



Mandala School's Reopening Plan

This document is meant to inform families and the general public about the details of how Mandala School will reopen safely during the pandemic.

**IMPORTANT: WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER AND
MUST COLLABORATE TO KEEP EVERYONE HEALTHY.**

Monitoring and reporting

- 1) We must be vigilant in watching for symptoms of illness in each other. If a person reports or exhibits any of these symptoms, they must not come to school: cough, headache, sore throat, fatigue, body aches, loss of taste or smell, congestion, nausea, diarrhea. See <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html> for more information.
- 2) Great trust is being placed with families and staff to control their exposure to groups and situations that may harbor a disease. Every Monday parents or guardians will complete a [form](#) testifying that their children appear disease-free, that nobody in the family has been in contact with anyone who is ill, nobody in the family has participated in a risky gathering or traveled to a state on the [quarantine list](#), and everyone has followed proper preventative procedures. These procedures include distancing, face mask, hand washing, and exposure. See <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html> for more information.
- 3) Temperatures of staff and students will be taken upon arrival at school with a no-touch thermometer. Anyone out of a healthy range (above 99° F) will be isolated and required to leave. Temperatures will only be recorded for out-of-range values.
- 4) Ordinary ailments that resolve in a day or two are not the major concern. Common sense will be used to decide if someone is healthy and can return to school. If Covid is suspected, a doctor's release must be presented before a return to school is allowed.
- 5) Any occurrence of Covid or any exposure by a Mandala community member to someone else who had exposure will be reported to all families and staff. Depending on the nature and degree of separation from the exposure, actions will be taken on an *ad hoc* basis after consulting with

local health authorities. A good standard is to **maintain two degrees of separation**. This means nobody in the family is exposed to anyone with Covid (one degree of separation) and nobody they know has recently been exposed to someone with Covid in the past 14 days (two degrees of separation).

Ongoing safety procedures

- 1) Distancing: Mandala School occupies a residential structure with five large rooms and four smaller rooms for instruction. With our current population, space is available for students to share a room while maintaining a distance of six feet. The schedule is being arranged to limit the number of people in any given room. Outdoor space on the school grounds or at local parks will also be utilized for instruction. Current thinking is that outdoor air flow decreases the exposure rate considerably which increases the value of distancing.
- 2) Face masks: Staff and students will be required to wear masks indoors (unless eating). Regular reminders, encouragement, and praise will be used to instill a sense of responsibility and care in children. Being more deliberate in how classes are changed, bathroom breaks are taken, supplies retrieved, or any other movement will reinforce the need to be careful. There will be regular times outdoors.
- 3) Hand washing: Besides regular washing before eating or after using a bathroom, students will be asked to use hand sanitizer or wash after unhygienic behavior such as coughing into a hand, picking the nose, and other activities. Paper towels will be available for drying. Students will practice opening the bathroom door before washing then not touching the door latch after washing or using the towel to open the door before disposing of it.
- 4) Cleaning: Staff will regularly clean surfaces such as tables, counters, handrails, and door knobs with a disinfectant supplied by New York State. This will be done when one group leaves an area and a new group arrives.
- 5) Air quality: An enhancement was made to the HVAC system to filter more particles from the air and to provide a means to kill biotics. The system uses both UV and ionization to neutralize viruses and bacteria. The ions also settle on surfaces to help keep them sanitary.
- 6) Safety Coordinators
 - a) John E. Newton, director, will be the primary safety coordinator
 - b) Kelsey Zimmermann will serve as safety coordinator if he is absent
 - c) Leah Zacaroli will serve as safety coordinator if both are absent

Details of arrival, classes, movements, etc.

Arrival

- 1) The first few days of school will require patience from all of us. Temperature and health checks, Monday health reports, along with the usual bustle of arrival will all need to be managed in ways that ensure our safety.
 - a) Parental assistance will be important for the first few days. We will ask for some volunteers to help with directing and monitoring children, collecting forms, storing & retrieving supplies for the day, and supervising distancing and mask wearing.
 - b) Current thinking is to have two check-in points in the driveway for temperature & health checks. The driveway will not be available for drop-offs or turn-arounds. Using the parking spaces near the school on the north side of Main Street eliminates the need to cross the street or back into traffic when leaving the school. Check-ins will occur 8-8:30 A.M. Initially, a staggered schedule will be used to allow for start-up inefficiency, distancing, and to avoid long waits.
 - c) Children will be escorted to their cubby and coat hook then to a place to stay while awaiting class. Usually, this will be the place of their first class. This procedure will continue until the routine is established. Parents and staff will help monitor the children as being static is not their normal mode.
 - d) Classes will begin as close to 8:30A.M. as possible.

Classes

- 1) More than is usual at Mandala, protocols will need to be discussed and practiced until habits are formed. Following is an initial list that will change through observation and need.
 - a) Students will remain in class for the whole class. There will not be movement to retrieve forgotten supplies, to get a drink, or even to change seats. Bathroom breaks will be allowed as needed with reminders about masks, hand washing, closing lid before flushing, and touching surfaces.
 - b) In some classes students will be quietly studying for long periods and sitting six feet apart. Masks may then be removed. This may happen during reading, writing, and research classes. If a teacher is moving about to consult and check on work, masks will be worn by all. If students will be closer than six feet, masks will be worn.

- c) If regular movement is anticipated such as repeatedly getting supplies or constantly moving as when woodworking, masks will be worn.
- d) As often as possible classes will take place outside where moving air further minimizes the chance of virus transmittal. The hope is that continuing research will show that closer distancing outside is safe especially within a relatively closed social group like Mandala School.
- e) Discussion and observation of students will determine how often “mask breaks” are needed. When possible, take these outside and allow some free movement.
- f) Human touch is an important component of mental health. At Mandala seeing students reading and writing while leaning together, interlaced on the couch, hugging, or holding hands is normal and acceptable. The hope is that with masks, hand washing, and diligence about not touching one’s face, a certain amount of human contact will prove to be safe.
- g) Objects, manipulatives, computers, pencils, and all other touchable materials will need regular disinfecting. When possible, they can be placed outside in sunlight. Certain objects such as computers can be disinfected after every person’s use. Plastic covers can make this easier. UV sterilizers may become affordable and reliable to use with manipulatives.

2) Nature of learning

- a) To avoid contact more of the interactions between teachers and students probably will occur remotely, even if present in the same room. For those above 4th grade, regular use of a computer or tablet will be necessary. Voice recognition and tolerance of misspellings, short-cut codes, and other messaging can ease this manner of interaction.
- b) With the experience of online learning in the spring of 2020, we found that students are more capable than we thought of scheduling their work and meeting deadlines. They are also capable of more independent work. This frees teachers from group direction for more individual consulting.
- c) At Mandala a “jigsaw” approach to learning is common. Individuals learn a part of an assignment then teach others. With remote learning and distancing, there will be a greater reliance on this strategy. There is a great benefit in learning an aspect of a project deeply then teaching it to others.
- d) With the use of computers, sharing of one’s work shades into publishing. This can create motivation to consider the quality of

the language and visuals being shared. Explicit work on improving student products will result in valuable skills.

Transitions

- 1) Being confronted with a new version of school can be disturbing. There will be new procedures and new worries. Teachers and parents need to be honest about how the procedures keep us safe so we do not have to worry. We can do a bit of “cheerleading” by reminding children they are living through historic times and they are developing memories that will be passed on for a long time. Regular reminders that we are doing fine and just have to put up with this for a while will be important in giving strength to others. We can find strength in community action.
- 2) Regular transitions between classes and other activities need to be scripted. Students need to think about where they are going, what they need, and how to get there with the least disruption. Masks are necessary when moving even if you don’t think you will be near someone. Distances will need to be maintained.
- 3) Surfaces, computers, and other objects in use will need to be disinfected.
- 4) Bathroom use will be as needed.
 - a) Mask is required for whole trip
 - b) Lid on toilet is closed before flushing
 - c) Hands are thoroughly washed and dried.
 - d) The paper towel used for drying is also used to open the door then thrown out.
- 5) Lunches and procedures will need changing.
 - a) In the past the microwaves were used extensively. Because of the small space in the kitchen, waiting in line while maintaining sufficient distances will be difficult even if one microwave is moved into the science room.
 - b) Because the lunchroom cannot accommodate the distancing requirements, students will use outdoors and several of the rooms for eating. Creating groups who eat together will help with initial lunchtimes and can change once routines are established.
 - c) There will be no sharing of food.
 - d) Distribution of utensils, plates, bowls, napkins, and occasional “community” food will be done by an adult.
- 6) Safety drills for evacuation will be practiced to maintain distancing while also efficiently leaving the building and assembling outside.

General procedures

- 1) Windows will be open as much as possible. Even in winter some fresh air will be brought in.

- 2) Room temperatures may be colder than desired so everyone will need to dress accordingly.
- 3) Outside classes will be a regular occurrence also requiring suitable clothing. Rain gear must be available when needed.
- 4) Transportation for field trips will require windows to be open, masks worn, and hardboard buffers between children on the same bench seat.
- 5) Personal supplies will include a carrying case for pencils, pens, compass (older students), and a small bottle of hand sanitizer. This will be taken to every class.
- 6) We can remind each other about masks, distances, and other safety measures.

Monday Health Survey

Child's name: _____

Date: _____

We believe the best ways to prevent the spread of disease is conscientious hygiene and the tracking of outbreaks. During this time of heightened danger, we must trust each other to be as careful as possible.

To the best of my knowledge, my child is free of disease and healthy with:

- No evidence of coughing
- No evidence of congestion
- No evidence of headache
- No evidence of fever
- No contact within the last 14 days with anyone who might have Covid-19
- No contact within the last 14 days with anyone who had contact with someone who might have Covid-19 **[Families: are you really avoiding contact with others? If you have gone to a religious service, party, or other group event have you followed mask and distancing guidelines?]**
- No travel outside of New York State to any of the quarantined states within the last 14 days
- No evidence of any symptoms of disease

signature

date