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**Bala House Montessori School
Health and Safety Guidelines, Protocols and
Procedures for School Re-Opening 2020-2021
Revised August 28, 2020**

Bala House Montessori School will reopen for in-person instruction on September 8, 2020. The health and safety policies and procedures listed below are aligned with the most recent guidance from the Montgomery County Department of Public Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Office of Childhood Development and Early Learning/Department of Human Services, and the state of PA. **This is a dynamic document that will be updated based on the latest guidelines as they are released.**

In preparation for our students' return, the Bala House facility has undergone a thorough deep cleaning, the classrooms have been rearranged to accommodate social distancing, and staff has been trained on all new procedures. This document will cover the following areas:

- Practicing Physical Distancing & Healthy Habits
- Additional Food Safety Procedures
- Increased Cleaning and Disinfection Efforts
- Screening for Symptoms - Children and Staff
- Procedures in Case of Child or Staff Illness
- Student Records and Documentation

PRACTICING PHYSICAL DISTANCING & HEALTHY HABITS

As it is difficult to prevent young children from coming in close contact with one another and their teachers, our goal is to limit the number of people in close contact in order to lower the risk of transmission. Physical distancing will be practiced by staff to the maximum extent while still allowing for the care of children. Bala House understands that staff needs to be in close proximity to children when providing care, but our program will limit physical proximity as best as we are able.

Cohorts of Children and Staff

- The same group of children and staff members will be kept together throughout the day; there will be no combining of groups. To the degree possible, staff will remain with the same groups. This will help reduce potential exposures.
- Our school program will use four classrooms. Each classroom will be a dedicated classroom pod.
 - Classrooms #1, #2 and #3 are located on the first floor and Classroom #4 is located on the second floor. The classrooms have been rearranged, in order to promote more individual work and furniture removed to maximize available space for physical distancing.
- Classrooms #1 and #4 have their own bathrooms. Classrooms #2 & #3 will share a bathroom. To the extent possible, children from each class will not use the bathroom at the same time. After each use, bathroom high touch areas will be disinfected.
- Children will eat lunch in their classrooms at their designated tables, with 2 children per table. Tables will be arranged to accommodate appropriate distancing.
- We will encourage individual work/play and activities as much as possible. In the classroom, children will also be allowed to work/play in pairs in larger designated play areas. Children will play outdoors with their classroom group of 15 or less in designated areas.
- Children will have individual items to use in the classrooms, including pencils, scissors, crayons, glue sticks, markers, etc.
- No large group activities or field trips will be planned. There will be no external specialists, special guests, or activities. Bala House staff will either provide movement, art, and music in each class or via zoom.
- Tables for classroom work have been appropriately distanced and the number of children at each table will be limited. Each child will have a designated chair and table assignment labeled with their name.
- Shared works/materials will be limited and disinfected between each use, or put aside until disinfection is possible.
- Each classroom will make use of our outdoor green space as much as possible.
- Recess will be on a staggered schedule. The use of playground equipment will be alternated daily for singular group use in a 24-hour period. Less restrictive supervised play on the natural side of the playground will be encouraged, along with non-contact, teacher-led games and activities out on the field.
- Bala Beach play time will involve sprinkler play only; water tables and shared

water play toys will not be provided.

Personal Protective Equipment

- Bala House staff must wear face coverings indoors and outdoors, unless a medical reason prevents the staff from wearing a face covering. Face shields are an acceptable alternative to face masks when high temperatures and humidity create unsafe conditions. Staff is required to launder cloth masks after each use. Disposable masks and face shields will be available for staff use at all times.
- As of Monday, July 13, 2020, all Bala House students are required to wear a face covering indoors and outdoors. Children 2 years and older are required to wear a face covering as described in the Governor's Order, unless they fit one of the exceptions below:
 - If a parent, guardian, or responsible person has been unable to place a face covering safely on the child's face, they should not do so.
 - If a child 2 years or older is unable to remove a face covering without assistance, the child is not required to wear one.
 - If an individual cannot wear a face covering due to a medical or mental health condition or disability, the individual should consider wearing a face shield.
 - Children with other sensory sensitivities may have challenges wearing a cloth face covering. Parents should contact their health care provider for advice about wearing cloth face coverings and may consider wearing a face shield.
 - Individuals who are communicating or seeking to communicate with someone who is hearing impaired or who has another disability, where the ability to see the mouth is essential to communication, also are not required to wear a mask. Other face coverings such as plastic face shields may also accommodate such disabilities.
 - The Department recognizes that getting younger children to be comfortable wearing face coverings and to keep them on may create some difficulties. Under these circumstances, parents, guardians, licensed child care providers in community-based and school settings or responsible persons may consider prioritizing the wearing of face coverings to times when it is difficult for the child to maintain a social distance of at least 6 feet from others who are not a part of their household (e.g. during carpool drop off or pick up, or when standing in line at school). Ensuring proper face covering size and fit and providing children with frequent reminders and education on

the importance and proper wearing of cloth face coverings may help address these issues.

- Parents are required to wear masks at pick up and drop off.
- Staff will wear gloves when preparing food, helping children during lunch, administering medication, and/or in contact with any bodily fluids.

Drop Off and Pick Up Procedures

- Distant drop-off and pick-up procedures, along with staggered arrival and dismissal times have been put in place to minimize contact and crowding at drop off and pick up
- Parents and other visitors are restricted from entering the building
- All parents/caregivers are required to wear masks at drop off and pick up
- Families are encouraged to have the same parent/caregiver drop off and pick up the child. The only other children allowed in the car should be siblings.
- We will have two (2) staggered drop-off times in the morning.
- We will utilize 2 designated car line areas for all drop-off and pick-up times. Parents and students will remain in the car and a staff member will do a temperature check while the child is in the car. Parents should have already completed their child(ren)'s daily health screening via Bala House's distance drop off website before arrival
- Drop-off and pick-up areas will have cones and classroom signs
- Classroom # 1 drop-off and pick-up area will be at red benches at the bottom of the handicap ramp
- Classroom # 2 drop-off and pick-up area will be at the front entrance of the school
- Classroom #3 drop-off and pick-up area will be at the Tower door.
- Classroom #4 drop-off and pick-up area will be at the red benches at the bottom of the handicap ramp. This area will be disinfected between drop-offs.
- At pick up, parents/caregivers will sign children out using their own device and unique PIN, via Bala House's distant drop off website. Only authorized release individuals listed on the Emergency Contact Parental Consent form will be allowed to pick up and sign out any child. You will need to share your PIN with the authorized release person.
- We will limit contact with parents/caregivers as much as possible. Teachers will use email for any updates/communication and parents will use email to contact teachers.

Hand Hygiene

- Hand hygiene will be practiced at the following times:
 - Arrival at school
 - Before and after eating
 - Before and after using the toilet
 - After coughing, sneezing, or blowing nose
 - After playing outside
 - After coming in contact with bodily fluids
 - After handling garbage
 - Children will be reminded and guided to wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
 - If soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty, a CDC approved alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol may be used with children under adult supervision.
 - Hand sanitizer is stored out of reach of children.

ADDITIONAL FOOD SAFETY PROCEDURES

- Lunchboxes will not be permitted. Children's lunches must be packed in disposable paper bags, Ziploc bags or containers. Disposable juice boxes or bottled water should be sent in place of reusable water bottles. No reusable food containers will be allowed.
- No food prep by children or sharing of food is allowed.
- Bala House provides all snacks. Snacks will be prepared in individual servings by staff.
- There will be no reusable glassware, utensils, plates, towels used in the classrooms.

INCREASED CLEANING AND DISINFECTION EFFORTS

- Increased hand washing and frequent sanitizing of high touch surface areas
- Staff will clean and disinfect frequently used items at 3 required intervals, daily.
- Full cleaning and sanitizing of room and bathrooms daily
- Children and teachers will set aside works that need to be cleaned at a "disinfection station." Staff will disinfect works and equipment with Purell Spray that has been approved by the CDC before next use.
- According to CDC guidelines, children's books, like other paper-based materials such as mail or envelopes are not considered high risk for transmission and do

not need additional cleaning or disinfecting. However, Bala House will clean and sanitize all articles used by children, daily.

- Children will nap in their own classrooms on designated cots. Nap items will be sent home each Friday to be laundered weekly.
- Bala House staff and our cleaning company are using cleaning products that are EPA-approved for use against COVID-19. As is required by DHS licensing, all cleaning products are stored securely and out of reach of children.
- Each child's belongings are kept separated and in their individual cubby. Cubby areas and work drawers will be further distanced to decrease the possibility of mixing children's belongings. Children should bring only what is necessary to school (jacket and bagged lunch).
- Merv 13 filters are being used in the HVAC and will be changed out every 3 months by our landlord, the church of St. Asaph's.

SCREENING FOR SYMPTOMS - CHILDREN AND STAFF

Bala House will conduct a daily screening for all staff and students upon arrival at school. The daily screening includes:

- **Temperature Check:** Every staff member and child coming into school will have their temperature checked each morning. If any child or staff member has a temperature of 100.4 or higher, they will be sent home. Designated staff members wearing masks and gloves will use a non-touch thermometer.
- **Symptoms:** Each parent must complete a health screening for their child every morning before arrival via Bala House's distant drop off website. A designated staff person will complete a brief checklist to evaluate COVID-like symptoms for all staff, daily.
- **Visual Inspection:** Designated staff person will make a visual inspection of all staff and children for signs of illness (flushed cheeks, rapid breathing, fatigue, coughing).
- **Exposure:** If any staff member, parent/caregiver, or child has been exposed (within 6 ft for 15 minutes or more) to anyone with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days, they must inform the school director, contact their physician and seek out testing, and follow the guidelines below:
 - **With symptoms** - Individual should be tested for COVID-19
 - If test result is negative, return to school 14 days after last exposure to the person with COVID-19 and symptoms have resolved.
 - If test result is positive, follow 'return to school' guidance for

positive test with symptoms

- **Without symptoms** - Individual should self quarantine for 14 days after last date of exposure to the person with COVID-19. (Household contacts are in quarantine until 14 days after household positive is released from isolation).

PROCEDURES IN CASE OF CHILD OR STAFF ILLNESS

If a child develops symptoms, the child will be isolated while waiting to be picked up, with a staff member wearing PPE. Sick children must be picked up within 30 minutes after being called by the school. If a staff member develops symptoms while at work, they will be sent home immediately.

- Staff or a child who have one (1) symptom of COVID-like illness: fever 100.4 or higher, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, or new loss of taste or smell or any two (2) of the following symptoms: chills, fatigue, muscle pain, sore throat, congestion, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea will be sent home immediately.
- If a child or staff member has symptoms of COVID-19 like illness:
 - They can return to school if:
 - Initial COVID-19 testing is negative and individual meets Bala House's normal criteria for return after an illness OR
 - a clinician has evaluated the child and documented an alternative diagnosis OR
 - for children who were not tested for COVID, all of the following are true:
 - at least 10 days since the onset of symptoms
 - AND
 - fever-free and off anti-fever medications for 3 days
 - AND
 - symptom-free

NOTE: repeat COVID testing is not required to return to school.

- If a child or staff member has a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19:
 - Bala House will contact the Montgomery County Department of Public Health for further instructions
 - All children and staff in the same classroom who have come into close contact (defined as greater than 15 minutes of interaction less than 6 feet away) may be required to quarantine at home for 14 days. Anyone who develops symptoms during that time should contact their

healthcare provider to request testing, and notify Bala House.

- Child or staff member should remain home until all of the following are true:
 - at least 10 days since the onset of symptoms
AND
 - fever free and off anti-fever medications for 3 days
AND
 - symptom-free

NOTE: Doctor's note is required to return to school.

- Bala House will notify all parents enrolled in the school about any exposure or positive cases of COVID-19 of a student and/or staff member.
- Cleaning/disinfection after a COVID-19 like illness:
 - Bala House will close off all areas used by a sick individual
 - Open windows to increase air circulation
 - Clean and disinfect all areas of use, such as classroom, bathrooms, common areas, and the area used to isolate the sick individual.

STUDENT RECORDS AND DOCUMENTATION

- Parents/Guardians must update and sign emergency contact forms, ensuring that phone numbers and names are valid and that emergency contacts can be accessed in the event a child becomes ill while at Bala House.
- Students, families, and employees who plan to travel or have **recently traveled must follow guidance from health officials.** COVID-19 information for travelers is updated regularly on the CDC website (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-in-the-us.html>).

By sending your child to school, Bala House presumes that you have carefully read, and agree to all of the above policies and procedures put into place to safely operate during the COVID-19 pandemic.

These policies and procedures are subject to change in order to comply with the health and safety requirements set by the Centers for Disease Control, the Montgomery Department of Public Health, the Office of Childhood Development and Early Learning/Department of Human Services, and the state of PA.