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School Attendance Policy regarding Covid19 and Fall 2020 Plan for Opening our School

Dear Parents & Staff,

September 8, 2020

Over the past few months, our school has been following the County and State Guidelines for School Opening and Social Distancing Learning. At this point, under Phase II of COVID19, in-person admission in the classroom is allowed for all families. We are proud and happy to open registration for the 2020-21 School Year. Here is our new school policy:

School Policy Update

Following the new directions of Maryland Health Department and MSDE and MSDE OCC (dated April, May and June 2020) we have drafted a new policy to meet the requirement and keep us safe while we are educating our children.

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Our Goal

The goal is to share the critical requirements while we are working with children and staff in the school. Parents, administrators and staff know and understand that we cannot eliminate the risk of Covid19, but we can mitigate the risk and open our school for children while taking all the necessary precautions.

Facility Preparation and Disinfection

We have secured disinfectant wipes, sanitizers, and cleaning supplies. We have also ordered personal protective face screens and surgical masks for children and all staff. We have increased water capacity to the school and formed washing stations inside and outdoors.

Inside the classrooms, we have physically distanced the set-up of the furniture where necessary – distancing tables and having each child sit independently.



We have built for each class its own **Outdoors Classroom**, fully equipped with tables, benches, & outdoor activities – to ensure that most of the class can be conducted outdoors (weather permitting). Our activities extend outdoors. Children learn art, botany, Gardening, math and more – all outdoors.



Our administrative team has been working diligently throughout the full summer to create policies and protocols for morning arrivals and symptom checks that will meet the recommendations of our medical task force. Moreover, we have been interviewing and hiring the additional staff necessary to meet our need for smaller cohorts.

We have staggered our school arrival to allow each parent to check the temperature of the child each morning at Carpool. The parents report to the staff. Only after the parent reports the temperature, can the staff help the child out of the car. The child gets inside the class and immediately washes his or her hands.

For the first month of school, we will not offer before and after care. Hours will be limited to 8:30 to 3 pm – to allow for disinfection of the classroom. We will reconsider this decision at the end of the first month.

Arriving at School

When arriving at school please put a mask and gloves on. We cannot handle your child without it, and we ask that you do the same.

Check your child's temperature at home AND when you arrive at school. Bring your own thermometer to school, check the temperature in the car, and show the thermometer to the staff – before they open your car's door.

Carpool Line, Arrival and Dismissal

We are staggering the arrival and pick up so that we have enough space on the carpool line.

Carpool line is in 2 lanes. Please form 2 lines driving into school. We ask that if you **want to get out** of your car, **park your car** at the allocated 4 spots on the side.

Otherwise, we will be going to your car to help your child out. In that case, you **DO NOT** get out of the car. If your child is over 5, they can unbuckle themselves and come out. We will help the child.

See map attached how to get on the carpool line.

If you have someone else driving your children, please share this map with them.

We will have a police officer helping us to run the carpool line.

Checking Temperature

You will be checking the temperature twice in the morning:

- Each morning prior to arrival, parents are required to check the temperature of their child and your family members at home.
- In addition, parents need to check the temperature **at carpool** line near the teacher – and report the temp daily to the staff. Please make sure to show us the thermometer.
- Under 99.7 Fahrenheit or 37.4 Celsius is admitted.
- Otherwise, we will see you another day after 48 hours from the last symptom at home **with a note** from your pediatrician clearing your child's re-admittance.

Parents need to bring your own thermometer to school for your child.

Why your own thermometer? The Maryland State Department of Education OCC issued the following guidelines on April 9, 2020:

- **The child's parent/guardian should use a personal thermometer brought from home; this thermometer should only be used for that child/family and should not be handled by the child care program staff**
- **After taking the temperature, the child's parent/guardian should show the temperature result to the child care program staff for recording**

Please help us keep the guidelines so that we can continue to provide you with the best service we can. Guidelines can be found at MSDE OCC website under Covid19.

We apologize for any inconvenience during the morning, and I hope to see everyone daily on the carpool line.

[Watch for Symptoms](#)

People with Covid19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure** to the virus. People with these symptoms may have Covid19:

- 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

This list does not include all possible symptoms. CDC will continue to update this list as we learn more about Covid19. MSDE will keep parents and guardians updated.

If you, your child **or anyone** in the family shows symptoms – please keep your child at home. We will see you another day after 48 hours from the **last symptom** at home with **a note from your pediatrician** clearing your child's re-admittance. **Any** symptoms will be sent home for 48 hours and need to be cleared by a pediatrician note to the school.

Please remember to bring your own Thermometer at carpool line. And that a child who shows symptoms needs a clearance from their pediatrician (the pediatrician can call/email our office).

Please communicate the same information to your designated driver who brings the children in the morning.

Why are we asking that you bring your own thermometer?

We are truly doing our best to accommodate everyone's needs. During the morning arrival, please make sure to follow the Maryland State Regulations and Guidelines.

The guidelines issued on April 9, 2020 state the following:

The child's parent/guardian should use a personal thermometer brought from home; this thermometer should only be used for that child/family and should not be handled by the child care program staff

After taking the temperature, the child's parent/guardian should show the temperature result to the child care program staff for recording

If you do not have your thermometer with you - we will ask that you get one (we are unable to give you ours). In some cases, we had to send parents home. In other cases, parents found a thermometer at CVS, from a friend and so forth.

Why are we asking for a note or a call of clearance from the pediatrician?

Children may experience symptoms and may not experience them at all. Children are mostly asymptomatic. Our team can only screen for symptoms. We are not doctors and we cannot tell if the symptoms require a Covid19 test or not. We always lean on the safe side. If your child showed the symptoms and/or you kept him or her at home, please take the extra mile, call the doctor and get a clearance for him or her to attend.

Last week, the Governor's office issued guidelines for schools. One of the items we looked at are the symptoms for Covid19 that parents need to look at before arriving to school.

When a person has:

Any 1 of the following: cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, new loss of taste or smell OR

Any 2 of the following: fever of 100.4 or higher (measured or subjective), chills or shaking chills, muscle aches, sore throat, headache, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, and congestion runny nose -

they need to be excluded from school to identify whether they should be tested.

Please remember that children can be asymptomatic. Therefore, if your child behaves differently, please take a note of it and let us know.

We will ask you to check with your pediatrician, and get a confirmation that they can come back to school.

Thank you so much for working together with us to make this happen. Please understand, we are here to keep those rules for everyone's safety and health. Our staff know that we are strictly keeping the rules. That is why they volunteered to work during Covid19 with the Essential Personnel. They trust you and us to keep those guidelines. We feel that we work together as a community to keep everyone as safe as we can.

Masks

Children under 2 are not required to wear masks. Children 3 and older should bring masks with them. Children over 4 are required to wear them inside the classroom. They do not need to wear them at the outdoor activities. In addition, we provide children with face screens. This means that a mask will be required for each student from when they arrive on campus until they get to their desk in their classroom. Inside the class, we ask that they put screens on. Since desks will be situated at least 6 feet away from others, masks will not be required when they are seated at their desk – and nor required for children under 4. If a student is walking to/from the restroom or between classrooms, he/she will be required to wear a mask. These guidelines follow the instruction of MSDE.

According to medical guidelines, masks must fit properly. Therefore, we ask that you size your child(ren) for a properly fitting mask and order/secure masks over the summer in preparation for a return to school. Since masks should be washed, we encourage you to order multiple masks for each of your children.

Social distancing:

We have worked out various social distancing and preventive protocols at the school. Indoors, children are assigned to their own desks; they are required to wash their hands as soon as they are dropped off, and several times throughout the morning session and afternoon session. Washing hands is taught and practiced daily.

Children learn to keep distance apart (age appropriate) and learn about clean hands and face. Children have their own designated workspace. Social distancing for young children is required in a format as follows: distance sitting area, distance napping area, distance and disinfect everything the child touches. We are disinfecting the workplace frequently and make sure the kids wash their hands very often. We keep small groups of people, permitted by the state, as a cohort of people including teachers. Each classroom has a separate entrance, independent private bath, and an independent private kitchen. Parents and guest are not allowed to access this room.

However, please note that we have no reasonable expectation or ability to enforce 6-foot social distancing with our very young children.



The Outdoor Classroom. An outdoor classroom is dedicated to each class. Part of our curricula is to spend much more of the learning time in the outdoor class area.

Creating Cohorts. The children of one class do not mix with other classes outdoors or indoors, and each class is its own cohort, with the same staff. Each classroom has its own entry and exit door. Children are not using the main door of the building. Only their class door.

No Adults in the building other than staff. No visitors or parents or any other adults are allowed in the school. Parents and guests are not allowed to enter the class or the building. We will designate time and hours for parents to come in (it might be during the day or after hours), into a certain areas. We will be disinfecting the area, to prevent cross-contamination. If your child is going through Transition, we ask that you schedule a time to be in the school for an hour. Please email Gabi at info@alefbetmontessori.org.

Medical Accommodations

We understand that some students may require medical accommodations. If your student requires medical accommodation in the classroom or even a virtual learning option, please communicate directly with us to info@alefbetmontessori.org – attention: Gabi.

Lunch and Food

We ask that you **do not send** food with your child. We will ask parents on a rotation to shop for the grocery list, that we will provide you in advance. That parent is shopping for the full classroom. Rotation is once per child each few weeks. The food coming from the grocery list is disinfected and sent to the classroom – this will cover both Snack and Lunch. We will be cooking fresh rice, lentils, pasta, grilled vegetables in addition to the bread, yogurt and granola, cheese and hummus, fresh vegetables and fresh fruit daily. Only pareve and dairy food will be in the classrooms. The rotation list will be prepared by our Admin team. Please ask Gabi for any information you need to know.

What to Bring:

Please WRITE the NAME of your child on each item

- Bathing Suit (for Water sprinklers - no water pools!) it will remain in school.
- hat
- sunscreen and bug spray (The Medication Authorization Form must be filled out and signed in order for us to apply sunscreen or bug spray to your child.)
- water bottle
- towel - with your child's name
- change of clothes
- water shoes, rainboots and indoor shoes
- We ask that you **do not send food** - due to COVID19. You will be required to bring lunch & snack groceries. The list will be given to you in advance.
- We ask that you **do not send a backpack** from home. We will provide your child with a backpack if needed. It will remain at school.
- We ask that you **do not send toys**, dolls and other fun props from home. Thank you for understanding.

Remember to write your child's name or initials on all clothing, water bottles, towels, hats, etc. All children will be eating lunch at school, even those staying for just half a day.

Expectations and Waivers

Parents and staff are asked to comply with the following directions and help each other to make our environment a safe place to work and learn. Parents and staff understand that our school will take every reasonable precaution and recommended instructions (by the CDC and required by the State authorities) to prevent the contraction of Covid19 to children, parents, guardians, staff and visitors while on school property.

Parents, staff and visitors release, waive, and absolve our school, employees and board from all liability resulting from Covid19. We follow religiously the directions of the CDC and the Health Department. Parents of our school are committed to complying with the strict requirements of the Health Department.

Please understand that the path we are taking going forward will involve some risk of Covid19 infection. Our goal is to balance minimizing this risk with re-opening our school to allow children and parents to benefit.

Communication with the teacher is via:

- General line Office - info@alefbetmontessori.org. 3 staff members are checking this email daily. or directly:
- Toddlers with Morah Carla – toddlers@alefbetmontessori.org
- Rimon with Morah Julia - rimon@alefbetmontessori.org

- Dvash with Morah Farhana - dvash@alefbetmontessori.org
- Duvdevan Elementary Hub - with Morah Racheli - duvdevan@alefbetmontessori.org

The teacher will be able to read your email during break time and respond. You can ask the teacher to call you, email you or anything you need.

Office Staff will be available to answer your questions anytime. The office is open 8:30 to 3:30 pm for calls.

Before and After Care

This is to reiterate that our hours are not including Before and After Care. We are not sure when we can offer Before and Aftercare because of regulations that limit our flexibility in moving staff from one room to another and the requirements to disinfect each class daily.

Ongoing Evaluation of the Situation and Our Policy

Please remember that we will need to continue to evaluate, alter and refine our procedures as the science and rules evolve. Please expect change and always communicate with the school if something is unclear or seems uncomfortable. School policies must be flexible and nimble in responding to new information, and as administrators, we are willing to refine approaches when specific policies are not working. Our policy is subject to changes throughout the year.

In addition to the State guidelines, we are looking for guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatricians. <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/>

Short Recap:

We ask all families to follow the guidelines below when arriving at school:

1. When arriving at school please put a mask and gloves on. We cannot handle your child without it, and we ask that you do the same.
2. Check your child's temperature at home AND when you arrive at school. You need to have your own thermometer in the car. Show the thermometer to the staff – before they open your car door.
3. We are staggering the arrival and pick up so that we have enough space on the carpool line.
4. Carpool line is in 2 lanes. Please form 2 lines driving into school.
5. If your child is over 5, they can unbuckle themselves and come out. Otherwise, we will help the child.
6. You must drive all the way to the front of the carpool line and show your thermometer to a staff member before we can take your child out of the car.
7. If you stopped halfway on the carpool line because another car was ahead - once that car moves, please move forward.
8. Staff DO NOT handle the child before you took the temperature and reported it to a staff member and they wrote it down.

9. Carpool line goes from 8:25 to 9:10 am.
10. Late Arrival – after 9:10 am. If you arrive after 9:10, please ring the main door. We will handle your child from the office. Please do not go directly to your child's class.
11. No adults are allowed in the building or classroom (except authorized staff). Do not go into the classroom unless you are here for a Transition for Toddler or child age 3. Transition parents will spend one hour with your child and need a mask and gloves. Usually, you will stay in the Outdoors Classroom. Please schedule this visit with Gabi, info@alefbetmontessori.org.
12. Do not cross the upper gate to Carla's class (on the left side of the building)
13. Do not go down the driveway to Farhana's class
14. Please give snack groceries directly to the staff of your classroom.
15. Please leave lunch groceries by the main red door and make sure to tell a staff member that you left them there.
16. If you are **on the carpool line you CANNOT get out of the car!** You cannot step out to bring groceries, to say goodbye, or to give anything to the staff.
17. **Please park** (in the designated area) if you would like **to get out of your car** for any reason. If you realize that you need to get out of your car once you are already in the carpool line please exit the carpool line and return in a parking spot before stepping out of the car. Please do not reverse your car into the parking spot.
18. If you choose to park your car and get out of your car, please walk to the crossed lines and line up in front of the Rimon class (right door on the first floor). You will need to be **6 feet away from any other parents or staff.**
19. If you choose to stay on the carpool line, we will help your child out of the car, as soon as you took his/her temperature.

Thank you for your cooperation on the carpool line. We truly appreciate your understanding.

** If your child is new to our school, and is going through Transition, you are welcome to join him/ her on the first day for one hour. Please wear a face mask and gloves when coming in with your child. We will allow one parent at a time – and will be staggering arrival of new children.

Frequent Q&A

Do kids over 2 years of age wear masks all day? The State does not require children under 2 to wear a mask for safety reasons. Children between the ages of 3 to 8 – is optional – we do not require that inside the class for age 2 and 3, only for outdoor if needed. Children over 9 need to wear a mask.

How do you keep preschoolers and younger physically distant from each other? Social distancing for young children is required in a format as follows: distance sitting area, distance napping area, distance and disinfect everything the child touches. We are disinfecting the workplace frequently

and make sure the kids wash their hands very often. We keep a small group, permitted by the state, as a cohort of people including teachers. Each classroom has a separate entrance, independent private bath, and an independent private kitchen. Parents and guest are not allowed to access this room.

What kind of PPE does the staff wear and how often do they replace it? The teacher is wearing a face mask and an apron and replace them daily. She also wears gloves during arrival and dismissal time.

How and how often are the bathrooms and classroom disinfected? We disinfect each classroom and bathroom on a daily basis. We do not allow food from outside or home at the school. Parents will receive a grocery list, bring it to school. We disinfect and make the food inside the classroom kitchen.

What kind of activities are provided to promote socialization among children while they remain physically distant? We have staff members working on the Learning from Home, Online Program for the School. They do dance, yoga, music, songs, Hebrew lessons and more. Everything that is taught in the Online Program is part of our EPCC. Art projects and learning material are the same.

What is the daily schedule for my child? The program runs from 8:30 am - 2:30 pm or 8:45 am - 2:45 pm (depending on the class) as a full-fledged Montessori education. We give lessons, we have circle time, discussion, music, art, reading, math, science, gardening and botanic curricula and more.

How much outdoor time do the older children have during the day? We created the Outdoor Classroom per each class. The area is designated to work and learn outdoors. This includes a full vegetable garden, benches and tables, play area and more. We used to spend half an hour in the morning and half an hour in the afternoon – that is now increased.

How much screen time or computer time do the children get each day? We do not provide any screen time at the school. During the original EPCC program, we were watching our Zoom class morning session from 10 – 10:30 online.

My child is a picky eater. How can I tell if he eats at school? As a policy we have variety of healthy foods available for the child to choose from. The teacher will ask him to taste. It is a rule in the class that you need to taste first before you say no. Tasting each day, helps the child develop flavors for healthy food. Our experience is that after a full month in the class with his classmates, your child will probably change some eating habits and start liking healthy foods. We serve freshly hot food such as: rice, lentils, grilled vegetables, lentils soup with potatoes, pasta (plain and in sauce), pasta with cheese, cuscus with vegetables, Israeli cuscus. In addition we offer fresh vegetables and fruits with sandwiches.

Will you do an online session for children who cannot or will not attend class? We are considering an online session for the morning half-hour, and 15 min in small groups once a day with 2 other children and a teacher. This is a remote learning program that is provided by our school teachers. To learn more, please contact Gabi. info@alefbetmontessori.org.

You mentioned there are children currently enrolled; how old are they, and how many staff work with them (i.e. what is the ratio)? We currently have waiting lists in some of our Summer Program classes. The ages are 18 months to age 9 years old. We are now able to offer 9 weeks of classes as follows:

1. Ages 18 months to 3 with Morah Carla
2. Ages 3 and 4 with Morah Julia
3. Ages 5 and 6 with Morah Farhana
4. Elementary Hub ages 7 to 9 with Morah Racheli

Currently, at Phase II there is a maximum of 15 in a class INCLUDING staff. This might change as we are awaiting government instruction. It will relax at Phase III or be more restrictive at Phase I.

Spaces are limited. Children are designated for their class and will not move between classes.

How often are staff screened for fevers or other symptoms of COVID19? Twice a day

How do the families verify their temperatures before dropping kids off? The parents are required to bring a thermometer, check the temperature and report to the teacher each morning before entering the class. Daily.

What happens if a child or adult is positive to Covid19? In such a case we follow direct instructions from the Maryland State Health Department for closure. The Health Department will issue us guidelines on what to do and how to act. We understand that it is requiring a quarantine time of 2 weeks for the cohort involved with the issue. However, we will ask for further directions if the situation arises.

Lastly, would any of our current parents be willing to volunteer as an ambassador that new parents can reach out to with questions? New parents - We are happy to put you in touch with families who have been at the Essential Personnel Child Care (EPCC) since April or May and had a chance to be with us throughout this time.