Carson Montessori School

Carson **Montessori**

Covid Reopening Plan 2020-2021

**July 29, 2020**

Carson Montessori is the hands-on,

real-world school that teaches among the many life skills that are a key part of its curriculum, practical, immediately applicable

coping skills for everyday life.

It is the school where

Students are not scared, they are prepared.

Carson Montessori School

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Carson Montessori Charter School

School Reopening Plan

July 29, 2020

Introduction:

Following the closure of schools in March of 2020, due to the worldwide Pandemic, Carson Montessori, which is a real-world, hands-on, Governor’s certified STEM School, launched a virtual program in 48 hours. During the school closure, which ran from March 16, 2020 to June 3,2020, CMCS was able to provide equitable learning and serve 100% of our students. At this time, Carson Montessori Charter School is presenting our plan to reopen schools for the 2020-2021 academic year.  With this document, Carson Montessori Charter School intends to provide the information and guidance needed to help the community, families, students, and staff understand the aspects of the reopening and the operation of CMCS under the existing public health conditions.

Carson Montessori Charter School is sponsored by the Carson City School District and while CMCS is an independent charter school site, under NRS, and operates with its own Governing Board and a single administrator, there are contracted services that exist between the Carson City School District and Carson Montessori Charter School. For that reason, Carson Montessori Charter School is following very closely the Reopening Plan of the Carson City School District, including the School Calendar and CCSD General Safety Protocols. Because Carson Montessori is a specific type of school, many times the CCSD Policies are adapted to fit site specificities.

At this time, the Carson Montessori Charter School’s Reopening School Plan offers two options to deliver instruction, as we start school for the 2020-2021 school year. Option One: is a Fully Remote/Virtually delivered education programs that meets the Nevada Department of Education’s approved Path Forward Program of Distance Education.

Option Two: A combination of distance education and in-person instruction referred to in the plan as Hybrid Learning. A Third Option is designed to allow for CMCS to be prepared, should the opportunity present itself, to be able to open back-up, completely with in person instruction. At all times, CMCS is bound by the Governor’s Directives. CMCS also considers recommendations from the CDC, and the State and Local Health Department.

This plan is the result of input from a variety of sources including citizens, parents, staff, community partners and the Carson City School District’s Survey, which Carson Montessori participated in and the District’s Reopening Committee.  In June, citizens responded to the survey, launched by the Carson City School District, seeking information about instructional preferences and educational expectations.  A portion of the survey information is based on educational outreach and experiences that occurred during the school closure in the spring of 2020.  We also had a staff member on the committee the Carson City School District established to discuss the community concerns, expectations, and values in developing a plan to guide and direct the reopening of schools in the fall.

First Day of School for Students:  **Carson Montessori Charter School’s Reopening Plan was approved by the CMCS Governing Board at their Board Meeting on July 29, 2020.** As part of the Plan, the Governing Board voted to modify the existing school calendar for the 2020-2021 school year, so that staff could take advantage of the five extra Professional Days granted by the NDE. Schools will officially reopen for students, in grades K-6, on August 24, 2020.

Communication:

It is the goal of Carson Montessori to provide our students, families, staff, and community partners with the information needed to understand the processes and changes associated with the reopening of schools.  CMCS will host virtual *Parent University* trainings on the operations of the programs and the Nuts and Bolts of the technology. There will be a *Knowledge is* *Power* series to help share the most accurate information and resources available. All families have access to a 24-hour hot line to obtain the latest information. Families receive personal contacts at least once a week from school personnel. Carson Montessori will utilize local media outlets, school websites, text messaging, email, social-media, and automated telephone-calls to educators, families, students, community members, and other key stakeholders in the dissemination of pertinent school-related information.  All families will receive an electronic registration FORM through their email to register their student for next year. The FORM will allow families to select which option, which days, and ask questions that relate to their individual situations.

Since March, Covid Compliant Signs have been posted on school entrances that promote everyday protective wellness measures and describe how to stop the spread of germs (such as proper social-distancing, handwashing, and the use of face masks). *Hand Washing Lessons* are an integral part of the *Montessori Practical Life Curriculum*. When the school building and grounds are open, more signs will be placed in highly visible areas.  Continual announcements identifying tips to reduce the spread of illness will occur regularly.

Free, family-friendly materials by national, state, and local public health agencies will be available through our email electronic distribution for students, families, and staff.  Should it be necessary, all health-related messages will be available in both English and Spanish.  Carson Montessori will also provide current, informational, health and wellness related resources dealing with COVID-19 on our Facebook page.  We will have staff trainings regarding illness and pandemic responses.

Emergency Management:

In the event of an emergency, CMCS will activate the *Carson Montessori Crisis Plan* and use our multi-layered communication systems to contact stakeholders to provide instructions, guidance, and information to staff and families to maintain operational integrity.  In the event of an emergency, CMCS has established Safety Services Protocols and a developed tested decision-making model, based on the Incident Command System. CMCS has the capacity and the plan needed to continue operational services and systems. We have planned how to layout our parking lot to evacuate our buildings and maintain social distancing.

Reopening School Buildings:

School buildings and grounds were closed to the public in the spring of 2020 by executive mandates from Governor Steve Sisolak.   The Governor has since released additional Emergency Directives providing CMCSs and schools local discretion to re-open buildings for instructional, administrative, extracurricular, and planning activities under social distancing protocols. Based on guidance from the Nevada Department of Education, CMCS’ reopening scenarios include plans for full-time distance education for all students, plans for in-person instruction using social-distancing protocols, and a hybrid-learning model. For the 2020-2021 academic year, Carson Montessori Charter School is prepared to operate under three distinct models.

1. Fully Remote teacher-led, virtual learning
2. A Hybrid-learning model where students spend two days on campus and three days off-campus. With this model, students engage in face-to-face learning in a classroom with a teacher and on a separate day the student learns at home with teacher-directed lessons, assignments, and practice using virtual methods and tools.
3. 100% full return for in-person education when directives allow.

Fully Remote/Virtual Learning:

The Reopening of Schools Plan offers families the option of a fully remote, teacher-led, virtual instructional model as a replacement to in-person instruction.  A family’s decisions to participate in this model is likely based on concerns about the potential for virus exposure if their child(ren) physically attends school. This learning system is available for any family with the commitment to engage in full-time fully remote instruction. If public health conditions improve allowing Carson Montessori to resume in-person instruction for all students, CMCS will reassess its operating status and any additional educational options for families at that time.

Family Commitment and On-line Learning

Fully Remote Families have been asked to commit to the first 9 weeks. Families should be prepared to support their children’s active participation in all remote learning activities.  They will need to ensure their children have adequate space, materials, and technology access to support virtual instruction.  If needed, the CMCS can provide a Chromebook and assistance to access internet services, as needed.

Students enrolled in remote online learning will have their work facilitated by GoogleClassroom. Students will receive both synchronous instruction (class meetings, small group, and one-on-one) and asynchronous instruction (pre-recorded lessons that focus on essential standards in each core subject area including reading, writing and math).  They also will have availability, as does every Carson Montessori Student to all of the on-line enhancement programs CMCS has including but not limited to IXL, ZEARN, Khan Academy, RazKids, Reading A-Z, NWEA’s Math, etc. CMCS teachers presenting lessons to the students remotely will facilitate the Students being able to engage in learning approximately 2.5-3.5 hours per day. However, CMCS is a school where family comes first and we know our students inside and out. We are aware of the fact that our families are working odd hours in order to survive. We also know that there are Backyard Learning Pods, students in daycare, students who are considered homeless and students with SEL needs. For that reason, lessons are recorded, we provide Chrome Books so the families can access the lessons at their convenience. Many of the lessons are Family Practical Life Project Based Lessons. In addition, CMCS staff will provide specialized instruction, as needed, such as ESL, 504, or Special Education Services. IEP teams, EL teachers, and 504 plans will determine the type and amount of services provided. There is a hot-line phone number that has a licensed teacher available 24-7 for use by any student or family. If a student needs extra help, two teachers, so they remain two-deep, are dispatched to the student’s home site to help or provide “front yard services.”

 In the event that schools are closed due to governmental restrictions, students in the Fully Remote program may continue using the Fully Remote program without interruption.

The Hybrid Model:

The Hybrid school structure requires a daily rotating schedule. Groups of students or Cohorts attend school on assigned days each week. The chart below illustrates how the Hybrid Model would look as it serves a portion of the students at school on Tuesdays and Thursdays and another portion of the student body on Wednesdays and Fridays. Students who are not attending in-person on any given day participate in asynchronous or off-site remote learning.  Students at home will use virtual curriculum resources and materials to complete instructional tasks assigned by their teachers, as well as recorded lessons from their teachers. These students also will have teachers available and who are making phone contact with them during their off-site learning.

**Hybrid Learning Schedule**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Monday | | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
| Teacher Planning | Group 1:  At Home  Remote Learning | Group 1:  In School | Group 1 :  At Home  Remote Learning | Group 1:  In School | Group 1 :  At Home  Remote Learning |
| Teacher Planning | Group 2:  At Home  Remote Learning | Group 2 :  At Home  Remote Learning | Group 2:  In School | Group 2 :  At Home  Remote Learning | Group 2:  In School |

Explanation of the Hybrid Model:

1. The Hybrid instructional model relies on a regular, repeating, predictable weekly schedule. This model is designed for students to spend two days at school and three days at home. For the student group scheduled to meet on campus, school will occur in Montessori fashion, except for increased emphasis on social distancing, and limitations on building occupancy. Students working from home or another remote location are expected to complete virtual assignments and practice problems that support mastery of the standard(s) being taught.

This model was selected for the 2020-2021 school year in collaboration with the Carson City School District’s School Reopening Committee to allow families, especially those who have students both at Carson Montessori and District schools to schedule and plan for child-care arrangements.  The predictable schedule provides a reliable pattern on which families can organize and operate.

1. Students will be placed in one of two Cohort groups. Student enrollment in individual classrooms is divided equally to accommodate social-distancing and meet building occupancy restrictions. CMCS and the Carson City School District, along with our families, will work together to establish uniform Cohort assignments so family members regardless of grade or level are guaranteed the same Cohort if they choose.
2. All students in grades K-6 will have access to a Chromebook computer and access to the internet according to family need. CMCS and teachers will work with families to make sure that students have access to the necessary technology to navigate the educational opportunities of the Hybrid Model.
3. On each Monday, both student Cohorts remain at home. Staff members report to their duty stations in order to host class meeting that all of the students can attend. Mondays will also be “TIME, TIME, TIME EVENTS”, which means that teachers will have time to collaborate and plan.

Since in a Montessori School, everyone is considered an “Educator” all staff members have been assigned as mentors to a list of students. On Mondays, all staff members, including specialty teachers (Social Workers, Outreach Specialist, Literacy Specialist, ESL Coordinator and other licensed staff) will engage with students remotely in a virtual “Home Room” setting.  Student attendance is recorded.  Home Room lessons will include social and emotional learning, discussions on current events, student health and hygiene, and other pertinent topics introduced by the teachers including cultural awareness.  Students and staff will use remote, virtual, learning tools and platforms to engage in the Home Room activity.   The Home Room time may also be used for remediation and individual or small group tutoring.

When the Home Room session ends, students may continue to work asynchronously on virtual lessons and problems or projects assigned by the teacher.   Staff will turn their attention to preparation activities such as attending PLC meetings, collaborating with colleagues in grade-level and general staff meetings, or attending meetings with the site administrator as necessary.  A 30-minute duty-free lunch, will also occur. After lunch, staff will have approximately 4 hours of personal preparation time to plan for student lessons in the coming week.  Teachers must prepare for both at-school and at-home (remote) lessons.  Instructional materials are to be purposefully developed and related to the appropriate academic standards and pacing for both face to face and remote teaching groups.  The Hybrid model suggests that students on campus receive direct instruction from teachers and receive virtual instruction remotely from their teachers.   Students may receive individual or small group tutoring from their teachers as needed.  Teachers must also prepare to provide students with additional instruction, practice, problems, or assignments remotely.  Assignments and projects can be completed remotely as students continue engaging in their studies.  Students working from home should expect to receive new instructional material as part of a teacher’s remote learning lesson.

1. On Tuesday through Friday of any given week, the respective Cohorts will alternate days of being on campus one day and remaining home the next.

100% In-Person/On-Campus Learning:

100% full return for in-person education is the traditional/Montessori hands-on model where all students arrive at a school building together and engage in learning activities.  In this model, students are assigned specific teachers within a specific schedule to a particular grade-level or subject.  Since current state guidance associated with social-distancing and limitations on building occupancy, this model is NOT feasible at this time.  However, should state restrictions be lifted in the future, Carson Montessori Charter School will be prepared to engage in this model and meet all of the regulatory expectations associated with school operations.

Approximate School Schedule for Start and Dismissal Times

Carson Montessori Charter School

8:45 AM

3:15 PM

It is the Goal Carson Montessori to keep the love of learning alive and thriving. By wrapping the Curriculum around meaningful, purposeful topics that hook and inspire the students, this can be accomplished.

Special Populations

* Families with students that have Individualized Education Plans are encouraged to contact Ms. Margaret or Ms. Shelley at 775-887-9500.
* A student's IEP committee and RTI Team will be convened to address services and support to ensure each individual student's needs are being met.
* The Carson City School District’s Student Support Services office is working with Carson Montessori to ensure that we have the resources and support to meet our students’ and staff individual needs.
* English Language Learners can contact CMCS’ EL Department at 775-887-9500

Grading Systems:

Grading at CMCS will use the established Standards-Based Model where the value of (1) represents not meeting standard.  The value of (2) represents approaching standard mastery, the value of (3) represents meeting standard, the value of (4) represents exceeds standard. Carson Montessori uses \*annotated observations as a valid form of assessment, \*Portfolios, \*Projects and all conferences are student-led.

Nevada Department of Education Expectations

Within the Hybrid Model, since CMCS is sponsored by the Carson City School District we will:

1. Use a consistent method in Infinite Campus for recording contact with students, which may include students demonstrating regular weekly progress in classwork that can be verified through Google Classroom.
2. Contact each student via electronic means or by telephone by a licensed teacher or licensed substitute teacher consistently. If a student’s lack of access to a telephone or phone service results in an inability to be contacted, a licensed teacher or licensed substitute teacher will record attempted contact and would be dispatched for a home visit (2 deep).
3. Provide a program of appropriate instruction for English Learners, students with Individualized Education Plans, and students with 504 Plans.
4. Assure that students have the ability to access and participate in distance education. Such access may include providing the technology necessary to participate in remote education such as a computer and internet connectivity, or a plan to provide accommodations for students without access to technology, which may include paper correspondence and on-site, at home instructions by the licensed teacher.
5. Assure any student quarantined on the advice of local public health officials receives access to distance education.
6. Assure that licensed teachers and/or licensed substitute teachers are accessible to students through the internet or by telephone during the regularly scheduled instructional hours.
7. Assure licensed educators have access to and participate in professional learning regarding high-quality distance education and health and safety requirements related to preventing the spread of COVID-19 and other illnesses.
8. Assure that parents will receive general updates regarding the CMCS school’s implementation of distance education at least weekly and in the primary language spoken in the home.

Additionally, Carson Montessori Charter School will:

(1) No later than ten days after the start of school, have identified all students who do not have a device and/or internet access at home with which to participate in distance education and report to the Nevada Department of Education the number of:

a) Students lacking a device with which to participate in distance education; if multiple students in one home are sharing devices, then the total number of students without devices should be reported as the difference between the number of enrolled students in the home and the number of devices in the home that can be used to participate in distance education;

b) Students without a subscription to home or residential broadband or high-speed internet service;

c) Households with a subscription to home or residential broadband or high-speed internet service in which multiple students are sharing the same internet connection and the number of students in those households; and

d) Students who fit the descriptions in both (a) and (b).

(2) No later than September 15, 2020, create a plan that includes a cost estimate to make devices and internet access available to all students who do not have a device and/or internet access at home with which to participate in distance education and submit such plan to the Nevada Department of Education.

School CMCS Operations:

In developing this educational plan, student and staff safety is of utmost importance.  A multi-layered approach to building cleaning and disinfecting is planned to keep buildings clean and people healthy. This includes enhanced and frequent disinfecting of surfaces, the flushing of fresh air through filtered HVAC systems, scheduled and supervised handwashing with soap and water, and the availability of hand sanitizer and disinfectant in every classroom.

Cleaning and Sanitation:

Custodial and sanitizing services, along with increased ventilation processes will occur according to heightened operational protocols.  A building management system that adheres to fresh air standards and proper indoor air quality enhances both CMCS buildings. CMCS has taken steps to contract with an HVAC Specialist to perform a HVAC Readiness and Pre-Occupancy Assessment so that we can return to our schools with confidence. This activity will be performed on HVAC, filtration, ventilation and was already done on the domestic water systems prior to the Covid Shut-down. A final engineering report will be produced summarizing the general recommendations of OSHA, CDC and ASHRAE. CMCS uses HEPA filters for all air-handling equipment.  Air Filtration systems, which are portable, have been ordered for every classroom. System filters are changed 3 times per year.

CMCS will disinfect touchpoints, table surfaces, and restrooms EVERY NIGHT. Students will also disinfect their work surface when leaving every day and upon arriving. We are using an enhanced disinfectant program, electrostatic disinfectant misting, nightly. Bio layers will be stripped from classroom surfaces and cleaned with soap weekly so that the disinfecting process is thoroughly employed. These activities required hiring an additional custodian to thoroughly sanitize the building.

At the end of each school day, students and staff will clear the floor of debris and regular school materials (pencils, crayons, paper, books, etc.) and store them properly or discard them is trash.  Trash bins and soiled cleaning materials will be removed for disposal.

The CMCS has purchased personal protective equipment, hand washing materials, and cleaning supplies that will be made available to staff. Liquid/foam sanitizer stations are placed at every building in the main entrance.  In addition, wall mount dispensers will be positioned throughout the building and classrooms. Hand pump dispensers are also provided throughout the school.

Nutrition Services

CMCS does not have a food services program. Students are required to bring their own lunch and snacks. However, CMCS has a fully stocked pantry that provides breakfast, lunch, snack to any student in need. This resource is paid for personally by the Executive Director of CMCS.

Transportation

CMCS does not provide transportation to students. However, we make every effort to help families make connections to assist with transportation needs.

Student Health:

Wellness

All individuals on school properties are expected to observe and follow Carson Montessori’s established Covid Compliant Protocols, which include masks required, hand washing, and social distancing practices. While we anticipate that it may be challenging to maintain 100% social distancing of students at all times, appropriate engineering and administrative controls will be implemented to facilitate observation of the desired levels of social distancing including footprints on the floors, designated spots on the playground and spacing of desks.

Prior to engaging in any in-person school activity, families are expected to do an at-home health assessment of their children.  Anyone, staff or students with a temperature, flu-like or cold symptoms, or in general are feeling un-well should not come to school. Each classroom area has been provided with a touchless thermometer. Students have access to handwashing stations at every entrance as they enter the school building.  Once at school, if a student or staff member presents with symptoms of an illness, CMCS will follow wellness protocols for intervention.

Students who develop flu-like symptoms during the school day will be isolated in a designated area and parents will be expected to come and pick them immediately. Students sent home will not be allowed to return to school until there have been no flu-like symptoms for 72 hours. Parents will not be allowed to enter the school building. Office Manager will coordinate with families who need to deliver medications to the school. They will call and we will meet them in the parking lot.

Face Masks

At CMCS, all students, employees, and the general public are required to wear face masks. The mandatory provisions of this Directive shall not apply to:

1. Individuals who cannot wear a face mask due to a medical condition or disability, or who are unable to remove a mask without assistance. Students with IEPs or 504 plans will receive accommodations based on guidance from these documents.

Teachers have the authority to ask all students, regardless of age, to wear face coverings in the classroom.

2.  Face shields are not approved for use at school at this time but can be used in Conjunction with a mask to teach words and letter formations. Face shields have been provided to all staff.

 Students must have two cloth face masks as part of their back-to-school supplies.  In accordance with the Carson City School District Regulation 519 Dress and Grooming, students may not wear masks which advertise controlled substances, display inappropriate words or pictures, gang related, or derogatory to any ethnic group or intended to cause disruption of any school, class or activity. We are so grateful to two families who started making cloth masks in March and we will have enough for all students and staff to take for free. Disposable masks will be provided to students who arrive to campus without a mask.

Other Hygiene and Safety Precautions

Hand-washing will be encouraged throughout the day and required before and after meals. Access to schools will be limited to students and staff as much as possible. Students should not share food, snacks, school supplies and materials. Hand Sanitizer is provided throughout the buildings.  Students and staff may bring their own hand sanitizer.

Scheduling of large school events is discouraged.  Virtual events are to be scheduled as often as practical. Any Special Events or activities will be held according to Phase 2 Directives.

Signage:  Signage reminding students and staff about personal hygiene practice is placed in conspicuous locations.

Human Resources:

Employees who have medical conditions and/or circumstances that may prevent them from returning to work should consult with their medical advisor as soon as possible.  The staff member should also contact Carson Montessori’s Executive Director and set up an appointment.  With the onset of COVID-19, certain employment laws exist to help employees deal with the varying conditions associated with illness due to the virus.  CMCS will be able to help staff through the various associated options.

* All employees should monitor their health and symptoms (fever, shortness of breath, etc.).
* All employees should maximize physical distance from others to the extent possible.
* Individuals returning to worksites, who may have any of the serious underlying health conditions as noted by the CDC, should take any and all precautions necessary to protect themselves.
* All employees should minimize any non-essential travel.
* All employees should continue to Practice Good Hygiene.
* All employees feeling sick should stay home.

All CMCS staff should anticipate the possibility of working outside of their usual and customary duties and assignments.

Day Care Options:

In addition to private day-care providers, The Boys and Girls Club of Western Nevada, Carson City Parks and Recreation, the Bridge, and the Salvation Army are working with CMCS to assist the community with child care options during the 2020-2021 school year.

Conclusion:

Carson Montessori Charter School will reopen for the first day of school for students in grades K-6 on August 24, 2020, one week later than originally scheduled. A copy of the updated school calendar was submitted.

The change to the school starting date is to allow the schools to provide staff with additional professional development for teaching students using virtual tools and materials.  With more emphasis on teaching using virtual tools and processes, there is a need to provide specialized training for teachers. All staff also will receive specialized Covid Training from a front line Covid-19 EMT expert. Successful teaching and learning depend on skillful teachers and interested students, who are able to use the tools and skills they are being taught and know they are in a safe environment. CMCS is committed to providing high-quality and accessible learning opportunities to all students – without regard to means, ability, or at-home support – while ensuring the health and safety of students, staff, and our community.

This Reopening Plan was approved by a unanimous vote of the Carson Montessori Charter School Governing Board on July 29, 2020. Since through the entire Covid Crisis, changes occur rapidly, the Carson Montessori Governing Board gave permission to the Executive Director/Principal, Jessica Barlow Daniels, Ed.S., NBCT, to use CMCS’ 48 Hour Launch at will to make decisions on the spot for the wellbeing of the students, the Carson Montessori educational community, and their families. The educational plan represented here is subject to change during the COVID-19 Pandemic.