



Dear Prospective Family:

We understand trying to make the best decision for your child and your family during this uncharted time is incredibly difficult. At MSW, we respect everyone's perspective, but we may need to make some challenging decisions that may not agree with you. For that we are truly sorry! Should your comfort level lead you to feel it is best for your child to not return to school in person, we hope you will consider the distance learning option that is being offered.

As we plan for school year 2020, we have asked each family to decide between in-school learning and distance learning for their child. We need you to review, sign, and return to our offices either the Return-To-School form or the Distance Learning form. Please contact the Office of Admissions to request the form that matches your choice for your child by emailing [SRadcliffe@TheMSW.org](mailto:SRadcliffe@TheMSW.org).

Below you will find our plan for opening in September for both in-school learners and distance learners. Please be sure to contact MSW with any questions you may have. Communication and patience are key as we navigate the changes we are all facing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Masks**

Students in grade one and above will be *expected* to wear **masks** throughout the day. Students in the Beginnings program (for two-year-olds) and the Primary program (for ages three through the kindergarten level) will be *encouraged* to wear masks.

All teachers will be wearing masks or face shields, and staff temperatures will be taken twice on a daily basis.

### **Protocols**

- All students, staff, and visitors will have their temperatures taken upon arrival.
- Questions will be asked about travel and contact with persons who have tested positive for COVID-19.
- Students will enter and exit through exterior classroom doors whenever possible. Sidewalks have been installed for easier direct access to classrooms.
- Everyone will hand sanitize immediately upon entering the building. Routine hand washing or hand sanitizing will be required throughout the day.
- Classrooms will be self-contained throughout the day.
- Each classroom will have a bathroom reserved to the use of its students and/or staff only.
- Individual workspaces for students will be six feet apart.

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- There will be routine cleaning of common spaces.
- Students will have their own sets of supplies.
- Parents and visitors will have restricted access to the building.
- All teachers will be wearing masks or face shields. Their temperatures will be taken twice on a daily basis.

**If I choose distance learning, can my child come back to the classroom at any time?**

MSW must follow mandated staff-to-student ratios and limitations on class size due to social distancing guidelines as recommended by the CDC. A space to return to the classroom may not be available until MSW can return to normal ratios and social distancing guidelines are no longer mandated. If space is available at the time of your request, your child may return to in-school learning.

A family may elect the distance learning option for their child after the start of the school year.

The need for distance learning will be reevaluated throughout the year but at a minimum it will remain in place through December 31, 2020. Should the state of Maryland go into Stage Three of the Governor’s Road Map to Recovery Plan, MSW will evaluate the comfort level of those families participating in distance learning regarding the return of their child to school.

**Will tuition costs for distance learning and in-school learning be the same?**

The tuition cost will be the same for either program.

**Parent Volunteer Commitment (PVC)**

MSW recognizes that due to social distancing limitations, PVC obligations place a burden on a family’s ability to complete the PVC requirement in the contract with the school. All PVC requirements will be suspended for the 2020-2021 school year. Should we need parent assistance, we believe our dedicated parents will rise to the occasion.

**All School Night and home visits**

MSW’s traditional back-to-school gathering, All School Night, will be via a virtual meeting online. We will send out a separate communication detailing how this will work. It is with a heavy heart that the staff will not be visiting new or rising student’s homes this year. There will be a visitation day at school for these children.

**Staff movement into different classrooms**

Careful consideration has been given to “specials”--the extra-curricular subjects added to the Montessori curriculum such as Fine Art, Spanish, Environmental Education, Music, and Chorus. The specialist teachers will use outdoor spaces to teach their classes when they can. When they cannot, they will be socially distanced from the students in the classroom. Appropriate measures will be taken to disinfect any areas or materials that they may use in a classroom.

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### **Will siblings be in the same classroom?**

Siblings who are in the same program level and are staying for After School Care (ASC) will be placed in the same classroom.

This is still under consideration for other siblings within the same program level.

### **What will distance learning look like?**

#### ***All Levels:***

We want to respect any requests for limited screen time or even no screen time for our distance learners. If you are a family that falls into this category, please speak with me directly. You will be provided curriculum and recorded lessons which you can view in order to assist your child with their work away from your devices.

Each classroom will provide a schedule that will include when your child will have the opportunity to join a lesson. When not in a lesson, the child is expected to complete his or her individual work. Depending on the age of the child, your assistance may be required.

Once we determine how many students will be involved in distance learning, we will better understand each guide's responsibilities to both the distance learners and the in-school learners. Support will be provided from aides in each classroom.

The guides have been provided with albums of lessons for each subject area. This, of course, is age-dependent and looks quite different from the Beginnings level to the Middle School level. When creating a plan for a student, the guides identify what lesson a student is ready to have and what degree of follow-up the student will be able to complete. Multiple students may be ready for the same lesson; however, any two students receiving the same lesson may receive different follow-up due to their own unique abilities.

It is our intention to continue to look at the lessons for which a distance learning student is ready and include him or her in the lesson to be given in a group with the in-school learners. We will not know the extent to which this is possible until we are notified of the number of students who will be utilizing the distance learning option at MSW.

#### **Beginnings:**

Curriculum will be adjusted to address the age of our youngest learners and their ability to focus on a device screen. Beginnings students will be provided with the opportunity to join a daily story time or community sharing via a Zoom gathering. These gatherings will be scheduled in advance. They will also be recorded so you can choose when to watch. You will also have a regular weekly scheduled time to meet virtually with Mrs. Merena to discuss your child's development.

#### **Primary:**

Because of limited student-to-staff ratios, Primary students will be grouped as follows: nappers, extended-day four-year-olds, and kindergarten-level Primary students. (Extended day four-year-olds and kindergarten-level Primary students work in their classrooms until 3 PM.)

For students of age three, curriculum packets will be made available to parents along with recorded lessons. If you feel your child is able to participate in small group lessons with Mrs. Strine or Mrs.

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Carroll, you will be provided a schedule for these lessons. These lessons will occur via a Zoom gathering. There will also be an opportunity for your child to join a daily story time or community sharing via a Zoom gathering with Mrs. Williams. These gatherings will be scheduled in advance and will be recorded so you can choose when to participate or watch. You will also have a regular weekly scheduled time to meet virtually with Mrs. Strine or Mrs. Carroll to discuss your child’s development.

For students of age four, curriculum packets will be made available to parents along with recorded lessons. There will also be an opportunity for a live lesson with Mrs. Strine on a daily basis and the opportunity for your child to join a daily story time or community sharing group via a Zoom gathering. These gatherings will be scheduled in advance and will be recorded so you can choose when to participate or watch. You will also have a regular weekly scheduled time to meet virtually with Mrs. Strine to discuss your child’s development.

For kindergarten students, curriculum packets will be distributed with the expectation that all work be completed. Daily lessons will be provided by Mrs. Carroll. Your child can participate live in these lessons or they can be recorded for parents and children to view later. Attendance will be recorded based on the work completed. There will be an opportunity for your child to join a daily story time or community sharing group via a Zoom gathering. These gatherings will be scheduled in advance and will be recorded so you can choose when to watch. You will also have a regular weekly scheduled time to meet virtually with Mrs. Carroll to discuss your child’s development.

A suggested daily schedule will be provided for each age division within the Primary program.

***Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary and Middle School***

The intention is for the distance learner to follow a schedule similar to the in-school learner. Below you will see a sample schedule. Please note this schedule will change as classroom groups are formed.

<b>Sample Schedule</b>	<b>In-School Learner</b>	<b>Distance Learner</b>
8:30 – 9:00 AM	Arrival and morning start	Possible morning walk
9:00 – 9:30 AM	Morning circle (socially distanced)	Joins classroom via Zoom
9:30 – 11:30 AM	Lessons and individualized work time	Joins any lessons that are recorded on the work plan
11:30 AM – 12:00 PM	Lunch	Lunch
12:00 – 12:30 PM	Recess	Recess – outdoor play
1:00 – 2:30 PM	Specials, lessons or work time	Specials, lessons or work time
2:30 – 3:00 PM	Clean-up and dismissal	Clean up work area
“Specials” include Spanish, Fine Art, and Music		

**Lower Elementary:**

Depending on the parent’s level of comfort with screen time for the distance learner student, your child will either participate in Zoom lessons or you will watch the recorded Zoom sessions to assist your child with the work that will be provided.

Each student will be given a lesson plan with the work for the week completely filled out. Please note that Montessori curriculum does not provide for instruction in each subject area during every school day. A distance learner may see more work sheets due to the fact that he or she will not be able to select from among the materials on the classroom shelves available to the in-school learner. Our

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intention is to send certain materials home, but this will be limited by the number of students participating in distance learning.

I also want to note that students work at different speeds; some are faster than others at completing work. This is normal and expected. In the classroom environment, a student who finishes work quickly may move on to a practical life work such as sewing or art. A student may also join other students in writing stories or researching a topic of interest. It is our suggestion that you have choices to meet these goals at home for your child. Please let us know if your distance learner is interested in doing a special project with an in-school student via online technology.

Curriculum packets will be created to go along with the work plan and lessons. Instructions on how you will receive curriculum packets and connect to the classroom will be shared with you prior to the start of the school year.

### **Upper Elementary and Middle School:**

Both of these levels will use Teams – Office 365 to view their daily schedule of assignments and lessons. If you wish to limit screen time for your child during distance learning, we will use an alternative method for you to receive your child's work. Lessons will be recorded and can be viewed at a later time if a student is unable to attend at the scheduled lesson time or if a parent wants to watch in order to limit a child's screen time and then provide instruction directly to the child.

Any assigned books will be available for pick-up prior to the start of the school year.

It should be noted that students naturally work at varying speeds and some will finish work sooner than others. If you believe your child needs supplemental work, please mention this to your child's guide. Distance learners will be able to communicate with the classroom through the Teams system and can work on self-selected projects in partnership with in-school learners as well.

Should your child need an individual lesson or one-on-one instruction, this will be scheduled accordingly. You will also have a regular weekly scheduled time to meet virtually with your child's guide to discuss her or her development.

Instruction on using Teams technology will be provided prior to the start of the school year.

#### ***Message from Jodi Lupco, Head of School, MSW:***

***Please keep the lines of communication open. Every child enrolled at MSW is important to all MSW staff, and because we are a small school, we will be here for you and for your child. MSW is grateful for your decision to stay connected during this pandemic. We will also be here for you when it is over!***

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