



410 Totten Pond Road, Waltham, MA 02451 | AdvancingMilestones.com | P: 781-895-3200 | F: 781-895-3226

June 15, 2020

Dear Milestones Families,

With summer fast approaching, we wanted to share the expected programming that begins remotely on July 6th. We anticipate implementing the hybrid model that Kim Rockers outlined in her email to you on Friday during the summer, with our target date being as early as July 13th (contingent on the implementation of the forthcoming final DESE guidelines for summer programming that have not yet been issued). The realities of being on-site, the considerations being put into place, and the plans thereafter are worthy of unpacking. Please review this letter/email as informational. Our MDS re-entry team is developing and has developed numerous procedures, however, this letter is to serve as a preliminary list of standard shifts in our practice as it relates to how our kids will feel the change.

This email will outline what we know thus far and what it will mean for our students. Clearly, the guidelines do impact how we operate given all the safety measures. We are aware that there may be additional items that may not be fully addressed in this letter, however, there are some key points that we feel need to be unpacked to give families an opportunity to process the information in chunks.

Some of the uniqueness and expectations of Milestones are impacted due to COVID-19 restrictions. Here is a list, although not exhaustive, of some adaptations that we believe families need to be aware of as you plan ahead.

Please note that these guidelines presently pertain to summer instruction, as DESE has not yet issued guidelines for fall programming.

Water Bottles: Due to the very nature of COVID-19 spread, students must bring in water as there will be no Brita or water dispensers available for community use.

Lockers: Students will not have access to the use of Lockers, therefore, materials will need to stay with the student at all times.



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Computers: All students will be provided with a Chromebook to use and will be responsible to transport in the safety case to and from school. Some students already have borrowed Chromebooks, these will continue to be dedicated throughout the summer. Since students can not share, if forgotten, one can not be borrowed for the day.

Lunch: The cafe is not going to be permitted this summer; therefore, all students will need to bring in their own lunch (and snacks, if applicable).

Sensory Room: This space will not be available at any time for usage this summer. In order to maintain minimal contact and cross-contamination, we are not able to provide this option.

Playground: Our playground is closed until further notice due to COVID-19. We are exploring other outside safe activities, and outdoor classes are at the discretion of the teacher.

Movement Breaks: Students will only be permitted, with staff in a 6 ft. distance, a walk around the school building. Teachers will be incorporating these into their programming as needed. No walking breaks will be permitted within the school building. Please bring a jacket or umbrella so you can walk outside should it be raining.

Kitchen: The kitchen will be closed. Students will not be able to access food or prepare recipes in our student kitchen.

Proximity: While in school, our students will stay in a designated classroom. Students will not be transitioning between classes, but rather, our staff will transition. Students will remain in the classrooms from the start of school to dismissal. As previously mentioned, walking breaks will be outside and limited.

Capacity: At any given time, DESE allows a total of up to 10 students and 2 staff in a space. MDS has up to 9 to a class with 2 staff. Based on DESE guidance, there will be no more than 12 people in a room. This will be carefully monitored. There will also be no more than 25% of our student body onsite at one time.

Masks: We are encouraged to expect students (as well as staff) to wear face masks to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Our staff has been recently trained and we know based on DPH, CDC, our state mandate, and COVID-19



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transmission, the use of masks to serve as a barrier is deemed necessary. Although opinions may vary about masks, we want our students to follow the guidelines as we may have students and staff that have an increase in susceptibility. We ask that you begin to desensitize your children to masks. You may ask them to wear them for small periods of time and slowly increase. You may try different types of masks (cloth, disposable, face shields, etc) to determine what is most comfortable for them. For the safety of all, the use of masks is critical. Students will be asked to wear their mask prior to entering the building if they are not already wearing a mask upon arrival. DESE asks that parents/guardians provide their students with a mask each day, and they recommend that students also keep an extra mask in their backpack. Milestones will have disposable masks available if a student forgets their mask on a specific day.

(Disclaimer: DESE does acknowledge, as does MDS, that we can not require students to wear masks. Exceptions may be a result of a disability, age, medical conditions, or health and safety. In addition, we want to make sure our parents know that there may be times we can't maintain the masks universally. Nonetheless, this is the State guidance for school, however, the use of masks is our expectation while on school premises.)

Health/Illness: Please look for forthcoming specific guidelines regarding students' wellness to attend school onsite that will be shared by our school nurse, Lyn Ross, after we receive final DESE guidelines. DESE has confirmed that any staff or student who is not well should not come to school onsite. If students present as not well once in school, they will be expected to leave if the school nurse, Lyn Ross, deems as so. In order to ensure families are able to be contacted for swift transport, we insist on having two emergency contact numbers (in addition to parents/guardians) that provide us with two local contacts who can pick up and drive your child in the event of an emergency if parents/guardians are not available. Without reliable local contacts, we put the school community at risk. In addition, if your student experiences seasonal allergies, we recommend that you outreach to Lyn Ross in advance (lross@advancingmilestones.com) so that we can be aware of your student's presentation.

Hand Washing / Sanitizer: Handwashing is required frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds as per CDC guidelines. In between, students will need to use hand sanitizer (realistically) multiple times a day as well. Hand sanitizer will be provided by Milestones. This is a must. We recommend that students practice both frequent handwashing and the use of hand sanitizers at home.



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Attendance in building: Each designated day, only the staff and students assigned to be on-site, ie. those with permission will be the only people within the school. Each day, Milestones will be able to account for the same personnel and students with no changes. This helps with securing cohorts within the building during the week. When staff is not assigned to be onsite they will be assigned to work with students remotely.

Drop off and Pick-up: DESE is not permitting visitors in schools this summer. All families and transportation providers will drop off and pick up in the designated location, the side of the building (bus doors) of the school (bus line). No one will be allowed in the lobby. No exceptions.

Materials: Only necessary items will be allowed in the school. No personal items are needed (toys/games, stuffed animals, personal electronics, fidgets, etc.). We expect students will bring in a lunch/snack, the school provided Chromebook in the carry case, and water. Students will have their own school supplies at their desks. A supply list may be requested by teachers and families will be notified if specific materials are needed.

As with everyone dealing with COVID, we are forever learning and shifting. The parameters that we must adhere to in order to reopen will require previewing to our students. It is important to us that you have as much knowledge to begin assisting this transition. Our staff is developing teaching expectations for families to have to assist in preparing our students. We realize these changes may create big thoughts. DESE expects the school to follow stringent guidelines. These are complicated times and we will work with DESE, you, and our districts to provide a learning platform that is comprehensive and safe.

Despite the limits, what is open is the minds and hearts of our community. We are proceeding with caution and anticipation for a new normal. As we learn, we share.

This upcoming week, we will be sending your child's schedule to families and districts. This will include the remote virtual schedule and on-site plan (for when we are able to implement). We have received some questions that we would like to provide responses regarding transportation, activities, and in-person attendance.



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Districts will be notified of our remote schedule and when we expect to move to the hybrid model. Transportation is coordinated through the district and we are not directly involved in any manner. If families wish to transport, you can let your district know. Nonetheless, districts are working incredibly hard to adhere to the guidelines and will work with families. Please direct all questions regarding transportation to them to receive responses. As stated, we will give districts more than a week's notice of any start date.

In-person attendance is encouraged, however, we realize that not all families will feel comfortable and/or may have other reasons for wishing to stay remote. In an effort to meet both needs, MDS will be having the classes remotely on in school days for any student that is not attending in-person. Our Executive Assistant Brittany Asselin will be outreaching to families this week to confirm if you will have your student participate onsite. We will let you know further steps as it relates to communicating with your district. We plan to mark attendance as full-day if the remote learning schedule is followed during the school day time. Since we are easing our kids back, students will only be onsite one assigned day from 8:30 am - 12:30 pm (on either a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday), which is in accordance with the DESE recommendation. On those days, should students stay home and attend remotely, they will need to attend each class as if they were in school. We are still honoring the half-day on Friday when we will have electives and homeroom.

Although we will not be going on field trips or having fun onsite events in the school as outlined above, we are utilizing the remote platform for electives and virtual field trip recommendations. In school, our content will be a continuation of the learning that we just ended, time to build rapport with new students, and practice social distancing. We know that there is a curriculum that teachers still wish to instruct, and we believe that the learning shall continue to promote progress and review as we embark on the uncertainty of the fall. Credits are earned however we are not providing grades. The expectation remains that students will be in attendance and participate as they would in any other summer program. We will be keeping districts informed of attendance as we always do. If any family expects to take a vacation and will be absent for a week, please notify the district and let us know. Lastly, we ask that families review upcoming messaging and protocols that will be finalized and shared as all members in our community will be expected to adhere to them.



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Thank you for riding this wave with us. We look forward to celebrating the success of all in this remote virtual world we are slowly rising out of. May you all embrace the sun and enjoy your vacation.

Best,

Kirsten Esposito, Ed.D, Principal
Gillian Warwick, Special Education Administrator