



Dear Parents,

I hope this email finds you healthy and well. We have all been experiencing a new way of life with the Coronavirus and this summer has been like no other for many of us. As some parts of our lives make their way to a new normal I know many of you have questions about the start of the upcoming school year. Almost daily I am receiving new/updated guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL). This email is our initial plan to outline what the school year could and most likely look like. St. Matthew's will continue to amend and modify our plan accordingly, with the safety of your child and our staff first and foremost in our minds.

School is to begin on Monday, September 14<sup>th</sup>. Your first tuition payment as well as other forms were due back on June 24<sup>th</sup>. If you have not yet sent your tuition please do so as it is my only way of knowing you will attend school. If you have changed your mind and will not return in the fall please let me know as soon as possible. Once I have more certainty in class sizes I will begin to work out the logistics and assign times for our Open Houses.

As we approach the start of the school year I have outlined some changes and procedures that will be put into place.

### **Special Changes and Procedures for 2020-2021**

#### **Daily Health Checks**

Following the CDC guidance, parents are asked to check their children for symptoms of any sickness and to take the child's temperature before coming to school each day.

As always per our sick policy if your child is feeling ill, has had a stomach or intestinal issue within the last 24 hours, bad cough, green runny nose, chicken pox, pink eye, fever, etc. please keep them home. For non-COVID-19 sicknesses, children may return 24 hours after gastrointestinal issues resolve, cough or cold significantly lessen, or child has been fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication.

COVID-19 symptoms may include 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 or diarrhea. If a child is diagnosed with COVID-19, they will only be readmitted following current CDC guidelines.

As your child arrives each day, a staff member will take the child's temperature with a contact free thermometer to be sure there is no fever before parents leave, and before the child enters the building.

These same precautions will be taken with our staff.

## **Arrival and Departure Procedures**

-Children will be dropped off and picked up outside, and parents are asked not to enter the building to lessen exposure of our children and staff to COVID-19:

-Both upper and lower parking lots will be utilized to expedite drop off and pick up.

-Ideally, the same parent or designated person should drop off and pick up the child every day. If Possible, individuals with underlying medical conditions should not pick up children as they are more at risk.

**Arrival:** Parents will pull car to designated space; turn engine off, and remove child from car. Temperatures of children will be taken using contact free thermometers, if a temperature is above 100.4 degrees the child will not be allowed to attend school. We ask that you be punctual.

*\*Parents will receive the details of times and specific parking lot to be used at a later date\**

**Departure:** Parents will return at dismissal with their last name prominently displayed in the front window of the car. A staff member will bring your child to your car and parents will strap the child safely into their car seat and drive away, making room for the next parent in line.

## **Masks:**

-We realize that masks play an important role in stopping the spread of COVID-19.

-Staff will wear masks.

-Children will be strongly encouraged to wear masks. The CDC and the PA Department of Health are recommending that children 2 and over wear masks. Please keep in mind that this is the recommendation today and it could change by September 14<sup>th</sup>

-I suggest to begin practicing wearing a masks at home in short intervals and increasing the intervals over time. Perhaps putting a mask on a doll or stuffed animal at first could help ease your child into wearing the mask. I have attached social stories I have found as well as an activity guide for parents.

## **Social Distancing**

The CDC realizes that young children will play closer than 6' apart and has issued guidelines on keeping the children together in smaller groups ("pods") that will not interact with other groups or enter other classrooms, thereby keeping the potential exposure to a minimum. Due to our typical class sizes we can align our traditional programs without mixing with other classes. Aside from our traditional programming the staff and I have come up with several different and creative ways to continue to offer library, gym, music, lunch bunch and enrichment classes.

## **Personal Hygiene:**

The children and staff will be encouraged to wash hands frequently throughout the day in addition to before snack, lunch and after bathroom. Hand sanitizer will also be used with the children, as needed.

### Cleaning:

We have always had a high level of cleanliness in the Nursery School. This year, we will enhance our usual routines:

- Professionally clean and disinfect the entire school each day. Disinfecting sprayers will be used to disinfect classrooms after school with CDC-approved disinfectant. (We have contracted with our cleaning service for an additional 2 hours per day)
- Each classroom will have all touch points, toys, furniture and equipment disinfected at the end of the day and as needed throughout the day.
- All floors and bathrooms scrubbed.
- Each classroom will also be cleaned at lunchtime if that room will be hosting an afternoon class.
- Tables will continue as always to be cleaned multiple times through the class time.

**Art/Craft Supplies:** There will be separate arts/crafts supplies for each child (crayons, scissors, glue, pencils, play-doh, kept in their own individual labeled art box.

### Visitors

We will not be inviting parents and visitors into the school at least in the fall as recommended by OCDEL. Therapist's admittance will be evaluated on a case by case basis, Montgomery County IU staff who visit multiple schools will not be allowed in the building. We are still waiting to hear the IU's plan regarding this.

### Special Events and Snacks

- Parents will not come into school for special activities, at least not during the fall.
- St. Matthew's will provide all snacks for the children this year; full-day children will continue to bring in their own lunches.
- No snacks will be sent in from home until further notice. We will be happy to celebrate your child's birthday with our traditional birthday crown etc.
- We will celebrate all of our traditional holidays, just with our own class.

**Personal Belongings** Children may bring their school bags, but may not bring toys to play with or share with others in their class.

**Illness and Return Procedures:** A child may not come to school if they are ill, as described in Daily Health Checks above. If a child becomes ill while at school, the parents will be called and asked to take the child home.

**Non-COVID-19 illnesses:** Children may return to school 24 hours after the sickness has resolved (vomiting, diarrhea, fever), or fever has been gone after 24 hours with no fever reducing medicine, after 24 hours on an antibiotic.

**Confirmed positive COVID-19 cases and exposure:**

- If the child or staff is in school when the temperature or symptoms present, the child will be isolated to a different room (with supervision), parents called, the staff would be sent home.
- The school will be closed for 48 hours following a confirmed positive case of COVID-19, to be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.
- Parents will be informed if there is a positive case of COVID-19 in the school
- Child or staff may only return after following the current CDC recommended quarantine strategies.
- If a child is showing COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath) OR if you've been in close contact with a person or child testing positive for COVID- 19, we ask you to keep your child home. They must be isolated for a minimum of 7 days after symptom onset, and 72 hours after their fever resolves without fever-reducing medicines. (For example, if symptoms and fever resolve on day 7, the person can return on day 10.) For most, this will be 14 days after the household contact with COVID-19. We ask that all parents and staff let us know of any potential exposure immediately. A potential exposure means being a household contact or having close contact within 6 feet of an individual with confirmed or suspected COVID- 19 for at least 10 minutes. The timeframe for having contact with an individual includes the period of 48 hours before the individual became symptomatic.

Thank you for your understanding and patience as we implement these new procedures. Our goal is to minimize disruption while at the same time keeping you, your family and our staff healthy and well. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to email me at [nurseryschool@verizon.net](mailto:nurseryschool@verizon.net).

Sincerely,

Jackie Anderson

Director, St. Matthew's Nursery School  
919 Tennis Avenue, Maple Glen, PA 19002  
215-646-4466  
[nurseryschool@verizon.net](mailto:nurseryschool@verizon.net)