



FSMA’s Covid-Operations Plan

FSMA is required to have an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) designed to protect students, staff and families from the spread of COVID-19 and other emergencies. This plan has been developed in collaboration with state and local public health departments, state and local licensing regulations, and with input and feedback from our local community.

The plan includes:

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Section 1: Prevention Strategies and Considerations

Decision-Making Process:

All decisions for covid-19 related procedures will be based on *CDC Guidance for Covid-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools* and the State/DDOE Recommendations.

FSMA will work with our local public health officials (Delaware Department of Public Health) to determine strategies for our local community and next steps as needed when situations arise.

Decisions will be made based on our local community when possible. This will include case numbers, vaccination numbers, student age levels, etc.

FSMA will utilize input from our community to make decisions. Family input will be sought, staff input will be obtained through our committee meetings, and board input will be a part of our process. In addition, our administration will meet weekly with other charter school leaders to think through plans and procedures.

Returning to School:

FSMA will have **in-person school for 5 full days each week** as per our school calendar unless there are local concerns, class or school quarantine situations, or the state recommendations to limit or stop in-person learning.

FSMA will only have a **virtual option for students who have a medically-documented need** to remain out of school. This will be addressed through homebound education and will not follow the structure of last year's virtual learning program.

***FSMA will return to school with most of the prevention strategies from last year, which are still recommended by CDC/DPH/DDOE, in place.** The CDC recommends removing one prevention strategy at a time and monitoring the impact/cases and we will follow this guidance. FSMA is removing the smaller cohort strategy and shortened day strategy to start the school year and will continue to monitor/remove strategies throughout the year. The chart below shares information about each strategy and our plans/considerations.

Prevention Strategies (these strategies are from the CDC Guidance Document):

Strategy:	FSMA Specific Plans	Other Details/Information
Promoting Vaccination	<p>Share information about vaccination events with families</p> <p>Offer time with nurses to answer questions about vaccinations</p> <p>Require staff to be vaccinated (exceptions for religious or medical reasons)</p> <p>Collect vaccination information about students for overall numbers and close/contact quarantine reasons</p>	<p>For age groups that can be vaccinated, if 70% provide documentation of vaccination, FSMA will consider if strategies can be lifted for some subgroups that do not interact with others (ex. middle school).</p> <p>FSMA strongly recommends students and families (who are eligible) getting vaccinated and will continue to share information about vaccination events with our community.</p>
Consistent and Correct Mask Usage	<p>Masks will required for all students and staff when inside the building and when on the school bus.</p> <p>Masks will not be required when outside. Daily outside time will be incorporated into classroom schedules when possible.</p> <p>The Lower School playground will be considered an outdoor space and if students physical distancing is present, students/staff may remove their masks.</p> <p>Mask break procedures will be set up in the classrooms and taught/practiced/modeled with students.</p>	<p>For lessons where mask wearing strongly impacts student learning and may need to be removed for a short amount of time (ex. students learning sounds and needing to see how they are formed when saying them), teachers may wear a clear shield instead of a mask during these lessons only.</p> <p>For lessons in large spaces, such as the gym/cafeteria/movement room, a teacher may pull down their mask when needing to address the entire group spread out in the space but only when directions or information is being given.</p> <p>Acceptable mask information is posted on our website.</p>

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Physical Distancing</p>	<p>Students/Staff should maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance when possible.</p> <p>Cohorting – FSMA will continue to utilize the cohort model when indoors to limit the number of students/staff who come in contact with each other. Until this prevention strategy is removed, there will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No mixed class activities without approval • No afterschool clubs/programs (exception: middle school sports) • No field trips that require mixed groupings <p>*Students may visit a different classroom for periods less than 15 minutes (ex. dropping an item off, buddy teacher, etc.)</p>	<p>K – 6th grade cohorts are groups of 24-26 students and 2-3 adults (a typical classroom)</p> <p>7th – 8th grade cohorts are the entire middle school (85-90 students and 6-10 staff)/ This is due to the switching of classes for content areas and electives.</p> <p>Physical distancing during meal times – Staff should utilize additional space in hallways/classrooms during this time.</p> <p>If possible, classrooms may use the outdoor space for meals when weather is appropriate conditions/schedule allows for it.</p> <p>*There may be situations when individual students or small groups of students interact with a different cohort for things like special education services, medical-related services, etc. In addition, 6th graders may be with other cohorts for some of their middle school courses (electives, science, health)</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Screening Testing</p>	<p>Updated 8/11/21</p> <p>FSAM will provide weekly testing for all students on site during the school day. Parents will have to register and provide consent for this and we will be sharing more information closer to the start of school.</p> <p>FSMA does strongly recommend testing within one week of the first day of school.</p> <p>If implemented, screening testing will not be required for anyone who is fully vaccinated.</p>	<p>According to the CDC, “Screening testing may be most valuable in areas with substantial or high community transmission levels, in areas with low vaccination coverage, and in schools where other strategies are not implemented.”</p> <p>Weekly on-site testing is being provided through a partnership with DDOE and DPH at no cost to schools.</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Ventilation</p>	<p>FSMA has made substantial changes to our HVAC system, including investing in bipolar ionization units for our ventilation system.</p> <p>FSMA buildings are designed so that windows do not open but we can increase the amount of outdoor air that is brought into the building.</p>	

<p>Hand-washing and Etiquette</p>	<p>FSMA will teach and reinforce hand-washing and respiratory etiquette (covering coughs and sneezes).</p> <p>Staff and students will be reminded to wash hands frequently throughout the school day.</p> <p>Hand sanitizer stations will be placed in the lobbies and community areas throughout both buildings.</p>	
<p>Staying Home when Sick and Getting Tested</p>	<p>Students and staff must complete a daily health assessment to screen for symptoms. Screening information is available here - https://firststatemontessori.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/covid-parent-screening-letter-updated_12.2020.pdf</p> <p>Students and staff who have symptoms of covid-19 should stay home, contact the school nurse and follow our FSMA Next Steps document before returning to school.</p> <p>Quarantining and isolation may be required for those not vaccinated if they are experiencing symptoms or have been in close contact with someone experiencing symptoms, or if he/she/they travel to an area where travel restrictions are in place.</p> <p>FSMA will provide a virtual learning experience if an entire cohort needs to quarantine for more than 3 days.</p>	<p>Effective virtual learning is something that is planned and thoughtfully created for students. If moving to virtual learning is necessary, teachers will need 1-2 days to plan so that work can be meaningful. This will look different at the different grade levels. (Note: Virtual Learning will not be delivered in the same model as the 20-21 school year. It will be combination of synchronous and asynchronous work).</p> <p>Students who receive special education services may receive their services virtually when on quarantine if it can be arranged between the student, family and staff member during the school day</p> <p>Similar to a typical year, when students are out sick, there will be no work expectations.</p>
<p>Contact Tracing in Combination with Isolation and Quarantine</p>	<p>FSMA will continue to collaborate with our state and local health departments to confidentially provide information about people diagnosed with or exposed to covid-19.</p> <p>FSMA will report any new cases to DPH immediately.</p> <p>Families are expected to report any exposure or diagnosis of covid-19 to FSMA immediately.</p>	<p>As per the CDC Guidelines, fully vaccinated people who were in close contact with someone who has covid-19 but do not have covid-19 symptoms, do not need to quarantine or be tested.</p>

<p>Cleaning and Disinfection</p>	<p>FSMA will hire a daytime cleaner to focus on community areas during the school day.</p> <p>FSMA staff/teachers will be provided with cleaning supplies for areas/items not cleaned or disinfected by our cleaning staff. Training will be provided for staff.</p>	<p>CDC Guidelines state that once a day cleaning is sufficient to remove potential virus on surfaces.</p>
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Section 2: Other Considerations for Students/Staff

Visitors/ Volunteers at FSMA:

- All non-essential visitors and volunteers must be vaccinated
- Outside groups or organizations must send representatives that are fully vaccinated
- All visitors and volunteers will be required to follow FSMA masking and physical distancing policies

Food Service and Meals:

- Students may not use microwaves in classrooms or cafeteria (no heat-ups)
- Snack recommendations will be provided by teachers
- Eat outdoors if available
- Eliminate lines for picking up meals/heating items up/getting utensils, etc.
- Given the low risk of transmission from shared objects, there is no need to limit meals to pre-packaged or single use items
- Promote hand-washing before and after meal times
- Increase ventilation in cafeteria if possible
- Physical distance should be at least 3 feet but ideally 6 feet when eating. Classrooms can utilize tables, floors and hallways as needed to increase the physical distance between individuals.

Recess and Physical Education:

- Masks are required for indoor activities but can be removed during outdoor activities

Updated 8/11/21

- For indoor activities, physical distancing should be maximized when possible
- On the playground, students may remove their masks if they are playing games that allow for a physical distance of at least 3 feet.

Sports and Other Extracurricular Activities:

- When participating in outdoor sports, students and staff are not required to wear a mask
- When participating in indoor sports, vaccinated staff may remove their mask when actively coaching
- Mask breaks should be built into the practice/game schedule
- When traveling to practice/games on a school bus, all students and staff must wear a mask
- Spectators should be limited unless physical distancing can be ensured
- Afterschool clubs will be considered starting in the Winter Session

Section 3: Vaccination Verification (From the CDC Guidelines):

For Families – *Existing laws and regulations require certain vaccinations for children attending school. K-12 administrators regularly maintain documentation of people’s immunization records. Since recommended prevention strategies vary by COVID-19 vaccination status, K-12 administrators who maintain documentation of students’ and workers’ COVID-19 vaccination status can use this information, consistent with applicable laws and regulations, including those related to privacy, to inform masking and physical distancing practices, testing, contact tracing efforts, and quarantine and isolation practices. Schools that plan to request voluntary submission of documentation of COVID-19 vaccination status should use the same standard protocols that are used to collect and secure other immunization or health status information from students. The protocol to collect, secure, use, and further disclose this information should comply with relevant statutory and regulatory requirements, including Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) statutory and regulatory requirements. Policies or practices related to providing or receiving proof of COVID-19 vaccination should comply with all relevant state, tribal, local, or territorial laws and regulations.*

For Staff - *As part of their workplace COVID-19 vaccination policy, schools should recognize that a worker who cannot get vaccinated due to a disability (covered by the ADA), has a disability that affects their ability to have a full immune response to vaccination, or has a sincerely held religious belief or practice (covered by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964) may be entitled to a reasonable accommodation that does not pose an undue hardship on the operation of the employer’s business. Additionally, school employers should advise workers with weakened immune systems about the importance of talking to their healthcare professional about the need for continued personal protective measures after vaccination. Currently, CDC recommends continued masking and physical distancing for people with weakened immune systems.*

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Section 4: Resources for Families

First State Montessori Academy Contact Information:

School Phone (302) 981-0491

For health and medical questions, please contact Nurse Laurie – laurie.murray@fsma.k12.de.us or Nurse Becky – becky.adeleke@fsma.k12.de.us

Local Updates and Data - <https://myhealthycommunity.dhss.delaware.gov/locations/state>

Visit vaccines.gov to find out **where you can get vaccinated** against Covid-19 in our community

FSMA's website has the following resources (and more) - <https://firststatemontessori.org/covid-19-resources/>

Next Steps for Parents for Exposure, Positive Tests, etc.

Close Contacts and Quarantine information

Mask Recommendations

(If there are other resources you would like to see added to this list, please let us know)