



ROCHESTER
MONTESSORI
SCHOOL

COVID-19 OPERATING PLAN

2021-2022

To confidentially report a COVID-19 test or result, please
email covidreporting@rmschool.org

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PROGRAM SUMMARY

Hours of Operation

We have extended our drop-off time in the morning to accommodate distancing during the arrival of students into the building. Pick up times will vary based on program level and classroom.

School Day:

Early Arrival: 7:30am-8:10 am

Arrival: 8:10-8:40 am

Pick up: varies by program level

After School Care Option 1: after school to 4:30 pm

After School Care Option 2: after school to 5:30 pm

Arrival Requirements/Procedures:

Daily Health Self-Screen

- We ask families to self-screen all members of their households for symptoms each day prior to arrival at RMS. A series of health screening questions you can use are:
 - Is anyone in your household experiencing a:
 - New cough?
 - New shortness of breath?
 - Sore throat?
 - Vomiting or diarrhea?
 - Chills?
 - Muscle pain?
 - Headache?
 - New loss of taste or smell?
- If your child has a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher, or answers "yes" to any of the screening questions, they will not be allowed at RMS and should refer to the [MDH Decision Tree for Exclusion](#) to determine when your child can return to school.
- If your child will be excluded due to symptoms or exposure, please complete a SchoolCues Gold Communication form to report your child's absence and list any symptoms present.

Entering School

- All Adults and children (Children's House level programming or above) arriving at RMS must wear masks/face coverings
- Hand sanitizers or disinfecting wipes are available for use with adult supervision at all entrances.
- Each family is asked to self-screen daily using the MDH Decision Tree for School Exclusion to screen for household symptoms.

Early Arrival Drop-Off

- Students attending for Early Arrival must be pre-registered with the school for these services
- Early Arrival drop-off starts at 7:30 am
- Parents and caregivers are required to wear a mask and walk their children into RMS and sign in at the clipboard at the front desk. A staff member will be present at the front desk to greet each student and family. The staff member will notify the classroom that the child is arriving.
 - If the child is in Toddlers or Children's House, the parent will walk the child to the classroom door where the classroom staff will greet them.
 - If the student is in the Elementary program, the child will be allowed to walk back to the classroom without the parent or caregiver.
 - If the student is in the MYP program, the student can sign themselves in and walk back to their classroom.
- Children in Children's House and up and all adults must wear a face mask while inside RMS.
- Students will report directly to their classroom, RMS will not mix cohorts for early arrival and after school programs.

Regular School Hours Drop Off

- Drop-off is from 8:10 am-8:40 am. We have extended this time period to increase distancing during student arrival into the building.
- Toddler families should park and walk up to RMS with their toddler. A member of the Toddler team will meet you outside at the benches and assist the child with walking into school.

- Parents and students (3 and older) are encouraged to wear a face mask during arrival.
- For all students in Children’s House and up, parents and caregivers may choose to use the car line for drop off. Car line procedures are as follows:
 - When you enter the parking lot, form a line beginning in the Southeast corner of the parking lot.
 - While waiting in the car line, we encourage your child to prepare for arrival by putting on their face mask and preparing all items to come into school.
 - We urge families to practice car safety while waiting, including children remaining inside of the vehicle and waiting in a safe manner.
 - As your turn arrives in the car line, drive your vehicle parallel to the curb pulling in as close as you can get. *Important note: please do not block the crosswalk at any time so that others may still safely walk into school.*
 - Staff will greet your student at the car and assist as needed.
 - As soon as your car door closes and your student is safely away from the curb, you may proceed toward the exit.
 - A member of our staff will greet children upon entrance to the building.

Late Arrival

Late arrival must be scheduled in advance through SchoolCues or with the main office. Please follow this procedure:

- Complete the Gold Communication permission form in SchoolCues and indicate the exact time of your child’s late arrival.
- Office staff will notify the classroom community to make arrangements for receiving the child at the pre-arranged late arrival time.
- At the pre-arranged late arrival time, please park and walk your child into RMS. Once inside, please sign your student in at the front desk. Office staff will proceed to assist the student in their classroom.

Early Departure

Early departure must be scheduled in advance through SchoolCues and the main office. Please follow this procedure:

- Complete necessary permissions form in SchoolCues to schedule your early pick up time.
- Office staff will work with the classroom community to make arrangements for assisting the child with departure at the pre-arranged early departure time.

- At the pre-arranged early departure time, wear a mask and meet your child at the front desk. You will need to sign your child out at the front desk.

Departure Procedures

Student dismissal will happen as outlined below:

- Parents and caregivers are encouraged to wear a face mask during pick up.
- Please form a car line at the designated time for your community.
- If your family has been given a pick-up number, please place it in a visible place in your vehicle.
- As your turn arrives in the car line, drive your vehicle parallel to the curb pulling in as close as you can get. *Important note: please do not block the crosswalk at any time so that others may still safely walk.*
- Once your student is in the car, safely pull away from the curb.
- If your student needs assistance buckling their car seat please use either a parking space or the gravel turn around lot at the bottom of the driveway.
- Student dismissal times and locations are outlined below.

Program	Time
Toddler 1/2 Day	11:30-11:45 pm
Toddler	3:00-3:15 pm
Children's House 1/2 Day	11:45-12:00 pm
Children's House Full Day	2:45-3:00pm
E1 East & West	3:15-3:30pm
E2 & Middle School	3:30-3:45pm

After School Care Option 1 (Pick-Up before 4:30pm)

- Students attending After Program Care must be pre-registered for these services
- After School Care Option 1 ends at 4:30pm
- Parents and caregivers are required to wear a mask and check in at the front desk.
- The front desk staff will notify the classroom of the parent's arrival.
 - If the student is in Toddlers or Children's House, the front desk staff will let the classroom know that the parent has arrived for pick-up. The parent

can then walk to their student's classroom. A staff member will be present just inside the classroom door to greet each parent and help the child gather anything needed for departure.

- If the student is in Elementary or the Middle Years Program, the student can walk up to the front of the school for pick-up.
- Parents and caregivers are not allowed to enter the classroom at any time.
- Children will remain with their classroom for After School Care, RMS will not mix cohorts for before and after school care.

After School Care Option 2 (Pick-Up before 5:30pm)

- If a parent or caregiver arrives for a student registered for After School Care Option 2 prior to 5:15 pm, please follow the pick-up procedures listed above for After School Care Option 1.
- Beginning at 5:15 pm, After School Care Option 2 will have curbside pickup. Students from all program levels will be expected to maintain distance from one another during this time.

Parent Contact, Communication and Conferences

Each guide has a school email address for parent communications. Guides will respond to emails as they are available. Time-sensitive contact should be facilitated by calling the main office and/or emailing reception@rmschool.org

Conferences will be held by the program guide during normal conference time frames as scheduled on our [school calendar](#). Conferences will be offered in person if we are able, however parents can request virtual or phone conferences as well. Parents are encouraged to ask questions or raise concerns as they arise and the Guide will facilitate a meeting, as necessary.

Parent observations of the classrooms will be offered in a manner consistent with current guidance and protocols. This can range from parent observation being unavailable or observations allowed only outside the classroom window.

Parent gatherings will occur in accordance with current guidance from the Minnesota Department of Health and the CDC.

Children's Meals and Snacks

All daily classroom snacks must be provided by parents.

Children will continue to enjoy their lunches in their own classroom environment. To limit possible contamination, all lunches will be handled by children, when possible. Children will carry their lunches to their classroom. Parents will need to provide cold packs in the lunches that require refrigeration. Students of all ages should provide their own utensils which will be sent home daily for cleaning. RMS will continue to provide individual milk service during lunch. Children should also bring their own water bottle to school.

STRATEGIES FOR REDUCING VIRUS SPREAD

Rochester Montessori School will collaborate, share information and review plans with local health officials and our Health Advisory Committee to help protect the whole school community. School plans are designed to complement other community mitigation strategies to protect high-risk populations and the healthcare system and minimize disruption to teaching and learning.

This document was compiled using the COVID-19 guidelines and recommendations for schools and childcare programs published by the CDC and Minnesota Department Health. RMS operating procedures meet or exceed the minimum standards of care and will be updated as new information or additional guidelines are made available.

Shared Community Expectations

We expect all members of our RMS to follow the health and safety guidelines as laid out by health professionals worldwide:

- Restrict your family’s exposure to large crowds.
- Practice physical distancing and wear a mask in high transmission areas and public indoor spaces.
- Teach children the importance of thorough hand washing.
- Teach children how to properly wear a mask.
- Do not bring students to school if they are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 or any other transmissible illness.
- Do not bring unvaccinated students to school if they have been exposed to anyone who has COVID-19 or anyone who is exhibiting symptoms.
- Follow CDC and MDH recommendations regarding travel and self-quarantine when returning from travel to specific areas of the country and the world.
- Report any information to the school that will assist us in maintaining a safe environment.
- Be flexible—our plans may change as the situation with the virus changes.

Training

Staff must be familiar with and receive ongoing training regarding State, CDC, and City of Rochester recommendations and requirements. Additional training may be provided/required as the CDC or State of Minnesota deems necessary.

Face Coverings

RMS requires students enrolled in Children’s House and older and all adults to wear a face covering while in the building. Masks are considered critical to controlling the spread of coronavirus. Please note that due to the nature of some of the presentations given in our early childhood programs, staff may remove their mask and wear a face shield for presentations.

While masks are required indoors, they are not required outdoors when cohort consistency is maintained.

Please help to make sure your child’s face mask fits properly and is as comfortable as possible. It is expected adults and children will wear a clean face mask each day. Students should have at least one spare mask available in the event the mask they wear becomes soiled. To remain aligned with our Montessori principles, please avoid facemasks that have distracting or inappropriate graphics.

Face coverings will not be worn or placed on someone:

- Who has trouble breathing
- Who is napping
- Who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the covering without assistance
- Who cannot tolerate a face covering due to developmental, medical, or behavior health needs.

Physical Distancing Strategies

Rochester Montessori School does not expect that young children (Toddler and Children's House) will consistently distance themselves from other children or adults while at school. Young children learn by engaging with their environment, which includes the other people in it. However, RMS will employ the following strategies for limiting the spread of COVID-19 in all of our classrooms regardless of age:

- RMS will remind students and staff of physical distancing and develop child friendly techniques to help children maintain distance, including creating single child eating areas.
- Communities will consist of stable groups/cohorts. Stable means that the same children are in the same group each day with no mingling of other student cohorts. If staff move between cohorts, they must remain masked and be vaccinated.
- Children shall not change from one group to another during the day.
- Program cohorts may be outdoors at the same time but distancing will be maintained and enforced.
- We will utilize our outdoor space as much as possible. Please send students to school with clothes that are appropriate for the weather.
- Plexiglass barriers will be utilized when possible and appropriate.
- The physical distance between students will be increased during daily meals and snacks with a minimum of 3' of space between students.
- At nap time, children's cots will be spaced out as much as possible to allow 3 feet, with alternating head to toe arrangements. Naps will occur in each classroom. A clean, flat sheet will be provided by RMS to cover your child's cot and be washed weekly or as needed.

Hand Hygiene

Proper hand hygiene is a simple yet effective way to reduce the spread of the virus. RMS will continue to practice good hand hygiene throughout the day with its practical life lessons. At minimum, all children and staff will engage in hand hygiene at the following times:

- Upon arrival to the school
- Before and after eating or handling food
- After using the toilet or helping a child with toileting or diaper changes
- Prior to putting on a mask and after removing a mask
- After coming in contact with bodily fluid (gloves should be worn)
- After playing outdoors or in any activity that soils the hands such as sand

Follow Five Steps to Wash Your Hands the Right Way

(<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>)

Follow these five steps every time.

1. Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds.
4. Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
5. Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

After assisting children with handwashing, staff should also wash their own hands. Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to get rid of germs in most situations.

Health Screening

Daily employee and child health screenings are important to help reduce the transmission of COVID-19 at school. Parents should screen children each morning before arriving at school.

All children and staff who meet any of the criteria below will be denied entry:

- Temperature over 100.4°F without use of any temperature reducing medications.
- New onset of a cough or shortness of breath by themselves OR at least two of the following:
 - Chills, muscle pain, sore throat, loss of sense of smell or taste , gastrointestinal symptoms (diarrhea, nausea, vomiting)
- In the previous 14 days has had contact with someone with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19;
- Is under investigation for COVID-19 or is waiting for test results;
- Traveling to another country in the previous 14 days. [CDC Returning from International Travel](#)

- **The MDH decision tree determines when you must stay home.**
<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/exguide.pdf>

Vaccines & Vaccine Status of Employees

RMS strongly recommends that all those who are eligible receive the COVID-19 vaccine. These vaccines have been proven highly effective and are our best defense against COVID-19. At this time, vaccines are not mandatory for RMS employees. RMS will continue to review data, guidelines, and confer with our Medical Advisory to remain up-to-date in our practices.

The vaccine status of faculty and staff is protected information, and RMS will not share personal health information about its employees.

COVID-19 Testing

For the safety of our community, RMS recommends our community follow the testing guidance issued by MDH. Testing often will help to insure exposure is minimized within our school. MDH testing guidance on when tests should be taken and how often can be found [here](#).

This school year, we may have the option to offer at home testing to students. More information will be given as the MDH program is finalized.

COVID-19 Symptoms and Cases

Reporting a Positive Case

To report a positive case of COVID-19:

- During business hours: call the office (507-288-8725) and speak to either the Head of School or the Operations Manager.
- Outside of business hours: please email covidreporting@rmschool.org regarding the details of a positive result. **Please DO NOT call and leave a message on the school phone.** Voicemails are not checked during non-business hours, however this email will be checked during non-business hours to ensure prompt notification for those who may have been exposed.

Following reporting of the positive case, you will be directed to next steps, which may include quarantining, testing, contacting your healthcare provider, and contacting Olmsted County Public Health.

Symptoms at School - Children

If COVID-19 symptoms begin while at school, the child must be sent home as soon as possible. Sick children will be kept separate from well children and staff contact will be limited as much as reasonably possible, while ensuring the safety and supervision of the child until they leave.

- Classroom staff will follow these isolation procedures:
 - Children aged three and older who can safely wear a mask will continue to do so. Disposable masks will be provided if needed to replace a soiled mask.
 - Classroom staff will take the child to the office
 - The classroom staff will inform the office staff of symptoms exhibited.
 - Office staff will contact parents to come to school to pick up the child.
 - The child will be supervised until the parent arrives.
 - Parents will be provided the [Minnesota Department of Health Decision Tree for People with Covid Symptoms in Youth, Student and Childcare](#)
 - Once a parent has left with the ill child, the area will be cleaned and sanitized.
- Families are encouraged to coordinate decision-making around the child's care with the family health care provider if there are specific health concerns, chronic disease, or complex social or emotional dynamics in the home.
- In the case of a child who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and does not get evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, the child is assumed to have COVID-19, and cannot return to the community until the child has met the criteria for return under Children or Staff with Positive Case of COVID-19
- A child who has exhibited symptoms that could be COVID-19 can return to school if the parent has obtained a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on a negative COVID19 test and an alternative diagnosis.

COVID-19 Symptoms at School - Staff

Staff is encouraged to monitor their health and required to perform daily health screenings for symptoms of COVID-19 including taking their temperature. Staff are required to stay home if they are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 or have a temperature of 100.4°F or higher, and to contact their healthcare provider.

- Staff exhibiting new or worsening symptoms of possible COVID-19 at school should:

- Continue to wear their mask
- Notify the office to ensure coverage is established
- Leave the classroom
- Obtain a COVID-19 test
- Follow the recommendations of their healthcare provider
- In the case of a staff member who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and does not get evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, the individual is assumed to have COVID-19, and may not return to work until the individual has met the criteria for returning to work after a positive test.
- If the staff member has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to work before completing the above self-isolation period, the individual must obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for the return based on a negative COVID-19 test and an alternative diagnosis.

COVID-19 Exposure

If an unvaccinated staff member or unvaccinated child has been identified as having close contact to someone outside the classroom community who is diagnosed with COVID-19, that staff member or child will be required to self-quarantine per the [CDC guidelines](#).

Positive Case in Classroom Community

If a child or staff member contracts COVID-19, all siblings and household members should follow MDH guidance and RMS will comply with guidance from public health concerning whether all persons in that classroom community will be required to self-quarantine. The following actions will be taken by school administration:

- Report the presence of COVID-19 at our school to appropriate state and local authorities
- Notify staff and parents/caregivers that a member of the classroom community has been diagnosed with COVID-19. Confidentiality will be maintained.
- Take steps to close the specific classroom community to allow for quarantine for all children and staff in the classroom community who have been in close contact with the person diagnosed with COVID-19 if advised by public health officials.
- Ensure appropriate cleaning and disinfecting protocols are followed.

Return to School After Positive Test

- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications); AND

- The child or staff member has improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); AND
- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared, or negative COVID-19 test result

Communication

Rochester Montessori School will communicate (confidentiality will be maintained):

- With families, if their child has been in close contact with someone at school who has then tested positive for COVID-19.
- With staff, if they have been in close contact with someone at school who has tested positive for COVID-19.
- With the entire school community if a classroom community has been closed temporarily due to COVID-19 exposure.

Monitoring Absenteeism

Rochester Montessori School administrative staff will monitor absenteeism among children and staff using SchoolCues. Any unusual patterns will be considered when evaluating the need for temporary or long-term building or campus closure. Decisions about extending closure will be made in consultation with the MN Department of Health and Olmsted County Health Officials.

Procedure for Recording Community Attendance

- Staff records attendance in SchoolCues, including any known reason for absence and may contact a parent if the child is not present.

Facility and Supplies

Masks

The RMS Office will have a supply of reusable and disposable masks should anyone need one. It is expected that students and staff will provide their own personal masks and we will have additional clean cloth masks to use should a child or staff's mask need to be replaced during the day.

Masks should meet the CDC recommendations for face coverings, which can be found at [here](#).

Hygiene Supplies

RMS will ensure availability of appropriate supplies to support healthy hygiene

behaviors and place them strategically in areas of the school where they may be frequently used.

- Supplies for students and staff:
 - Masks as listed above
 - Liquid soap, running water and paper towels are located in all classrooms and bathrooms other than the specials room, gymnasium, resource room, and the meeting room. Children and staff may use these as frequently as needed throughout the day.
 - Tissue is provided in all classrooms and common areas.
 - RMS will provide hand sanitizer stations throughout the school.
 - RMS staff and janitorial services are responsible for replenishing or replacing all soap, paper towels and tissues with their classroom spaces, as needed.
- The RMS office will ensure adequate supply of these materials in the health area and office:
 - Disposable gloves
 - Eye protection
 - Masks for students or staff, as back up or for illness, as needed
 - Thermometers (non-contact)
 - Cleaning rags
 - Cleaning and disinfecting products

Air Quality

RMS has an HVAC service contract to ensure consistent maintenance. The HVAC system at RMS is designed so that one furnace and AC unit services one classroom area (the classrooms are not all serviced by one central furnace). Nearly all classrooms have their own thermostat. Our system does bring in fresh air from the outdoors that is exchanged in the return air ducts. We will encourage the “fan” setting on the thermostats to run constantly to help circulate the air and bring in fresh air. Several rooms have doors that go directly outside and we will encourage them to be cracked open as much as possible for increased fresh air.

Water Quality

RMS will have the water system flushed and tested prior to student arrival due to the water being unused for several months. RMS is on city water (chlorinated) and the pipes in the school are new (2004).

Cleaning and Disinfecting

Cleaning Practices

Rochester Montessori School will follow a detailed cleaning and disinfecting plan for each classroom, common areas and the front office. These efforts include the following:

- Staff will routinely clean, sanitize, and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched, especially materials.
- All bathrooms and high touch surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected regularly.
- Electrostatic Spraying Technology will be used to disinfect and sanitize our environments when needed.
- Materials that children have placed in their mouths or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretions or excretions will be set aside until they are cleaned by hand by a person wearing gloves. These materials will be sanitized prior to use by the next person.
- Children's books and other paper-based materials such as mail or envelopes, are not considered high risk for transmission and do not need additional cleaning or disinfection procedures.

Bedding

Each child's personal napping items will be kept separate and stored in individually labeled bins. Cots and mats are cleaned after each use. Toddler parents are requested to send a fitted cot sheet that will be laundered weekly or as needed. For children in Children's House, RMS will provide a flat sheet to cover the cot that is washed weekly or as needed.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Products

Rochester Montessori School uses disinfecting products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19.

Student Accommodations

District Services

RMS has a limited number of students with IEP's, 504's, IHP's, etc. and will work to ensure any students that are at risk are provided accommodations to continue to be able

to learn. RMS will also work with Rochester Public Schools to ensure students that are receiving services from them are continued or accommodated to ensure decrease in risk to them and RMS, including virtual services when possible.

Distance Learning

RMS will begin the 2021–2022 school year fully in-person with COVID-19 policies and procedures to allow the students and staff to return to a safe learning environment. We will not be offering distance learning opportunities at this time.

Mental Health and Wellness

COVID-19 has caused tremendous stress, fear and anxiety for many people. RMS is providing staff, families, and students (age-appropriate) with the following information on how to access resources for mental health and wellness.

- www.health.state.mn.us/communities/mentalhealth/support.html
- www.mn.gov/covid19/for-minnesotans/get-help/mental-health.jsp
- www.health.state.mn.us/communities/mentalhealth/children