HAVE PASSED since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test, they are fever free for 24 hours without medication, respiratory symptoms have improved, AND with appropriate documentation from their health care provider.	Contact school nurse regarding exposure. Different situations will warrant different levels of quarantine and procedures.
Do I need a Health Care Provider Note or COVID Testing Documentation?	NO, IF STAYING HOME 10 DAYS. YES, IF COMING BACK BEFORE 10 DAYS.	YES	YES	YES	YES

*Exposure is defined as being within 6 feet of someone diagnosed with COVID-19 for 15 minutes or more.

No student or staff member shall be penalized for staying home in accordance with the CDC quarantine guidelines.

Hygiene & Personal Protection

All teachers and staff, as well as any adult who must enter the building are required to wear face masks. **Please make sure all masks are clean and labeled, and that your child has an extra mask that can stay at school.**

Primary

Children in the PP1 and PP2 programs are not required to wear face coverings. Any child over age two who wishes to wear a mask may do so.

Kindergarten through Middle School

Children in Kindergarten (Lunch Bunchers) through Eighth Grade are required to wear face masks at the following times:

- In classrooms
- During arrival and dismissal
- In any school public spaces (for example, hallways and public restrooms)

Some exceptions apply:

- While student is eating and able to maintain 6 feet of distance from another person.
- While engaged in strenuous physical activity.
- While student is outdoors and able to maintain a safe distance.
- While in a classroom "Mask Free Zone"
- Anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious.
- Anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance.
- Anyone who cannot tolerate a cloth face covering due to developmental, medical or behavioral needs.

****A child will only be allowed to wear a face shield with a documented medical exemption. Contact Lauren Ambrosino, the school nurse, to request an exemption form.****

Physical Distancing

Our school is taking actions to support health and safe environments. These actions include:

- ✓ Signage to remind children of physical distancing practices
- ✓ Appropriate placement of furniture and equipment in classrooms
- ✓ Each class will be assigned a unique outdoor area separate from other classes

Please speak with your child about the importance of physical distancing during the school day.

Handwashing

Washing hands regularly is one of the best ways to help prevent the spread of infections. Soap dispensers and sinks are available in every classroom. Hand sanitizer dispensers will be available at every school entryway and in every classroom. Hand washing with soap will be utilized as much as possible.

All staff members will receive a pump bottle of hand sanitizer to be kept with them and used outdoors or when hand washing is not possible.

Teachers will be giving frequent lessons on handwashing in the classroom, modifying flexible schedules to include handwashing breaks throughout the school day, and reinforcing handwashing during key times throughout the school day, such as:

- ✓ Arrival at school and after breaks
- ✓ Before and after taking mask on or off
- ✓ Before and after eating or handling food
- ✓ After using the restroom
- ✓ After playing or receiving instruction outdoors
- ✓ Before and after touching eyes, nose and mouth
- ✓ After sneezing, coughing, or blowing nose
- ✓ Before leaving the building for the day

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

See detailed arrival and dismissal procedures on page 53 of this Handbook.

Arrival

- School drop off will begin at **8:15 am**. Please do not arrive before 8:15 am. Children will need to wait in their car until a staff member meets them and assists them from their vehicle.
- Children in Grades K-8 must have a mask on at arrival.
- **Primary and Grades 1-3 will be dropped off at the front of the building** and enter through their classroom's outside entrance (except Lynne's class which will go through the main hallway.)
- Assistants will be available to help children to their doors.
- **Grades 4-8 will be dropped off at the back of the school.** Grades 4-5 will enter through the old back entrance. Grades 6-8 will enter through the new back entrance under the large canopy and will immediately go up the stairs to the middle school classrooms.
- **Families with children in different grades will need to drop off each child at their appropriate entrance door.**
- Children who are dropped off by a bus will be helped to their assigned entry door.
- Students will sanitize their hands upon drop off and can wash their hands once in the classroom.
- **Parents will not be permitted to walk their children into the school building.**

Afternoon Dismissal

Dismissal will begin at 3:10 pm – please note that the car dismissal procedure has changed and, due to new regulations, may take longer than in years past. Refer to the attached map for new directions. Having your sign with your student's name will help with the speed of dismissal. Please be prompt and focused to keep up with the flow of traffic. Please follow the procedures below:

- **Please do not arrive earlier than 3:10 pm.**
- **Turn onto Bates from Detroit Road**, continue northbound on Bates – cars that turn from Detroit onto Orchard Park will be asked to go to Bates and join the line.
- **Turn left on Berry.**
- **Turn left onto Orchard Park.**
- **Turn left to enter Ruffing's driveway.**
- Cars will stay along the western edge of the front parking lot and loop around to pick up their children in the back of the school.
- Cars will stay on the main driveway along the back blacktop area.
- The children will be waiting for their cars on the back blacktop area.
- **Pull forward as far as possible to close all gaps. Your children will be brought to your car.** There is no need to stop directly in front of their class. This will allow more children to be loaded into the cars at the same time.
- **Please do not get out of your car at any time.** A teacher will be at the curb to help the children into cars. Children will not be released to anyone not in the car line.
- Children in grades K-8 will have a mask on and practice distancing during dismissal.
- Please be respectful and courteous to bus drivers entering school property and to those who are helping facilitate the dismissal process.
- Please be courteous of our neighbors and do not block the driveways.
- Please do not cut in front of other cars.
- Obey neighborhood speed limits and stop signs.
- **Please advise substitute drivers of these guidelines.**

Noon Dismissal (Primary)

- **Please do not arrive earlier than 11:55 am.**
- **Turn onto Bates from Detroit Road**, continue northbound on Bates – cars that turn from Detroit onto Orchard Park will be asked to go to Bates and join the line.
- **Turn left on Berry.**
- **Turn left onto Orchard Park.**
- **Turn left to enter Ruffing's driveway.**
- Cars will pull up along the sidewalk in front of the school.
- Pull forward as far as possible to close all gaps.
- Your children will be brought to your car, there is no need to stop directly in front of their class.
- Please do not get out of your car at any time
- A teacher will be at the curb to help children into their cars.
- Cars can pull onto the back blacktop area to buckle children into car seats.
- **Exit onto Bates.**
- **Exit slowly – be aware of other children who may be in their outdoor classroom**

Late Arrival/Early Dismissal/Mid-Day Appointments

- The school must be notified if a child will be late for school.
- Upon arrival, the parent will call the office and a staff member will meet the car to take the child's temperature, administer the arrival questionnaire and help them to their room. Children may not exit their cars or enter their classrooms before the temperature check and arrival questionnaire have been administered.
- For early dismissal, a parent will need to contact the office to indicate the exact time of pickup. The latest time for early dismissal is 2:30 pm.
- At the pre-arranged early dismissal time, parents will pull up to the curb at the child's designated drop off door and wait.
- A staff member will walk the child to their vehicle – children may not wait in the office for their ride.

Daily Activities

Lunch

- **The Hot Lunch and Milk programs are suspended** for at least the first half of the school year.
- **Each child should have their own water bottle with their name on it** – drinking fountains will be disabled so bottles will be filled in the classrooms.
- Students will eat lunch outdoors (preferably) or in their classrooms at physically distanced seats.
- Masks will be removed during lunch and children will sit in the same direction while eating, if possible.
- The teacher will wear a mask while the children are eating.
- Paper place mats will be provided to each classroom to be used for indoor lunch. Children will eat at their placemat to promote distancing and wrap their trash in the placemat for disposal.
- **Students are encouraged to bring disposable lunches (paper bags, etc.)** so trips to lockers are not necessary after lunch.
- **Lunches cannot be delivered to the school by outside vendors.**
- **Parents cannot drop off lunches every day.** In the event a student forgets their lunch and a parent needs to drop off a lunch one day for their child, it must be left in the front vestibule. Parents will need to call the office to arrange the drop off.
- Food may not be shared. Ruffing will have a small supply of healthy snacks that can be given to a child who forgets their lunch.

Class Snacks

Birthday party lunches and shared snacks will not be permitted until further notice. Please keep in mind that all food policies (nut, etc.) remain in place.

Recess

Recess will be outdoors as often as possible. Masks can be removed during recess as long as children are distancing. **Each child must have some way to attach their mask to themselves (lanyard, glasses chain, etc.).** Masks cannot be left in the classroom, on the ground or with another child during recess.

All classrooms will be assigned an outdoor area. Children will stay within their class's designated outdoor area and not mix with other classes. Shade structures (canopy, tent, etc.) will be provided in each outdoor area.

Specials – Art, Spanish, Music, Band, Gym, Religion, Garden

- Specials schedules will be changing to allow specials teachers to help with arrival, to move between classrooms and to clean materials in between classes (10-15 minutes between classes).
- **Each child must have some way to attach their mask to themselves (lanyard, glasses chain, etc.) during outdoor specials.** Masks cannot be left in the classroom, on the ground or with another child.
- Art will take place either in each class's room or in the class's assigned outdoor area with the teachers or assistants leading.
- Specials will start the week after school begins.
- Children will wash hands before and after specials.

Spanish

Spanish will be held in the class's room or in the class's designated outdoor area. Materials will be disinfected between use.

Music

Music will be held in the class's room or in the class's designated outdoor area. Materials will be disinfected between use.

Band

For current band members (no beginners), band will take place after school from 3:15 pm until 4:30 pm. Schedules for intermediate and advanced bands will follow. There will be no beginning band this year.

Gym

- Masks will not be required during outdoor gym as long as distancing can be maintained.
- Gym will take place outside on the turf as often as possible. In case of indoor gym, masks will not be required as long as distancing can take place.
- Each child will need a water bottle **WITH THEIR NAME ON IT**. Children will not be allowed back inside to get a drink of water during gym.
- Equipment will be disinfected between use.

Religion

At this time, lower elementary, upper elementary and middle school religion classes will take place. Further information will follow. Materials will be disinfected between use.

Garden

Garden class will take place in the garden with proper distancing. All tools will be disinfected between use.

Operational Return to School Addendum – 8/21/20

Cleaning, disinfection and air purification are important parts of Ruffing's re-opening plan. In addition to increasing the frequency of disinfection of school areas according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations, Ruffing has also updated our heating and cooling system with Needle-point Bi-polar Ionization technology. Below are explanations of both of these upgrades:

Cleaning/Disinfection

As stated by the CDC, "Reducing the risk of exposure to coronavirus (or SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19) by cleaning and disinfection is an integral part of reopening schools."

During school hours the restrooms, door handles, tables, sinks, faucets, stair railings, materials and other common touchpoints will be cleaned and disinfected using disinfecting wipes and microfiber cloths dipped in disinfectant cleaner.

Oxivir will be used in the classrooms to disinfect during the day and will disinfect a solid surface in just 60 seconds. Oxivir is rated at the lowest level (Level 4) by the EPA for hazard/toxicity, requires no safety warnings and is considered non-hazardous by OSHA.

After the building is empty each evening, the school will be disinfected using an electrostatic sprayer and an EPA approved spray disinfectant. As the disinfectant leaves the sprayer it is given a positive electrostatic charge. The droplets become attracted to all negatively charged surfaces allowing the disinfectant to wrap around the surfaces including the underside and backside which might be missed by wiping. When using an electrostatic sprayer, disinfectant can be applied in a more efficient manner using fewer chemicals. Because the droplets sprayed by the electrostatic sprayer travel throughout the room, plants and animals are going to be kept out of classrooms this year.

SNiPER is the product that will be used for electrostatic disinfecting. SNiPER is rated at the lowest level (Level 4) by the EPA for hazard/toxicity, requires no safety warnings and is considered non-hazardous by OSHA.

Air Purification

This summer air purifiers were added to the existing and new heating and cooling units at Ruffing. The purifiers have Needle-point Bi-polar technology which uses carbon fiber brushes to produce an electrical charge to clean the air without byproducts like ozone. An equal number of positive and negative ions are produced that remove the hydrogen molecules from viruses, bacteria and mold when they come in contact. Without hydrogen, the pathogens will die. The ions also attach to allergens causing them to band together until they are large enough to be caught by filters. This technology generates the same ions that nature creates in lightning, waterfalls, ocean waves, etc. Nature uses ion energy to break apart molecules, naturally cleaning the air and producing a healthy environment.

The same air purifiers that Ruffing installed were tested with Covid-19. Within 10 minutes, 84.2% of the virus was inactivated. At 15 minutes, 92.6% of the virus was inactivated, and at 30 minutes 99.4% of the virus was inactivated.

