

Pandemic Care Policy

Revised on 16 Nov 2021

Policy Statement:

In response to the need for childcare in licensed centres to remain open during the pandemic, Brason Academy Montessori School (BAMS) will be fully operational to provide safe and quality child care and Montessori learning. Provincial regulations, Ministry of Education direction and Region of Waterloo Public Health Recommendations will continue to provide operational guidance during the pandemic.

Operating Details:

All licensing requirements will be met to satisfy the Ministry of Education and program advisor. All requirements as outlined by Region of Waterloo Public Health and the Ministry of Health will be followed by all staff. Staff are expected to follow all new policies related to the operation of child care during COVID-19, and all other required policies and procedures as used during normal business operation.

Cohorting

A cohort is defined as a group of children and the staff members assigned to them, who stay together throughout the duration of the program for a minimum of 7 days. Maximum cohort size for each room is equal to the full licensed capacity of that room. This includes both staff and children. Each cohort must stay together throughout the day. Mixing with other cohorts is not permitted.

BAMS will maintain ratios set out under the Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA). Reduced ratios are permitted (excluding infants) as set out under the CCEYA provided that cohorts are not mixed with other cohorts.

Staff rooms

- Staff meetings, to be held virtually as much as possible.
- Distancing and masking (when mask is removed to eat) required in common staff areas, with sign in sheet for all users

Visitors

Restrict access to only essential visitors. All visitors must complete daily self-screening prior to entry and wear a medical mask (surgical/procedural) and eye protection • Regular parent traffic (e.g. picking up children from classroom) not allowed • Social events such as open houses, holiday parties, meet the teacher nights not permitted at this time.

Enrollment

Returning families will be given priority around their spaces before any children on the waitlist will be started. We will hold spaces for children who are unsure about their return date as long as possible but monthly fee will be payable in such a case. If the family decides to withdraw their child, then the space will be offered to the next family on the wait list.

The following was taken into consideration when determining a priority list for returning families;

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- Returning children served through emergency child care
- Care for families where parents must return to work and that 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

Staffing

Supervisors should limit their movement between rooms, as far as possible, only entering classrooms when necessary.

Staff should only work at one location and their movement between classrooms should be kept minimum. Only in the case where a classroom needs a cover, should staff be moved between classrooms.

Supply staff will be assigned to a specific classroom and should avoid mixing between cohorts.

Movement of supervisors and/or designates, staff and students on educational placement between licensed age groups is permitted, but should be reduced where possible to minimize potential for transmission

Entry of volunteers will be discouraged to minimize potential for transmission.

Physical Distancing

When setting up the play space, physical distancing of at least 2 meters must be maintained between cohorts and should be encouraged, where possible, between children within the same cohort.

Suggestions include;

- ♣ spreading children out into different areas, particularly at meal and dressing time. Family Style meals are permitted at this time as long as children are encouraged to wash hands before and after their meals. Children are also encouraged to stick to their assigned cubby area while dressing/undressing.
- ♣ incorporating more individual activities or activities that encourage more space between children
- ♣ using visual cues to promote physical distancing (markings on the floor)
- ♣ When using shared objects or toys children should be encourage do use hands before and after handling this.
- ♣ When sponges and towels are used for practical life activities, these should be laundered daily. Children should be encouraged to wash hands before and after using these activities.
- ♣ When possible, moving activities outside to allow for more space

In children's bathrooms, only one cohort should be using it at any given time. If more than one cohort uses the same washroom, thorough disinfection must be performed between cohorts. Limit capacity to maintain physical distancing of at least 2 metres or as much as is operationally feasible. Practice proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette. Use paper towels to dry hands, turn off faucets and open doors. Follow recommended cleaning and disinfection standards and protocols and track this in a log.

Cubbies

Children are allowed to use their cubbies, with the following risk mitigation strategies:

Grouped by cohort (as much as is operationally feasible)

Assigned cubbies

Hand hygiene before and after use

Staggered access times to minimize congregating and promote physical distancing

Limit time spent at cubby

Signage to promote distancing in cubby areas

All items should be labelled; minimize items to necessary (e.g. no toys)

Shared materials (e.g. toys, equipment)

The use of shared materials is permitted with hand hygiene before and after use

Frequency of cleaning for high touch surfaces – recommend to follow Ministry of Education guidance for twice daily cleaning plus disinfection at a minimum.

Playground structures do not need to be cleaned or disinfected between uses; hand hygiene should be practiced before and after using playground equipment

A protocol is established to identify contaminated items and/or areas used by a child suspected of having COVID-19 for cleaning and disinfection (see isolation protocol)

Lunch/eating protocols

Distancing as much as possible between cohorts while eating outdoors

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

Family style meals permitted as per Ministry of Education guidance

Music

Singing while indoors is permitted within cohort, masking required and distancing of at least 2 metres between individuals. The use of well-ventilated spaces should be prioritized

Outdoors: No mask required if physical distancing of at least 2 metres is maintained between cohorts, masking required if distancing not maintained between individuals within a cohort

Visitors and Students on Placement

All visitors to the program, including parents, students completing educational placements, or others, are subject to the health and safety protocols as applicable from the Screening policy.

The number of visitors indoors should be limited to the ability to maintain physical distancing of at least 2 metres.

The screener will validate the screening of visitors.

Use of video and telephone interviews should be used to interact with families where possible, rather than in person.

Ministry staff and other public officials (e.g., fire marshal, public health inspectors) are permitted to enter and inspect at any reasonable time.

At the advice of the local public health unit, Brason Montessori may be asked to restrict visitor access.

Infection Prevention

- All staff, children and caregivers will be screened prior to entering Brason Montessori and mid day (See Screening Operating Procedure). Any person who fails the screen will not be permitted into the centre.
- No visitors or delivery personnel will be permitted into the centre during the pandemic. New families may not tour the centre. All drop offs and pick-ups will be done outside the centre. If it is absolutely essential for the parent to enter the school then the supervisor should be informed and the normal screening and entry procedure should be followed.
- Children will spend additional time outdoors weather permitting.
- The use of sensory play materials will be permitted however all children should be encouraged to wash hands before and after handling the sensory materials. The teachers should do their best to switch out the sensory materials if they find that they have been contaminated.

- Teachers will regularly engage in proper hand hygiene protocol, which includes but is not limited to prior to entering and before leaving a room. Hand washing with soap and water is the preferred method, hand sanitizer is also acceptable. (See Infection Control Standard Operating Procedure).

- Cleaning in the form of disinfecting will take place two times at a minimum, and as often as required, on high traffic touch spots. General thorough cleaning of the rooms will take place at least once daily. All cleaning products used will meet Public Health guidelines. (See Infection Control Standard Operating Procedure).

Hand Sanitizer- Gelax NPN 80097895, Alcohol content- 80% (approved by health Canada)

Disinfectant- Quatromyicide II, DIN 02321963, 5mls in 1 litre , contact time- 10 min

- Children will bring their own sunscreen where possible and it will not be shared. Staff will provide assistance to apply sunscreen to any child requiring help. Staff will exercise proper hand hygiene when applying sunscreen to children (washing hands before and after each application).

- Every effort will be made for social / physical distancing between staff to staff, child to child and for all other people in the centre.

- Cooks and support staff will avoid entering program rooms and working between the centres that are open.

- Every reasonable effort will be made to limit the number of staff that enter a room, as such staff schedules may be altered to minimize the number of different individuals entering a program room for break coverage, lunch coverage, and beginning and end of day.

- Where a child nor staff become symptomatic mid program, and if one of the following apply-

Close contact with a COVID-19 case

Travel outside of Canada within 14 days prior to symptom onset

Been told by a doctor, healthcare provider, or public health unit to self isolate.

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the supervisor will report all symptomatic children, and staff to public health using their online reporting form –

<https://forms.regionofwaterloo.ca/External/COVID-Response-external/Childcare-Reporting-Symptomatic-Staff-or-Children>

Communication with families

Brason Montessori will keep an open communication with the Brason community including all families and staff during the time of the pandemic. Monthly newsletters and emails will be sent out to update and inform families of any changes in the policies, reinforcing any of the procedures if necessary, any concerns with the implementation of the policies, and the state of the cases i.e any outbreaks in any of the program rooms. All families will be communicated about their child's daily life at the Montessori, during the pandemic, through a web based app. All updated Pandemic care policies will be available to all the families on the website. If capacity restrictions are mandated, Brason will update its Waitlist policy and update all the families of the same. The priority/waitlist changes will be such that it follows an equitable approach.

In the case of the closure of any program room due to an outbreak, all families affected by it will be informed by email, making sure that confidentiality is maintained, with recommendations and consultations from the Public Health Authorities. If a program room or the whole centre is closed due to an outbreak of COVID 19 and all children and staff are asked to isolate by Public Health, then at that time Brason Montessori will try as much as possible to refund the fees for as many days of the closure as possible. The closures will be reviewed and a confirmation email about the fee refund decision will be sent out in an email to all affected families.

If one child is asked to isolate by public health or due to COVID like symptoms, then this will be treated as any other sick day and no fees will be refunded. In case of the closure of the whole centre, all essential visitors will be informed via email like cleaners, mat man, pest control etc. In any kind of closure, program or whole school, a child's spot at Brason will not be affected.