



**CORNERSTONE MONTESSORI SCHOOL and
CORNERSTONE MONTESSORI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**2023-2024
Academic Year Safe Learning Plan**

1611 Ames Avenue East
St. Paul, MN 55106
651.774.5000

www.cornerstone-elementary.org

Approved by the CMES Board of Directors
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INTRODUCTION

At Cornerstone Montessori School (CMS) and Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School (CMES), we are committed to supporting your family and our community in an environment that is developmentally appropriate and emphasizes health and well-being. Although the Covid-19 pandemic continues to impact our daily lives, our utmost priority is still an emphasis on community, learning, and caring for your children safely.

The following Safe Learning Plan outlines the changes that have been made to accommodate in-person learning. Should we need to change to a distance-learning model, this plan will be updated accordingly.

We recognize the importance of families being able to acknowledge their own comfort level with risk, and hope to provide information that will assist all in making the best decision for their children and families. We will continue to update this document as needed, or as mandates, policy, and procedure require.

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

A CMS/CMES administrator will be on-site during the hours of 7:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Cornerstone staff primarily communicate through email. Meetings with Guides or administration will take place over Zoom or in person, as requested by either party.

Communications to the whole community are made weekly at minimum, through the school's NotifyMe system. Please make sure you are signed up for this service at www.cornerstone-elementary.org/?PageName=NotifyMe. The guides, specialists, and administration are always available to talk with individual families about concerns and progress.

Cornerstone staff can be reached at 651-774-5000. Alyssa Schwartz, Head of School, is also available at 651-583-4181. CMES staff email addresses are firstname.lastname@cornerstone-elementary.org (for example, alyssaschwartz@cornerstone-elementary.org); CMS staff email addresses are firstname@mtcm.org (for example, alyssa@mtcm.org).

CORNERSTONE POLICIES DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

PROGRAM HOURS

Toddler Community, Children's House 1, and Children's House 2:

Hours

Half Day 8:45 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Extended Day 8:45 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Before Care* 7:30 – 8:45 a.m.

After Care* 4:00 – 5:30 p.m.

*Before and After Care require registration and an additional fee.

Garden, Pond, Marsh, and Forest:

Hours

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Before Care 7:30. – 8:45 a.m. (attendance by sign up only)

MASKING

As of August 1, 2022, masks are optional indoors at Cornerstone. Masks are an effective way to prevent transmission of Covid-19 and anyone who chooses to wear one will be able to do so.

In addition, staff and children are asked to cover their mouth and nose with their sleeve or a tissue when coughing or sneezing and to avoid touching their face, particularly their mouth, nose and eyes, with their hands. Staff, children, and visitors are expected to dispose of tissues in provided trash receptacles and wash or sanitize their hands immediately afterward. Respiratory etiquette will be demonstrated on posters and supported by making tissues and trash receptacles available to all.

Cornerstone may require that masks be worn during periods of high transmission. If masks are required, Cornerstone will have extra masks available if needed. Children will be taught proper mask usage and parents are encouraged to model good mask etiquette with their children. If a child cannot or will not wear a properly-fitted mask, they may be sent home.

Well-fitted masks cover the nose and mouth completely and fit snugly against your face without gaps. Medical grade masks provide the most protection, such as N95 or KN95 masks or surgical masks. The CDC's guide to masks can be found [here](#).

When masks are required, all adults and children will wear masks unless facial expressions are necessary (as with some language presentations) or a medical reason is documented by a doctor, in which case face shields may be used. Face shields are not a replacement for masks and will be used sparingly, unless a mask is also worn.

HAND WASHING/SANITIZING

Anyone entering the 1611 Ames Avenue facility is requested to wash or sanitize their hands prior to or immediately upon entering the facility. Hand sanitizer dispensers are present in each of the environments, bathrooms, workrooms, entrances, and exits.

Basic infection prevention measures are implemented in workplaces and teaching environments at all times. Staff, children, and visitors are instructed to wash their hands with soap and water frequently throughout the day, but especially at the beginning and end of their shift/day, before and after any mealtimes, and after using the restroom. Proper handwashing procedures, including the application of soap and washing of wrists and individual fingers with hot water, are posted in bathrooms and near all hand washing sinks.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

Bus transportation will be provided for K-6th grade children living in St. Paul upon request. Parents/guardians/caretakers and children must read the Cornerstone Bus Policy, found in the *Parent Policies Handbook*. COVID-19 policy and procedure set forth by Cornerstone applies to all busing. These policies may include children wearing masks and/or assigned seats based on the order in which children are picked up or dropped off.

Parents/guardians/caregivers are expected to monitor their child's health prior to allowing them to board the bus. Children will not be permitted to ride the bus home if they are found to have a fever or other COVID-19 symptoms while at school.

ENVIRONMENTS

Children may enter their environments at 8:45 a.m. With limited space in the environment, children may be pulled out of class to meet with their Special Education Teachers and Specialists. Cornerstone's COVID-19 cleaning policies and procedures extend to all areas outside of the environments for this reason.

Lead Guides may assign seats, lockers, and/or cubby space to encourage social distancing.

When weather permits, all environments will eat their lunch outside. Lunch times during inclement weather are arranged so as to utilize as much of the building as possible.

FOOD AND NUTRITION

Children are offered breakfast, lunch, and a snack during their school day. We are not able to provide meals to children who are quarantining or doing home-based schooling.

School meals will be ordered on a monthly basis. To order meals for your children please contact Chris Bewell, chrisbewell@cornerstone-elementary.org, with your request.

Children's House and Toddler Communities

Breakfast - Breakfast will be offered to children as they arrive and conclude by 9:15 a.m. An adult will serve items, most of which will be single serving items.

Lunch - Meals are provided through Cornerstone's catering service. Families that would like to provide a lunchbox are invited to do so. Children bringing lunch will store their meals in their lockers.

Snack - Snacks in single serving portions will be distributed to children by an adult.

Lower and Upper Elementary Communities

Breakfast - Breakfast is available for CMES children upon arrival (between 8:45-9:15 am). It will be served in the outside areas between Garden and Pond classrooms whenever possible or in the multi-purpose room when weather requires.

Lunch - Meals are provided through Cornerstone's catering service. Families that would like to provide a lunchbox are invited to do so. Children bringing lunch will store their meals in their lockers.

Snack - Snacks in single serving portions will be distributed to children by an adult.

Snacks will be available in individual (and where able, individually packaged) options. All non-disposable meal utensils and dishes will be sanitized in Cornerstone's ECOLAB machines, with procedures and chemicals that have been tested and verified by ECOLAB and the MN Department of Health. Staff will support eating, conversation, and cleanliness during all meals or snack.

Should there be a need to transition to a distance learning model, Cornerstone schools will make every attempt to provide meals for our families which will require advanced ordering and prompt pickup.

COVID TESTING, QUARANTINE, AND COMMUNICATION

CMS and CMES staff are required to be fully vaccinated against Covid-19. CMES staff may choose to submit proof of a negative COVID test weekly, in lieu of vaccination.

Children and staff, regardless of vaccination status, are encouraged to be tested every two weeks.

Testing resources are available at <https://mn.gov/COVID19/get-tested/index.jsp> and at-home tests can be acquired from Cornerstone by request.

Cornerstone's Safe Learning Plan follows the guidelines developed by the State of Minnesota, which is based upon Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and MDH guidelines for COVID-19, Minnesota Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MNOSHA) statutes, rules and standards, and Minnesota's relevant and current executive orders.

All members of the Cornerstone community are expected to follow state guidelines for COVID-19, and are asked to consider how the entire community could be affected if they choose to travel, participate in large social gatherings, or otherwise increase exposure to COVID-19. Cornerstone asks that everyone consider testing after high-exposure activities.

Staff, families, and children are expected to monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 and follow the isolation requirements of the school. In the event of a COVID exposure or positive test:

- **Families must notify the school within 24 hours of a COVID positive test result.** Upon confirmation of a positive COVID-19 test or direct exposure, the school will call parents/guardians/caretakers immediately to begin contact tracing and case investigation. Expectations for quarantine, testing, or other requirements will be communicated at that time.
- Through contact tracing and case investigation, **individuals who are considered close contacts will be notified immediately.**
- Families will be notified when a case is identified within their child's environment.

When a child is required to stay home for more than one week, due to exposure or a positive test, Cornerstone will provide at-home learning experiences through scheduled Zoom meetings and/or work packets. Children who participate in their work will be marked as present; children who do not complete work but have notified the school of a necessary quarantine will be marked as excused. Guides will prepare work to be picked up the day following notification to the school of an absence.

In the unlikely event that any one environment must transition to distance learning, the following steps will take place:

- Lead Guides will provide specially prepared take-home learning packets developed to meet each child's learning needs.
- Administration will support by providing technology equipment to children who need it for online learning.
- Lead Guides will utilize Schoology, Seesaw, or a similar online learning platform as a way to provide at-home learning opportunities. In addition, Lead Guides will prepare online presentations and schedule regular zoom meetings to provide instruction and communication with families.
- Special Education/ELL Teachers and Specialists will organize zoom meetings to provide on-going services to children.

Quarantine and Testing Guidelines

Recommendations from the CDC and MDH change frequently; this Safe Learning Plan may not be updated with each change. Families and staff will be notified by email and website when there are changes and the Safe Learning Plan will be updated as is appropriate.

The following quarantine/testing requirements are in place to begin the 2023-24 school year:

No Symptoms + Positive Test	Isolate for 5 days and wear a mask at all times for additional 5 days
Symptoms + Positive Test	Isolate for 5 days from the onset of symptoms, be symptom-free for 24 hours, and wear a mask for additional 5 days
Exposure to a known case	Wear a mask for 10 days; test after day 5

In all scenarios:

- The day of exposure/positive test/symptoms is considered day 0.
- All individuals must be able to wear a well-fitted mask in order to have a shortened isolation or quarantine period. A quarantine period may be required if masking is not possible.
- Following **any** exposure, should symptoms appear, the child must isolate for at least 5 days from the onset of symptoms and be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school.

Cornerstone administration will work with each family to determine the appropriate quarantine and testing regimen for the situation.

DISINFECTION PROCEDURES

We take cleaning and opportunities to strengthen our cleaning procedures very seriously at Cornerstone. In partnership with ECOLAB Inc., the 1611 Ames Avenue facility in its entirety utilizes two products for disinfection and sanitization:

1. Peroxide Multi Surface Cleaner and Disinfectant

- Broad Spectrum Disinfectant that disinfects and deodorizes by killing common germs; Antibacterial, Germicidal, and Fungicidal.
- Peroxide will not harm you if ingested, however, it is recommended that any surface sprayed with Peroxide that may come into contact with a child's mouth or with food is then rinsed with water and sprayed with the SMARTPOWER Sink and Surface Cleaner Sanitizer.

2. SMARTPOWER Sink and Surface Cleaner Sanitizer

- A Food Contact Cleaner Sanitizer that reduces risk of foodborne illnesses by keeping food contact surfaces cleaned and sanitized with a 2-in-1, no-rinse cleaner and sanitizer.
- EPA Registered food contact sanitizer with 15-second contact time for SARS -- Related Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2)

All staff, including contracted cleaning services, are trained in the effective and safe use and storing of these products. Light switches, doorknobs, and other high-touch furnishings and areas will be disinfected before and after school and throughout the day as needed, using the peroxide solution. Tables and other areas that may come in contact with food will be disinfected before and after each

meal and additionally as needed throughout the day, using the peroxide-water-Sink and Surface Cleaner Sanitizer. All adults will wear masks and gloves during cleaning and sanitizing, including dishwashing, and food distribution.

Regular practices of cleaning and disinfecting outside of the teaching environments have also been implemented, including a schedule for routine cleaning and disinfecting of work surfaces, equipment, tools and machinery, and areas in respective work environments, including restrooms, break rooms, lunch rooms, meeting rooms, and drop-off and pick-up locations, as well as high-touch areas, including phones, keyboards, touch screens, controls, door handles, copy machines, and as needed, Montessori materials.

VENTILATION PROTOCOL

Operation of the 1611 Ames Avenue facility includes necessary sanitation, assessment, and maintenance of building systems, including water, plumbing, electrical, and heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems. The maximum amount of fresh air is being brought into the workplace, air recirculation is being limited, and ventilation systems are being properly used and maintained. Steps are also being taken to minimize air flow blowing across people.

In accordance with state-mandated building protocol and safety and occupancy standards, we will continue to complete all required inspections and approvals for the facility on a regular basis. Licensing for the facility requires this. The ventilation, heating and cooling systems, and plumbing were inspected at the beginning of the COVID pandemic, and sanitation and safety protocol were reviewed. Inspections and policy reviews have continued as the change in temperature/weather has demanded. Whenever possible, doors – including patio, classroom, bathroom, and others – can be propped open within the facility to increase air circulation.

Because Cornerstone is a school and not a hospital, medical center, or pharmaceutical production plant that *requires* air-quality assessment and control risks to maintain ventilation equipment to serve airborne containment control facilities and document their maintenance activities, the HVAC system installed in the 1611 Ames Avenue facility is not now, or has ever been equipped to host HEPA Filters. For our current HVAC system, we have opted to change the filters every month, as opposed to quarterly, which was required pre-COVID-19.

Cornerstone will utilize a combination of individual Medify MA Air Purifiers for every 500 square feet of bathroom space and Heston Air Purifiers for every 1500 remaining square feet of space with H13 True HEPA filters. In addition to this, we work with staff to purchase and change the filters prior to the filter replacement indicator prompting.

HEALTH POLICIES

As previously noted, staff and families of enrolled children have been informed of and encouraged to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. **Staff, students, and children are expected to follow the guidelines included in this Safe Learning Plan.** The following policies and procedures are being implemented at Cornerstone to assess an individual's health status prior to entering the work or school, and for staff and families of enrolled children to report when they are sick or experiencing symptoms.

Decisions to send children home ultimately rest with the Cornerstone administration.

Please note the following policies and procedures:

- If a fever is identified, it will be verified with a second thermometer. Children or staff with a temperature above 100 degrees will be immediately sent home and must remain home until 24 hours after the fever breaks.
- Tylenol and medication to reduce fever may not be used to determine the length of time a child is well.
- Children will be sent home immediately if they demonstrate fever, new cough, shortness of breath, or loss of taste or smell. Children experiencing dry cough, shortness of breath, or two simultaneous symptoms (for example, fever and diarrhea) may be sent home.
- A single symptom, other than cough or shortness of breath, requires the child to be home for 24 hours after the symptom subsides.
- If an ill child has an unvaccinated sibling on-site, the sibling will also be sent home and must remain home until the decision tree path is determined. Vaccinated siblings may continue to attend.
- If Cornerstone administration requests a child be picked up due to illness, parents are expected to arrive within 30 minutes.

The most up-to-date COVID-19 symptom list can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>.

If a child or staff member presents symptoms consistent with COVID-19, they are strongly encouraged to seek testing. Please see the Testing section above for more information.

It is absolutely critical that families notify Cornerstone immediately if they have been exposed to COVID-19 or if they have been diagnosed with COVID-19. If a child or staff member is diagnosed with COVID-19, contact tracing and case investigation will determine which individuals need to quarantine. Administration will inform staff and parents of MDH guidance and if closures are required.

If your child has an underlying health condition, please notify administration.

It is important to note that this guidance does not mean school is a fully safe place. We will err on the side of caution in any event of illness or exposure.

GUESTS/VISITORS

It is Cornerstone's goal to work closely with families and community partners. Visitors to our community are required to follow Covid-19 protocols as stated in this Safe Learning Plan, including masking, social distancing, and sanitizing.

During the 2023-24 school year, we anticipate that full access to Cornerstone will be possible for licensed contractors, parents or prospective families to tour or observe, and community partners to visit.