

The year 2020 has been a year like no other and we sincerely appreciate your support, patience, and flexibility as we navigate these unknown waters. After considerable planning and deliberation, we have developed the following guidelines and procedures to assist in the long-awaited return to VdM. As new information regarding COVID-19 becomes available on federal, state, and local levels, these regulations may be modified, and we will keep you up to date. As the year progresses, it is our sincere wish that things get back to normal as soon as possible and that we can look back on this time as challenging, yes, but also as a time where we all rallied together and made the best of stressful situation.

### ***General Preparedness and Planning***

Villa di Maria will collaborate, share information, and review plans with local health officials to help protect the whole school community. School plans are designed to complement other community mitigation strategies to protect high-risk populations and the healthcare system and minimize disruption to class work and learning. This document was compiled using the COVID-19 guidelines and recommendations for schools and childcare programs published by the CDC. The team at VdM is working diligently to maintain the safety of the children, staff, and families through measures such as:

#### ***Face Coverings***

- Face coverings are mandatory at all times for staff and students when indoors and not physically distant\*
- Frequent mask breaks will take place throughout the day

\*Face coverings will not be worn by the adults or the children in the YCC community

#### ***Health and Hygiene***

- Daily symptom and temperature checks for all staff and students before entering school
- Closely monitoring and addressing symptoms, illness and exposure
- Increased health hygiene routines by staff and students, including frequent hand washing and hand sanitizing for students and staff
- Increased cleaning, disinfecting and sanitizing of all environments, including the daily use of an FDA-approved electrostatic sprayer
- Separate bathrooms designated for each stable group
- Improved ventilation and air circulation throughout all indoor spaces, including open doors / windows and fans to increase air flow whenever possible
- Increased outdoor workspaces and outdoor work time for all classrooms

#### ***Classroom Changes***

- Reduced class sizes for all classrooms
- Stable group model for classrooms throughout the entire school day including no cross-classroom work, shared common spaces, shared recess or shared lunch across classrooms
- Added outdoor and indoor spaces to increase the square footage of each stable-group environment.
- Snack and lunch will take place outside, weather-permitting
- Arrival and dismissal directly to/from individual classrooms

- Reduction of adults entering the buildings and classrooms
- Required physical distancing when possible, including large spaces between work areas to allow for physical distancing

### ***Changes to the Elementary Program***

This fall we will offer three versions of our Elementary program.

(1) In-Person Learning. Children on campus Monday through Thursday each week.

(2) Hybrid Learning. Children on campus on Mondays and Wednesdays and participating in Distance Learning on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

(3) Distance Learning (DL). Children participate in DL Monday through Thursday each week.

All three versions have the following in common:

- Fridays will be reserved for independent work for all children and planning and preparation time for guides.
- Children will have interactions/lessons/conferences (in-person and/or virtual) with their classroom guides.
- Children will have clear instructions and a plan for work to do on Fridays; children will be held accountable to that work.
- Families will commit to one of the three options for the entire semester to ensure continuity of education.

For version (1), we will offer a Friday on-campus care option for families who require care for their children.

For versions (1) and (2), we will support individual quarantined students and/or classrooms if/when needed.

For versions (2) and (3):

- Guides will work with parents to define the level of partnership required from parents to maximize the benefits of DL for the children.
- Guides will outline specific roles and responsibilities for the children.
- Children must have access to an internet-connected device and printer access.

Children will not be permitted to check out physical classroom materials however printable Montessori materials will be available online.

### ***Quarantine Scenarios***

#### **When Someone is Sick**

- Anyone who is not feeling well or who has been directly exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 should stay home for 14 days after your last contact with a person who has COVID-19.
- If someone is sick at school, they will be isolated until they can leave.
- Families and staff will be advised to contact a healthcare provider if exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms (as defined by the CDC) or if answering YES to any COVID-19 screening questions.

#### **When a Family Member is Sick**

If a student is excluded from school due to COVID-19 symptoms, we will discuss with parents/guardians about any siblings living in the same household. If they exhibit symptoms, they will also be excluded from school. If they do not exhibit symptoms, they might still be excluded from school and asked to self-quarantine.

## **In Event of an Infection**

VdM will contact the St. Louis County Department of Health and follow their guidance regarding contact tracing, classroom or school closure, sanitizing protocols, and notification of community

The CDC currently defines COVID-19 [contact](#) as being face-to-face for fifteen minutes, within six feet. Local health officials have recently determined, however, that students and/or teachers will not be considered as "exposed" during contact tracing if they were wearing face coverings. If students and staff are wearing masks, therefore, they might not need to be quarantined, even if they were around others who have tested positive.

## **Classroom and/or School Closure Guidelines**

The St. Louis County Health Department suggests that if over 5% of the student body in a building or district test positive any day, 4% test positive over 2 days in a row or 3% test positive for 3 days in a row, then that building or district closes for 10 days (percentages may change when better scientific data becomes available). If we are forced to close school for an extended period of time, we will consult with the Villa di Maria Board of Trustees regarding any potential changes to tuition.

## **Community Standards**

Villa di Maria's partnership with you, our families, has never been more critical as we navigate a global pandemic. It is important for us to realize that, now more than ever, everything we do might have an impact on the entire school community. Mitigating the risk of the spread of the virus and maintaining a safe environment on campus so we can remain together requires each one of us to do our part *off campus*—when we're not at school.

We implore each of you to follow the health and safety guidelines as laid out by health professionals worldwide to maximize the chances that all children can remain in school, and that VdM can stay in session on campus. When you send your child to school you agree to:

- Continue to talk to your children about COVID-19 in an age-appropriate way. AMI has shared a [helpful guide](#) from the National Association of School Psychologists and National Association of School Nurses.
- Restrict your family's exposure to large crowds.
- Practice physical distancing and wear a mask in public.
- Teach your children the importance of thorough and frequent hand washing.
- Take your children to the doctor; it is vitally important for the health of your child and others that you keep up with vaccines and that you immunize against the flu in the fall.
- Do not bring children to campus if they have been exposed to anyone who has COVID-19 or is exhibiting symptoms.
- Support your child's mental health: Children pick up on our anxiety and may be feeling disconnected from their school community.
- Take the school's self-screening protocol seriously. We rely on our parents to watch for fever or symptoms in themselves and in all people in their households.
- Minimize socializing outside your child's stable group.
- Be patient at arrivals when we are checking temperatures and allowing for entry at a safe distance between students.
- Follow [CDC recommendations](#) regarding travel.
- Prepare for contact tracing: If your child contracts COVID-19, it will be important to quickly determine whom they have come in contact with for more than 15 minutes at a time. Create lists of children and adults that your children

are routinely with, including phone numbers for those contacts. The ability to quickly provide this list will greatly help the health department in their effort to determine who may have been exposed, and to notify those people in a timely manner.

- Report any information to VdM that will assist us in maintaining a safe environment.
- Be flexible—our plans might change as the situation with the virus changes.
- Regularly look for updates to our plans. Updates will be communicated via email.