



Dear CNS Community,

August 26, 2021

Last night, the CNS Board of Directors met to discuss and vote on the fall health & safety policy as we prepare to welcome children, teachers, and families back for the 2021-2022 school year in just a few short weeks. Maintaining an informed community is integral in a program like ours, with roots deeply planted in collaboration, trust, and partnership.

Our mission at CNS is to provide a nurturing and stimulating environment where each child, parent, and teacher feels safe, productive, and valued as a unique individual and a respected member of the community. Throughout every step of this process, we are committed to remaining true to that mission while prioritizing the overall health and well-being of our community members. Throughout this ongoing pandemic, our focus has always been on ensuring:

- **Health and safety** by following expert guidance to maximize the possibility that members of our community stay safe.
- **High-quality early education** steered by the principles of Reggio Emilia, play, and the natural environment, and realized by teachers who exhibit steadfast dedication and commitment to the children they love.
- **The emotional well-being** of children, parents and teachers alike, with the belief that being together is both valuable and necessary to enduring a global pandemic.

Together with the CNS Board of Directors, and with input and guidance from CNS staff, a variety of public health experts including local pediatricians and epidemiologists, and of course, all of you, we remain committed to making the best possible decisions for our children. After synthesizing public health recommendations, other local [public](#) and private school plans, survey results, town hall discussion, and general community feedback, the plan that follows was unanimously approved by the Board of Directors. At the meeting, some discussion arose about the fluidity of this plan and whether CNS will make changes. CNS intends to actively monitor local public health data, along with state guidance, and will maintain flexibility and dedication to considering changes as needed, to best keep our community safe.

Warmly,

Kayla Piskuliyski, Director

## →Mask-Wearing

- Mask-wearing will be required by all individuals **inside** the school building.
- Mask-wearing will be optional/individual choice **outside**, when the classrooms are not mixing. A portion of the school day (generally falling into the first half of the morning) will be divided into outdoor “zones” similar to the previous school year. Classrooms will have exclusive use of a zone, as well as their classroom tent, for that portion of the day. The zone schedule will rotate daily and repeat weekly.
- Mask-wearing will be required **outside for the end of the school morning when the whole playground is open for free play/unstructured time for all three groups (outdoor co-mingling)**. This allows the full outdoor space to be utilized by everyone for a portion of the day, and will not hinder the program elements we believe the children deserve to experience, including community socialization and a Reggio-inspired, outdoor focused curriculum. This also helps with contact tracing guidance, since fully masked individuals outdoors would not be considered a close contact at this time.
- In working with 2-6 year olds, we recognize and understand that each child will respond to mask-wearing in their own way, and will work with families to support this routine in a nurturing manner.
- We fully support any family choosing to mask outdoors. Teachers will collect intentions from parents and update their classroom clipboards with this information before the first day of school.
- In general, masks should be well-fitting and fully covering the mouth, nose and chin. CNS leaves mask selection up to the individual. Extra disposable masks will always be available at school for adults or children who need them.

## →Parent Volunteers

- Parent-Helping will start on Monday, October 4th, on a normal rotating daily morning schedule (9:00 AM - 12:00 PM). The parent helping schedule will be distributed in early September.
- At parent orientation night in September, all parents intending to volunteer in the classroom will be required to show proof of vaccination and submit a photo of their license for the background CORI check. More information to follow.

## →Drop-Off/Pick-Up Routines

- Parents/caregivers will be able to drop off inside the school building and may walk children to their classroom over a general 15-minute drop-off period (9:00 AM - 9:15 AM).

- After 9:15 AM, parents/caregivers will not be permitted to enter the building, and an administrator will meet at the front door to take the child in. This is mostly to respect the classroom flow and limit disruptions once the morning is underway.
- Pick-up/Dismissal will occur outside at the front gate over a general 15-minute pick-up period. Parents/caregivers will line up along the sidewalk and teachers or administrators will dismiss children to their respective caregiver. Except for inclement weather days, all groups will likely be outside together at this time and will gather beginning at 11:50 AM to dismiss. Due to parking lot congestion, dismissal will be extended through 12:05 PM.
- Parking lot protocols (for traffic flow and general safety) will be shared ahead of the first day of school.

## →Additional Programming

- CNS is moving forward with offering a Lunch Bunch/Extended Afternoon program (pending enrollment) on either Tuesdays and Wednesdays or Tuesdays and Thursdays.
- It will be enrolled as one large group and sign-ups will be for either lunch (1:00 PM dismissal) OR extended afternoon (2:00 PM dismissal).
- To start, this will be offered as an eight-week outdoor session beginning early October. Additional sessions will presumably be offered in the winter and spring months, although program components could change as the ongoing health situation (and related recommendations) fluctuate.
- While eating, whenever possible, children will be divided at tables into the morning cohort groupings.
- Masks will be required when outside since it will be a mixed group.
- If we do not meet a minimum enrollment threshold for the extended afternoon portion, we will still offer lunch bunch programming until 1:00 PM within the Red & Blue classrooms.
- Registration for Lunch Bunch/Extended Afternoon, as well as information/registration for other programming (toddler playgroup) will be made available on Tuesday 8/31.

## →Further Health & Safety Precautions/Sick Policy

- Health Screenings & Sick Policy: Families and staff should do a self-screening at home which includes checking for the following symptoms: fever, cough, shortness of breath, gastrointestinal symptoms, new loss of taste/smell, muscle aches, or any other symptoms that feel like a cold. Anyone with a fever of 100.0F or above, or any other signs of illness, should not attend school.
- A visual and verbal screening will occur each morning as the child enters school each day. This includes staff members and children. The screener will ask if the child or any household member has had any of the following symptoms in the last 24 hours, which will be posted at the school entrance:
  - Fever (temperature of 100.0F or above), felt feverish, or had chills
  - Cough
  - Sore throat Difficulty breathing

- Gastrointestinal symptoms (diarrhea, nausea, vomiting)
- Fatigue (Fatigue alone will not exclude a child from participation.)
- New loss of smell/taste
- New muscle aches
- Any other signs of illness
- Please be advised that the school will also ask if children, families or staff members have had close contact with a person known to be infected with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), which may affect school attendance.
- In order to return to school following illness, a family must procure a negative Covid test, or be cleared by a pediatrician. For severe symptoms (fever over 100, vomiting, etc., a child must be 48 hours symptom-free before returning to CNS).
  
- Cleaning Protocols: CNS will be cleaned on a daily basis by professional cleaners. In addition to daily cleaning tasks (vacuuming, mopping, etc), our cleaners will fully clean and disinfect all bathrooms and high touchpoint areas such as sinks, countertops, door handles, light switches, etc, with an EPA registered disinfectant for use against COVID-19.
  - Teachers will also clean, sanitize and disinfect specific areas, tabletops, and toys at various times during the day, as needed, with an EPA registered and child-safe sanitizer/disinfectant spray for use against COVID-19.
  - It is our protocol to keep windows and doors open so fresh air can circulate, as permitted. Increased air circulation will be prioritized throughout each classroom. Thanks to the generous donation of a current family, each classroom will have a HEPA air purifying system running.
  
- Hand-Washing: Hand washing, with soap and water, occurs throughout the day for children and staff. This includes, but is not limited to: **arrival, before and after snack, bathroom times, and after outdoor play**. There may be other situations that arise during the day which also necessitate hand washing. Teachers will prompt children to wash hands during those times as well. We know that the partnerships we have with families will be most effective in helping promote consistent and good hand washing techniques in and out of school.
  
- Physical Distancing: While there are no distancing requirements currently in place, in order to promote exploration in an organic way, indoor and outdoor classroom environments will be set up to allow for children to have adequate space while still engaging in a play based experience at school. This will include the use of natural barriers (i.e. classroom furniture; outdoor items) to create purposeful environments. Thoughtful consideration will also be used in creating daily schedules/routines that promote safe distancing.

- **As much as possible, snack and eating routines will be done outdoors. If indoors, children will be spaced with recommended distancing requirements.**

- **Travel Policy:**

- Since children under the age of 12 are currently ineligible for a vaccine, we anticipate that many families will have questions about travel, particularly as it relates to contact tracing rules and quarantine. **We are currently reviewing travel guidance in accordance with the State and CDC guidelines. When we finalize our travel protocols, we will make them available.**
- For community reference, the most up to date guidelines are as follows: Massachusetts COVID-19 Travel Guidance references CDC guidance and suggests that if you are vaccinated there are no restrictions on domestic travel, and you can travel freely. Here are the CDC's recommendations for unvaccinated people.

- **Reporting of Illness:** For the case of all suspected illnesses, including COVID-19, CNS will refer to the Board of Public Health for guidance. If a child becomes sick while at school, they will be asked to be picked up immediately by a parent or guardian. While waiting to be picked up, children will be kept outside of the group's classroom in a separate space that is comfortable and supervised by an onsite administrator. Families will be asked to consult with a pediatrician while the school determines next steps in conjunction with the Board of Health.
- In the event of a positive case of COVID-19 in our community, we will follow direct guidance from the Lexington Board of Health. While maintaining privacy for each member of our community, our goal is to remain transparent and provide updates to our community in order to keep everyone healthy and safe. The local Board of Health will be the primary source for reporting and tracing COVID-19 positive cases and exposures. Questions about closure, quarantine, and reports of positive cases or exposures will always be directed to the Lexington Board of Health first.
- **Additional Information:** Per the MA Department of Early Education and Care:
  - All children who attend Community Nursery School are required to have a current, unexpired, physical on file before entering school.
  - For each child enrolled, programs must maintain on file a physician's, nurse practitioner's, or physician's assistant's certification that the child has been successfully immunized in accordance with the current DPH's recommended schedules.
  - For each child with a chronic medical condition that has been diagnosed by a licensed Health Care Practitioner, programs must maintain an individual health care plan (IHCP). The plan shall describe the chronic condition, its symptoms, any medical treatment that may be necessary while the child is in care, the potential side effects of that treatment, and the potential consequences to the child's health if the treatment is not administered.