



MLS COVID-19 Response Plan

As we approach the 2020-21 school year, we want to thank you for choosing My Little School for your child's education. We fully appreciate the decision that you, our families, are making in sending your children to MLS and that you have put your children's social-emotional and educational needs first at a time when we face significant challenges in our city, in our country and in our world.

We eagerly anticipate opening our doors once again to the My Little School community. With guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), New York City Department of Health (NYC DOH), various local medical doctors and other professionals in their field on our MLS Task Force, we've created our safety protocols outlined in this document to give you a sense of the plans we've developed thus far to safely reopen our school this fall.

While school will look different than it has in years past, we will strive to create the same environment that you know and expect from MLS; one where children and families feel welcomed, secure, and cared for, and where each child and parents feels at home.

Please note that the information to follow is comprehensive and outlined as follows:

- School Opening
- Important Phase in Dates
- Health & Safety Plan Overview
- Arrival and Dismissal Procedures
- Class Sizes
- Safety Precautions & Social Distancing
- Additional Considerations and Other Infection Controls
- Cleaning Procedures Elaborated

- Arrival and Dismissal
- Preschool Testing for Teachers
- Symptom Screening and Management Plan
- Virtual learning in the Event of School Closure

School Opening

As of today, **our plan is to begin school with outdoor visits on August 31st** (a more detailed calendar and phase-in schedule with specific information as it pertains to location will be sent separately in August). In addition to the guidance of the Center for Disease control (CDC), NYS and NYC Department of Health (DOH), the following factors must be considered. As always, our plans are meant to be flexible to pivot as needed to keep safety at the forefront.

External Factors

- Stay-at-home/quarantine orders remain lifted
- Permission from the New York City Department of Health (DOH) for all Article 47 group childcare programs to run (as of 7/13 NYC DOH has said daycares can re-open in person)
- Guiding decisions from Governor Cuomo, who is expected to make a statement on New York State schools by Friday, August 7th
- Mitigation efforts in our local communities continue to result in declining cases, hospitalizations, and metrics in all seven categories of [New York Forward Plan](#)

Internal Factors

- Staff are trained and prepared to operate under new guidelines
- School spaces at MLS are ready to support physical/social distancing
- Cleaning and sanitizing operating procedures are in place and adequate supplies are available to properly execute
- Adequate PPE supplies are available for staff use

Commitment from MLS Families

- Assumption of Risk Agreement
- [Health Screening One-Time Attestation Form](#)
- Daily Health Screening through a new App (more details to come)
 - Please note that the questions on this form may evolve over time and we expect your continued cooperation and commitment

- Monitoring student health (particularly before arrival)
- Communicating with My Little School openly about health concerns
- Follow all policies and procedures to support a healthy community and mitigate the risk of the virus spreading. We recommend keeping your child's social interactions within their cohort.

Important Phase-In Dates

We have carefully and thoughtfully examined how children will transition back to school. In considering each child's social emotional well being, their health and safety, and the logistics involved, we've developed Phase-In schedules for each class. Your class Phase-In schedule will be sent in August, with the general approach as follows:

Welcome Back!	
Week of Aug 24th	Individual virtual meetings with teachers before school starts
Aug 31st	Individual outdoor visits with teachers
Sep 1st and beyond	Small group outdoor classes → small group indoor classes → whole group indoor classes

***Please note that we are currently planning to allow accommodations for separation, with one parent/caregiver per child in our 2's classes to accompany their child for separation in small groups. More details will be included in your individual class phase in schedules.**

Health & Safety Plan Overview

Student Health Screening

- All parents (on behalf of their children) will be asked to download an app to their phones to self-report and each day will answer a series of symptom checking questions. The answers will inform whether or not to proceed with sending your child to school. This health screening will help keep anyone sick or feeling symptomatic at home and away from the school community to help stop the spread of the virus
- Twice daily temperature checks (one in the morning and one mid-day) and an overall wellness check at arrival. If your child does have a fever of 100.0 or above during the mid-day check, please refer to our protocols regarding next steps (i.e. seeing your pediatrician and ensuring that your child is fever free for 72 hours before returning to school with a doctor's diagnosis)
- Health monitoring throughout the school day by faculty & staff

While the school looked into the feasibility of requiring all students to be tested, under guidance from several medical experts, as well as testing professionals, we have decided against this as a protocol. Essentially, considering the diagnosed cases of children under 5 has been extremely low world-wide, combined with the difficulty of getting young children tested and that in a low prevalence environment as is currently, the utility of surveillance testing at this scale is very limited, we have concluded it would be unnecessary.

Faculty and Staff Screening, Testing & PPE

- All staff members will be tested for Covid-19 before the start of school (see below) and again one month in to the school year; we will reassess next steps from there
- Completion of daily symptom screening via app, daily temperature check, and general health screening by administration at arrival
- Health monitoring throughout the school day
- Face coverings throughout the day and additional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including face shields, gowns and gloves will be available

All staff will be required to take a COVID-19 test for active infection within 1 week of the start of their enrolled session(s). Proof of a negative result must be sent to our office prior to opening day to attend. This allows us, to the best of our ability, to ensure that the teachers and staff begin the year COVID-free.

Cleaning and Disinfection

- Cleaning and disinfection of all shared spaces, gross-motor activity areas, equipment, and supplies between each group with sanitizers and an electrostatic sprayer
- Log system of when cleaning is done
- Increased daily cleaning and disinfection protocols by professional cleaning team after school hours
- Cleaning and disinfection of high touch surfaces throughout the day by teachers and facility personnel
- Designated supplies and materials for each group's exclusive use, as well as individual sensory materials
- Use of EPA-approved and CDC recommended soaps and sanitizers
- Upgrading HVAC with MERV 13 filters
- HEPA Air purifiers for each classroom

Individual Safety Measures

- Mandatory hand washing and sanitization protocol throughout the day (hand sanitizing stations will be installed where sinks are not available)
- Washing hands when visibly soiled
- Caregivers/parents to wear masks at all times if entering the building
- **Children ages 2 and above should wear masks whenever they are not in their classroom, and masks will be strongly encouraged for all ages, especially our older children, throughout the day.** We will work with children and families throughout the year to help increase comfort with mask wearing, Specifics include:
- Masks will be stored in paper bags in cubbies while in the classroom, if a child does not keep it on
- In order to mitigate the risk of the virus spreading, we recommend keeping your children's social interactions within their cohort. If you are unable to follow through with this, please be prepared to report contact with children in other cohorts in the event contact tracing is needed

- **Face coverings for children are strongly recommended and encouraged, but not required, as state guidelines and AAP recommendations only require this for students in Kindergarten and above. MLS will support and strongly encourage mask wearing for all children throughout the day.**

Reasonable Contact Reduction

- Reduced in-person class sizes to 15 students or less (see chart below)
- Social distancing between classes
- Promoting social distancing within the classroom (more details below).
- Teachers and students stay with their class for the entire day, with interactions from other staff members on an as needed basis (absence, special circumstance, emergency, etc.). Any person who comes into the classroom who is not a static member of the classroom will fill out a log, so that we know everyone who came in contact with the members of the classroom in the event that contract tracing is necessary

Symptom Management Plan

- We will assess all persons with possible Covid-related symptoms and instruct them to contact a healthcare provider to determine next steps. All children who have symptoms will require a doctor's note with a diagnosis to return to school.
- If you have been exposed to an individual with confirmed COVID-19 then you will need to quarantine for 14 days
- **If you receive a positive COVID-19 test you may return to school IF you meet all the below requirements:**
 - 10 days have passed since you had the positive test
 - you have been symptom free
 - No fever for at least 72 hours without the use of fever reducing medications.
- Enforcing strict symptom management, including isolation, communication, tracing, and post-illness protocol. If a child develops symptoms during the school day, he/she will be isolated from the rest of the class and a parent/caregiver will be asked to promptly pick him/her up and follow up with a healthcare provider

Class Sizes

MLS classroom groups will remain as static as possible throughout the school day. Our class sizes and teacher to student ratios will comply with the DOH guidelines for group childcare programs that was recently published. Within these groups we will establish pods. Group sizes are as follows:

Age Level	State Maximum Number of Students
2s/3s	12
3s/4s	15

4s/5s	15
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Safety Precautions & Social Distancing

Teachers will try to increase spacing and physical distancing with children from other classes when possible. Because maintaining social distance is not always possible to enforce with young children, the following established practices will also be in effect:

- Frequent and thorough hand hygiene for both faculty and students
 - Hand washing will take place when entering/leaving the room, before/after activities, eating, nap time, coughing/sneezing, bathrooming
- Teachers may be wearing an apron, smock, gown, or additional layer over their clothes. Employees will change this additional layer if it comes in contact with a child's secretions (including drool).
- Children soiled with secretions will be changed as necessary. As in past years, children should have multiple changes of clothes on hand in their cubby, and any contaminated clothes will be placed in a plastic bag and sent home for laundering.
- Teachers will wear gloves, wash hands (staff and child), and will disinfect appropriately between diapering/providing restroom assistance with each child. Teachers will also be provided with eye protection should they choose to utilize it for extra protection

Symptom Screening and Management Plan

In order to protect your child(ren), your family, and the entire MLS community, we ask that you keep your child(ren) home if they are sick with any illness and consult your physician.

All children must have their temperature checked, and parents are responsible for answering screening questions (see below) **every day, at home, before you arrive at MLS. Before the start of school this fall, we are asking all families, teachers, and staff to submit a [Health Screening One-Time Attestation Form](#), supplied by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, on which you agree to screen your child(ren) at home every single day.** (This form can be submitted through the account you'll set up in the app.) Children with any symptoms of COVID-19 must be kept at home. We will require all families, teachers and staff to submit an Assumption of Risk Agreement.



When you arrive at
54 Reade Street:

MLS Staff will screen your child before they can enter the building by:

- Making a visual inspection for signs of infection, such as flushed cheeks, fatigue, or extreme fussiness.
- Taking your child's temperature with a contactless thermometer. Everyone must have a temperature below 100.0°F in order to enter the building.
- Checking that a parent logged in through the app that morning.

Arrivals will be staggered and upon arrival, children will be quickly screened a second time before they are allowed to enter the building. MLS staff will make a visual inspection for signs of illness, and will take your child's temperature with a contactless thermometer. **Children and visitors who have a temperature above 100.0 will not be permitted to enter the building.**

We ask you to partner with us in dialogue about your child's health and to understand our need to be cautious and to question any symptoms your child may exhibit.

For general illness, children must now be fever free (without the use of medication) for 3 days before they can return to class. Please do not give your children medication and send them to school for any reason during this emergency. It puts the child and others at great risk and increases the potential for extended school closures that will impact the community.

COVID-19 Protocols

The current signs and symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- Fever - 100° or higher or any fever in the last 3 days
- Cough or sore throat
- Headache
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- **Gastrointestinal upset (nausea, vomiting or diarrhea) - especially prominent in children's cases**
- Nasal congestion or runny nose
- New loss of taste or smell
- Fatigue, Muscle or Body aches
- Chills or repeated shaking with chills

- Any changes in the child's baseline – lethargy, paleness, flushed, skin rashes, unusual spots, swelling or bruises, etc.

The New York State Department of Health considers close contact to be someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 10 minutes starting from 48 hours before illness onset until the time the person was isolated. If you have been exposed you should get a test and quarantine while waiting for results or must quarantine for 14 days and watch for symptoms.

- Should a child become symptomatic, they will immediately be isolated in a designated isolation room with an adult who will ensure they are wearing a face mask, and will stay with the child as arrangements are made for the child to be picked up. The adult will escort the child to the Reade Street entrance, where they will meet their caregiver. We will initiate cleaning and disinfecting of the classroom. A consultation with your child's doctor, as well as a doctor's note with a diagnosis and consideration of COVID testing will be required for the child to return to school. We will notify your classroom and sibling classroom (if applicable) that a child was sent home with x symptoms
- **If you or your child test positive, please inform the Director, Jordana Fruchter, immediately** as we must inform the NYC Department of Health of positive cases and participate in contact tracing efforts.
- You must inform us if a contact tracer alerts you to possible contact with the virus and arrange for another adult to bring your child to and from school.
- **If a parent or household member** (which includes any siblings, additional family members or caregivers in your home) **is COVID-19 positive or has symptoms:** Child(ren) must stay home and quarantine for 14 days as the children are a "close contact."
 - If the parent is being quarantined as a precautionary measure, **without symptoms or a positive test**, as a "contact of a contact," the child **may return** to School during the duration of the quarantine
- **If a child or teacher tests positive: The rest of their class will be sent home and advised to quarantine for 14 days.** For that time, the class will switch to virtual learning until it is safe to return to the classroom to continue in-person learning. The other household members of students/teachers that are in quarantine do not need to self-isolate (as they are not close contacts) unless the child they live with subsequently develops symptoms.
- In the event that there are two or more unrelated positive cases, the school will close for contact tracing. The length of the school closing will depend on the amount of time needed to investigate. If there is a clear link between the two cases (i.e 2 kids are siblings, or two kids had a recent playdate), then the remaining unaffected classes can return to school, with the exception of other children/staff that may need to be quarantine (i.e other children on the playdate that go to the other classes). If there is no clear link between the two cases, then it's considered a sign of community spread and the whole school will shut down for 14 days.

- The State and Local Health Department will continue to provide the school guidance on cases of exposures.

*The sibling(s) of a confirmed COVID-19 case must also stay home from school as a precaution.

If a person has a new symptom (for example, new loss of smell only) with no other diagnosis to explain it, they should stay home and talk to their health care provider about testing for COVID-19, even if it is the only symptom they are experiencing.

*****Please note - to protect the privacy of teachers and families, we will NOT be able to share any details (beyond the class grouping in which an infection has occurred) about who associated with a particular classroom has tested positive.*****

A COVID-19 symptomatic or positive person must stay home and quarantine. We must use the Health Department's ["Interim Guidance for Public and Private Employees Returning to Work Following COVID-19 Infection or Exposure"](#) to determine when adults and children may return to school

Additional Considerations and Other Infection Controls

- Classes will have designated, staggered times to transition to and utilize gross-motor spaces, shared bathrooms, and other shared spaces so that they will have minimal to no contact with other groups.
- MLS students and teachers who are able will only use the stairs
- Group activities that can, will take place outside. The children will not utilize the playground equipment at the park, and we will be utilizing neighborhood outdoor spaces as alternatives, including the White Street Synagogue courtyard. Lining up will include appropriate physical distancing.
- We are exploring which of our specialists and support staff will be in-person or via Zoom to adhere to DOH protocols.
- Snacks will be provided and will be individually served (as opposed to previous years where snacks were served family style). Children will be physically distanced at snacktime.

Cleaning Procedures Elaborated

- Teachers and the Facilities Team will routinely clean, sanitize, and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched.
- Toys that are not able to be cleaned immediately will be put in a bin after use by children and disinfected at the end of the day. We will forgo the use of soft toys, puppets, dress-up-clothes for the beginning of the year, as these items are harder to clean regularly. (We will reassess this decision at a later date).

- Shared spaces, like the gym, will be disinfected after each use using an Electrostatic Sprayer.
- All of our cleaning supplies are EPA approved and on a list of New York State registered/approved sanitizers and disinfectants effective against Covid-19.
- Weather permitting, and to the extent practicable while maintaining the health and safety of students and teachers, windows will remain open for optimal air circulation. Additionally, every classroom will use a Levoit Core 300 True HEPA Air Purifier which will support better air quality in these spaces, and all HVAC filters will be replaced with MERV 13 filters, the highest protective air filter to combat the spread of airborne viruses.
- Children will not share personal items. Coats, sweaters, separation items, etc. will be kept in your child's individual cubby during the day. These items will be sent home daily to be cleaned and disinfected. **Toys or other items that are tempting to share should not be brought to school.**

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

Assigned, Staggered Arrival & Dismissal Times

We will organize a staggered start for each class, between 8:45-9:15am, and families will have an assigned window to arrive at 54 Reade Street each day to limit the flow of people at one time. Security will be stationed at 54 Reade Street until arrival for all classes is complete. Your class's arrival and dismissal time will be sent in August with further details.

Caregivers should arrive promptly at the allocated start time for your child's classroom and wait outside of the entrance of 54 Reade Street, adhering to 6 feet social distancing, where each child will be temperature checked. We will likely have spots for classes on both sides of the sidewalk. At this time, caregivers will have limited access to the building, although considerations will be given for separation. When admitted into the gym, students will sit on a line of dots clearly marked on the floor that are at least 6 feet apart. When it is time for a class to ascend to the 3rd Floor, teachers will bring students up the elevator. If permitted, older students will walk up the stairwell to mitigate congestion.

The same applies to dismissal procedures at the end of their school day. Children will be brought to the front of the school for pick up by their caregivers.

Please note that this year, stroller storage will not be available as drop off will take place at 54 Reade Street.

Caregivers Must Wait Outside and Wear a Mask

Caregivers must wait outside and wear a mask until they are safely distanced beyond 6 feet from other caregivers at pick up. If at all possible, we ask that **the same** adult bring/pick-up

children to and from school each day. This will help to minimize the number of adults entering and exiting the school space and coming into contact with other children and families. *We understand this is not possible for all families at all times and simply suggest this as a best practice when possible.* Each child will sanitize their hands as they enter the building.

Teacher Communication

Since parents will be restricted from entering the building, more in depth communication between teachers and parents will happen through email, phone calls, texts, and written notes. Please utilize those channels to communicate any special instructions or information regarding your child.

Separation

Adults will be allowed to accompany children who are separating, in very small groups and will be expected to follow all necessary protocols. Otherwise, adults will not be allowed in the building. Separation will be a gradual phase-in process modified from years prior. More information to follow on this process in individual class emails.

Virtual Learning in the Event of School Closure

We will be ready to transition to online learning at any point should it become necessary. Should virtual learning be necessary for an extended period of time, we will make programming and staffing decisions accordingly in an effort to pass along the most savings as possible to parents. Please note that these savings could result in a lighter virtual offering. We continue to work on our plans for virtual learning and to consider what length of time and content are age appropriate and feasible within the structure we've laid out above. At this point we will be offering virtual after-school programming in order to ensure that students are familiar and comfortable with an on-line platform should it become necessary to transition to on-line learning.