

July 17th, 2020

Dear Families,

We have lived through and learned so much since March and we are grateful that RMS is a small school with ample space to navigate during this pandemic. It is clear that COVID-19 is not going away and that we must adapt to the challenges as safely as possible, together. RMS staff, administration and board members are committed to reopening for the coming year and are working hard to define new policies and to implement protocols designed to keep us safe. Our preparedness plan will be sent to all families by August 3rd.

Our plan includes small cohorts of no more than 15 children to promote physical distancing with the exception of middle school which is anticipated to have up to 18 children onsite. We are excited to share that the MYP classroom was expanded by removing a wall this summer creating a much larger environment for learning. We are confident that RMS will meet or exceed the recommended guidelines provided by the Minnesota Department of Health including operating at less than 50% occupancy with 6 feet of separation between children to ensure that we can return as safely as possible for everyone. Based on the survey result, we anticipate that approximately 15% of children E1-MYP will attend via classes virtually.

Rochester Montessori is blessed with a beautiful 15-acre campus. Maria Montessori believed that children have an innate love for nature and that nature must be an integral component of education. It's time to make our grounds work for us and have the children outside as much as possible for both academics and movement. Each program is considering how to build more outdoor time into their schedules. It would be very helpful to create work and seating areas outdoors. We are looking for donations (in-kind or cash) for patio furniture or if anyone is willing to lend the school some furniture, it would be much appreciated. Additionally, children elementary through middle years may be asked to provide a picnic blanket or camp chair for school this year to help promote more outdoor class activities.

We are pleased to announce that Dr. Brenda Schiltz and Dr. Yu Kawai, both in pediatric medicine at Mayo Clinic, have joined the COVID-19 Health Advisory Team. We have started to engage the team to review our preparedness plan to ensure best practices as we adapt for fall. We are fortunate to have the team's expertise to guide us during this time.

We would also like to share that we are getting the facility in top-notch condition this summer. Deep cleaning has commenced and we are busy organizing furniture and materials, developing new disinfecting protocols, scheduling maintenance checks on our HVAC system and flushing and testing our drinking water, among other things.

Thank you for choosing our school. We cannot wait to welcome children back this fall.

Regards,

Deborah Summerson, Interim Head of School
Kellie Mueller, Board Chair