



# PARENT HANDBOOK

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## COVID-19 Edition 2020 School Year

Version 3 – November 30, 2020

**Phoenix Montessori School**  
Parent Handbook  
**COVID-19 Edition**

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## Introduction

Dear Parents,

As we are getting ready to reopen after being closed for more than three months, Phoenix wants to ensure we are all aware of the changes required to reopen. While we know this is an uncertain time since none of us have ever experienced this before, the teachers and administration at Phoenix are committed to providing a quality Montessori program that is safe, educational and welcoming!

While the focus of this guidance document is on the new health, safety and operational measures that are required in order to safely re-open, please note that every effort will continue to be made to uphold the welcoming and caring environment that Phoenix has always provided for its children and families.

While many things will seem different with new procedures in place for safety of all, this will still be a Montessori environment that fosters inquiry and experiential learning. It is our goal to draw out and inspire the best in our students as we provide them with opportunities to create, explore, and learn.

This handbook will lay out the changes as we enter the next phase of this COVID-19 pandemic. This situation is constantly evolving, so all changes included in this handbook will remain as the “new normal” until further notice. We will make sure that all changes are realistic and feasible for staff and children by following TPH (Toronto Public Health) and Ministry of Education (Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014) guidelines. Please be sure to read through this and sign and return the last page electronically.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions about the policies and procedures that are outlined in this Parent Handbook. They are in place to ensure that Phoenix is a safe, healthy and welcoming place for your family.

Kind regards,

*Lori Priolo*  
*Principal*

## **SCREENING**

### **Location:**

- Screening for bus children must be completed on Transparent Classroom or children will be held in the lobby area until the screening is received from the parent.
- Drive by drop off children will be temperature checked and screening confirmed, unless you are walking to school from nearby then you will look for Ms. Dinardo on the sidewalk in front of the school and do the screening procedure with her before your child proceeds to their entrance
- Drop off times will be between 8-8:30am in the parking lot of Hogle Funeral Home. Please remember that school starts at 8:15. Mrs. Priolo will come to each car and confirm you have completed the screening questionnaire with you. She will also take your child's temperature without touching your child. She will then direct you to your classroom drop off point. If you have multiple children being dropped off - please proceed to one of the dropoff areas and disembark your children.
- Pick-up times will be at 3:30 pm at cohorted doors and gates. Please call the school or buzz at the door to let us know you are here if it is after 3:40, charges will apply for pickups between 3:40 and 5 pm. (see before and after care notes on page 10) You will need to buzz and then go to your child's cohort door.
- During pick-up times, parents/guardians will wait at the entrance for your child's cohort and practice social distancing. There are signs and markings indicating appropriate distances. Wearing a mask is mandatory.
- If your child will be arriving or will be picked up between 8:30am and 3:00pm, parents/guardians MUST arrange this with the office staff to ensure proper procedures are followed at all times.
- Visual guides will be provided to assist with physical distancing (e.g., pylons/tape on fence or pavement) in the event that a line-up forms while parents/guardians are waiting to pick up children.

### **Health Screening Procedure:**

- Parents/guardians are not permitted in the school at this time
- If your child has an underlying health condition that would require you to answer YES to a symptom – for instance; runny nose for seasonal allergies – then you must submit a Baseline Health Statement via email before your child's start date. A doctor's note is not required.
- A screening questionnaire must be completed at home, every day for every child attending school. Mrs. Priolo or Ms. Dinardo will confirm your answers along with the temperature check at drive by drop off.
- Phoenix will deny entry to any person including the child of a parent/guardian who has any of the symptoms outlined in the 'COVID-19 Reference Document for Symptoms' on the Ministry of Health's COVID-19 website. If a family member living in the same house develops COVID-like symptoms, the child of that household will not be allowed to enter our school for 14 days or until all family members are symptom free.
- Parents are required to keep any sick children at home. If a child or staff member comes to school with any COVID-like symptoms, including a temperature equal to or greater than 37.8 degrees Celsius, or if the child(ren) have any signs or symptoms listed below they will be sent home.
- Screeners will take appropriate precautions when screening, including maintaining a distance of

at least 2 metres (6 feet) from those being screened, or wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) (i.e., mask; gloves; eye protection (goggles or face shield)).

- Non touch thermometers will be used. Thermometers with single use covers will be used to get a temperature when the child is in the classroom at school and appears to be sick.
- **\*Please see the waiver at the end of this document\*** to be signed by all parents/guardians.

## SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE

- Everyone will be greeted in the Hogle Funeral Home parking lot or on the sidewalk in front of the school.
- The following statement will be posted on the doors and screening table, and all questions must be answered by parents/guardians and staff:

“As you are aware COVID-19 continues to evolve, as a result we are conducting active screening for potential risks of COVID-19 for everyone who enters the location. The screening will ensure the safety and well-being of staff, children and families”.

1. Have you/the child travelled outside of Canada within the last 14 days: Yes/No
2. Have you/the child been identified as a close contact with a confirmed or probable COVID-19 case? Yes/No
3. Have your child been instructed to stay home and self-isolate by TPH or another Public Health entity or health care worker? Yes/No
4. Do you/the child, or any member of your household have any of the following symptoms:
  - Yes/No (for each)
    - Fever and/or chills (confirm temperature at drop off)
    - New or worsening cough
    - Shortness of breath
    - Hoarse voice, difficulty swallowing
    - Runny nose or sneezing, nasal congestion(not related to prior or known condition)
    - New smell or taste disorder(s)
    - Nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain(not related to prior or known condition)
    - Unexplained fatigue/malaise/lethargy
    - Chills
    - Headache

**Note:** as outlined by the Province of Ontario, parents/guardians are asked to take the child(ren)'s temperature daily before coming to Phoenix and honestly reporting it during the screening procedure. Giving your child any fever reducing drugs before sending said child to school may cause an outbreak at the school and will jeopardize your child's space at the school. Likewise, all staff are asked to take their own temperature daily before coming to Phoenix.

Telehealth Ontario 1-866-797-0000

## **Responses:**

**If you answered “YES” to any of the symptoms included under question 1 of the new screening tool provided October 2nd:**

- Your child should stay home to isolate immediately.
- Contact your child’s health care provider for further advice or assessment, including if your child needs a COVID-19 test or other treatment.
  - The school should be notified if you proceed to testing and what the results of the testing were

**If you answered “YES” to only one of the symptoms included under question 2 of the new screening tool provided October 2nd:**

- Your child should stay home for 24 hours from when the symptom started.
- If the symptom is improving, your child may return to school/childcare when they feel well enough to do so. A negative COVID-19 test is not required to return.
- If the symptom persists or worsens, contact your child’s health care provider for further advice or assessment, including if your child needs a COVID-19 test or other treatment.
  - The school should be notified if you proceed to testing and what the results of the testing were

**If you answered “YES” to two or more of the symptoms included under question 2 of the new screening tool provided October 2nd:**

- Your child should stay home to isolate immediately.
- Contact your child’s health care provider for further advice or assessment, including if your child needs a COVID-19 test or other treatment.
  - The school should be notified if you are getting yourself or your child tested and then what the results of the tests were

**If the individual answers “YES” to question 3, 4 or 5 of the new screening tool provided October 2nd:**

- Your child should stay home to isolate immediately and follow the advice of public health.
- If your child develops symptoms, you should contact your local public health unit or the health care provider for further advice.
  - The school should be notified if you are getting yourself or your child tested and then what the results of the tests were

If the parent/guardian or staff answers NO to all questions, the child or staff have passed the screening and the child/staff can enter the building:

- Designated staff will take children to their classrooms. Staff will wear mask and shield when escorting children to their cohort entrance
- Staff will use proper hand hygiene between children or use new gloves for each child.

If the individual answers YES to any of the screening questions as shown above, or refuses to answer, then they have failed the screening and cannot enter the building.

- If you have submitted a Baseline Health Statement for your child in regards to symptoms then you do not answer YES to that symptom unless it is a worsening symptom from your child’s baseline and if that is the case then you should be keeping your child home until that symptom returns to your child’s baseline level for 48 hours
  - The staff or family will be told to return home and self-isolate immediately.
  - If a child or staff member is denied entry at screening, reporting procedures mentioned below will occur.
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### **Documentation of Screening:**

Documentation of the information received during active screening must be recorded on PHOENIX's Transparent Classroom and the Daily Log for children and staff. The supervisor is responsible for ensuring that this information is managed and retained as required.

### **MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT**

If a child or staff begins to experience symptoms of COVID-19 while attending Phoenix, the following procedures will occur:

- Staff members presenting any COVID-like symptoms will be required to go home immediately.
- Symptomatic children will be immediately separated from others in a designated, supervised area until they can go home. In addition, where possible, anyone who is providing care to the child should maintain a distance of 2-metres.
- If a 2-metre distance cannot be maintained from the ill child, appropriate PPE will be donned and prevention techniques utilized to limit virus transmission to those providing care.
- Phoenix will contact the local public health unit to notify them of a potential case and seek input for next steps. All steps will be strictly adhered to.
- Parents of the child or the staff member will be advised to use the self assessment tool provided here <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>
- Environmental cleaning of all spaces the child was in will be conducted.
- Other children and staff in the cohort who were present while the child or staff member became ill will be identified as a close contact to the TPH. The TPH will provide any further direction on testing and isolation of these close contacts.
- Children or staff who have been exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19 will be excluded from the childcare setting for 14 days or until TPH advises a date for return.
- A medical note is not required for a child or staff to return to school

### **ILLNESS POLICY**

Reference Phoenix's current Health and Wellness Policy – decisions regarding illness will be guided by our current policies in conjunction with this Covid Parent Handbook.

### **REPORTING**

- Child care centres within the meaning of the [Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014](#), have a duty to report suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 under the [Health Protection and Promotion Act](#). Phoenix will contact the TPH to report a child or staff member suspected of having COVID-19. The TPH will provide specific advice on what control measures should be implemented to prevent the potential spread and how to monitor for other possible infected staff members and children.
- Any elementary aged child who reports a positive Covid-19 test will be reported to CovidSchools@toronto.ca.
- Phoenix will respect the confidentiality of any staff member or student who experiences COVID-19 symptoms and/or tests positive for COVID-19.
- Reportable diseases (diseases of public health significance) shall be reported immediately by an administrative staff member by calling TPH or Telehealth [1-866-797-0000](tel:1-866-797-0000) (24 hours, 7 days a

week). The TPH will investigate and confirm these reports prior to any communications to parents or staff.

- Administration will utilize the Covid-19 Decision Guide provided by TPH.
- If a confirmed case of COVID-19 is reported then Phoenix will submit a Serious Occurrence report to the Program Advisor of the Ministry. A Serious Occurrence report must be submitted as well if a cohort is shut down by the TPH.

## **TESTING**

- Symptomatic staff and children should be referred for testing. Testing of asymptomatic persons should only be performed as directed by the local public health unit as part of outbreak management. A list of symptoms, including atypical signs and symptoms, can also be found in the 'COVID-19 Reference Document for Symptoms' on the Ministry of Health's COVID-19 website.
  - Those who test negative for COVID-19 must be excluded until 48 hours after symptom resolution.
  - Those who test positive for COVID-19 must be excluded from Phoenix for 14 days after the onset of symptoms and clearance has been received from TPH.
- Phoenix must consider a single, symptomatic, laboratory confirmed case of COVID-19 in a staff member or child as a confirmed COVID-19 outbreak in consultation with TPH.
- Children, including siblings, or staff who have been in contact with a suspected COVID-19 case should be monitored for symptoms and cohorted (i.e., grouped together) until laboratory tests, if any, have been completed or until directed by TPH.
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- Staff members awaiting test results, who are asymptomatic, may continue to work unless there is reason to believe they would be considered a case (e.g., potential exposure to an ill or positive case or household contact). Staff should also monitor for symptoms while waiting for test results; if they become symptomatic, they should be excluded from work.

## **COMMUNICATION**

- If a child begins to show signs of COVID-19, the parents/guardians will be notified immediately by phone by the administrative staff. The time, date and symptoms will be documented by administration and kept for future reference if needed on the Daily Absence log.
- Parents are required to provide current phone numbers to Phoenix and keep them updated at all times. All other emergency contact phone numbers need to be updated as well. If a parent/guardian cannot be reached, the emergency contacts will be called. Parents/guardians need to make arrangements to pick up their child as soon as possible.
- Phoenix will follow all direction from TPH as to when and how to communicate information about a communicable disease and/or outbreak to parents/guardians and staff.
- Phoenix is committed to providing information in a reasonable timely, respectful manner to all parents/guardians and staff about communicable diseases or outbreaks. This will include but is not limited to emails, phone calls, posted signs on doors/walls of the school, etc.
- Video and telephone interviews/meetings will be used to interact with families when needed.
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## EXTRA HYGIENE MEASURES AND PROCEDURES

### 1. Handwashing:

Phoenix has a *Hand Hygiene Policy and Procedures* that will be used for all staff, children, parents/guardians and visitors.

All children will be encouraged to wash their hands before choosing a piece of material and bringing the material to the sanitization table upon completion or staff will remove said material to be sanitized.

### 2. Sanitizing/Disinfecting:

- Phoenix has an *Environmental Cleaning and Disinfecting Policy and Procedures* that all staff will be properly and routinely trained in.
- All materials will be sanitized between uses and at least daily unless being assigned to one child for a number of days (ie elementary)
  - Phoenix is using an electro-static sprayer with Bioesque product to sanitize materials, shelves, tables and chairs as well as the outdoor playground equipment
  - One staff has been assigned the job of touchpoint cleaner and makes her rounds repeatedly over the course of the day including using the electro-static sprayer to sanitize as above

### 3. Mask wearing:

- Masks and shields are to be worn and other appropriate personal protective equipment are required for staff that are part of screening procedures or with a child who is being isolated for pickup.
- Guides must wear masks and face shields while in the school when social distancing is not possible. Guides in YCC and Casa who are giving lessons where it is important for the child to see the guides mouthshape (sound games) or facial expression are allowed to wear a clear mask with a shield during these times. Otherwise guides should wear medical masks and shields when in their cohorts, while in hallways, bathrooms or in the staff room unless during eating or drinking. Social distancing must be maintained when not wearing masks and shields.
- As per new guidelines released August 4, children in grade 4 and up must wear masks at school. Parents will need to provide several masks to be worn over the course of the day with somewhere to put the used masks which will need to be laundered and returned to school the next day – Paper bags are a better choice than plastic.
- At Phoenix parents of children grades 1 to 6 have chosen to provide and have their child wear a mask while in the classroom. Appropriate mask breaks are provided over the course of the day
- Parents or guardians dropping off by walking or picking up at the end of the day are required to wear a mask

### 4. Social distancing

- Phoenix will promote physical distancing, to the greatest extent possible, in all school settings. This may include limiting the number of adults and children per classroom, off-setting indoor and outdoor play, cohorting all classrooms, etc.
- Each class is considered a “cohort”. Each “cohort” will social distance from other “cohorts” to assure safety. Recesses are staggered to ensure children are not in cubby spaces at the same time
- Cohorts will not intermix and will be with the same guides and assistants wherever possible.

- This means that for September through December care will only be offered between 8 and 5 pm daily so that children can remain in their cohorts until 5 pm.
- Staff will avoid getting close to faces of children, where possible but continue to be welcoming and accessible.
- Staff will set up classrooms in a way that encourages physical distancing, especially during meal and dressing times.
- All large group events are cancelled at this time.
- Any meetings required by staff or with parents/guardians will be done through online meetings or in a space and manner where all parties will easily maintain a 2-metre distance.
- All parents and guardians are asked to wear a mask when dropping off or picking up children

#### 5. Managing Communicable Diseases

- Phoenix has a *Managing Communicable Diseases Policy and Procedures* that all staff are properly and routinely trained in.

#### 6. Interactions with Infants and Toddlers

- Proper hand hygiene will be practiced at all times.
- Recognizing that physical distancing is difficult with small children and infants, suggestions to support physical distancing include:
  - planning activities that do not involve shared objects or materials
    - Frequent handwashing
    - When materials are used consecutively, hand washing will happen before and after an activity and materials will be sanitized
    - when possible, moving activities outside to allow for more space.
- Children must not share food, feeding utensils, soothers, bottles, sippy cups, etc.
- Mouthed toys must be removed immediately for cleaning and disinfecting and must not be shared with other children.
- Label clothing and personal items with the child's name to discourage accidental sharing.

#### 7. Outdoor Recess

- Only one cohort will use the playground space at any one time or a 2-metre separation will be created between the cohorts if necessary
- Playground structures will be cleaned and disinfected between cohorts unless weather prohibits.
- Children will bring their own sunscreen, labelled, and there will be no sharing.
- Staff will help children apply sunscreen and use proper hand hygiene between each child.
- Cohorts will use the same entrances/exits assigned to their cohorts to enter the playground area
- Elementary children will continue to use the local playgrounds, sanitizing hands before and after use and washing hands upon return to school – Lower and Upper groups will visit separate playgrounds to avoid cohorts intermixing

## **ACCESS TO CHILD CARE SPACES**

Due to the new requirements for smaller class sizes, Phoenix will prioritize the limited childcare spaces by considering the following:

- Families of frontline workers
- Siblings of another child randomly chosen to be offered a space
- Balance for mixed age groupings
- Families where parents must return to work and who work outside of the home
- Families with special circumstances that would benefit from children returning to care, such as children with special needs
- Other local circumstances.

## **CHOOSING TO DEFER ATTENDANCE**

- Should a current family choose to defer attendance to a time later than September 8<sup>th</sup> it will be necessary for fees to be paid to retain your child's space in the classroom.
- "Families whose children attended a licensed child care centre immediately before the emergency was declared, must be given at least 14 days notice to accept a placement available on or after September 1, 2020. Licensees can begin charging fees once a space has been accepted. If a parent chooses not to accept a space, the licensee will be permitted to require fees to hold the space or will be able to offer the space to another family." *Shannon Fuller document, July 30, 2020*
- if you do not wish to continue paying fees to retain your child's space in their classroom, you can request to be placed on the waitlist so that when you are ready to return it might be possible to rejoin your child's class at that time. Please be forewarned that there are at least 100 names on the waitlist waiting for spaces in all levels
- if you choose to withdraw from the school – the Withdrawal Policy will be in effect

## **BEFORE AND AFTER CARE**

- due to cohorting and the difficulties of introducing additional staff members into a cohort for the month of September through December we will not offer before care until 8 am and the latest pick up time will be 5 pm.
- When we feel it is safe to create another cohort for aftercare children we will bring back our extended care staff to be able to provide care to those who require it between 5-6.
- We are choosing this route in an abundance of caution believing that the cohorts are an excellent way to manage the COVID risks

## **VISITORS**

- There will be no non-essential visitors to the school during this time.
- Educational consultants, speech therapists and other specialists are allowed in the school with proper PPE and social distancing where possible.
- Ministry staff and other public officials (e.g. fire marshal, public health inspectors) are permitted to enter and inspect Phoenix at any reasonable time and will follow screening procedures.
- Student teachers from the Foundation for Montessori Education are allowed.
- There will be no volunteers in the school during this time.

## **BUSING**

- Busing services will begin on Tuesday, September 8<sup>th</sup>.
- All parents must send their child's screening into the school via Transparent Classroom before putting their child on the bus.

- A temperature check will be done by the driver before allowing the child on the bus
- The driver will be required to wear a mask and gloves. The driver will use gloves when assisting a child with seat restraints.
- All children – no matter age- will have to wear a mask (unless under 2 years) while on the bus
- Siblings will be seated together
- Windows will be opened to allow air circulation when weather conditions allow
- After the children have been dropped off at the school, the driver will sanitize the bus with the electro-static sprayer and disinfectant

#### **MANDATED CLOSURES AND DISTANCE LEARNING**

- If all of Phoenix is mandated closed by the government, we will move to distance learning for Elementary and the Learning Portal will be available for all other levels. Elementary distance learning availability will depend on whether the teacher is well and able to provide this distance learning.
- There has been no guidance from the ministry regarding return of funds for mandated closures, until we have further direction we are unable to provide a policy regarding this.
- Withdrawal from the program will follow the standard withdrawal policy in the Parent Handbook.

## Parent or Guardian COVID-19 Handbook RECEIPT and WAIVER Form

Parents or Guardians,

Please thoroughly review the Parent Handbook "COVID-19" Edition 2020, which contains the policies and procedures for Phoenix Montessori School while in the process of reopening. After reading the handbook, please complete this form and return it to the school via email prior to your child's return. This form will be a waiver for the entrance screening procedures each day your child attends. It will be kept in your child's file for the duration of the school year.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

*Lori Priolo*

Principal  
Phoenix Montessori School

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I, \_\_\_\_\_ (print your name), the parent/guardian of  
\_\_\_\_\_ (print child's name), hereby acknowledge receipt of PHOENIX 's  
Parent Handbook COVID-19 Edition. I have read and agree to adhere to all the policies and regulations set  
forth in this handbook. I acknowledge and understand that the services, sanitary practices, screening  
processes provided by Phoenix during the Covid-19 Pandemic are as safe as possible for my child(ren). I  
waive any liability of Phoenix Montessori School, its administration and staff as a result of contracting a  
communicable disease.

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_