



27 Conshohocken State Road  
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004  
Phone: 610-664-6767  
Fax: 610-664-6792  
E-mail: [admin@balahouse.org](mailto:admin@balahouse.org)  
Web: [www.balahouse.org](http://www.balahouse.org)

**Bala House Montessori School**  
**Health and Safety Procedures for Operating During COVID -19**  
**Revised December 31, 2021 - UPDATES IN YELLOW (pgs. 4 - 7)**

The Bala House Montessori School has revised and updated some of the policies and procedures in this document due to the significant increases of the Omicron variant and the COVID-19 virus. We are keeping a close eye on the positivity rates in our area through biweekly calls with the Montgomery County Office of Public Health. The CDC expects that anyone with Omicron infection can spread the virus to others, even if they are vaccinated or don't have symptoms. Public health officials are also expecting a surge of COVID-19 cases in the coming days to weeks due to holiday travel.

These revised health and safety procedures were created with the most recent data and guidance from the Montgomery County Office of Public Health. The Bala House Board of Trustees and the Bala House COVID Task Force, along with the School Director, have taken into account guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the PA Department of Human Services/Office of Childhood Development and Early Learning, and the PA Department of Education. In addition, we must take into account the specific needs that our school requires.

Given our success over the past year and half with offering in-person instructions with very little interruption, we will continue to adopt and implement comprehensive procedures in an abundance of caution to ensure the health and safety of our students and staff members and community at large. **This is a dynamic document that will be updated based on the latest data and guidelines as they are released and the specific needs of our students and staff to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic.**

The Bala House facility underwent a thorough deep cleaning in August 2021, 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:

- Vaccines for Staff Members
- 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

#### **VACCINES FOR STAFF MEMBERS**

- All Bala House staff members are mandated to be fully vaccinated unless exempt for a religious or medical reason. If an exemption is accepted, these staff members will be tested 2 times per week with a PCR test.
- As of January 2022, all Bala House staff members are to have a booster vaccine.

#### **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. Each class has 2 stalls dedicated for their use.
- Tables for classroom work have been appropriately distanced and the number of children at each table will be limited to two children. Each child will be assigned a designated chair and table labeled with their name.
- Children will eat snacks and lunch outside as much as possible. Each child will sit on their own beach towel 6 feet apart from others. Siblings will be allowed to sit near each other if they choose. When snack and/or lunch will be in the classroom, one child will sit at a table, the other child from that table will sit on their towel on the floor 6 ft. away from others.
- 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 18 or less in designated areas.
- Children will have individual items to use in the classrooms, including pencils, scissors, crayons, glue sticks, markers, play doh, etc.
- No large group activities or field trips will be planned. There will be no external special guests, or activities. Bala House specialists will either be held outside or on zoom. Tumble Tots will be outside, music will be outside for as long as the weather permits, then will move to zoom. Kindergarten Spanish will be via zoom. Art projects will be created by the Bala House Art instructor, and left for each classroom teacher to carry out in the classroom.
- Each classroom will make use of our outdoor green space as much as possible. We have four designated play areas for our four classrooms to rotate daily.
- 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 and on the fields will be encouraged, along with non-contact, teacher-led games and activities out on the field.

## **Personal Protective Equipment**

- Bala House staff must wear face coverings indoors and outdoors, unless a documented 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.
- All Bala House students are required to wear a face covering indoors and outdoors. If a student cannot wear a face covering due to a documented medical or mental health condition or disability, the individual shall wear a face shield. Ensuring proper face covering size and fit is imperative. Please make sure that your child's mask does not fall down below their nose. If you are consistently reminding your child to pull up their mask, the mask is not the proper fit.
- 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 and children 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.
- Bala House students must have their face mask on before parents roll down the window for a temperature check. BH staff should not be putting on a child's face mask at drop-off.
- 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.
  - Hand sanitizer is stored out of reach of children

### **ADDITIONAL FOOD SAFETY PROCEDURES**

- Lunchboxes will be permitted. Children's lunches can be packed in reusable containers. Reusable drink containers are allowed as long as they have a pop up straw and a permanent lid that closes. **Disposable juice boxes or bottled water with a twist off cap are not allowed.**
- No food prep by children or sharing of food is allowed.
- Bala House will provide all snacks. Snacks will be prepared in individual servings by staff.

### **INCREASED CLEANING AND DISINFECTION EFFORTS**

- Increased hand washing throughout the day by both students and staff.
- Full cleaning and sanitizing of room and bathrooms 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 lunch box).
- Industrial Air Purifiers have been installed in all classrooms.
- Classroom windows will be open every day, as well as classroom doors to encourage circulation of air.

## **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.
- **Visual Inspection:** Designated staff person will make a visual inspection of all staff and children for signs of illness. If any visible symptoms, child will be moved to quarantine room, parents will be called and expected to pick up child within 30 minutes. Staff member will leave immediately.

## **PROCEDURES IN CASE OF CHILD, HOUSEHOLD MEMBER OR STAFF ILLNESS**

If a child develops symptoms while at school, the child will be isolated in our quarantine room 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 has **one (1) symptom** of any of the following: unexplained fever 100.4 or higher, unexplained headache, muscle aches, fatigue, chills, vomiting, diarrhea, cough, congestion/runny nose, head cold, sore throat, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, or loss of taste or smell.
- **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.
- **Vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals follow the same rules.**
- **Household Sickness:** If anyone in your household (this means anyone who lives with you in your home or a regular nanny or babysitter) is sick with **one or more symptoms** listed below, your child must stay home until the symptomatic household member is tested and you must share the test result with the school.
- **The symptomatic household member must be tested** with either a negative PCR test or 2 consecutive negative rapid antigen tests. (For example, for rapid tests: wake up Monday morning with a runny nose: swab and obtain negative result; Tuesday, again swab, obtain negative result). With negative testing for the household member who is sick and if your child remains asymptomatic, your child may return to school.
- Symptoms include any of the following: unexplained fever 100.4 or higher, unexplained headache, muscle aches, fatigue, chills, vomiting, diarrhea, cough, congestion/runny nose, head cold, sore throat, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, or loss of taste or smell.
- If a Bala House student is symptomatic, they need a PCR test to return back to school. Acceptable tests are ones that are reviewed, signed and verified by a physician or CRNP clearing them to return to Bala House. A home test or any other negative test results that have not been reviewed, signed and verified by a physician or CRNP will not be acceptable.

**(This follows the PA Department of Health Announcement on 12/20/21 which is included at the end of this document.)**

### **Bala House Student Who has tested Positive for COVID-19**

- A student with a positive test result requires a **10 day quarantine**; onset of symptoms is day 0. However, if the student is asymptomatic, the date of the test when administered is day 0 of a 10-day quarantine period.
  - For close contacts of the Bala House student who tests positive, the quarantine is 10 days. The last day of exposure would be day 0 of their quarantine period. A student can test on day 5 or after from the last day of exposure. They can be released from a 7 day quarantine with a negative PCR test and no symptoms (on day 8) or with a 10-day quarantine period with no symptoms and then no test is necessary.

### **Bala House Staff Who has tested Positive for COVID-19**

- For staff with positive test results regardless of vaccination status, 5 days of isolation, and then 5 days of diligently wearing mask indoors and outdoors. Staff member must be asymptomatic and 24 hours fever free at day 5 of isolation. Onset of symptoms is day 0 of 5 day isolation.
  - If asymptomatic, the date of the test when administered is day 0 of a 5-day isolation period.
  - If the staff tested positive and is symptomatic, then the date of the onset of symptoms is the day 0 of the 5-day isolation period.
- For the second 5-day period, the staff may come back to work, but must wear a mask at work, which is already required. In addition, at work, this staff member shall eat or drink in a room with no other individual present. The staff member shall disinfect the area before leaving.

### **EXPOSURE PROCEDURES**

- If a Bala House student is **exposed to a household member who is positive**, the following is required:
  - The Bala House student will need to quarantine during the household's positive **isolation** period for 5 days. Once the household member who was positive is released from isolation and is no longer infectious, then the Bala House student will begin their own 10-day quarantine with no test. Total quarantine for BH student is 15 days.
    - The Bala House student has the option to test on day 7 of their quarantine (namely the 12th day: 5+7 =12 days total) and could return on day 8 of their quarantine (namely, the 13th day) if the test result is negative and they remain asymptomatic.
    - The Bala House student can either have a negative PCR test on day 12 or 2 consecutive negative rapid antigen tests (day 12 and day 13) return on day 13) as long as they remain asymptomatic.
  - If a Bala House student is a **close contact (as defined as "within 6 ft. for 15 minutes or more") with a positive individual who is not a household member**, the following is required:
    - Without symptoms: quarantine for 10 days after exposure without testing OR on day 5 can be tested and with a negative PCR test or with 2 consecutive negative rapid antigen tests (Day 5 and day 6) can return on day 7).
    - If the Bala House student becomes symptomatic, please see Section **PROCEDURES IN CASE OF CHILD, HOUSEHOLD MEMBER OR STAFF ILLNESS for guidelines for symptomatic Bala House student.**

## TRAVEL PROCEDURES

- **Family members who in the past 7 days who have traveled and/or have been indoor, unmasked with unmasked persons not known to be covid negative for more than 15 minutes, must be tested, even if asymptomatic, to return to school.**
  - The test can be either a PCR or 2 consecutive rapid antigen tests.
  - **Rapid testing** can be either of the following combinations; Saturday/Sunday, Sunday/Monday before school or Saturday/Monday before school. Test results must be shared with the school.
- **Examples of travel or get-togethers are: traveling by plane, public transportation, Uber, and/or going unmasked to bars, restaurants, shopping, etc.**

### **Those who:**

- a) only gathered in masked scenarios**
- b) did not gather/travel outside household**
- c) traveled by car and gathered only in scenarios where all individuals were tested**

**will not be required to test.**

If testing is not available, the student would need to remain home for 5 days or until a negative test result is acquired, whichever comes first, to return to school.

- **Any household members who are symptomatic, please follow the guidelines under PROCEDURES IN CASE OF CHILD, HOUSEHOLD MEMBER OR STAFF ILLNESS**

## 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.

**By signing the Bala House Enrollment Contract, Parent/Parents agree(s) to comply with all Bala House Montessori Health and Safety Guidelines. Parent/Parents acknowledge that failure to act in accordance with the provisions listed therein, or with any other policy or procedure outlined by Bala House Montessori can result in termination of services.**

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 County Office of Public Health, the Office of Childhood Development and Early Learning/Department of Human Services, and the PA Department of Education.