



# COVID-19 Handbook 2022-2023

Revised: 7/21/2022

***Mission Statement:***

*At KMS, we provide children with an educational program, rooted in the philosophy of Maria Montessori, that nurtures a love of learning and fosters respect for self, others, and the environment.*

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## KMS COVID-19 Handbook

### Introduction

At KMS, our mission statement outlined above remains the umbrella under which the COVID committee makes recommendations to the board while prioritizing the health and safety of our students, staff and their families. The purpose of this handbook is to outline COVID-19 guidelines for the 2022-2023 school year. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has proven dynamic, so we too shall be flexible and responsive in our management. The KMS COVID committee will continue to meet, updating policies and procedures as necessary.

### COVID- 19 Updates

At the conclusion of the 2021-2022 school year, the Maine Department of Education (DOE) retired the Standard Operating Procedure (“SOP”) for schools, a state-driven framework for the school response to COVID-19. Instead, there is now both data as well as guidance available to interpret the data to create an informed response locally, as outlined by the national CDC. The COVID committee will continue to consider the many aspects of our unique community as well as the past experience and feedback from our parent and teacher communities as we use this data and guidance to make policies for KMS this school year. KMS will start this year with a **mask optional** baseline policy, as long as the CDC’s reporting of community transmission levels for either Kennebec or Somerset counties are below the HIGH or SUBSTANTIAL designation. If either county is rated HIGH or SUBSTANTIAL, KMS students and staff will follow universal masking protocols. In an effort to avoid rapid change, we will only switch our approach to masking after two consecutive weeks of sustained change in the community transmission levels. In the event of a change in the masking requirements, an update will be sent via email and the Remind app.

The specific data the school will be monitoring can be found here: [COVID-19 INTEGRATED COUNTY VIEW](#). Follow this link and under **Data Type**, scroll down and select **Community Transmission**. KMS will closely monitor the effect of this policy on students, staff, and our greater community, as well as the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic and public health guidance, with the understanding that changes in policy may be made.

Community has long been one of the strengths of KMS; the past two years have been no exception. The staff, students and families have shown great resilience and allowed KMS to effectively maintain many key aspects of our programming under unprecedented circumstances. We are grateful for the ability to continue our quality programming, including the social and emotional opportunities for children, while working within the current requirements and guidelines for health and safety. Through our focus on [diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging \(here\)](#), children at KMS are educated to nurture a respect and understanding about themselves, their larger world, and their impact on the planet as well as our community. As we move forward, our ability to keep students, staff and families safe while on campus still depends on the actions of each community member and their dedication to safety within the community at large. Each family is expected to understand and respect their role in the safety of our school community

and to follow the procedures herein. All families are required to submit acknowledgement of this handbook before their child attends KMS. Any questions related to these procedures should be forwarded directly to the Head of School, Dr. Jeff Beedy at: [jeff@kennebecmontessori.org](mailto:jeff@kennebecmontessori.org).

### **Community Expectations**

- **Health Monitoring** - Exercise caution when monitoring the health of children and determining if they are healthy enough for school. KMS favors a high level of caution to determine admission each day and throughout the day as children will learn best when they are well. When questioning the health of your child prior to arrival, please proceed with caution and keep your child home as necessary for the safety of everyone in our school community.
- **Communication** - In addition to the health of your child, we expect transparency from families regarding exposure outside of school, symptoms, and diagnosis. It is your responsibility to inform anyone that you have designated to pick up or drop off your child of these policies, as their compliance is also required. Our ability to provide a safe environment for students and staff, as well as maintain onsite operations, relies on the daily decisions and communication of each of our community members. Notify an administrator promptly if your child is suspected or confirmed positive for COVID-19.
- **Exercise Caution and Consideration of Others** - Please remember that we are a community and the actions of each individual has the potential to affect everyone. If you, your child, or anyone in your family has been ill with COVID-19, exposed to or in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, presented symptoms of COVID-19, or presented symptoms of other illness, your student must remain home until they are healthy for school.
- **Practice Consistency** - Practice mask wearing and healthy hygiene outside of the school community. Given that the pandemic continues to evolve and that classroom close contacts are likely, students will be asked to mask when there is a classroom exposure. Our approach continues to prioritize in-person learning for students and staff; therefore, masks will likely remain a part of the school experience. Please stay informed and abide by all state and local safety guidelines.
- **Be Collaborative** - Communicate immediately, maturely, openly, and honestly about any concerns you may have about your family's experience at school. Recognize that staff may not have all of the answers to your questions immediately and will consult the appropriate resources to determine the best course of action. Trust that the school has everyone's best interests in mind when making decisions.

## **Health & Safety Screening**

- Students, staff, and any volunteers are expected to conduct personal health screening using this [Pre-Screening Tool](#) each day prior to arriving on campus. We encourage you to print it and keep it handy in your home. A copy of the screener is included in the Appendix of this document.

Use the following self-check checklist, which should be updated to include any new information from the CDC. Check for updates [here](#).

- Do you feel sick with **ANY** symptoms consistent with COVID-19?
  - Fever or chills
  - Cough
  - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - Fatigue
  - Muscle or body aches
  - Headache
  - New loss of taste or smell
  - Sore throat
  - Congestion or runny nose
  - Nausea or vomiting
  - Diarrhea
- If you are not UP TO DATE with COVID-19 vaccination, have you been in close contact with a person who has COVID-19 within the past 10 days?
- Within the past 24 hours, have you had a fever (100.4 and above) or used any fever reducing medicine?

If the answer is yes to any of the questions, stay home.

- Any student or staff member exhibiting symptoms must report their symptoms by contacting the Office Manager, Kristin Gagnon, at [kristin@kennebecmontessori.org](mailto:kristin@kennebecmontessori.org) and may not be present at school until they have met the requirements for a safe return outlined in the Safe Return to School section of this handbook.
  - For more information on COVID-19 symptoms and a self checker tool from the CDC, click [here](#).
- Students and staff who present with symptoms during the day will be sent home immediately. They will be required to isolate in the designated area at the main entrance. Parents are required to pick up their child within 30 minutes of being notified.

## **Contact Tracing**

- In a good faith effort to reduce COVID-19 spread, KMS will conduct contact tracing for all known cases of COVID-19 at school.

- As there is no assigned seating in the Montessori classroom, the WHOLE CLASS will be counted as close contacts if there is a confirmed case within the class.
- If the positive case was present in Before care or After care, we will assess the location and duration of contact to determine a possible exposure.
- Exposures outdoors do not constitute close contacts, regardless of distancing or masking.
- Notification: We will do our best to identify and notify all close contacts in a timely manner. The primary method of notification will be via email and the Remind app.
  - Parents should be sure that they can receive communications from both of these communication platforms prior to the start of school.
  - Sign up for the Remind app [here](#) and search for @kmspar22 to receive updates.

#### Special Circumstances:

- During the school day, if it becomes known that a student is a close contact, the student will immediately follow the “strict masking” rules (defined below).
- SIBLINGS OF A CLOSE CONTACT: If a sibling or other household member of a KMS student has been notified that they (but not the KMS student) are a close contact in any location (KMS, another school, or a community exposure), the KMS student in question is not required to stay home from school.
  - However, best practice is that the exposed individual should quarantine as much as possible from the student and wear a mask around others, including in their home, for 10 days from last contact with the COVID positive individual.
  - We would ask that if you are unable, in good faith, to keep the student reasonably separated from the exposed individual, keep the KMS student home. This is especially true if they are unvaccinated.
- HOUSEHOLD EXPOSURE (If there is on-going exposure, such as a household contact with COVID-19):
  - Best practice recommendations are for COVID-19 positive individuals to isolate and wear a mask around others as much as possible, including in the home. When considering the appropriateness of allowing your VACCINATED student to attend KMS, please take into consideration your ability and willingness to ensure you are doing everything possible to reduce the risk of transmission to the KMS student. Students or staff who are not up to date with vaccination will need to follow the quarantine and safe return to school guidelines outlined below.
  - The student or staff member can follow the guidance below for safe return to school but remains on “day 0” until the day after the positive contact is released from their 10-day ISOLATION.
    - For example, if a parent has COVID-19 diagnosed on 1/1/2023, they are isolated and then masking through 1/11/2023 and released to usual activity and masking expectations on 1/12/2023. 1/11/2023 is the LAST date of contact for the student, so their quarantine/strict masking day 1 is 1/12/2023.

## **Safe Return to School**

Please refer to and follow the [CDC guidance for ISOLATION](#) which is summarized below.

If a student or staff member TESTS POSITIVE for COVID 19:

- ISOLATE at home immediately and please report this to the school administration ASAP. Please provide the date and type of test, the date of symptom onset, and the last day the child or staff member was in school.
  - Please email Kristin Gagnon at: [kristin@kennebecmontessori.org](mailto:kristin@kennebecmontessori.org). You can expect to receive communication about the plan for return to school the next business day.
- Remain at home in ISOLATION until meeting the national CDC criteria for release from isolation. Currently, that is 5 days (day 0 is the day symptoms begin, or the date of a positive test following exposure without symptoms). The individual may return on day 6 as long as they haven't had a fever for at least 24 hours without fever-reducing medication and symptoms are resolved or greatly improving. We request that an antigen test is done at the end of the 5 day isolation period. If positive, the individual should continue to isolate until either the individual tests negative with symptom improvement or once the 10 day isolation period is completed and with symptom improvement.
- Students and staff returning to school within 10 days of a positive test result will be **required** to wear a well-fitting KN-95 mask through day 10.
- The above guidance applies to those who test positive, whether or not they have symptoms.
- If you have severe symptoms or a moderately reduced immune system, the above guidance should be taken into consideration by the individual's personal physician.

### **CLOSE CONTACTS:**

Defined by the CDC: someone who was less than 6 feet away from an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period in the 2 days prior to the infected person developing symptoms or testing positive.

Please refer to and follow the [CDC guidance for QUARANTINE](#) which is summarized below.

For a student or staff member **identified as a close contact of a person with** COVID-19 and is:

### **ASYMPTOMATIC:**

- Students and staff who are up to date (please refer to the CDC definition [here](#)) with their COVID-19 vaccinations may remain in school with vigilant daily symptom monitoring: testing on day 5 (consider every 5 days for ongoing exposure) and "strict masking" for a full 10 days after the last close contact.

- Students and staff who have had a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the past 90 days may follow the above guidance regardless of vaccination status.
- Students and staff who are NOT up to date with their COVID-19 vaccinations: Stay home for at least 5 full days. Even if you do not have symptoms, get tested 5 days after your last contact with a COVID-19 positive individual. An antigen test or PCR test is acceptable. You may return to school on day 6 as long as you are asymptomatic, have a negative test, and are able and willing to wear a well-fitting mask through day 10.
  - If KMS is following Universal Masking (due to the community transmission level being in the Substantial or High categories and/or a classroom close contact occurs), a student or staff member who is not up to date with their COVID-19 vaccinations would not be required to quarantine. Should that student or staff member become symptomatic, however, they would be asked to test and remain at home.
- Calculating quarantine days: Day 1 is the first full day after the last contact with the COVID-19 individual.

#### **SYMPTOMATIC:**

- Test immediately and isolate at home until the results are available.
  - Antigen or PCR testing is acceptable. A positive antigen test does not need confirmation with a PCR test.
- Students and staff with a **positive** test for COVID-19 should follow the guidelines for ISOLATION and safe return to school as outlined above.
- Students and staff with a **negative** test AND resolved symptoms may resume the asymptomatic close contact algorithm at the appropriate number day from their close-contact.
  - Those with negative tests and ongoing symptoms should contact their personal physician for further guidance, and their return to school will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

#### **SYMPTOMS OF ILLNESS**

Remember, even if your symptoms are not COVID-19, we want to maintain a healthy learning environment at KMS. If you are sick, please stay home!

Students and staff **WITHOUT** close contact exposure who are experiencing **symptoms** consistent with COVID-19 may return to KMS 24 hours after symptoms improve and COVID-19 testing, if indicated, is negative.

- Tests for COVID-19 are readily available and easy to do at home. Please test early and often if you or your child is experiencing symptoms. If you need assistance obtaining tests for home use, please let the school know.
- Individuals **should** be tested if they have any one high risk symptom or two or more low risk symptoms (see chart below).
  - Antigen or PCR testing is acceptable.

<u>Low risk symptoms (<math>\geq 2</math>)</u>	<u>High risk symptoms (ANY)</u>
new headache body aches runny nose/congestion nausea/vomiting/diarrhea any of the above beyond their usual presentation (allergies)	new, uncontrolled cough shortness of breath or difficulty breathing new loss of taste or smell fever (temp. 100.4 or higher), chills sore throat

- If an alternative diagnosis is provided for the symptoms, individuals should follow the guidance of their personal physician.
- Exceptions to testing (e.g. in the setting of a previous COVID-19 infection or receipt of monoclonal antibody therapy within the past 90 days) will be handled on a case by case basis.

### **Mask Wearing**

The COVID committee and KMS Board strongly encourage wearing a well-fitting mask as a simple and effective strategy to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 to the individual and others.

Day-to-day indoor mask wearing will be optional as long as the following conditions are met:

- The COVID-19 COMMUNITY TRANSMISSION LEVEL (in either Somerset **or** Kennebec counties) as assessed by the CDC Data tracker is in the low or moderate risk zone. Please refer to [this](#) site for updated data. Under the Tab: **Data Type** scroll down and select **Community Transmission**.  
AND
- The KMS student or staff member has not been exposed to, or diagnosed with, COVID-19 in the past 10 days.

Important reminders:

- **Please understand there may be unforeseen circumstances under which we may ask students and staff or full classes to engage in mask wearing.**
- Students and staff may remove masks outdoors.
- We encourage parents to practice wearing masks with their children, should it be necessary during the school year. [Here](#) are some helpful tips for practicing.
- KMS will provide a safe environment where students are supported regardless of the need or choice to wear a mask.
- Staff can encourage mask wearing if that is the request of the child's caregiver, but they cannot be held responsible for assuring compliance if a student is not wearing their mask (unless it is indicated by the strict mask-wearing requirements).
- Children are not expected to wear a mask while sleeping, as long as they are not under strict masking requirements.

STRICT masking requirements:

- Masks will be required in the setting of returning to school prior to 10 days after close-contact or infection as outlined above and at the onset of symptoms during the school day while awaiting pick-up.
- Medical grade or surgical masks are preferred but cloth masks which are double layered, in good condition, well-fitting to cover the nose and mouth, worn appropriately, and changed if they become soiled or damp are allowed. Face shields and gaiters are not acceptable.
- Extra masks should be provided in the child's backpack and kept in the cubby. If the child's mask is ill-fitting, soiled, damp, or lost, KMS will provide a new mask.
- During strict masking, there is NO removal of the mask in the classroom.
- Eating and drinking may occur with a minimum of 6 feet distance, in designated areas or outside the classroom if needed. This area may include a cohort of other students or staff who are also following "strict masking" requirements. If there is not sufficient space within the school to allow for adequate distancing of all students needing this accommodation, it is possible that individuals will be asked to remain at home. This will be handled on a case-by-case basis.
- Individuals may remove their mask outdoors, but should maintain at least 6 feet of distance from other students and staff.
- Rest/nap time is **NOT** an exception to this requirement: students requiring rest (and thus removing their mask for an extended period of time), should remain at home or be picked up prior to rest time.
- We ask parents to assess in good faith whether their child is able to follow these guidelines, and if not, to keep their child home during the period of time during which strict masking would be indicated.

### **Hand Hygiene**

- Upon entry to their classrooms, children will store their personal belongings, change their shoes, and wash their hands.
- Additionally, students and staff are required to wash hands upon entry from outdoors, before and after eating, after using the bathroom, between works (when children have been engaged for extended periods), after touching pets, before entering a new cohort, and before leaving.
- Contractors and pre-authorized personnel (e.g. janitorial and maintenance) will be permitted to enter the building and must wash hands upon entry.
- Staff are provided with proper hand washing training.
- Teachers provide students with proper handwashing lessons regularly.
- Signage will be displayed at entrances and sinks.

### **Air Quality**

- KMS has upgraded its HVAC filtration system to include MERV 13 filters and will run the system continuously while the building is occupied. The filters will be changed monthly and monitored by Superior Mechanical, our maintenance company for over 20 years.

- Teachers will be encouraged to keep windows open in the classroom as much as possible throughout the day.
- In addition, KMS will offer as much outdoor learning time as possible, weather permitting. Each classroom will have an outdoor learning space extending from their main indoor learning space for children to access on most weather days.

### **Cleaning & Sanitation**

- Each classroom will identify key areas and frequencies for regular cleaning within their environment such as high-touch surfaces, bathrooms, materials, etc., and will maintain room-specific cleaning logs.
- As always in the Montessori classroom, children will be invited to clean their own work spaces. They will not be involved in the cleaning of communal work spaces.
- Materials that cannot be cleaned easily may not be made available to students or may be rotated to ensure safety. Upon preparing shelves, teachers will use their discretion and be mindful of the potential for materials as fomites under the current health considerations.
- Upholstered furniture may be covered with washable coverings or cleaned as necessary.
- Regular daytime cleaning will be done using chemicals that may be safely used in the presence of children. We use a peroxide and citrus-based eco-cleaner. These active ingredients are effective virucides.
- Our janitorial service will support more intense daily cleaning procedures after normal operating hours using a quaternary-based disinfectant.
  - Using a different chemical during the night supports an additional step to potentially kill the virus, in case it was missed during the day, and facilitates an integrated disinfecting approach.

### **Classroom Cohorts**

- In general, classrooms will remain as cohorts throughout the day. This is possible due to our unique classroom facilities, each with their own bathrooms, sinks, exterior doors, and outdoor spaces.
- Extended Day will be allowed “Special Classes” either in mixed groups or in an entire Extended Day Group. All elementary (Lower Elementary 1, Lower Elementary 2, and Upper Elementary) will be allowed to have recess together.
- All primary classrooms will have recess together.
- It is necessary for some staff members to lend support across cohorts. When transitioning to a new cohort, they are required to wash their hands and abide by all safety precautions.
- Students enrolled in the Before and After Care programs will be integrated. Children in these programs will be outdoors as much as possible.



## Appendix

Maine Department of Education Pre-Screening Tool (accessed 7/21/2022)

[https://www.maine.gov/doe/sites/maine.gov.doe/files/inline-files/Pre-Screening%20Tool\\_11.pdf](https://www.maine.gov/doe/sites/maine.gov.doe/files/inline-files/Pre-Screening%20Tool_11.pdf)

# Pre-Screening Tool for School Attendance

Within the past 24 hours have you had a fever\* or taken fever reducing medicine?

YES =



Do you feel sick, had Vomiting/diarrhea, fever\*, sore throat, new cough, or felt unwell?

YES =



Have you been told to stay home and isolate/quarantine due to COVID-19 exposure?

YES =



### Most Common Symptoms of COVID-19:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever \*
- Chills
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

### Less Common Symptoms:

- Muscle pain
- Nausea or Vomiting
- Stomach pain
- Diarrhea
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Rash
- Swelling or redness of hands/feet
- Red eyes/eye drainage
- Congestion/ runny nose

*\*Fever is 100.4°F/ 38°C regardless of measurement location (oral, temporal).*

Stay home with any **YES** response to the questions above.

**Symptoms of illness can have many causes. Please keep your student home and contact your school nurse or primary care provider if your student is unwell. Students who present with symptoms while in school will be dismissed to home at the discretion of the nurse.**

*\*A fever is 100.4F/38C or greater.*



Updated 10.19.2021

## **References and additional useful resources:**

CDC COVID-19 Symptom List:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

CDC COVID-19 Guidance for Schools & Childcare Programs:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>

CDC COVID-19 “When You Can be Around Others After You Had or Likely Had COVID-19”

[https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/end-home-isolation.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fprevent-getting-sick%2Fwhen-its-safe.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/end-home-isolation.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fprevent-getting-sick%2Fwhen-its-safe.html)

Maine COVID-19 Homepage: referenced quarantine and isolation guidelines (7/21/2022)

<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/airborne/coronavirus/index.shtml>

State of Maine Frequently Asked Questions (referenced 7/21/2022)

<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/airborne/documents/frequently-asked-questions.pdf>

American Academy of Pediatrics

<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/>

Maine Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics Assessment for COVID-19 in Children with Symptoms and No Known Exposure (referenced 1/20/2022)1/14/2021

<https://www.maineaap.org/assets/resources/Eval-for-Sick-Child-in-Schools-with-PCR-Antigen-Testing-Update-1.14.2022.pdf>

Maine CDC Travel Information:

<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/airborne/coronavirus/travel.shtml>

## **Acknowledgement**

### **ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT OF KMS COVID-19 HANDBOOK**

On behalf of our family, I acknowledge that we have received and read the **KMS COVID-19 Handbook**. We agree to comply with the policies and rules contained therein and any updates forthcoming. We understand that if we do not comply with all policies and rules contained in the handbook, my family's access to KMS resources may be revoked up to and including disenrollment of my child(ren).

I understand that the KMS COVID-19 Handbook is effective August 30, 2022 and works in tandem with the 2022-2023 KMS Parent Handbook. I understand that this handbook represents only current policies and procedures and that KMS reserves the right to update or revise them as deemed necessary to meet its needs and to promote the safety and quality of its programming. It is my responsibility to keep up to date with changes to these policies and to comply with them in order to support my school community and its mission of fostering respect for self, others, and the environment.

Child(ren)'s Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This acknowledgement will be retained in the student's file and must be returned to KMS prior to the start of school. This handbook and KMS policies are expected to be dynamic in response to the evolution of the pandemic and guidelines. Families are not required to sign a new acknowledgment form with each update but they must comply with the original form's requirements for staying informed and practicing the most updated procedures.