



DMS COVID Safety Protocols for 2022-2023

Created 8/12/21, Updated 8/22/22

Safety is of the utmost importance for Desert Montessori. Our guidelines and protocols below have been informed by state recommendations, using best judgment, professional support, and protocols put in place in other school districts around the country. We follow the guidance of our licensing agency, Early Childhood Education Providers from the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department and have made adjustments or additions based on the specific needs of our school. The requirements that are in place at this moment may lighten up with time, or possibly become more restrictive. We will adjust accordingly in order to keep our doors open and our children and staff healthy and safe.

Current guidelines to operate are as follows (based on ECECD, PED, and CDC requirements and adjusted to reflect our program):

- Licensed providers may operate at group sizes and ratios according to their licensed Star level. Our maximum current ratios are as follows:
 - Toddler: 5.5:1
 - Primary: 9:1
 - Elementary: 10:1
- Providers must conduct daily wellness checks on every child at the facility. *Screenings will include visual evaluation and temperature check.* Staff may also ask the child questions like "how are you feeling?" Any signs of illness will exclude a child or staff member from entering the school. This could include runny nose, coughing, sneezing, and discharge from eyes.
- Training on COVID safe practices is required for all staff, including cooks and transportation staff.
- Good hygiene practices are required, including frequent handwashing/sanitizing
- Frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned often throughout the day and disinfected at the end of each day.
- Students will bring their own lunch and snack daily and are not to share food.
- In group events, there will be designated servers who are handling utensils. Wear gloves when serving food and plate each meal.
- When weather permits, food will be eaten outside. If meals need to be inside due to inclement weather, students will be distanced during meal times.
- Transportation safety requirements if using school van:
 - ◇ Mandatory mask wearing for all passengers.
 - ◇ Use the vehicle's vents and windows to bring in fresh air and avoid using the recirculated air option.
 - ◇ If possible, maintain one empty space between passengers.
 - ◇ Require handwashing/hand sanitizer before and after exiting the vehicle
 - ◇ Clean and sanitize regularly touched surfaces between groups/runs.
- We encourage all eligible staff to get a COVID vaccination.



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- Providers must exclude children or staff from the program who have symptoms consistent with COVID-19 and/or test positive, including those who are fully vaccinated.
- Staff and children who were in close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 positive case may continue attending school as long as they are wearing a well-fitting mask for 10 days. They are not required to test unless symptomatic, but are encouraged to test 5 days after exposure. Anyone who is exposed to a confirmed case should monitor themselves for symptoms for 14 days after exposure; if symptoms develop, they should get tested and self-isolate while waiting for the results. The CDC currently defines “close contact” as “anyone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (for example, three individual 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes).” *This definition is subject to change.*
- Staff and children who are infected with COVID-19 must quarantine for at least 5 days. If, after 5 days, they are no longer symptomatic, they may return to school and wear a well-fitting mask for 5 additional days.

Additional Desert Montessori guidelines are as follows:

- All classrooms will keep all windows and doors open, as weather allows. Two fans will be stationed at the windows - one for exhaust and one for intake of fresh air. At least one air filter will be running all day in each classroom.
- Masks are currently optional for all students, staff, and parents or visitors entering the building unless a person has had a close contact with an individual infected with COVID-19, in which case they must mask for 10 days following exposure.
- Classes will be in separate rooms and time spent together will be limited to outdoor activities.
- Tables and activities centers will be positioned six feet apart. The same guideline will be followed at naptime. Mats and cots will be placed 6 feet apart. If the room does not permit, children will be arranged head to foot.
- Children are to be reminded never to share or touch anyone else's food or drink.
- Parents must screen their children and themselves before leaving home. Anyone with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 should get tested and remain at home in isolation until getting more guidance. Length of isolation depends on contact with someone with known COVID-19 and other factors.
- Handwashing should take place at the beginning of the day, before and after meals, after outside play, after using the restroom, before and after classroom activities and after coughing or sneezing.



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- Routine cleaning and disinfecting of all surfaces using cleaning products that meet EPA standards.
- Any parent who knowingly sends a child to school with symptoms of illness may forfeit their enrollment.
- Any failure to report being diagnosed with COVID-19 or report of contact with a person infected with COVID-19 can lead to termination of enrollment and or employment.
- All classrooms will be equipped with hand sanitizer, disinfectant spray, gloves and extra masks in the event a child wishes to or needs to wear one.
- If a student displays symptoms related to COVID-19 while at school they will be moved to an "isolation tent" so as to be removed from other students. A staff member will remain with them while parents are called to pick the student up.