

# Westside Montessori School / COVID-19

## Stage 2: Return to School Plan 2020-21 **Updated 24 February 2021**

### SUPPORTING EACH OTHER

We acknowledge that this year will be like no other. The health and safety of our WMS school community remains a top priority. We understand that strong emotions, diverse views and opinions and sometimes conflicting evidence will surround us.

*We need to remain calm, thoughtful, adaptable and compassionate, patient and creative when addressing challenges throughout the year.*

Our plan and all the health and safety protocols that we have developed, align and uphold the highest standards as set out in the K-12 Public Guidance from the Ministry of Health and Education. While our plan shares many of the elements of other Independent and Public Schools, it has been developed with a focus on our school community in mind.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In preparation for the return to full-time in-class instruction the following guiding principles informed our decision making:

- The health and safety of our students and employees is our top priority.
- An increased focus on the social and emotional health of students and employees.
- Meaningful learning happens both inside and outside the classroom.
- Programming and scheduling will align with the [updated K-12 Health and Safety Guidelines](#) and [Public Health Guidance for Child Care Settings](#)

### PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITY

We have developed and implemented extensive health and safety protocols and measures throughout the school. Detailed documents outlining these measures include our Return to School Health & Safety Plan and our Exposure Control Plan which have been developed according to the direction and guidance of our health authorities. Upholding these measures is the collective responsibility of WMS staff, students and our families.

*COVID-19 is a fluid situation, and changing dynamics could impact some or all of our plans. We will continue to update and adapt as necessary to respond to changing guidance from our health authorities. At this stage, WMS is focused and prepared to deliver in-class instruction for all our students. Should the need arise, we are also prepared to adapt and offer a portion of remote learning if a shift to Stages 3, 4 or 5 be required during the year.*

As the information on COVID-19 is evolving, up-to-date information on symptoms and prevention can be found at the [Canada.ca](#), [BCCDC](#) and [WHO Novel Coronavirus](#) web sites.

## What you can expect throughout the school in Stage 2:

### LEARNING GROUPS

A Learning Group is a group of students and staff who remain together and who primarily interact with one another. Learning Groups help reduce the number of close, in-person interactions an individual has in a day. Within a Learning Group, physical distancing is encouraged but not required. The size of each group is set as per the requirements set out in the [BC's Five Stages Framework for K-12 Education](#). Learning Groups enable effective contact tracing in the event of a potential COVID case. During Stage 2, a Learning Group for students in K-12 is 60 inclusive of students and core staff.

We reconfigured our classes to reduce cross exposure among children by grouping the Kindergarten students who attend full days and their siblings altogether in one group. We have also set up outdoor learning areas to allow for as much physical distancing as possible. Siblings attend together in the same classroom and the same adults remain with the same group of children.

At WMS we have three distinct Learning Groups:

1. First Floor Class students and their core classroom teachers.
2. Second Floor Class students and their core classroom teachers.
3. Elementary Class students and their core classroom teachers.

### PHYSICAL DISTANCING

#### **Indoors**

When indoors all students and staff will stay physically distant as much as possible and to the best of their abilities, maintain 6 feet or 2 metres apart.

#### **Outdoors**

When outdoors and in an “out of a Learning Group” situation, students and staff will stay physically distant as much as possible and to the best of their abilities, maintain 6 feet or 2 metres apart. There are very rare instances where children will be out of their Learning Group.

#### **Parents at Drop-Off & Pick-Up:**

During the drop off and pick up of students, parents are **highly encouraged** to wear a mask and maintain physical distance of 6 feet or 2 metres from others except for their family members.



# Help prevent the spread of COVID-19

## Cover coughs and sneezes



Cough or sneeze into your sleeve, not your hands. Avoid touching your face with your hands.

Or



Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue and put your used tissue in a wastebasket.



Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Or



Clean hands with alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

worksafebc.com

WORK SAFE BC

## RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE`

### **Students and Staff should:**

Cough and sneeze into their elbow, sleeve, or a tissue. Throw away used tissues and immediately perform hand hygiene.

## HAND HYGIENE

Frequent hand washing protocols will be in place for students and staff. Handwashing and hand sanitizing locations are visible and easily accessed.

### **Staff members will:**

- Encourage hand washing with water and soap for at least 20 seconds.
- Alcohol-based hand rub will be provided containing at least 60% alcohol if sinks are not available
- Incorporate additional hand hygiene opportunities into the daily schedule.
- Assist younger students with hand hygiene as needed.
- Hand washing supplies will be monitored and replaced regularly stocked at all times including soap, paper towels, and where appropriate, alcohol-based hand rub.

## LIMITED GATHERINGS

As outlined in Phase 3 of the [Ministry of Education's Restart Plan](#), large gatherings are prohibited. Small groupings are best. Where a larger gathering occurs, the maximum number will be 50.

School gatherings and events will be postponed and, as much as possible, will be held in a virtual setting (e.g. New Family Information Evening, Winter Concert, Annual Open House, Applicant Family Interviews, etc.)

### **Use of Non-Medical Masks or Face Coverings**

Non-medical masks are required to be used in situations where a person cannot maintain physical distance and is in close proximity to a person outside of their Learning Group or household. There is an emphasis on reducing the number of close, prolonged, face-to-face interactions an individual has, even within Learning Groups, and to remember that **masks are not a replacement for physical distancing.** This approach continues to be a key component of BC's strategy to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

## STUDENTS AND MASKS

Elementary students are not required to wear a mask in schools. Elementary students' mask use is based on their personal or family/caregiver choice and their choice is respected.

In line with current public health guidance, masks are not required for elementary school students based on international evidence regarding younger children's capacity to comply with the correct use of masks (e.g. frequent touching/removal of mask, wearing mask incorrectly, etc.), and potential impact of mask wearing on the learning and development.

Schools and school districts will have non-medical masks available for staff and students, including anyone who becomes sick while at school.

The use of masks does not reduce or replace other more effective infection prevention and exposure control measures in schools, such as:

- ensuring students and staff stay home when they are sick or required to self-isolate, including ensuring everyone entering the school performs a daily health check;
- enhanced cleaning and disinfection;
- placing students and staff into consistent groupings of people (learning groups);
- adapting learning environments to maximize the use of space; and
- frequent hand hygiene.

These measures provide multiple layers of protection that reduce risk of transmission.

## STAFF AND MASKS

All Staff are required to wear a mask or face shield (in which case a mask will be worn in addition to the face shield) in schools – both within and outside of their learning group, except when:

- sitting in (or standing at) their seat or desk/workstation in a classroom learning space;
- there is a barrier in place;
- eating and drinking; and
- outdoors.

## FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY

While the school will take every precaution to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 exposure, each family plays an important role in ensuring that our community stays healthy.

### ***Vigilance at all times***

Please be vigilant with physical distancing, wearing a mask when in public spaces and washing your hands frequently.

### ***Stay Home if You Have Symptoms***

In addition, it is critical that students and staff stay home from school if they are showing any signs of illness, COVID-19 related or otherwise.

### ***Protect the Community***

We have a shared responsibility to keep our community healthy so that our school can remain open. We are in this together.

## **ENHANCED SAFETY AND CLEANING PROTOCOLS**

Enhanced cleaning protocols have been developed and numerous improvements have been made including:

1. Additional staff hired to clean and disinfect all high touch areas hourly.
2. Pandemic level cleaning procedures implemented.
3. LEVOIT large room air purifier with True Hepa Filter have been purchased for each classroom.
4. Hand sanitizer is available throughout the school (to be dispensed by teachers for Preschool and Junior Kindergarten students as per licensing requirements).
5. A hard surface sanitizing spray for the disinfecting of classrooms as well as shared materials.
6. All windows to remain open to allow improved airflow within classrooms.
7. Plexiglass barriers to be placed where physical separation is not possible and disinfected according to our cleaning protocols.
8. Outdoor learning spaces created in the front, balcony and back yard play areas to maximize the use of outdoor spaces throughout the year.
9. Parents and caregivers are responsible to complete a daily health check with their child(ren) prior to sending them to school.

## **SIGNAGE AND VISUAL CUES**

Visual cues and signage will remind all members of our community of important procedures and protocols that will help reduce density, manage traffic flow, and remind everyone to physically distance including:

- No visitors
- Visual cues for physical distancing
- Line markers for families at Drop-off and Pick-up
- Hand hygiene posters
- Occupancy numbers posted
- Traffic flow arrows
- Health check reminders

## THE SCHOOL DAY

### Health Checks

Staff and student families have a responsibility to assess themselves daily prior to coming to school.

- Staff and students must stay home if sick.
- Review the “Self-Assessment and Illness” procedures.
- At drop off, teachers will complete an informal daily health check with students i.e.: “How are you feeling today?” and take their temperature.
- If a student or staff develops symptoms of COVID-19 while at school, the Onset of Symptoms protocol will be followed. See Appendix C of the Return to School Health & Safety Plan.

Student health care checks do not need to be documented and temperature checks may be carried out at the discretion of administration.

## WASHROOMS

### Oak Street Location

Each classroom has a three stall washroom with three sinks attached. Each outdoor play area has an outdoor sink for added ease of hand hygiene and reduction of density in the washrooms. Staff remind students of hand hygiene and social distancing protocols.

### Cambie Street Location

There are three separate washrooms in the Elementary facility. Students will visit the washrooms one at a time despite multiple stalls. Students are assigned a particular washroom to use.

## DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP AREAS

Families are expected to go to their designated zones when they arrive in the morning before class. This will help to reduce congestion. Reminder to stay 2 meters apart in these areas.

### *Preschool & Junior Kindergarten Students*

Back Lane Gate

### *Extended Day / Kindergarten Students and their Siblings*

Oak Street Gate

### *Elementary Grades K-1*

Front Door along Cambie Street

### *Elementary Grades 2-7*

Outdoor Classroom Space along West 18th

## DAILY SNACK

### Oak Street Location

Daily snack will consist of organic fruit, organic veggies, cheese and crackers will be plated by served by staff to each child whenever a child is hungry. Snack will be eaten outdoors whenever possible.

## LUNCH

Students will wash their hands before and after eating. Lunches will be eaten within Learning Groups and supervised by teachers.

## OUT OF COHORT MEETINGS

For Parents and Visitors - As much as possible meetings will be held virtually. There may be exceptional circumstances that will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Authorized individuals would follow school access and health check protocols.

- All individuals in the conference and/or meeting must wear masks
- Perform hand hygiene in advance of the meeting
- Respect respiratory etiquette
- Maintain physical distance

## PLAYGROUND

Current research suggests that playgrounds are a safe environment. The following measures will be taken with students regarding the playground:

- Hand washing before and after outdoor play.
- Guidance to minimize direct contact between students.
- Sand and water can be used for play if children wash their hands before and after play.

## POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Please note that these policies will continue to be updated and revised throughout the year as needed.

- WMS Return to School Health & Safety Plan
- WMS Enhanced Cleaning Protocols
- WMS Exposure Control Plan

## BACK TO SCHOOL FORMS & COVID-19 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All parents were required to sign a digital COVID-19 Acknowledgement Form **before** the first day of school acknowledging that they have read the WMS Return to School Health and Safety Plan and recognize their responsibility in conducting daily health checks prior to sending their child(ren) to school.

## SELF-ISOLATION & SYMPTOMS

Any student, staff or person within the school who has symptoms of a cold, influenza or COVID-19 or who has travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days **or** who was identified as a close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case **should stay home**.

- Those unsure if they should self-isolate should use the [BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#).
- For a list of symptoms of COVID-19, see the [BC Centre for Disease Control Website](#).
- If they remain unsure, they should be advised to contact 8-1-1, a doctor or nurse practitioner for further recommendations.

## SELF ASSESSMENT & ILLNESS

COVID-19 has a relatively low infection rate among young children. Based on published literature to date, the majority of cases of COVID-19 in young children are the result of droplet spread from a symptomatic adult family member in the household setting. Children do not appear to be the primary drivers of COVID-19 spread in child care facilities, schools, or other community settings.

Children tend to have very mild symptoms of COVID-19, if any. They often present with mild respiratory symptoms, such as a cough. Children can experience the same symptoms as adults but may show symptoms differently. For example, fatigue may show in children as lack of appetite, decreased activity, or changes in behaviour. Most young children are not at high risk for COVID-19 infection.

Daily self-assessments will be an important component of keeping our community safe. Please refer to the student illness policy on the following page. At times, members of our community may experience symptoms or be around members of their family that have symptoms. Please see below.

### DAILY HEALTH CHECK

A Daily Health Check is a tool to reduce the likelihood of a person with COVID-19 coming to school when they are infectious.

- Parents / Caregivers should assess their children daily for illness before sending them to school.
  - Parents/caregivers and students can utilize the provincial [K-12 Health Check app](#) for daily assessment of symptoms.
  - Schools are not required to verify that the student health check has occurred every day or require that parents/caregivers submit a daily health check form.
- Staff and other adults are required to complete an active daily health check, in line with the Provincial's Health Officer Order on Workplace Safety, prior to entering the school.
  - School and district administrators are required to verify that staff and other adult health checks have been completed before they enter the school.
- If a student, staff or other adult is sick, they must not enter the school.

## STAYING HOME SELF ISOLATING & SYMPTOMS

### STAY HOME WHEN REQUIRED TO SELF ISOLATE

The following students, staff or other adults must stay home and self isolate:

- A person confirmed by the health authority as testing positive for COVID-19; or
- A person confirmed by the health authority as close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19; or
- A person who has travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days.

A person who has been tested for COVID-19 must stay home while they are waiting for the test result.

### SYMPTOMS OF ILLNESS AND RETURN TO SCHOOL

Students, staff or other adults should stay home when sick, as this is one of the most important ways to reduce the introduction and spread of COVID-19 in schools. The following resources provide guidance regarding specific symptoms of illness:

- Parents/caregivers and students can use the [K-12 Health Check app](#).
- Staff and other adults can refer to BCCDC's ["When to get tested for COVID-19"](#).
- Staff, students and parents/caregivers can also use the BCCDC online [Self-Assessment Tool](#), call 8-1-1 or their health care provider.

When a staff or student or other adult can return to school depends on the type of symptoms they experiences (as indicated in the [K-12 Health Check app](#) and BCCDC ["When to get tested for COVID-19"](#) resource) and if a COVID-19 test is recommended.

Students and staff who experience symptoms consistent with a previously diagnosed health conditions (e.g. seasonal allergies) can continue to attend school when they are experiencing these symptoms as normal. They so do not require re-assessment by a health-care provider and should not be required to provide a health-care provider note. If they experience any new or unexplained symptoms, they should seek assessment by a health-care provider.

Students or staff may still attend school if a member of their household develops new symptoms of illness, provided the student/staff has no symptoms themselves. If the household member tests positive for COVID-19, public health will advise asymptomatic student/staff on self-isolation and when they may return to school. Most illness experienced in BC is not COVID-19, even if the symptoms are similar.

## STUDENT ILLNESS POLICY

Specific details on how to address general illness and/or symptoms, refer to our Student Illness Policy. For general guidance on when to return to school following student illness, follow the steps below.

### **1. For a Non COVID Related Illness**

- For respiratory illnesses, the individual must not have a fever within the last 24 hours without taking medication.
- For gastric symptoms (nausea, diarrhea, vomiting and abdominal pain) individuals stay away from school for 48 hours after the symptoms have stopped.
- For full details, refer to the Student Illness Policy.

### **2. For COVID-19 like symptoms (with no screening completed)**

- An individual may return to school when they are symptom free (except for mild cough) and:
- It's been a minimum of 10 days since symptom onset

### **3. Returning After a Positive COVID-19 Case**

- When Public Health has advised it is acceptable to return. Please inform the school of this guidance.

#### **4. COVID-19 Screening Returns as Negative**

- When an individual seeks a COVID-19 screening and the result is negative, return to non-COVID related illness guidelines stated in the Student Illness Policy above.

#### **Onset of Symptoms for Students While at School**

- If a student develops an onset of symptoms while in class, teachers will engage in a brief conversation with the student to assess how they are feeling.
- If teachers deem that the student has developed symptoms of illness, they will promptly separate the child outdoors and follow through on procedures outlined in Appendix C of the Health & Safety Plan.

### **SEPARATION SPACE**

- An outdoor separation space has been designated.
- This space will be used for isolating a sick individual to reduce the spread of the virus while the student is waiting to leave the school.
- Students will be supervised and wait comfortably for parent pick up.

### **COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS**

- Parents will be contacted immediately if a student is required to wait in the outdoor separation space.
- We will ask families to seek medical assessment as necessary.
- The family will keep the child at home until symptoms no longer exist and/or as guided by health authorities.
- We ask that families keep the school informed of their child's health status and to confirm with the school as soon as possible if there is a COVID-19 confirmation.

### **CONFIRMATION OF COVID-19**

The following steps will be taken in the event of a confirmed COVID-19 case in our school community.

- Any student or employee who tests positive for COVID-19 is required to inform the school as soon as possible.
- We ask that families inform us if a member of their family has been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19.
- Public Health Officer will provide guidance regarding school measures to be taken.
- Contact tracing will be initiated under the guidance of the Public Health Office (PHO).
- The threshold for reporting to public health will be determined in consultation with the PHO. Communication to the school community will balance the privacy of the individual with the duty to inform.
- Should public health issue an order to self-isolate to a designated individual or grouping,

communication to our employees and parent community would be done in consultation with public health.

## **VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL**

We will strictly limit visitors while classes are in session, including parents and other members of the community to minimize the risk of transmission of the COVID-19 virus. All visitors must wear masks, physically distance as much as possible and sign in to assist with contact tracing.