



# **PARENT HANDBOOK**

## **2020-2021**

THE MADISON AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH DAY SCHOOL  
PARENT HANDBOOK 2020-2021

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September 2020

Dear Parents,

Whether you are new to the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church Day School or a returning family, we are thrilled to welcome you to our 71st year of educational partnership with parents and children. Now and during the coming year we hope you will refer to this handbook and find it useful.

The handbook is written as a counterpart to the ongoing dialogue between home and school. It is intended to assist your understanding of how the school operates and to supply basic information about daily life here. In addition, you should always feel free to seek clarification or guidance from your child's teachers, the administrative team, and from us.

We welcome your involvement in the life of school and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

*Laura and Adrienne*

Laura Graham, Director  
Adrienne Wing, Associate Director and  
Director of Exmissions

## **MADISON AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH DAY SCHOOL**

921 Madison Avenue NY, NY 10021

212-288-9638

mapds@mapc.com

**Laura Graham, Director**

mapds@mapc.com

**Adrienne Wing, Associate Director and Director of Exmissions**

amw@mapc.com

**Becky Simon, Education Coordinator and Admissions Coordinator**

ras@mapc.com

**Barbara Mozaam, Executive Assistant**

mapds@mapc.com

<http://mapcds.org/>

[Facebook](#)

@921MadisonAve

[Instagram](#)

m.a.p.c.d.s

[Twitter](#)

@mapcds

## DAY SCHOOL MISSION AND HISTORY

### MISSION

The Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church Day School is an integral part of the ministry of the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church. The Day School provides developmentally appropriate early childhood education for children between the ages of 2 and 6 years.

The curriculum is designed to enhance each child's spiritual, intellectual, emotional, social and physical development.

In keeping with the MAPC's goal of building a community reflecting God's love, justice and mercy, The Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church Day School offers educational opportunities to families within and beyond the congregation in order to maintain an ethnically, economically and religiously diverse community. The school supports and serves Day School parents in their responsibilities and is committed to offering tuition aid for families who could not otherwise enroll. We believe education is a partnership among the school, the teachers and the parents, based on their mutual desire to support each child's journey into the world.

### HISTORY

The Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church Day School was founded in 1949 as a ministry of the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church. The mission statement of the School affirms that it is an integral part of the Church's ministry, providing early childhood education for children from families in the congregation and the community-at-large. The School's curriculum is intentionally non-religious but is designed to enhance children's spiritual as well as intellectual, emotional, social and physical development.

The School welcomes families of varied religious communities and encourages parents to share their faith traditions and other aspects of their family culture, heritage and religion with our school children. Christmas and Easter are celebrated in the Church Sanctuary. Chanukah, Martin Luther King Jr Day, Norouz, and Lunar New Year are among the holidays from many other traditions that are observed throughout the year. A prime goal of the School is to teach children to recognize and respect one another's religious and cultural commonalities and differences.

## GOVERNANCE

The School is governed by the Church's Session (eighteen elected elders and three pastors) working through The Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church Day School Committee (DSC). The DSC is comprised of two Session members who serve as Chair and Vice Chair, additional members of the Church (often alumni or current parents), representatives of the School's Parents' Committee, representatives of the DSC Budget & Finance Subcommittee, the Pastor of the Church, the Director of the School, ex-officio and the Associate Director, ex-officio. The group reviews the school's mission and policies and establishes tuition. A subcommittee which consists of a combination of DSC members (excluding current school parents) and school leadership reviews and determines tuition aid awards. Two non-Church parents serve as Chair and Vice-Chair of the Budget & Finance Subcommittee. They oversee

the budget and provide periodic reports to the parent body and the Day School Committee.

Day-to-day operations of the School rest solely with the Director, who reports to the Chair of the Day School Committee and the Pastor, as Head of Staff.

## **PARENTS' COMMITTEE**

All parents are automatically members of the Parents Committee. The leadership includes two chairpersons, parents designated to represent each class and the chairpersons of various committees such as the Spring Benefit, Holiday Party, and other special events. All parents are encouraged to attend meetings and to participate as volunteers. Monthly meetings are called by the Committee Chairs or as requested by the Director of the School.

The Committee guides fundraising efforts, assists in the admission process, and organizes social occasions for both parents and children. The Chairpersons of the Parents' Committee and the fundraising and social events are appointed by the Director. Parents who are interested in serving in a leadership role, should communicate their interest to the Director.

## **SCHOOL FINANCES**

### **OPERATING BUDGET**

The School budget, with revenues and expenses specified for the coming academic year, is developed by the Director in consultation with the DSC Budget & Finance Subcommittee, which is chaired by two parents, who report to the DSC and the parent body. After review by the DSC, the budget is submitted to Session for approval mid- winter, as part of the Church's annual operating budget. Because the Church operates on a calendar year, while the School plans its expenses on an academic year, the revenues and expenses of the School are identified and tracked separately from other Church programs, The School's financial records are included in the Church's annual audit, which is conducted by an independent accounting firm.

The School's operating budget includes a single line item for Building and Operational Overhead. That charge is based on the allocation of space used primarily by the School, hours of usage and shared staff. Included in this line are property insurance, repair and maintenance costs, legal fees, audit fees, maintenance supplies, and utilities (electric, gas and heating). In addition, based on time spent on School business, a portion of the salaries of the Pastor as Head of Staff, of relevant management staff, building receptionists and building services staff is included in the allocation of charges to the school. The methodology for the allocation of cost is developed by the Business Manager in consultation with the church treasurer and independent auditors and the School's Budget and Finance Committee. This is reviewed as part of the annual audit. The Director, with the assistance of the Business Manager and Budget & Finance Committee Co-Chairs, administers the budget of the School, and is authorized to approve expenditures within the established budgetary framework. Expenditures in excess of budget require the prior approval of the Session upon the recommendation from the Day School Committee through the Day School Committee Chair. The School is operated as a program of the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, which is the

ultimate guarantor of the School's programs and finances.

### **TUITION AID**

The Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church Day School is committed to the maintenance of a tuition aid fund with money from annual fundraising activities. Additional individual, foundation or corporate gifts are welcome at any time. This is a cumulative fund - the balance at year's end is carried forward. Monies are raised the year prior to which they are awarded; both principal and interest are used to fund tuition aid.

MAPCDS strives to assist families who are not able to afford the full cost of tuition. With the proceeds of fundraising events organized by our parent community and interest from small endowment funds, the Day School is able to provide a limited amount of Tuition Aid to new and returning families. Requests are considered through an application to School & Students Services (SSS) by the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS). Awards are need-based as assessed by SSS, considered by the MAPCDS Tuition Aid Committee and distributed according to the availability of funds. Each case is reviewed annually and amounts granted may be adjusted based on availability of funds and on the family's economic circumstances.

### **TUITION PAYMENT**

The tuition payment schedule is specified in the MAPC Day School Contract which is signed by parents. If the need for a different schedule arises, please speak to the Associate Director to make arrangements. Please refer to your contract for payment due dates. Fees may be applied for overdue payments. Refunds are not available to families who withdraw for any reason.

### **FUNDRAISING**

Tuition alone does not cover all school costs such as salaries, employee benefits, classroom materials, supplies and facility maintenance and upkeep. Fundraising is essential to bridge the gap between tuition and expenses. Fundraising events include an Annual Fund Appeal, which closes some of the gap between operating expenses and tuition income, a winter Holiday Party to support our tuition aid program and a spring Benefit for special projects, tuition aid and the Teacher Fund for professional development. Donations to existing funds and the establishment of new ones are always welcome and are essential for the development and growth of the school. All contributions are tax-deductible to the extent provided by law. Corporate matching and individual gifts are welcome at any time.

The fundraising philosophy of The Madison Avenue Presbyterian Day School is to encourage broad-based participation among the school's families and friends in a spirit of personal generosity. We hope that every family will contribute to the Annual Fund and to special fundraising events organized by the Parents Committee. Participation reflects support of the school and recognition of the community's shared spirit.

Your participation in any way - your time, your creativity and your financial support - is valued. An involved parent body, together with a committed faculty, make for the outstanding education that we value for our children. For more information or to make a donation, please see the [Giving](#) page on our website.



## CALENDAR

The official Day School calendar is posted on our website and available for printing from there as well. Parents can also subscribe electronically to the [calendar](#) through the website.

## HEALTH RECORDS AND ILLNESS

The New York City Department of Health requires all children to have a yearly physical examination. A complete record of such examination and up to date immunizations must be uploaded to the parent portal online by the specified date each school year. Children may not attend school without required immunizations and a current record on file.

We also ask parents to complete a confidential developmental information form to help us understand each child's early history. Information about allergies, unusual reactions to medication, orthopedic or ophthalmological limitations or language and general developmental delays are particularly important. Any evaluations by a medical or learning specialist should also be shared. This information is only available to our school professionals. It is never shared with anyone else without a parent's express permission.

Parents are asked to sign a release authorizing treatment in the unlikely event of a medical emergency. Please inform us if your child is currently or regularly taking any medication. If a child becomes ill while at school, that child is isolated with a staff person in attendance. We try to make him/her as comfortable and secure as possible and parents are notified immediately. It is particularly important that we know where to reach parents at any time during a school day. If your usual pattern varies on a given day, a phone number where you or a designated substitute can be reached should be left in the Day School office or attached to the daily sign in sheet. If a parent cannot be located, the designated person for your emergency contact will be called.

No medications are ever administered by members of the Day School staff and cannot be left accessible to children nor can children self administer. Please discuss with the Director any individual circumstance regarding an ongoing medical situation that may require medication during school hours. We ask everyone's cooperation in notifying the school immediately when a child has contracted a contagious disease such as conjunctivitis, strep throat, chicken pox, fifth disease or if they have active head lice or nits. Parents in the affected child's class are informed by email on the day school is notified. If your child was treated over the weekend and has returned to school, please share this information with the school. Children need to be fever free for 24 hours before coming to school. Children who have vomited or had diarrhea within 24 hours of the start of the school day should stay at home. Children who have had lice need a note from an appropriate professional indicating they are both nit and lice free before returning to school.

## **SCHOOL PROGRAM**

The program of the Day School reflects the mission of the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, the mission statement of the Day School, and the most current and widely accepted scholarship on early childhood education. The Director is responsible for developing and implementing the program, in collaboration with the Associate Director, Education Coordinator and teachers and in consultation with the Day School Committee.

The MAPC Day School is a learning environment which respects and nurtures the different gifts and learning styles each child brings to the group. The children's interests are an integral part of curriculum planning. Active, expressive, child centered learning experiences are emphasized. We support an inquiry process leading toward focused studies of topics which are particularly engaging to the children and provide the opportunity for integrated, emergent curriculum. This project approach embraces the arts as languages which enable expression of ideas, theories, understanding and questions. This model affords teachers insight into each child's needs and interests. Manipulative materials such as sand, water, clay, paint and blocks are used regularly. Explorations with concrete materials encourage children to question, think, plan, re-create and thereby to make sense of the world. Professionally qualified teachers develop programs rich in language experiences and reading and math readiness to encourage in each child a love of learning, curiosity, creativity, self-motivation, confidence and independence as a learner. Music and art specialists encourage the full exploration and development of creative expression and fluency.

### **ART**

A full-time art specialist supports the teachers with art in the classroom and also works directly with small groups of children in the Studio to encourage their fluency in this creative language. Children work in the studio on a varying schedule, according to the needs and interests of both the children and the class curriculum.

### **MUSIC AND MOVEMENT**

Singing, dancing and creating with art materials are a regular part of classroom life. Additionally, a Music and Movement specialist works with each group twice a week, further enabling children to add to their vocal music repertoire as well as to gain understanding and control of their bodies and develop their innate musicality.

### **OUTDOOR PLAY**

Our covered outdoor Roof Garden permits all weather use - rain, snow, or sunshine! Each group is scheduled for daily outdoor play. Generally, a child who is considered well enough to be in school should be well enough to go to the roof. Exceptions must be planned in advance with the Director. Children should dress for the weather and outdoor temperature in clothing that permits safe and vigorous activity.

## **ASSEMBLIES, CHAPELS, HOLIDAY GATHERINGS**

Assemblies are held throughout the school year. These festive events serve to bring the school community together in a common experience. The skills and gifts of the children, parents and staff are utilized at all celebrations. Families are often invited to join us for these special times which usually take place mid to late morning.

As part of our Presbyterian heritage, the Christian holidays of Christmas and Easter are observed and celebrated at school. The sharing of other religious and cultural traditions such as Chanukah, Passover, Lunar New Year, Norouz and Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, reflects the diversity of our families and staff and respect for the community at large.

Participation in the holiday stories and celebrations of our community of families encourages children to explore the spiritual aspects of their own lives and of the people around them. This expresses the mission of the Church for the school: to address issues of self-esteem and relating well to others. The discussion and celebration of the holidays and customs of various faiths is a model for the respectful comparison of various practices. Commonalities are emphasized where appropriate.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Well planned trips are occasionally integrated into the individual classroom curricula and planned according to the interests and developmental levels of the children.

Adult supervision will vary according to the activity (a walk around the block vs. a picnic in the park) and the needs of the children, but will always be arranged with the safety of the children utmost in mind. Children are never taken on any trips involving transportation without specific parent consent. On all trips, children wear school tags with the school's name and phone number. For certain trips, parents will be invited to join their child's class and chaperone. Teachers will assign specific children for each parent chaperone to monitor on the trip. Class trips are extension of classroom learning and should be conducted with similar structure and focus. Please respect the teaching environment and the special time with your child and the group by refraining from cell phone use, except in the case of emergency. Family pets are not permitted on class outings. Parents are asked to help children get the most possible out of a trip by providing your full attention and engaging with the children. Never separate from the group unless previously arranged and follow all of the teachers' instructions. Usually, teachers expect parents to participate in the entire trip, including bringing children safely back to school as a group. If you are unable to remain with the group or travel back to MAPCDS with the class, please let your teachers know ahead of time so they can plan for appropriate coverage on the way back. If necessary, teachers will provide drinks and snacks for children on trips. Parents should not provide individual, personal snacks for their child on trips unless medically necessary and pre-arranged with teachers. Similarly, we ask that parents do not purchase anything for their child on a trip as this creates distraction for others.

If you should lose sight of a child in your assigned group at any time, immediately alert the teachers and an official at the venue. Remain with your group while the teacher and officials search for the child.

## PARK DAYS

At MAPCDS, we strongly believe in the importance of children's interactions with natural world and the benefits unstructured time in nature provides for children's overall development. The outdoors offers endless sensory experiences which are especially appealing to young children. Children instinctively respond to nature's call by engaging in vigorous physical play which strengthens both their bodies and minds. The elements and objects of nature spark imagination, investigation, creativity, collaboration and problem-solving.

Our proximity to Central Park enables us to provide children with regular experiences in nature, making our "Park Days" an essential component of the curriculum. Classes visit the park each month, generally for a portion of the school day, and no two experiences are quite the same. Digging for worms, determinedly climbing boulders, and making forts out of fallen branches are common occurrences. A meditative walk to note the changing season might be ideal for one group one day, while another might be fascinated by musicians they encounter, for example.

Classroom curriculum is often impacted by our experiences in the park. Language, mathematical thinking, artistic expression, physical challenge and scientific inquiry are all interwoven in our Park Days, just as they are incorporated in daily classroom life. These excursions are considered to be part of our regular program, rather than as actual field trips. Children should always be dressed appropriately for outdoor play in all weather. Unless weather conditions are dangerous (such a high wind, lightening, low visibility) we do go out in various elements so children can experience the wonder of nature. For young children, there is nothing quite like splashing in puddles or playing in freshly fallen snow!

## EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM

On Monday through Thursday, children in the Old 2s, 3s, 4s, and 5s have the option of participating in our Extended Day program until 2:45 p.m. for an additional cost. Families are welcome to enroll in one, two, three or four afternoons per week.

The Old 2s remain with their teacher for a rest time, snack, choice time and outdoor play on the roof garden. For 3s, 4s and 5s, Extended Day is comprised of mixed age groups in special classes designed to supplement the children's regular school day. Each class also has a rest time, has a snack provided by the school, and enjoys outdoor play on the roof garden. Recent class offerings include Spanish, Brain Builders, Cooking, Art, Movement and Sports for the Young Child, Storytelling and Book Making, Theater, and Sewing. Participation in Extended Day encourages community building between children from different classes as well as between children and MAPCDS teachers from different age groups, strengthens children's stamina for a longer school day and provides an opportunity for children to either try something completely new to them or to dedicate focused attention to an established interest.

***\*Due to health and safety protocols related to Covid-19, Extended Day will run differently this year. Children will remain with their classmates and regular teachers and not combine with any other group or teaching team. Children will have the opportunity to engage more deeply with worktime choices as well as participate in special activities unique to each group.***

## FOOD

Monday through Thursday, a healthy morning snack of water and crackers, pretzels, fruit, vegetables or cheese is provided for each child, or the product of a morning cooking activity may be the snack for that day. No **peanut butter, nuts or nut products** are used in school. We ask your cooperation in not sending food containing them, in order to protect children in the school with a very serious allergy to these foods. Parents who wish to bring special foods to share may do so as long as they plan in advance with the teacher.

Children bring their lunches Monday through Thursday. Please send yogurt, cheese or a sandwich cut in half or quarters, a small piece or pieces of fruit and a drink in a lunch bag or box marked with your child's name. Grapes should be cut as they are a choking hazard. Please avoid gum, candy and chips. Leftovers are re-packed and sent home so that you can gauge your child's appetite. If you send hot food, such as pasta, please use a thermos as teachers do not heat lunches individually.

Lunch is very convivial time which stimulates language development and encourages children to interact sociably for a more extended period than at snack time. Children sit at a table with an adult and are encouraged to use table manners.

## DAILY SCHEDULE

Each group has a planned schedule of activities and daily routines which is posted in the room. Variations in the schedule do occur, in respect of the children's natural rhythms and needs each day. Each class' daily schedule is posted on their class journal online, on the parent section of the website, under "[Classes](#)."

## CLOTHING

Please send your child in washable play clothes. Please be sure clothing can sustain active and messy activities including outdoor play, painting and cooking, so that it does not inhibit your child's participation.

A full change of clothing for each child is needed at school. This should include socks, shoes or sneakers, pants, a top, an easily managed sweater and pairs of underwear. Please label all articles of clothing with your child's name.

When buying new clothes and shoes please keep in mind your child's growing independence and look for easily managed fasteners. Elastic waist bands and velcro straps are especially easy for young children to manage. Sneakers are best for playground activity; smooth leather soles lack traction for safe climbing and running. Flip flops are dangerous on the playground equipment and are not permitted.

## SUPPORTING CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS

Physical and emotional safety are essential to a learning environment. Discipline is geared toward providing this safety while at the same time encouraging children to gain self-control. Teachers respond in a variety of ways when a situation is viewed as inappropriate, including re-direction of children into more productive activity.

Remediation of behavior is often private and always positive. The teacher may speak quietly with the children involved who are helped to see the dynamics of the situation and to find constructive solutions. We believe it is important for children to understand and take responsibility for their actions, yet not feel diminished.

If negative behavior persists, the teacher will speak with the child's parents to see if they can help us understand what is happening and to collaborate on a solution or strategy. Such communication between teachers and parents is essential for the child's well-being and positive development. Cooperation in implementing the school's recommendations is implicit in the contract of enrollment.

## TOILET LEARNING

We will be happy to work with parents to help their children achieve this important milestone. Lapses are normal and to be expected; children are matter of factly helped to change and are not shamed when they occur. A supply of fresh clothing, with plenty of underpants and socks, should be left at school.

## HOME VISITS

We see the relationship between parent and school as a partnership invested in supporting each child's journey into the world. This relationship between families and the Day School is nurtured even before children begin classes. Generally, in early September, teachers visit children in their homes to demonstrate the strong, natural connection between home and school life and to meet each child in their most comfortable environment. This year, in lieu of home visits, teachers will meet each family individually in Central Park. Every family visits the classroom individually before classes begin, to provide additional familiarity with their new home away from home. The regular school schedule is gradually phased in over several weeks, with classes beginning in half groups to allow children to become acquainted with teachers, peers and routines with ease. At every age, separation from the parent or caregiver is handled gently and gradually, according to each child's individual needs.

***\*Due to the pandemic, in lieu of home visits, teachers will meet with each family in Central Park.***

## FAMILY BOOKS

Each spring, parents receive blank "Family Books" to be completed with their children over the summer and brought to school by the first day of classes. Each book comes with a list of prompts to respond to through photos, drawings, or artifacts. Statements such as "This is my family" or "These are my favorite foods" provide information that is unique to each child and offers a source of connection between classmates and between children and teachers. The books are always available in the classroom for children to peruse privately, or to share with friends and teachers. Oftentimes, these books, which are robust representations of the child's life outside of school, serve as comfort to children during the separation process as well.



## BABIES AND TODDLERS

MAPCDS offers playgroups for babies and toddlers, ages 4 through 24 months, with their parent or caregiver. Formal application to the school is not required to participate. The playgroups are designed to serve both children and their adults during this exciting time of life and to introduce them to life in our community. In addition to stimulating the hearts and minds of our youngest learners, the group provides a social and support network for parents and caregivers. Families enrolled in these classes are welcome and encouraged to participate in all Day School events. Due to health and safety protocols in response to Covid-19, Bs and Ts will not be held at school this year. There is a possibility we will hold classes in Central Park, weather permitting, and will notify parents if this becomes a viable option.

## JUNE DAYS

June Days is an optional extension of the school year, with a special summer twist. This fun-filled program runs mornings for three weeks in June and is available exclusively for children who are enrolled at the Day School. Classic summer experiences including water play, outdoor adventures, and making ice cream and other warm weather treats supplement open-ended classroom play and creative music and art experiences. The energy of summer's freedom is infused throughout each June Day. Families can choose to enroll for individual weeks of the program.

## SCHOOL PROCEDURES

### ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

***\*Please note, due to health and safety protocols related to Covid-19, arrival and dismissal times will be staggered this year and not follow the usual schedule outlined below. Please see the separate schedule emailed to parents to identify the arrival and dismissal times for your child's class. In addition, our arrival routines will now include a health screening for each child. Details can be found in the addendum to this handbook.***

A smooth arrival and dismissal is essential to children's feeling of well-being and their overall safety.

Morning Program arrival time is 8:30-8:45 am.

Elevator access to school floors begins at 8:25. While we encourage families to arrive to school on time, arriving early is distracting to teachers preparing for the day. We greatly appreciate your respecting the school's operating hours and not arriving early without special circumstances that have been prearranged with the Director.

Please make every effort to arrive within the 8:30-8:45 window. It is difficult for a child to enter into a group already fully engaged in activities. Children need to be escorted by an adult into the elevator and to their classrooms. We ask that parents and caregivers wait until teachers

acknowledge their child's arrival before leaving.

Sign-in Procedure: The adult bringing the child to school will write the child's name, arrival time, the name of the person picking him or her up that day, the time the child will be picked up and the phone number where the pick-up person can be reached on the sign-in sheet. This insures that we will know with whom your child is supposed to leave.

Teachers are happy to greet parents and caregivers at arrival and dismissal each day. Their primary focus at these times however, is to connect with each child entering and leaving the room. As a result, this is not the time to discuss individual questions or concerns about your child or the class in general. Instead, it is best to send an email to the teachers requesting a time to speak on the phone or to arrange an appointment to meet in person without your child present. Teachers do not check email during the school day. They do respond to email messages within 24 hours during the school week. Parents should always call the school in case of an emergency or to change dismissal plans for the day.

As a security measure, elevator access to school floors is restricted after arrival until dismissal. The ramp entrance is unlocked for morning arrival. After 8:45, the receptionist will operate the door and the elevator for later arrivals.

## **STROLLER PARKING**

Because the elevators operate at full capacity during school hours, parents are requested to park all baby carriages and children's strollers on the right of the Parish House lobby. Neither the Church nor the Day School can be responsible for loss or damages. Since strollers often look similar, clearly mark yours to avoid confusion. Do not leave anything overnight or over the weekend, as this area is used for other purposes during this time.

Dismissal time is 12:45 pm Monday - Thursday and at 12:00 pm on Friday. Extended Day ends at 2:45. All dismissals are from the classroom.

When children are leaving they are encouraged to say goodbye to a teacher and clearly acknowledge that they are departing. Please inform everyone who will be picking up your child of this safety procedure. Parents and caregivers should wait outside the classroom. Please arrive promptly for dismissal. Waiting even a few extra minutes can provoke anxiety in young children.

No child will be released to any adult other than a parent without permission, even if that parent is waiting in the lobby or outside the building with a younger child sleeping in a stroller. In this case, please ask a fellow parent to stay with the sleeping child while you or your previously designated caregiver picks up the Day School child.

If there are changes during the day please notify the office. In the further interest of safety, once children have been dismissed, they should leave promptly in the company of an adult.

Children must be accompanied in the elevators and on the stairs by an adult.

Should an emergency arise that necessitates an earlier individual dismissal time for a child, please call the Day School office to alert us of the change.



## BUILDING EXPECTATIONS

The elevators which service the Day School also service the other ten floors of the building and are therefore often used to capacity. Please remember, an overloaded elevator is not safe. Strollers and baby carriages are not permitted in the elevators and may be parked in the designated area of the lobby.

If the elevator in which you are riding malfunctions, push the button with the telephone graphic. This will connect you to the service provider. At the same time, pushing the button with the bell on it will alert building staff to the situation. The elevators are monitored at the reception desk and the receptionist can notify our building services staff, who may be able to correct the problem before the mechanic arrives.

The church staff has requested that no one eat or drink or change diapers in the lobby as it taxes the ability of our small housekeeping staff to keep the area clean. Similarly, eating or waiting for dismissal time in any area of the building other than school floors is prohibited. Please inform your caregivers of this policy.

## DOGS

In the interest of safety and compliance with the Department of Health regulations, school families' pets are not permitted in the Parish House lobby, elevators or school floors.

## COMMUNICATION

### ABSENCES – CHILDREN

Please report your child's absence to the Day School office (288-9638) by 8:30 a.m. It is especially important that we receive immediate notification of any contagious disease, such as Strep Throat and Chicken Pox or Fifth Disease, or of head lice. If your child is diagnosed and treated for a contagious condition over the weekend the school needs to be notified in order to inform the parents in your child's group to look for symptoms.

Your child is not identified in the notification. Children must be fever-free for 24 hours before returning to school. In the case of lice, a note from a qualified professional documenting that the child is both nit and lice free is required before returning to school.

***\*Please see the addendum to this handbook for absence protocols related to Covid-19.***

### ABSENCES – PARENTS

When parents travel away from home for an extended period, the school must have a plan in writing stating who is responsible for their child and all appropriate contact numbers for a specified period of time.

## **ACCIDENTS**

Parents are informed in writing of any injury incurred during the day. Parents are telephoned immediately for serious injuries or when their child is not feeling well. Children who become ill during the day are expected to be picked up as soon as a parent is notified. If a parent is not reachable, the school will call the persons listed as your Emergency Contacts (who must live or work in reasonable proximity to school.) Please discuss this policy with your contacts to ensure they would be available to pick your child up as needed.

## **CLASS PARENT REPRESENTATIVE (CPRs)**

Two parents from each class are asked to assist with activities, e.g., outside trips, and contacting other parents in the class about school events or needs, such as refreshments, or in the event of an emergency closing. At holiday time and the end of the school year, the CPRs organize teacher appreciation gifts and year-end events during the last weeks of school. CPRs also organize social opportunities outside of school for parents in their class a few times per year.

## **CLASS PLACEMENT**

Decisions regarding room and teacher assignments are made based on age, gender and appropriate educational groupings, within the framework of seven classrooms and the relative teacher/child ratio. The age span and number of children differ in each classroom and they vary from year to year, as do the teaching teams assigned to classrooms and age groups. Once class placements have been assigned, it is not possible to change them.

## **CURRICULUM NIGHT FOR PARENTS**

A parents' night is held on an evening each fall. Here, teachers explain their classroom practices and the developing curricula. The evening also serves to acquaint parents in each class with one another.

## **DAILY JOURNAL**

Teachers post highlights of each day on the daily journal on their class page on the [website](#). All parents also have access to the Studio Journal and Extended Day journal, both of which also communicate what children have been working on at school.

## **FAMILY DIRECTORY**

Class directories for each group in the school include the name of each child as well as parents' names, home addresses, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses are available under the Resources tab of the parent section of the school [website](#).

All information contained on these lists is confidential and should not be shared with or used by anyone not directly and currently associated with the Day School. Please keep all information current. If you do not want your number(s) listed, please let us know before the first week of school.

## **PARENT EMERGENCY NUMBERS**

In case of an emergency, it is important that we have the correct and current home, cell and business telephone numbers for both parents. Should one of these numbers change, please notify the school office immediately. Please specify two Designated Substitutes as your Emergency Contact when completing school forms on the school parent portal each year. If their telephone numbers change, or if you change the persons to be contacted, please update the record online and notify the school office of the change. Emergency Contacts must live or work in reasonable proximity to the school, need to be available if you are not able to pick up your child, and are permitted to authorize whatever care or medical attention is needed. We will always try to reach a parent first.

## **PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES**

In addition to the start of school and the informal parent-teacher discussions held throughout the year, individual parent-teacher conferences are planned for November, March and May. There are no classes during the time scheduled for conferences.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

The MAPCDS website address is [www.mapcds.org](http://www.mapcds.org). We maintain an active social media presence on Facebook (@921Madison Ave), Instagram (m.a.p.c.d.s) and Twitter (@mapcds) which expands the possibilities of our engagement with one another. As a resource to families, our Facebook page and Twitter account often feature published articles on early childhood, education and parenting. We encourage parents to follow, like and interact on our social media platforms as another means of connection, dialogue and mutual support. We welcome and encourage reviews of any aspect of our program on Facebook as well. To ensure a consistently professional environment, we ask that parents follow official school accounts and not “friend” or follow any MAPCDS staff’s personal accounts online. Similarly, members of the staff will respect families’ privacy and not connect with school parents’ personal social media.

## **EMERGENCIES**

### **EVACUATION**

We have monthly fire drills which we call “exit practices” as this is more descriptive of what we do and is less alarming to children. We line up and count the children, using the attendance sign in sheet and walk down the fire safe stairs, ending in the lobby where children are recounted in their groups. We also have several outdoor practices where children assemble in a line stretching down 73<sup>rd</sup> street towards Park Avenue, alongside the

building gate.

If we need to stay off of the school floors or leave the building in case of a real emergency, there are two options, chosen according to the situation:

- We go directly to the Parish Hall which has a full kitchen, bathroom, plenty of space, and also has the advantage of being familiar. It is mostly underground with a few small, sealable windows. We are prepared with cell phones, water, food, health and safety supplies to stay there until you are able to pick up your child.
- If we need to need to evacuate the building, we would go to either the James Lenox House, The Hewitt School or Resurrection Episcopal and call you with our location. A complete package of every child's medical and emergency contact information is taken with us in evacuation.

## **SCHOOL CLOSINGS - WEATHER**

Should we find it necessary to close, an email chain will be used to notify all families and an announcement will be posted on our website. During times of severe weather, listen for television and radio announcements by the Department of Education. If New York City public schools are closed, we will close also. We might also choose to close in inclement weather, even when public schools remain open. This information will be communicated via email, school social media accounts and on our website as well.

## **COMMUNITY**

### **ADMISSIONS - SIBLINGS**

MAPCDS strives to offer admission to siblings of enrolled or alumni students who would thrive in our program. We offer Early Decision Notification for sibling applications, in accordance with the Independent Schools Admissions Association of Greater New York (ISAAGNY) calendar. Should the Early Decision Notification option not be taken, the applicant will be considered without preference or prejudice in the remaining applicant pool. Students must be 2.0 years of age by September 1 of the year they enroll. Classes for Babies and Toddlers are available for children between the age of 6 months and 2 years, with a parent or caregiver. Formal application to the school is not required to participate. These playgroups are designed to serve both children and their adults during this exciting time of life and to introduce them to our community. In addition to stimulating the hearts and minds of our youngest learners, the group provides a social and support network for parents and caregivers. Families enrolled in these classes are welcome and encouraged to participate in all Day School events. Please apply through our [website](#).

### **BIRTHDAYS - IN SCHOOL**

Birthdays are exciting and wonderful occasions for children and we are eager to share them at school. We encourage each family to plan with the teachers for a celebration at school, whether or not the child's birthday occurs during the school year. This celebration need not occur on the child's actual birthday. Simple cookies, muffins or small cupcakes may be brought

from home. Please avoid elaborate party fare (e.g., balloons, party favors, candy, ice cream) which are more appropriate for extended celebrations out of school. A school celebration usually takes place during the morning snack time or after lunch. Parents of the birthday child are welcome! Please remember we are a nut allergy aware school, and check with a classroom teacher to see if there are any other specific food allergies in your child's group.

***\*Due to health and safety protocols related to Covid-19, we are unable to host parents at birthday celebrations this year. We are happy to dedicate classroom time to recognize the birthday child with a special snack which parents give to teachers upon arrival.***

## **BIRTHDAY PARTIES - OUT OF SCHOOL**

Birthday parties held outside of school should include either a very few children from the class (matching your child's age to the number of guests is generally a good guideline) or the entire class. Please do not exclude just one child or just a few children. Invitations may not be distributed at school; nor may children who are going to a party be dismissed as a group from the classroom. These provisions are to protect the feelings of children who are not able to be invited or are unable to attend. Shared celebrations are highly encouraged; with many birthdays occurring close together, joining another family or two can make the event more pleasurable for everyone. The Roof Garden is available for rental to current school families after 4:00 Monday through Thursday and after 12:30 on Fridays. If you require tables and chairs and plan to decorate, please allow sufficient time after the hours stated above as the school is using these spaces until then. Certain restrictions will apply, for example, only Mylar balloons are allowed, no glass containers, etc. Please note that pointed heels cannot be worn on the roof as they puncture and damage the safety surface. The rental agreement will have specific details. Other rooms may be available during cold weather. Contact Lissette Perez-Erazo, the Office Manager of the Church at 212-288-8920 for details.

## **DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION**

The Day School does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, gender, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation or family structure in admission, educational policies, tuition aid allocation or any aspect of our program. We are an intentionally diverse community which takes pride in the rich and varied ethnic, racial and religious traditions of our families. Our staff studies and practices anti-bias and culturally responsive pedagogy in attempt to help children recognize and celebrate their unique selves. Our curriculum is designed to cultivate values of respect, empathy and justice in children. We encourage all Madison families to address these principles at home as well to promote anti-racist thinking in their children in hope of creating a more equitable society. The parent portal on the MAPCDS website includes a list of [resources](#) to help parents with this critical work.

## PLAYDATES

We encourage parents to plan after-school playdates on an occasional basis. When doing so, keep in mind that the children have a long, busy day and need time to unwind and relax; over-scheduling creates overtired children. However, the opportunity to extend classroom socialization can encourage play skills and deepen friendships if well timed and supervised.

***\*Please see addendum for health and safety recommendations regarding playdates through the pandemic.***

## PERSONAL BELONGINGS

We discourage bringing toys from home to school. Children often cannot release them during the morning and their day is spent guarding the treasure and not participating in the program. If transitional toys are brought, it is best that they are left in the cubby or, preferably, are taken home by the adult. Children who need the comfort of a transitional object will gradually be encouraged to put it away in a safe place. A soft doll or a stuffed animal may be used at rest time in Extended Day. Family books can provide needed comfort for a child in place of objects from home.

## SPECIAL GROWN UP DAY

A visiting day for the special adults in your child's life is held in May. A grandparent, godparent, or an adult friend may be invited to share time in school on this day.

Grandparents and other special people who cannot be with us on this day are welcome to visit at another time. Please plan in advance with the teachers for such a visit.

***\*Due to health and safety protocols related to Covid-19, we are unable to host special visitors at school this year.***

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteer opportunities abound at the Day School! A volunteer sign up is part of the yearly forms parents complete before each school year. This provides a listing of volunteer positions available and an opportunity for parents to express interest in serving the school in this capacity. Volunteering at the school helps parents connect with one another, builds community and, for children, demonstrates parents' active interest and investment in their school life.

***\*Due to health and safety protocols related to Covid-19, in person volunteer opportunities are not available this year.***

## MOVING ON FROM MAPCDS

### EXMISSIONS

MAPCDS parents have the unique advantage of our Director of Exmissions to guide and support them through the process of applying to ongoing independent, public and parochial schools. This undertaking officially begins the spring before families apply, with an informational meeting led by Adrienne Wing, our Director of Exmissions. Here, families learn about admissions procedures and timelines and how to research schools and develop an initial list of those they find most compelling. Next, Ms Wing meets with each family individually to help finalize the school list, and then provides regular, personalized support as needed throughout the process. Under her expert guidance, parents know what to expect and are well-prepared for each step of the process, including parent essays, interviews, children's school visits, and financial aid applications. Parents are warmly supported throughout the admissions cycle, from initial steps through final decision notifications.

### TRANSFERRING TO ANOTHER SCHOOL

We can best serve the interest of a child who is transferring to another school when the Director is notified in advance. Transmittal of records and recommendations require written permission of parents and adequate time to prepare and send a school report. Tuition refunds are not possible after signing the annual school contract.

## PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS AND ACCREDITATIONS

- Early Steps
- Independent Schools Admissions Association of Greater New York
- National Association for the Education of Young Children
- North American Reggio Emilia Alliance
- Parents League of New York
- Licensed by The City of New York Department of Health
- Accreditation by The New York State Association of Independent Schools

This document does not represent an agreement or contract between The Madison Avenue Presbyterian Day Church School and its parents, but is intended to provide an overview of the program as well as information which will be helpful to parents of children attending the school.

## **HANDBOOK ADDENDUM 2020-2021**





# **REOPENING PLAN 2020-2021**

**SEPTEMBER 1, 2020**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

We plan to open the school building to faculty and staff on September 1, 2020, and to welcome children back to school on September 14<sup>th</sup>. We are confident that our commitment to health and safety, our small class size, our dedicated staff and our notable tight-knit community marked by true, mutually respectful partnership between the school and parents, makes it possible to reopen and operate successfully in accordance with the New York State Reopening Guidelines. While we acknowledge the many necessary and required new protocols are challenging, we are prepared to implement them effectively. Our staff is fully committed to reopening on time, as we believe in person, hands-on learning is best for young children. We agree with the American Academy of Pediatrics who maintains there are major health, social and educational risks to keeping children at home. In addition, we recognize the burden on working parents when schools were closed this past spring and hope to eliminate this frustration for our families. We have been closely following the CDC and other agencies' scientific reports about the virus and its transmission and will continue to do so for as long as the current health threat exists. In addition, we have consulted with school parents who are medical professionals and incorporated their knowledge and experience into our thinking and planning.

Our reopening plan has been written to comply fully with the guidance published by the New York State Department of Health and the federal authorities. Our decision has been shaped in the interests of many, from all constituencies, to resume the work of teaching and learning in the presence of one another as well as by a careful reading of science and consultations with local medical professionals. Our plan has been created in collaboration with many members of the community and the MAPC Building Reopening Task Force which is comprised of Church leadership. We have also consulted with the Day School Committee, the school's governing body, which is designed to be inclusive and representative of both the church and of our families. This decision, as with all major school decisions, has been undertaken in a spirit of transparency and responsiveness to the entire community.

Our coordinated efforts to reduce risk will include daily health screening and temperature checks, social distancing, rigorous hand washing hygiene, thorough cleaning and disinfection of the entire building and decreasing the density of people in common areas. This powerful array of coordinated interventions collectively demonstrates our commitment to attend to safety at all times.

As we prepare to welcome children to school each fall, we conduct a series of routines and safety checks to prepare a safe and inspiring environment for joyful learning. In light of the pandemic, this year, we have added a significant number of steps before reopening our doors including:

- editing classroom materials to reduce the spread of germs by removing soft toys and dress-up clothes, sanitizing the outdoor play equipment, and placing hand sanitizer in all classrooms (in addition to soap and paper towels)
- In collaboration with the Church's Building Reopening Task Force, we have ordered PPE for all staff as well as cleaning supplies, including sprays and wipes, which conform to the CDC list of acceptable products. Building cleaning will be conducted in accordance with DOH's "Interim Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection of Public and Private Facilities"

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for COVID-19” and “Interim Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection of Primary and Secondary Schools for COVID-19”.

- We will post Department of Health signage throughout the school and will regularly share similar messages with the school community, consistent with DOH COVID-19 advice regarding public health protections against COVID-19. We will also develop and utilize age-appropriate signage consistent with the DOH’s signage for our children’s reference (ie, hand-washing procedures.)
- Social distancing signage and floor markers have been ordered, as well as tape to indicate directionality of foot traffic.
- We have ordered plexiglass to secure the reception area on the 8th floor.
- We have ordered an extra supply of classroom materials, such as writing utensils and paint brushes for children, to reduce the need for sharing and reduce the likelihood of any cross-contamination of germs.

Here in greater detail are the steps we have put in place proactively to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, to monitor health conditions among the members of our school community and, should it be necessary, to act to contain transmission of the virus:

### ***ADMITTANCE TO BUILDING***

Visitors to the building, and especially to school floors, are limited to essential personnel only. A visitor log will be maintained by both the building receptionist in the lobby and the school receptionist on the 8th floor. All deliveries will be accepted by the ground floor receptionist. No delivery personnel will be allowed on school floors.

14 days of self-regulated quarantine is required before entering school premises for anyone - adult or child - who has recently returned from international travel or US travel to designated states with significant community spread, pursuant to CDC and DOH guidance as well as Executive Order 205.

### ***FACE COVERINGS AND PPE***

Face coverings/masks are required of all adults in the building where social distancing is not possible. Acceptable PPE are cloth-based face coverings (e.g., homemade sewn, quick cut, bandana), and surgical masks that cover both the mouth and nose. Face shields worn without other face coverings are not considered adequate protection or source control against COVID-19 and may not be used without a mask worn simultaneously. Appropriate PPE will be provided to adults at no charge and they are also free to use their own supply as long as they adhere to the minimum standards of protection. All staff who screen children and adults upon arrival will wear required PPE. Faculty and staff will wear masks. Children will not be required to wear a mask, per the

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New York State guidelines, though mask-wearing is encouraged in children if well-tolerated. Teachers will make every effort to ensure children wear their masks in accordance with individual parent preference, but will not insist children do so if the mask becomes too distracting, is being worn incorrectly or being taken off and put back on frequently, negating the intended protection. Each child will be given a lanyard to attach to the mask, allowing him/her to pull the mask down to eat or drink and avoiding the possibility of it falling to the floor or propelling respiratory droplets into the air when carrying it.

### **HEALTH CHECKS**

Each parent must sign and electronically submit Form OCFS 6040: Child Care Employee, Volunteer, Parent, Child and Essential Visitors Health Screening One Time Attestation before the school year begins. This is available on the parent's SchoolAdmin checklist of required documents and signatures. All staff will also complete this form, by hand.

A daily health screening assessment will be conducted for employees, essential visitors, and children (through their parents) and temperature checks will be taken of all adults who enter the building, with a non-contact thermometer. The screening will be conducted by parents at home, before going to school each day. Information about how to conduct the daily screening will be sent to parents in a separate communication. If an individual presents a temperature of greater than 100.0°F, or reports any symptoms associated with COVID-19, the individual will be denied entry into the facility. In addition, a teacher or staff member will take the temperature of every child before they are escorted to school floors. All adult visitors to the building are also subject to a temperature check upon arrival.

The screening assessment will determine whether the individual has:

- (a) knowingly been in close or proximate contact in the past 14 days with anyone who has tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 or who has or had symptoms of COVID-19;
- (b) tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 in the past 14 days;
- (c) has experienced any symptoms of COVID-19, including a temperature of greater than 100.0°F, in the past 14 days, coughing or shortness of breath and/or
- (d) has traveled internationally or from a state with widespread community transmission of COVID-19 per the New York State Travel Advisory in the past 14 days.

We will conduct an immediate review each morning of all data collected from parents, including follow-up calls to families of children who are not in school that day if those families have not already submitted their daily form. In the case of children who have stayed home, the follow-up call will include a reminder that any child presenting with a fever of 100.0°F or above must stay home, according to our quarantine protocols found on page 7 of this document.

## ***SOCIAL DISTANCING***

MAPCDS will strive to maintain appropriate social distancing unless safety or the core activity requires a shorter distance or individuals are of the same household. Mask-wearing by adults and plexiglass barriers will also help address cases where six feet of distance cannot be maintained.

Drop-off and pick-up will be held in the lobby, with staggered times between groups to avoid congregating at school and potential virus transmission. Schedules will be sent to parents in late August. Children will separate from their parents or caregiver in the lobby and teachers will escort them to the classroom in small groups.

Social distancing markers will be placed in the areas as well as in the elevators. There will be minimal use of common areas. Staircases at opposite ends of the building will be designated as up or down to facilitate foot traffic.

Class groups will have no more than 15 children who will work in the classroom and play outside together and not combine with other groups. This arrangement allows children to move around the room more freely and engage in developmentally appropriate play that is not considered high risk. The use of floater teachers will be avoided as much as possible to further promote the integrity of the cohort.

All staff, committee, and governance meetings will occur remotely until further notice, except when social distancing can be maintained appropriately for smaller groups.

## ***SOCIAL EMOTIONAL WELL BEING OF STUDENTS***

Social emotional learning has always been and will continue to be a main aspect of our program. We are aware that some children may have experienced trauma as a result of the city lockdown and are prepared to support all children and families who experienced hardship as a result of the pandemic. We will begin the year with a phase-in schedule where children are able to gradually acclimate to their new classroom, teachers and peers. Administrators participated in several professional development workshops over the summer conducted by New York State Association of Independent Schools, National Association of Independent Schools and the Harvard School of Education, among others, which addressed the social-emotional impact of quarantine and loss on young children. In addition, we have been following the civil unrest across the country regarding systemic racism as well as recent public accounts of institutional racism at many independent schools. In immediate response, we provided a resource list to parents and are building out a more comprehensive resource guide on the website to provide both information and support related to these complex issues. We are in the process of arranging professional development focused on diversity, equity and inclusion for our staff and for families, furthering work we have done in this area in recent years.

## ***FOOD***

Children's daily snack will be provided in individual servings. No family style or shared food will be available. Children will bring their own lunch to school and will be socially distanced when eating. Teachers will be alert to hygiene protocols during mealtimes, modeling appropriate social distancing and hygiene while eating with children, and washing hands after eating.

## ***PERSONAL HYGIENE***

Schoolwide hand-washing routines are already in place and will be increased. Children wash their hands upon arrival, after using the restroom, before and after eating, after outdoor play and before departing. We will add handwashing in between program activities now as well. MAPCDS follows all hygiene requirements as advised by the CDC and DOH. These include:

- Training all students, faculty, and staff on proper hand and respiratory hygiene, including providing information to families and guardians on ways to reinforce this at home.
- Creating extra time in the schedule for handwashing, especially after restroom breaks, outdoor time, or using shared materials
- Creating extra hand hygiene stations around the school that have soap, running warm water, and disposable paper towels
- Installing touchless hand sanitizer dispensers filled with at least 60% alcohol-based sanitizer for areas where handwashing is impractical.
- Providing hand sanitizer and wipes in common areas or near shared workplace items (copy machines, computers).

Parents who do not wish their child to use hand sanitizer should inform the Director and classroom teachers in writing, and provision will be made for the child to use a handwashing station instead.

## ***RESTROOMS***

Each class has its own restroom for children. Adult individual restrooms are located on each floor. All staff will be required to use the restroom on their assigned floor (teachers who work on the 8th floor, will use the 8th floor adult restroom, etc) to limit cross-exposure. Restrooms will be cleaned throughout the day by building custodial staff, following recommendations put forth by the Department of Health.

## ***DAILY CLEANING AND DISINFECTING OF FACILITY***

The school's custodial staff is primarily responsible for daily cleaning and disinfection. A comprehensive COVID-19-specific cleaning plan per State guidelines has been developed for the school and is overseen by the Business Office. Per DOH guidelines, custodial staff will keep logs that include the date, time, and scope of custodial cleaning and disinfection. In addition to the work of the custodial staff, classrooms and common areas will be stocked with child-safe, CDC-approved disinfectant spray so that teachers can also contribute to cleaning efforts at

## **THE MADISON AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH DAY SCHOOL REOPENING PLAN 2020-2021**

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periodic intervals during the day. Extra time has been built into the schedule for hygiene maintenance--both handwashing and the disinfection of surfaces. High touch surfaces such as push bars on exit doors and elevator buttons were added to cleaning requirements in February and remain in place. All cleaning supplies will be from the Environmental Protection Agency List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19).

### **VENTILATION**

Research tells us fresh air flow is effective in reducing virus transmission. Classrooms will keep windows open accordingly. Our HVAC management company recently evaluated the building's ventilation system and made improvement recommendations. All system coils and ducts will be cleaned and sanitized. Ionization units will be installed in all units capable of handling them. Filters in all the air handles will be replaced with the highest rated MERV filter the specific air handler can accommodate. Portable air purifying units will be provided for each classroom, 2 small ones in the larger class rooms.

### **MANAGEMENT OF ILL PERSONS**

Any individual who screens positive for COVID-19 exposure or symptoms will be immediately sent home with instructions to contact their health care provider for assessment and testing. Children who screen positive will be immediately separated from other students and supervised until their parent or emergency contact can retrieve them from school. In the event that a parent of a child must be isolated because they have tested positive for, or exhibited symptoms of, COVID-19, they will not be permitted to enter the site for any reason, including picking up their child. If the parent who is a member of the same household as the child is exhibiting signs of COVID-19 or has been tested and is positive for the virus, we will utilize an emergency contact authorized by the parent to come pick up the child. As a "close contact," the child must not return to the child care for the duration of the quarantine. If the parent – who is a member of the same household as the child – is being quarantined as a precautionary measure, without symptoms or a positive test, we will walk out or deliver the child to the parent outside the premises. As a "contact of a contact" the child may return to school during the duration of the quarantine. If a child or their household member becomes symptomatic for COVID-19 and/or tests positive, the child must quarantine and may not return or attend the child care until after quarantine is complete. We will immediately notify the state and local health department about any positive test result by an employee or child at MAPCDS and will follow New York State Contact Tracing protocols and maintain individuals' confidentiality as required by federal and state law regulations.

If an individual's responses to any of the screening questions changes, such as if they begin to experience symptoms, including during or outside of school hours, they must report immediately to the Director for follow-up. Teachers will receive training prior to the start of the school year in how to identify pediatric symptoms of Covid-19, and will refer any students they see exhibiting such symptoms to the Director.



MAPCDS will follow the local DOH requirements for determining when individuals, particularly students, who screened positive for COVID-19 symptoms can return to the in-person learning environment. At a minimum, a return to school will require documentation from a health care provider evaluation, negative COVID-19 testing, and symptom resolution. For staff, we will follow DOH's "Interim Guidance for Public and Private Employees Returning to Work Following Covid-19 Infection or Exposure" regarding protocols and policies for staff seeking to return after a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 or after the member had close or proximate contact with an infected person. Specific quarantine protocols are on page 7 of this document.

### ***CLEANING AND DISINFECTION AFTER A SUSPECTED OR CONFIRMED CASE OF COVID-19***

In the event an individual at the school is confirmed to have COVID-19 while at school, we will immediately:

- Close off areas used by the person who is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19.
- Open windows to increase air circulation in the area.
- Wait 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting. If waiting 24 hours is not feasible, we will wait as long as possible to allow aerosolized particles to settle.
- Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, such as offices, classrooms, bathrooms, lockers, and common areas.
- Reopen the area once it has been appropriately cleaned and disinfected.

If more than seven days have passed since the person who is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary, but routine cleaning and disinfection will continue.

### ***QUARANTINE***

There may be times when we are ordered to close the school by the governor. The State has established metrics that they will use to order a regional or state-wide lockdown. In addition, there may be situations within our own neighborhood or school community when community spread of COVID-19 needs to be addressed. Under guidance from the State and local authorities, we have identified the following policies to help us track and trace the level of transmission in the school setting, so that we can responsibly provide for the health and safety of our students, families, faculty, and staff.

MAPCDS will enact the following quarantine plan, should a member of our community contract COVID-19, in order to reduce the risk of further transmission at school. These protocols satisfy New York State COVID-19 child care program requirements, and ensure the privacy and confidentiality of all MAPCDS community members, in accordance with all applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations.

Students will be grouped in classes conducted as cohorts to allow for fewer opportunities for cross-exposure, and more manageable containment of the virus if there is an outbreak. In the event of a positive case, the school may take extra precautions in the form of increased

cleaning, changes in school schedules or space use, etc. during this time to mitigate the risk of spread.

## ***QUARANTINE PROTOCOLS***

### ***Scenario 1:***

**Child/staff has COVID symptoms that include fever, cough or shortness of breath:**

⇒ Child/Staff member tests for COVID-19

If test is negative:

class remains open and child/staff member returns, with written clearance from a healthcare provider, 72 hours (3 days) after symptoms are resolved, without the use of fever-reducing medication.

If test is positive:

affected child or staff member quarantines for 14 days (according to the DOH guidelines for isolation, outlined below.)

Class closes and all in class have to show a negative test to return. If the child who tested positive has a sibling at Madison, that sibling will also need to quarantine for 14 days. However, the sibling's class will not have to quarantine unless the sibling develops symptoms and becomes positive.

Families and staff are notified of a positive case, while safeguarding the privacy of the affected child/staff member.

### ***Scenario 2:***

**Child has fever and ear or throat pain:**

Class stays open if doctor diagnoses and provides written confirmation of ear infection, strep or similar infection.

Child may return 72 hours (3 days) after symptoms resolve.

**Scenario 3:**

**Family member in the home or someone in close contact with child/teacher develops symptoms:**

⇒ Test for Covid-19

If test is negative:

child returns to school.

If test is positive:

class stays open and child/teacher quarantines for 14 days. Child/teacher may return with proof of a negative test and clearance from the child's doctor.

If the student who tested positive has a sibling in a different class, the sibling will also self-quarantine for two weeks; however, the sibling's classmates will not need to quarantine unless the sibling tests positive. The same is true for a child at Madison whose sibling who is enrolled at another school and has been exposed. The Madison child will also have to quarantine but the Madison classroom will remain open if this child does not test positive.

**General Quarantine Guidance**

Generally, individuals should quarantine in their regular residence while taking necessary precautions to protect those they live with.

Children and staff members under quarantine must stay home (unless directed otherwise by a doctor), maintain 6 feet of distance for others, use face coverings regularly, and arrange for food deliveries to avoid the need to be outside.

The 14 day quarantine period begins on the latest day the child/staff member had close contact with an infected person.

**Travel-related Quarantine**

As we look ahead to reopening, parents, as well as faculty and staff, must be mindful of the New York State Travel Advisory and adjust their plans accordingly. Per Governor Cuomo's Executive Order 205, issued June 25, 2020, travelers from designated states that are now COVID-19 "hot spots" or New Yorkers who have visited these states for a period of 24 hours or more, must complete 14 days of quarantine upon entering or returning to New York State. This list is subject to change and can be viewed at: <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory>

***We will close the entire school and move to distance learning online for a quarantine period if 2 or more classes need to quarantine at or approximately at the same time. Similarly, if there is an outbreak of the virus in the school or if the city requires us to close because of high transmission in the greater community, we will move to our distance learning model immediately.***

## **SHIFT TO REMOTE LEARNING**

This past spring, we taught remotely with very little time to prepare and ran a successful program; we believe our offerings will be even more robust this year as a result. Our plan takes into account what is developmentally appropriate for children in terms of their relationship to the screen and its effects on their well-being. Daily meetings on a video conference platform such as zoom in both large and half groups, read alouds, math explorations, dedicated music and art sessions with our specialists and physical activities are all included in our model. In addition, asynchronous learning opportunities will be provided through each class's blog. Our online curriculum meets all of the developmental areas as our in-person program, including fine and gross motor, cognitive and social emotional learning. Professional development related to pedagogical practices of remote learning have and will continue to be provided in the form of assigned reading, opportunities to attend NYSAIS-sponsored seminars on the topic, and time in our staff meetings devoted to discussing and brainstorming together.

## **COMMUNICATION**

We welcome all questions and will do our best to provide information as accurately and quickly as possible in what is still a dynamic landscape.

## **CONCLUSION**

We believe we are well-positioned to return to an in-person teaching program in September. Our building, outdoor spaces and updated ventilation system lend themselves to hygienic airflow. Our small class sizes make the spatial aspect of social distancing possible to implement. Our flexible arts-based curriculum and use of the outdoors, combined with our strong social-emotional learning program provide a solid foundation for student wellness. Our faculty is committed to reopening and eager to teach in person, despite the current challenges. Our partnership with parents should facilitate daily screenings and healthy habits at school and at home, to reduce the risk of a COVID-19 outbreak within our school community.

We will continue to vigilantly monitor the Department of Health and Center for Disease Control outlets for current information and make daily decisions accordingly. We recognize that public health conditions and New York State guidance may change at any time, prompting necessary revisions to the MAPCDS COVID-19 response plan. We will maintain regular communication with school parents about significant changes to our plan. We look ahead in joyful hope to the 2020-2021 school year.

***We recognize that a successful reopening only works with full involvement and ownership of individual families (i.e., taking accountability for daily temperature checks, self-quarantine as needed) and appreciate our partnership with parents to safeguard the health and wellness of every member – child and adult – of our community.***



# **REOPENING PLAN**

## ***FAQ***

**2020-2021**

*As of 8/27/20*

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### ***Q. How did the school arrive at the decision to reopen this fall?***

We firmly believe that in-person, hands-on, collaborative learning is the most effective means for young children's healthy cognitive, physical and social-emotional development. Our teachers are eager to return to the classroom to guide children's explorations and discoveries, nurture their blossoming social skills and support their emotional needs. By starting the year in-person, children and teachers will have the opportunity to develop meaningful relationships with one another which will support their work online in the event the school must close to safeguard the health of our community.

### ***Q. How many children will be in each class? How many teachers?***

There will be no more than 15 children per class. Most rooms will have 3 teachers. As always, our teacher:child ratio will meet or exceed Department of Health requirements in all classrooms.

### ***Q. Will last year's classes stay together this year?***

Each year we aim to have children advance to new rooms with some classmates who are familiar to them and others with whom they have never been in class. This intentional process promotes a progression of relationship building throughout the preschool experience. We pair balanced groups of children with a teaching team well suited to their individual and collective educational and social-emotional needs. Because many factors contribute to class assignment, changes are not possible after placements are made.

### ***Q. Will children or adults wear masks at school?***

Teachers and school staff will wear masks in the classroom and shared spaces. Children are strongly encouraged to wear a mask at school to the extent that they can wear them without distracting themselves or others. Teachers will help children understand the importance of a mask and encourage this safety practice as much as possible.

***Q. What will the drop-off and pick-up procedures be this year?***

Drop-off and pickup will be in the lobby. Times for each class will be staggered to avoid congestion and ensure smooth transitions for children and their families.

***Q. What screening protocols can I expect on a daily basis?***

Before the school year begins, each family is required to complete a one-time health attestation through the parent checklist on the SchoolAdmin portal. (School staff also completes this attestation.) In addition, a daily health screening is required by the NY State Department of Health (which school staff is also required to complete.) The daily screenings will be conducted online before children arrive at school. More information about the platform we will use for this process will follow in September. The questions will provide a comprehensive assessment and health status of individuals entering the school building. In addition to certifying that an individual does not have a temperature of 100o F or above, the questions will address other symptoms and the individual's contact with anyone who may have been exposed to the virus. Please refer to the [CDC COVID-19 Symptoms List here](#) for more information. Teachers will also take children's temperature upon arrival each day.

***Q. Will children take the elevator or the stairs at school?***

Children will use both the elevator and the stairs to move through the building as needed. Physical distance will be maintained in the elevators.

***Q. Will MAPCDS create additional classrooms out of common spaces that will not be used for other purposes, enabling children to spread out more?***

The Department of Health enforces strict regulations about spaces which qualify as classrooms, restricting us from creatively using other spaces in the building. With no more than 15 children in each class however, we will not need additional space.

***Q. Will Central Park still be included in the children's school experience?***

Yes! Experience in nature is an important aspect of our program. In addition, research shows that transmission of COVID-19 is lower outdoors. As in prior years, we will use the park regularly.



***Q. Will the art and music specialists still work with children?***

Of course! Schedules for music and art classes will be provided in September.

***Q. Do I need to send extra supplies or materials to school with my child?***

All children will need a change of clothes as always, which will be kept at school. Additional materials are not needed. We have ordered extra classroom supplies to ensure ample materials are available while tools are taken out of use for cleaning.

***Q. Will children have a snack and lunch at school this year?***

A snack will be provided by the school and will be served in individual portions rather than family style. Parents send lunch to school with their child. Children will eat lunch together in the classroom, socially distanced, but in close enough proximity to one another to facilitate conversation and social skill building.

***Q. Will Extended Day be available?***

Yes! Extended Day will be available to all children who are 2.6 years of age or older as of September 1<sup>st</sup>. The program format will be slightly different this year, as we cannot combine children from different classrooms, per the NY State reopening guidelines. Children will enjoy Extended Day activities with their own class, rather than combining with children from other classes, and the afternoon will be led by each group's regular classroom teachers. Families are welcome to register their children for Extended Day at any point in the year, allowing extra time for our youngest children to develop the stamina needed for the longer hours. A rest time, snack, indoor and outdoor play are included for all ages. Registration will be available on the SchoolAdmin portal in September.

***Q. Our family looks forward to holiday celebrations at school. Given the restrictions on large gatherings, how will religious and cultural holidays and children's birthdays be recognized this year?***

For now, all celebrations will be held in individual classrooms without adult participation beyond the class teachers. We are eager to resume schoolwide celebrations and will do so when large gatherings are safe again.

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***Q. How will MAPCDS enforce quarantine for travelers returning both domestically and internationally?***

We require school families and staff to comply with CDC and NYS travel advisory guidelines, which can be found here: [CDC Guidelines](#) - [NYS Guidelines](#). We will ask all families to answer travel related questions on the daily screening. In the interest of the community's health and safety, we fully expect all families to comply with these requirements. The children of families who knowingly reject quarantine protocols are subject to dismissal from the school.

***Q. What is the school's policy on playdates given the potential health threat? What about other classes held outside of school?***

Although we are a cohesive school community, we encourage families to socialize with those in their class for now, to prevent the potential introduction and spread of COVID-19 between class groups. Attending afternoon classes at other locations is discouraged for the same reason. MAPCDS Extended Day will begin earlier in the year than usual, in consideration of families whose personal or work schedules require after-school programming.

***Q. Will teachers help to educate children about Covid?***

Through developmentally appropriate conversation, teachers will initiate conversation about the return to school, time in quarantine, safety protocols and hygiene practices needed to keep our community safe. They will also respond to children's questions and understandings with equal sensitivity, clarity and attention. Specific concerns about an individual child's experience and understanding of the global crisis should be communicated to your child's teachers.

***Q. Will there be a distance learning option this year?***

We are exploring the possibility of offering classes with our music and art specialists remotely this year. If the school is required to shut down at any time for health and safety reasons, teachers will conduct our distance learning program from their homes.

***Q. What is the financial impact of the pandemic on MAPCDS? Will there be a tuition discount or any refunds if the program moves online?***

Many families have left New York City as a result of the pandemic, causing school enrollment to drop this year. Our operating budget relies on both tuition (approximately 88% of the budget) and fundraising (approximately 12% of the budget.) Fewer families in the 20-21 school year, means fewer charitable donations, which will adversely impact

the budget. Many of our costs are fixed, including salaries, benefits (approximately 75% of the budget) and facility costs. In addition, health and safety related work and purchases prompted by the pandemic have been an added expense for the school. These factors make any discounts or refunds impossible if we are to maintain the fiscal health of our beloved, longstanding non-profit institution.

***Q. Are all teachers equipped with technology to teach remotely?***

Teachers generously used their own personal computers and home wifi connections to teach remotely in the spring, as our 2019-20 school budget did not allow for this unanticipated expense. If the school needs to move to a remote program at any time in the 2020-21 school year, teachers will continue to dedicate their own equipment and absorb internet expenses to ensure an immediate, smooth transition to distance learning. We are grateful for their commitment and understanding of our limited resources during this period of economic strain.

***Q. Will the Babies and Toddlers program be available this year?***

Since parents and caregivers are not allowed in the building this fall, per NY State reopening guidelines, we are unable to offer Bs and Ts classes at school. We are considering running a fall program outdoors and will let families know if this becomes a feasible option.

***Q. How can parents help ease the transition back to school?***

We hope parents will approach the coming school year with an open mind, positive outlook and a flexible, supportive spirit. As we have all experienced the pandemic personally, it is important to remember that educators are returning to school under the same challenging conditions as school families. Nonetheless, our teachers are eager to return, in service to children and parents. When preparing your child to begin the school year, it is important to communicate positive feelings about the start of school, to promote a feeling of security and trust in this transition. Your child will follow your lead, and be empowered to connect joyfully with teachers and peers. Parents can partner effectively with teachers through active engagement and participation. We will host two evening discussions to help prepare for back to school, one led by a medical doctor and another by a child development specialist. Details to follow in September.