



# Nurture and Nature

Health protocols for COVID-19

Version 1.3

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**\*This document is a working document and will be continually updated as new guidelines are published and as we learn through this process.**

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# Introduction

Nurture and Nature Montessori Preschools are committed to ensuring that the members of our community are kept safe in line with all Health and Safety protocols. We are committed to compliance, cooperation and above all else, protecting the lives of all in our school community. In line with Government and WHO protocols and recommendations, we have put together this document in order to outline our plan of action for reopening and daily running of our preschools.

While we cannot guarantee that the transmission of COVID-19 will not occur, we commit to do everything within our power to minimise the risk while giving our children the best education and loving care.

Our biggest chance for success throughout this process is to have a community of parents, teachers and children who all buy into the process. We request that all parents ensure that these protocols are followed at all times and that children are not sent to school under any circumstances should they be ill. We believe that children are incredibly smart and resilient and that they will be able to understand these “new normals” within a short space of time. This will be made easier if these principles are reiterated at home.

Our core principles that we believe in will be upheld at all times. We will continue to foster a love of learning in all of our children and to educate them to be caring, socially responsible citizens of their community and world. We will continue to ensure that the children feel as though school is an extension of their family and we promise you that all children will continue to feel loved and cared for.

Due to the nature of our age groups, parents are able to choose whether or not to return to school when we open. We will continue with online teaching for the foreseeable future for those parents choosing to keep their child at home until they feel comfortable bringing their child back to school.

## General principles

1. Pamela Schreiber is the Company’s Health and Safety Officer with the Principals of each school responsible for ensuring all policies, procedures and plans of action are meticulously followed.
2. We require every member of our school community, and visitors, to strictly adhere to the rules, regulations, policies, protocols, and procedures. The school shall have the right to refuse entry to any person not willing to comply with any aspect of the regulations and/or policies, procedures, and protocols.
3. The school reserves the right to make changes as required by law, and/or for practical purposes. Notification of any changes will be communicated to all parents via email.
4. All staff, including cleaning and maintenance staff, have undergone training of all policies, procedures, and protocols and will be continually trained as new information comes to light.
5. No sick children, teachers or other staff will be allowed at school. In particular, anyone who has a temperature, cough and/or difficulty breathing will not be allowed at school without a medical certificate explaining the nature of the problem (e.g. allergies).
6. The wearing of face masks is only effective when they are used correctly. This includes the manner in which a mask is put on and removed, as well as the avoidance of touching and removing the face mask regularly. If a mask is not work correctly, or touched or removed regularly, it reduces its benefit and, in some instances, the ‘behaviour’ of regularly removing and / or fiddling with the mask, may increase the risk of infection (as it is touched with hands that may be dirty, that will transfer viruses and germs to the mouth, nose and eyes). Young children (5 years and younger), in general, will find it difficult to cope with the correct practice of wearing a face mask, even when practiced often. This means that there is a real increased

risk of them touching their faces when fiddling with a face mask or when they try to adjust it or remove it regularly.

Children are welcome to wear face masks or face shields to school but it is not mandatory. We encourage all parents to begin practicing with their children at home should you wish for your child to wear them. All staff will wear face masks and visors at all times which have been provided to them. All masks are required to be cleaned every day (this includes washing and ironing). Please make sure all masks are labelled. Unfortunately, this will be the reality for all of us for the next few years and the sooner your child gets used to it, the better. We will have additional disposable masks at school for emergencies. Please send a spare one in your child's bag if possible.

7. All children will be required to complete the Risk survey prior to returning to school. Parents are required to advise the school should anything change. All staff have also completed Risk assessments and plans have been put into place for those staff deemed to be at high risk.
8. Should any child or staff member have been in contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, they will be required to remain at home for 14 days prior to returning to school.

## Children's belongings

1. Parents are requested to send as few things to school as possible. No toys or unnecessary items will be allowed on school property.
2. A spare set of clothes are to be sent to school on the child's first day back at school. Please pack them in a separate plastic bag, preferably a zip lock bag. They will be kept in the child's locker until needed and they will be sent home once used.
3. Snack boxes are to be sent with as few extra items that need to be opened as possible. If you would like to send different items in small bags, please open them in the morning so that the children are able to open them without help.
4. Water bottles and caps will remain in the child's locker and will be taken out when used and will be put back immediately. These will no longer be kept in class buckets in order to prevent cross contamination with other children's items.
5. Please only send a dummy / pacifier and comforters if absolutely necessary. These will need to be washed daily.

## Procedures for children entering school

**Please take your child through this process prior to their first day back in order for it to be less scary. We will send videos for you to show them the required process.**

1. There will be a drop off area in the parking lot for parents to hand over their children to their teachers. No parents will be allowed through the pedestrian gates.
2. Parents and students are required to stand in line (if applicable) on designated markers in order for their child to be screened to enter.
3. Temperatures will be taken via a touchless forehead thermometer and anyone **with** a temperature of 37.5 degrees and above will not be allowed onto school property.
4. A basic screening will be done to ensure that the child does not have a temperature, cough and/or difficulty breathing.
5. Children over 3 will have their hands washed with disinfectant
6. Children will be taken by their teacher to their class where they will put their bag in their locker and thereafter will be directly taken to wash their hands.
7. They will then join their friends in the class.

# Daily procedures

1. No drinking water or cups will be available in the classrooms. Everyone is required to bring their own water bottles and absolutely no sharing of food or water bottles will be allowed (this is always our rule, but we will be even more vigilant).
2. Physical distancing will be encouraged at play times and no hugging, hanging on each other or physical contact will be allowed. When sitting for group activities such as story time, children will be physically distanced from one another. According to guidelines provided, a minimum of 1m space must be respected at all times. We will use developmentally appropriate ways of reinforcing this such as hoola hoops, markings on the floors etc.
3. Playtime will be staggered so as to reduce contact between classes and all playground equipment will be washed between classes.
4. Teachers will be particularly alert for any negative emotional or social changes in behaviour, particularly as a result of anxiety or stress related to COVID-19 and appropriate measures will be taken to address this and inform the parents of any concerns.
5. Crayons / Pencils will not be shared during class. Each child will have their own set which will be cleaned at the end of each day.
6. Limited extra murals are available until further notice.

# Hygiene

1. Prior to school opening, the property was thoroughly cleaned as well as sanitised by an outside company.
2. Classroom tables, chairs and equipment will be sanitized at regular intervals throughout the day, and thoroughly cleaned at the start and the end of each day.
3. At the end of each day, every class as well as all the equipment within it will be washed.
4. Each weekend the school will be sanitised by an outside cleaning company.
5. The children and staff will be required to wash their hands at least every two hours. In the toddler environment., this will happen every hour. Clean water and soap will be provided and proper hand washing for at least 20 seconds will be monitored. Disposable paper towels will be used to dry their hands. Fabric towels are prohibited
6. Temperatures will be taken at the same time. Anyone with a temperature higher than 37.5 degrees will be isolated immediately in a dedicated isolation room. Parents will be contacted and will be required to fetch their child as soon as possible (ideally within 30 minutes and no longer than 45 minutes).
7. Hand sanitiser will be available in all classrooms as well as throughout the playground and staff will encourage continued use throughout the day.
8. All bathrooms will be sanitised with every use and thoroughly cleaned at least every hour.
9. Child friendly signage will be put up throughout the school.
10. Safe preparation of food will be enforced. Only the cook will be allowed to handle food as well as cookware, utensils and plates. No sharing of utensils will be allowed.
11. Before meal times (morning snack, lunch and afternoon snack), children will wash their hands and then remove their masks. This will be taught to them by their teachers from the first day. Once they are finished eating, their faces will be washed with single use wet wipes, their hands washed and their masks placed back on.
12. We would highly recommend to all families that on arrival at home, clothes should be changed, shoes removed, hands thoroughly washed with soap, and then sanitised.
13. Sleeping cots, stretchers or mattresses will be spaced as far as possible apart. Head-to-toe positioning of children will be done. No child will share sleeping surfaces.
14. We will remove any equipment from the classes which isn't able to be washed continually.

15. When helping children with items that require them to touch them or their belongings (e.g. blowing noses), teachers will first wash their hands, then help the child, then wash their hands again. Gloves will be worn when assisting with nappy changes and toilet as per current procedures.

## Visitors

1. No parents or visitors will be allowed within the school pedestrian gate while children are within the property.
2. Parents or Visitors requiring to enter the school property will be required to set up a meeting before hand and will need to take place outside of school hours.
3. Everyone entering the property will be required to have their hands sanitized at the gate, and their temperature taken. Anyone with a temperature of 37.5 degrees and above will not be allowed onto school property.

## Parents Checklist

1. Monitor your child's health and keep them at home if they are ill.
2. Inform us immediately should your child, or someone that your child has had contact with, tests positive for COVID-19.
3. Teach and model good hygiene practices for your children. Wash your hands with soap and water frequently. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based sanitiser with at least a 70% alcohol content. Always wash hands with soap and water if visibly dirty. Cough and sneeze into your elbow and avoid touching your face, eyes, mouth and nose.
4. Encourage your child to ask questions and express their feelings with you and their teachers. Remember that your child may have different reactions to stress; be patient and understanding. Common responses include having difficulties sleeping, bedwetting, having pain in the stomach or head, and being anxious, withdrawn, angry, clingy or afraid to be left alone. Respond to children's reactions in a supportive way and explain to them that they are normal reactions to an abnormal situation.
5. It is strongly suggested that children receive the flu vaccine prior to returning to school and that all childhood vaccines are brought up to date.
6. Prevent stigma by using facts and reminding children to be considerate of each other.

## Updates

- 26/06/20: Updates to General Principles, point 6 – Masks do not need to be worn by the children.
- Procedures for children entering school point 5 – Only children over 3 will have their hand sanitised.
- 22/09/20: Removal of paragraph detailing returning to school dates as the school is fully functioning.
- 08/09/21: Updated document in line with current procedures

**This document has been compiled from guidelines from the World Health Organisation, UNICEF, The South African Departments of Health, Education, Social Development and Labour and the South African Montessori Association.**