



Health and Safety Guidelines for the SCMS Community

August 14, 2021

Dear Parents, please read the information below carefully. We have underlined some key items, however please do read this document in full. These guidelines may change and adapt in response to new and relevant information in the future. We look forward to working together with you on our shared path towards normalization during the on-going pandemic.

Keeping in mind our children's and staff's safety, we are asking you to adhere to these guidelines:

- **Communication with SCMS staff.** You are requested to communicate with SCMS teachers or administration by emailing or calling the Front Desk. Your message will be delivered to the teacher who will respond to your query at the earliest possible time. For in person meetings with teachers and administration staff, prior appointments are needed. New families of one to two year olds will be allowed to come in person on a need basis if the child is experiencing anxiety or crying during the first week of school. Children do better if the drop-off period is short and sweet as this reduces separation anxiety in the child's mind.
- **Health check prior to entering School.** Parents and staff must check for symptoms of any illness prior to coming to school each day (note: parents please be vigilant of any symptoms of the Covid-19 in your child). All persons entering the school building will have their body temperature checked at the front desk. This includes any and all children, parents and staff. School staff will administer both a forehead temperature check and a quick check for any observable signs of illness ("Health check") immediately upon arrival and throughout the day if deemed necessary. Anyone displaying symptoms of illness upon arrival will be denied entry or if symptoms appear later in the day, will be sent home.
- **Masks and protective equipment.** All adults, including parents and staff, are required to wear face masks while at school and around others (regardless of vaccination status as of now due to variants). The American Academy of Pediatrics also recommends the use of masks for all children ages 2 and above at this time.

- **COVID-19 Notification and Response Plan.** If your child tests positive or is exposed to COVID-19, please notify us by calling or emailing the school as soon as possible. SCMS will report positive cases and exposure of children and staff to the DHHS (Department of Health and Human Services). **The DHHS will provide our school with the appropriate guidance and response plan.**

We follow DHHS guidance on the following procedures:

- **Notification**, including who needs to be notified within the School community
- **Quarantine**, including who needs to be quarantined and for what length of time
- **Disinfection** procedures of the School environment of the affected area as per CDC standards
- **Contact** tracing assistance and follow-up

The DHHS follows a flow chart in which individuals that test positive or are exposed are handled on a case by case basis, however **generally the individual will be allowed to return after the following:**

- **Completion of a 10-day isolation period and/or**
 - **They receive a negative test result (Test type must be PCR-RT)**
 - **The school will be in contact with you to help you return to school as quickly and safely as possible.**
- **Building Access.** In an effort to minimize potential exposure to the variants of Coronavirus, we are limiting the number of people that may enter the school building, including visitors and school vendors. If you need to drop off your child outside of the carpool times 7:30 a.m. - 9:15 a.m., please park and bring your child to the front door and a staff member will be available to come perform a health check and take your child to their classroom. If you need to pick up your child after carpool times, please call us 5 minutes prior to arrival so that a staff member can bring your child outside to you.
 - **Handwashing and sanitizing.** Hand sanitizing will occur immediately upon arrival at building entry points for all individuals. S.C.M.S. benefits from the fact that every classroom has two sinks for handwashing within the classroom itself. We will continue to reinforce proper handwashing practices in our daily routine for our children and will increase hand washing frequency throughout the day, particularly after returning from recess/outdoors, using the restroom, after sneezing or coughing and before snacks and

meals. In addition, we urge everyone to cover coughs and sneezes into a tissue, then dispose of it in the trash immediately.

- **Improved ventilation.** All classrooms at S.C.M.S. are equipped with operable windows. Windows will be opened at regular intervals to dilute indoor contaminants such as virus particles.
- **Increased outdoor time.** We have outdoor covered areas where children can sit and read, study or play. Teachers will incorporate increased outdoor time for both instruction and play (as much as the weather permits). Studies have shown that being outdoors helps reduce the spread of viruses.
- **Daily sanitizing.** Toys and other high-touch surfaces will be regularly disinfected and rotated throughout the day. We have paused the use of water works, play dough, large pillows or stuffed animals, and other materials that are difficult to clean for now to reduce the risk of bacteria and viruses spreading.
- **Heightened sick policy rules.** Children and staff will be required to be symptom-free without medication for at least 48 hours (increased from 24 hours) before returning until further notice. Parents must provide a doctor's "Back to School" note after their visit with the doctor. If your child or another family member does test positive for Covid-19, notify the School administration at the earliest so that we may take appropriate measures.
- **Separation of sick children.** SCMS will isolate children if they show any symptoms of sickness, until they are picked up. Families will have 1 hour to pick up their child. We recommend that families inform any individuals (non parents/guardians) that are authorized to pick up their child to be on standby in case such a need arises. If you would like to see who is on your authorized list for pickup, or update your list, please email us.
- **Social distancing.** S already maintains lower ratios and group sizes for most classrooms when compared to Texas state standards. We will continue to practice social distancing as much as possible to reduce risk.
- **Modifications to snacks.** We are modifying our shared snack practices to reduce the spread of germs. As always, staff will use gloves to handle and assist children with snacks and children wash hands before eating. Students will not be serving themselves as is normally done as part of teaching independence in a Montessori environment.

- **Nap time adjustments.** Children will continue to sleep (without masks) with appropriate distance between the children and they will be positioned alternating head to toe or toe to toe. Please send an extra crib sheet/mat covering in case of an accident and both sheets will be sent home on Fridays
- **Continue to follow CDC travel guidelines.** As states and countries modify their restrictions and protocols, please pay close attention to CDC guidance around travel to specific regions. If you travel to these regions, you will need to follow CDC guidance for quarantining yourself and your family before returning to SCMS.

Once again, thank you for entrusting your child in our care. All our children are a precious gift and we are dedicated to their safety and well-being. Our commitment to this goal means all members of our school community must value and care for others. We must adhere to rules and policies which keep our community safe and healthy while understanding that the degree of risk others may have may be different from our own.

We value all of our families at SCMS and are looking forward to an enriching school year together.