

Northeast Iowa Montessori School

Operating Plan - 2021/22 Academic Year

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Overview

Let the teacher not lose sight of the fact that the goal sought is not an immediate one - not the hike - but rather to make the spiritual being which the teacher is educating capable of finding their way by themselves. Maria Montessori

I love this quote by Maria Montessori. COVID-19 has given us the opportunity to pause, grow and experience a unique kind of educating. The solution cannot be immediate because there is no clear immediate solution. So, we learn to take our time, practice patience, give an overabundance of grace and find the way by ourselves. This operating plan is not the hike - it is guidance that will remain agile and fluid as we navigate and find our way.

Our classroom environments are designed to harness the developmental forces of each plane of a child's development for the child's own optimal self-construction through experiential interactions with the environment. Our ability to guide that development is diminished in the absence of a face-to-face learning environment. By starting school in the fall, we are aiming to fulfill our mission of Northeast Iowa Montessori School, which is to provide a nurturing environment that cultivates each child's intellectual and creative potential while instilling a sense of individual and global responsibility.

This document explains the policies and procedures we are employing to mitigate COVID-related risks at school. That approach is built around intensive new health monitoring and screening procedures, as well as new classroom day procedures designed to reduce the number of contacts during the school day and interactions. Starting school in the fall with these new protocols represents an important first step in responsibly living with this virus.

NEIM believes that operating under these conditions is in the best interest of the community and that each NEIM family will make its own decision about the balance of risk, and what is best for their children. The information in this document will provide clarity around the practices and procedures NEIM has established to minimize exposure to our community but in no way warrants that COVID-19 or other communicable disease infection will not occur through participation in our program.

Thank you,

Rachael Buresh

NEIM Head of School



All Day Program Summary

September 1, 2021 - May 27, 2022

Hours

****No walking school bus will be offered this academic year**

School Hours: 8:15am-3:00pm

Arrival: 7:45am-8:15am

Departure: 3:00pm-3:15pm

After School Care: 3:15pm-5:30pm ****After school care is only available to those students who are registered for NEIM.**

Location and Staffing

418 West Water Street, Decorah IA 52101

Head of School

- Rachael Buresh

Elementary - 6 yr - 12 yr

- Lead - Jane Busch
- Assistant - Gabriel Surovy

Children's House - 2.5 yr - 6 yr

- Lead - Heather Vilaro
- Assistant - Jenny Lenehan
- Assistant - Claire Tebbenhoff
- Mentor - Christine Gowdy - Jaehnig

Parent Contact/Communication

Head of School - neimontessori@gmail.com Text: 563-419-0509

Elementary - greenfields@mabeltel.coop

CH Lead Guide and Assistants - neimguides@gmail.com

School phone - 563-382-6491

Arrival and Departure - Please read carefully

Families with students in both Elementary and Children's House programs will use the **FRONT** door on **418 West Water Street** for Arrival and Departure.

Elementary Community(ages 6-12) Arrival will be from 7:45am-8:15am.

Please use the back gate. Please say your goodbyes at the back gate.

A gentle reminder to not leave your vehicle idling.

Students will wash hands upon entering the building.

Children's House Community(ages 3-5) Arrival will be from 7:45am-8:15am.

Use the **front door** which is located at 418 West Water Street. You can park along the street or the public parking located on the west side of the school.

A gentle reminder to not leave your vehicle idling.

Students will wash hands upon entering the building.

ALL Families: It is important that families have a back up plan in place if your student is not able to come to school or you are asked to come get your student in case of illness. Also, please respect that only staff and students will be allowed in the building. If you need to drop something off please text the Head of School at 563-419-0509 and she or a guide will meet you at the West side door of Children's House.

Late Arrival - Please follow this procedure for ALL students.

- Text the Head of School (HOS) 563-419-0509 and indicate the time of your student's late arrival.
- HOS will make arrangements for receiving the student.
- At the pre-arranged late arrival time, please use the Children's House side door (West) that you would utilize from the public parking lot.
- Guides will meet you and your student at the door.



Departure - please read carefully

Departure for **Elementary community(ages 6-12)** will be from 3:00pm-3:15pm. At the back gate.

Departure for **Children's House community(ages 3-5)** will be from 3:00pm-3:15pm. Use the front door on 418 West Water Street. Parent/Designated Person will wait at the front door outside. Students will be escorted to the front door.

You can park on the street or use the public parking lot on the west side of the school. Please be mindful of not idling your vehicle.

Early Departure - Please follow this procedure for ALL students.

- Text the Head of School 563-419-0509 and indicate the time of your student's early departure.
- HOS will make arrangements with guides for assisting the student for early departure.
- At the pre-arranged early departure time, please use the parking lot side door (West) at Children's House. Guides will assist the student with departure and bring them to the door.

Face Coverings

Iowa law prevents schools from requiring face coverings for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors. The CDC, however, recommends universal indoor masking in K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status.

Northeast Iowa Montessori School encourages face coverings; it is one of the layered prevention strategies to keep our students healthy. Parents should discuss with their student their family's decision and the importance of respecting the face covering decisions of others.

Physical Distancing

The CDC recommends schools maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students when possible.

Northeast Iowa Montessori School will work to maintain 3 feet of distance within the school setting whenever possible.

Hand Washing

The CDC states handwashing is a proven prevention strategy and is one of many important layers of protection for students.

Northeast Iowa Montessori School will promote consistent hand washing throughout the school day.



Cleaning and Disinfection

The CDC states proper cleaning and disinfection are important layers of prevention to keep schools safe.

Northeast Iowa Montessori School will continue cleaning and disinfection efforts throughout the school day.

Ventilation

The CDC recommends multiple strategies for increasing ventilation to maintain a healthy environment at school.

Northeast Iowa Montessori School has high quality filters in our HVAC system, does routine professional checks of HVAC equipment and utilizes open doors and windows when appropriate.

Hydration

Each student will bring their own water bottle that will have their name on it. This water bottle will be kept at the school all year. The water bottle will be sterilized each evening and refilled for your student each morning and anytime the student needs water.

Vaccinations

The CDC and IDPH encourage all eligible Iowans to receive the vaccine.

Northeast Iowa Montessori School does not require staff or students to be vaccinated, but encourages all those eligible to give it their fullest consideration.

Volunteers and Visitors

Our school year starts out with many unknowns - parents, volunteers and visitors will not be allowed in the building (with the **ONE** exception of the Parent Meeting on Wed., August 25th).

COVID-19

[A. Persons who test positive for COVID-19 are recommended to stay home until they are no longer infectious](#)

Persons sick with COVID-19 are considered infectious 48 hours prior to symptom onset until:

At least 10 days since symptoms first appeared AND,

At least 24 hours with no fever without fever-reducing medication AND,

Other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving.

[B. Close contact](#) is defined as being less than 6 feet away from an infectious person for more than 15 consecutive minutes AND the case, the contact, or both were not wearing a face covering during the interaction.

C. Unvaccinated, asymptomatic contacts are advised to stay home to monitor for symptoms

To help further reduce risk of spreading the virus, unvaccinated persons who are exposed but remain healthy (no symptoms) can be advised to stay home to monitor for symptoms. This approach can help to reduce the risk of spread to other people.

Individuals exposed to COVID-19 may develop symptoms from 2-14 days after exposure.

However, exposed individuals can reduce the length of time they are recommended to stay home from 14 days via the following options:

- Stay home through Day 10 if no symptoms have developed.
- Stay home through Day 7 if the exposed person tests negative and no symptoms have developed. The specimen must be collected within 48 hours before leaving the home (i.e. not earlier than Day 5).

In all cases, the individual should continue to monitor for symptoms and are recommended to wear a mask when around others through Day 14 in order to minimize risk of spread.

D. Vaccinated contacts do not need to stay home, but should monitor for symptoms and get tested

Fully vaccinated people with no COVID-like symptoms do not need to stay home following an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19. However, fully vaccinated people should still self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days following an exposure.

When there is a positive case, parents will be given information around exposure to COVID-19 in order to make their own informed decisions regarding risk.

As Northeast Iowa Montessori School becomes aware of positive COVID cases within the school community, an email will be sent to the classroom affected with the start date of symptoms.

Staying Home When Ill

Students, guides and admin should stay home when they have signs of any infectious illness and be referred to their healthcare provider for testing and care.

Northeast Iowa Montessori School asks all parents to stay diligent in keeping students home when ill. School staff will also be asked to stay home with any sign of infectious illness.



Monitoring

The CDC states localities should monitor community transmission, vaccination coverage, screening testing and occurrence of outbreaks to guide decisions on the level of layered prevention strategies.

Northeast Iowa Montessori School will continue to work with the Winneshiek County Health Department and review guidance from the IDPH, CDC, DE, and Decorah Public School District.

Virtual Learning

Northeast Iowa Montessori School will offer a short-term virtual learning option for students needing to isolate or quarantine. When an illness or desire to quarantine is reported to the HOS, the HOS will provide information about short-term virtual learning. Guides will be notified and will contact the parents.

This Operating Plan is fluid and will have many changes throughout the 21/22 academic year. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this plan or your student's educational needs this year, please do not hesitate to reach out to Rachael Buresh - Head of School.

