



TOTH
MONTESSORI
NAVY YARD, WASHINGTON, DC



July 28, 2021

Dear parents,

Given news of recent delays in COVID-19 vaccine availability to young children and now the spread of the highly contagious delta variant of the coronavirus, we felt it was important to communicate with all of you the steps we are taking to maintain our own vigilance, and to ask our parent community to continue to partner with us in the weeks and months ahead to reduce the chance of COVID-19 exposures in our school community as much as we can during the 2021-22 school year.

While we are prohibited by law from sharing private health information about our employees, including vaccination status, we want to share the policies we are putting in place to help keep our community as safe as possible. **ToTH will be implementing a COVID-19 vaccination requirement for all current and future employees.** All staff must have received at least one vaccine dose by August 29, 2021, and be fully vaccinated by September 30, 2021. While we are legally required to review any request for an exemption due to a medical condition or sincerely held religious belief, ToTH would only grant such a request in the event it would not pose a direct threat to the health and safety of members of our school community. In such a case, the individual would be required to submit to weekly PCR testing.

As we previously noted, we have not and will not be lifting our mask mandate at ToTH at this time, regardless of vaccination status, and we note that the CDC has now revised its prior guidance that relaxed indoor mask-wearing for vaccinated individuals.

In addition, for the 2021-22 school year we are asking that all children be tested for COVID-19 in the week prior to your child's assigned start date. We must receive a negative PCR test result before your child can begin school next year. Please send results to Stephanie via email.

We are asking parents to continue to partner with us in reducing the chance of COVID exposure and school closures in weeks and months ahead. Please review and follow the additional safety measures that we are strongly recommending to our entire school community:

1. Follow the [new CDC guidance](#) and wear your mask and have your children wear masks (if they are able) in crowded public places such as grocery stores, even if you are vaccinated;
2. Continue to avoid or limit time you and your children spend in larger groups, indoors or outdoors;
3. Limit unmasked indoor activities to close contacts;
4. Consider starting a discussion now with the parents in your classroom about what activities outside of school your cohort is comfortable with (you may use the classroom listserv);
5. Try to do as much as you can outdoors, rather than indoors, such as dining out al fresco;

6. Try to maintain at least 6 feet of distance indoors and outdoors, and if you are going to be in a crowded outdoor space, please wear your mask;
7. Continue to encourage hand hygiene with your children, and keep hand sanitizer with you;
8. Practice proper cough, sneeze, and nose-blowing hygiene with your children;
9. **Carefully consider your travel outside of DC, Maryland and Virginia, as your children may be subject to increased quarantine and testing requirements. Any unvaccinated resident must wait 3-5 days after returning from travel before getting tested, and submit a negative test result to return to school.**

We know how important it is for parents to feel that their child's school is doing everything possible to keep the school open and the children, the staff, and our families safe in these uncertain times, so I hope that this information and guidance gives you some added peace of mind. As we get closer to the beginning of the school year, we will share any further guidance we receive from health authorities. Maria Montessori wrote that "an education capable of saving humanity is no small undertaking" and we could not agree more after this year. We will continue to stay on top of best practices and formal guidance throughout all phases of this pandemic so that we are doing our part to win the fight against COVID-19.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Sarvana
Interim Head of School

Anya Landau French
Interim Head of Administration