

# Parent Town Hall

July 15, 2020

We will begin at 8:05 pm.

# Agenda

- Submitting your questions
- Greetings from Juliane Trautmann, Parents Association Head
- Health Advisory Committee update
- Promises and community ethos
- Building organization and classroom structure
- Preparing for school
- Appreciation, celebration, and closing remarks
- Q&A

M M

METROPOLITAN  
MONTESSORI  
SCHOOL

S

# Health Advisory Updates

<https://www.mmsny.org/covid-19-response/>

## Health Advisory Committee

Health Advisory Committee has met three times already and communicates and shares research daily on Slack.

- [Dr. Magdalena Cerda](#)
- [Preeti Gureja](#)
- [Dr. Luana Fioriti](#)
- [Dr. Shirley Tilghman](#)
- [Monique Kotsen \(trustee\)](#)
- [Dr. Fabio Stefanini](#)
- [Dr. Jillian Parekh](#)
- [Kelli Stidham Hall, PhD MS](#)
- [Claudia Hamilton \(trustee\)](#)

Every meeting is also attended by academic and administrative leaders.

Learn more about our Distance Learning and Covid-19 Response, including plans for Fall 2020.

**Covid-19 Response**  
 The Coronavirus crisis has required quick decision-making and remote thinking. Metropolitan Montessori School is guided by facts and research, and as is the nature of this pandemic, we learn valuable, new information every day that informs our thinking on distance learning and protective health measures. As we look to the 2020-21 school year, we aim to safely return to 60% street as soon as possible. As a community, we are humbled by the can-do spirit of our faculty and administration and the many parents who have answered the call to lend their time and talents (you'll see one example below) to our community. MMS prides itself on being a small, village-like environment, and in this difficult time we believe that the values of resilience, common good, critical thinking, and passion will advance and support us all.

**Health Advisory Committee**  
 Caring for our community's health and wellbeing is paramount. Every school is now grappling with how to safely re-open, an effort that requires substantial expertise, investment, and coordination. We are fortunate to have an esteemed group of professionals in medical, insurance, and scientific fields help us to plan. The Health Advisory Committee will consider a wide variety of steps to prevent the spread of illness from classroom misanthropism to building enhancements, increased cleaning, and measures that our students, teachers, and parents can adopt to support the health of our community. The group's charge is as follows: "Acknowledge Metropolitan Montessori School on policy and protective measures to prevent and limit the spread of Covid-19 within our community, starting June 2020 and until coronavirus is no longer a threat. We are available to attend all committee meetings, twice monthly over the summer, monthly over the school year, and as needed should urgent matters arise, as well as to serve on sub-committees tasked toward specific objectives and questions. While the school's operational leaders are tasked with implementing practical measures and communicating with the broader community, the Health Advisory Committee will provide expert guidance and a well-rounded array of perspectives on health and safety to help comprehensively address concerns and minimize the chance of the virus affecting our community."

**Dr. Magdalena Cerda**  
 ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, NYU GROSSMAN SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

**Preeti Gureja**  
 VICE PRESIDENT, CHUBB INSURANCE

**Dr. Luana Fioriti**  
 COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, DEPARTMENT OF NEUROSCIENCE

**Dr. Shirley Tilghman**  
 PROFESSOR OF MOLECULAR BIOLOGY AND PUBLIC POLICY AND PRESIDENT EMERITA OF PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

**School Communications**  
 Update from Head of School (3/3/20)  
 Update from School (6/10/20)  
 New parent and current parent Town Hall slides (5/20 and 6/7/20)  
 Update from Head of School (5/8/20)  
 Update from Head of School (4/13/20)  
 Update from Head of School (4/9/20)  
 Update from School Psychologist (4/6/20)  
 Update from Head of School (3/15/20)  
 Update from Head of School (3/7/20)  
 Update from Head of School (3/10/20)  
 Update from Head of School (3/4/20)  
 Update from Head of School (2/27/20)  
 Update from Head of School/School Psychologist (3/3/20)

**Virtual Events**  
 Virtual events have been a wonderful way to gather and foster a sense of community in an isolating time. In late April, we transformed our usual adults-only benefit into a family event with performances from students and talented parents alike. The event was such a hit, we scheduled additional virtual events for the rest of the spring. Here are two examples, and you can check out more of our videos here:

**Virtual Benefit: A Celebration of the Arts**  
**Virtual Benefit: MMS @ Home, Stronger Together (Full Event)**

## MMS Health Advisory Committee Charge

“Advise Metropolitan Montessori School on policy and protective measures to prevent and limit the spread of Covid-19 within our community, starting June 2020 and until the coronavirus is no longer a threat. Be available to attend all-committee meetings, twice monthly over the summer, monthly over the school year, and as needed should urgent matters arise, as well as to serve on sub-committees geared toward specific objectives and questions. While the school’s operational leaders are tasked with implementing anti-viral measures and communicating with the broader community, the Health Advisory Committee will provide expert guidance and a well-rounded array of perspectives on health and safety to help comprehensively address concerns and minimize the chance of the virus affecting our community.”

## In the Coming Weeks...

We will continue to set policy in the following areas:

- Community conduct expectations: safe practices for limiting the spread of illness outside of school hours
- Equity and mission-centered considerations
- Mental health support for students, teachers, and parents as we transition back to in-school learning
- Health screening and monitoring

# Promises and Community Ethos

# Our Promises

- We want to safely return to 85<sup>th</sup> Street as soon as possible.
- We continue to develop contingency plans based on multiple scenarios.
- We will serve the whole child, focusing on understanding how each child has reacted, academically and emotionally, to the circumstances of this pandemic.
- We will continue to have a growth mindset—learning from the challenges of this spring and anticipating those of the future—and think outside of the box.





# Community Ethos

- Caring for our community's health and wellbeing is paramount, and a responsibility shared by every adult, and every child (to the best of their developmental ability).
- We will be guided by facts and research, and as is the nature of this pandemic, we are learning valuable, new information every day. We are prepared to be flexible and act quickly when change is needed.
- This pandemic is an opportunity to teach our children how to live the values MMS holds dear. Particularly, resilience, common good, critical thinking, and passion.
- All of us will be served by mutual spirit of generosity, patience, and understanding.



M M

METROPOLITAN  
MONTESSORI  
SCHOOL

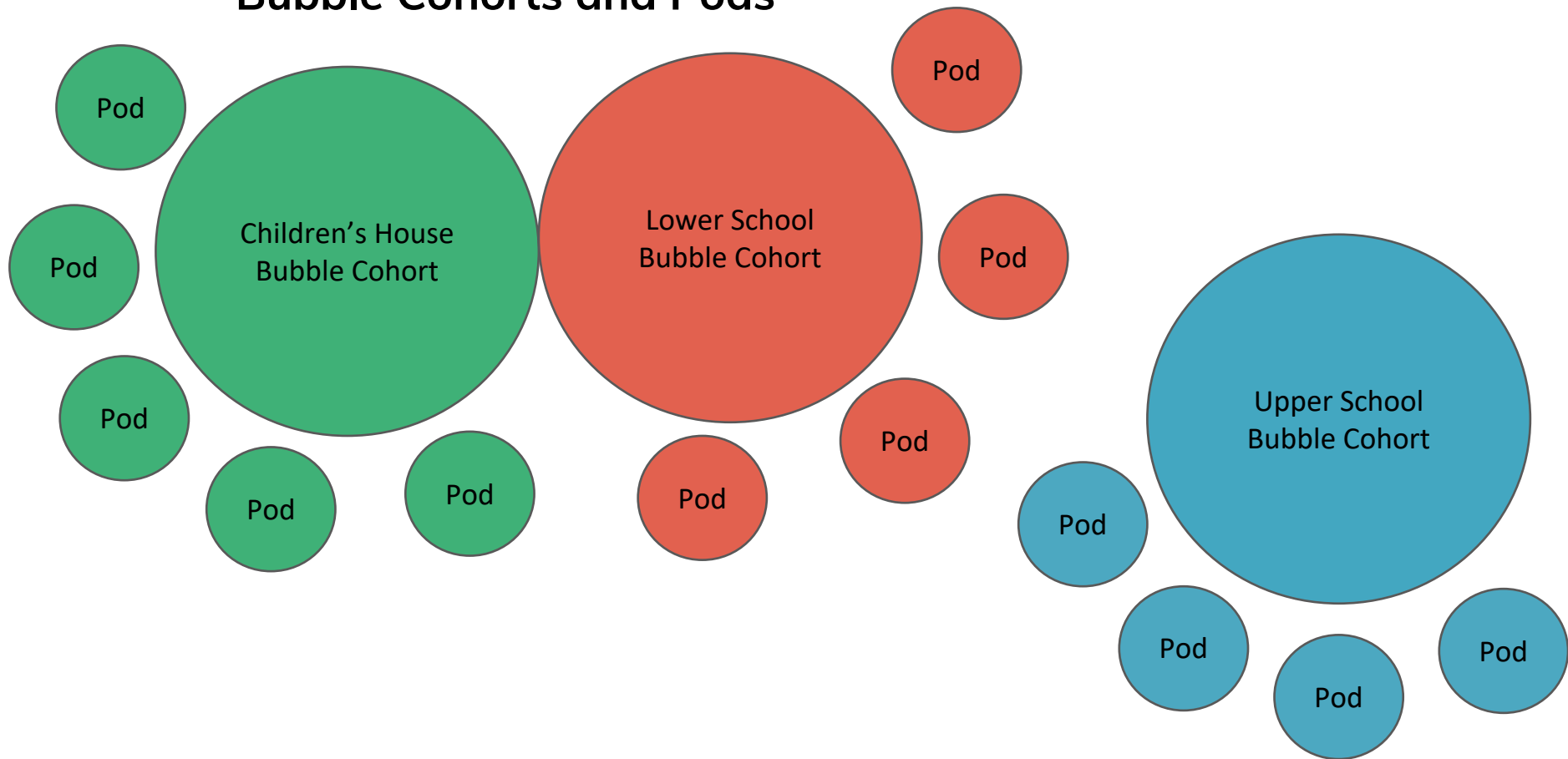
S

# Building Organization and Classroom Structure

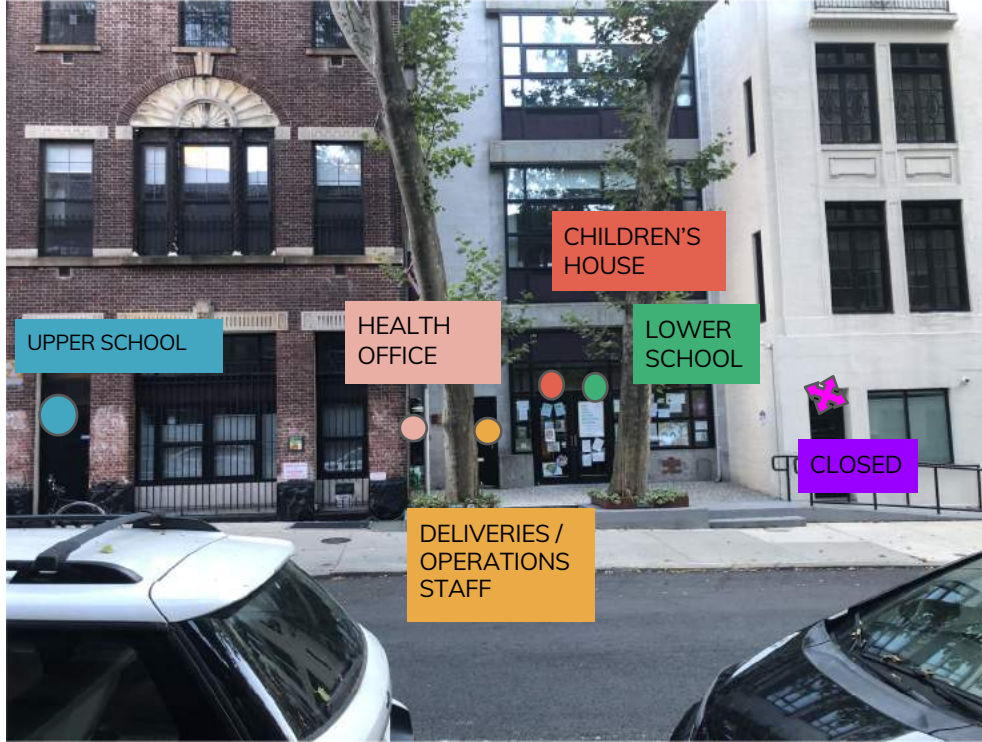
## Classroom Structure and Groupings

- Divisions will be organized as bubble cohorts
- Within each bubble cohort, there are several pods (pod = classroom)
- Pods will have very limited interaction with each other.
- This cohort and bubble structure ensures safety and helps mitigate the spread illness
- Upper School cohort will not interact with Lower School/Children's House cohort
- Parents will not be allowed in the building to mitigate spread.

# Bubble Cohorts and Pods



# Defined Entrances to Limit Contact



METROPOLITAN  
MONTESSORI  
SCHOOL

Upper School Entrance



Lower School and  
Children's House Entrance



# Building Reorganization

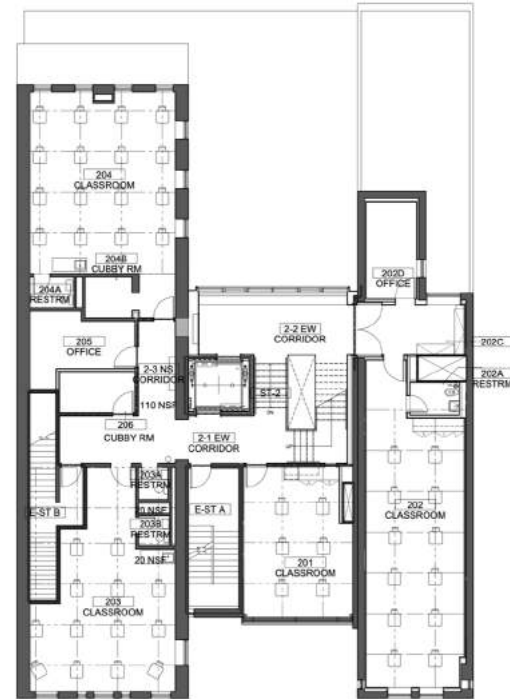
METROPOLITAN  
MONTESSORI  
SCHOOL



- ← Grade 5
- ← Grade 4  
Grade 6
- ← Grades 2 and 3
- ← Children's House
- ← Grade 1 (in gym)

# Spacing Within Classrooms

- Architecture firm Rogers Partners assessed space in every room in MMS.
- Students and faculty will be able to socially-distance at 6 feet in every room we use.
- The only way to ensure that every child can attend school every day is to repurpose some spaces, such as the gym, into classrooms.



# Teaching and Learning

## Classroom Structure and Grouping

- Primarily, grouping by age and grade to meet needs of their developmental stage.
- In this time of change, we're prioritizing social emotional support and facilitating friendships and social connections
- Classroom assignments coming in early August.





# Staggered Arrival and Dismissal

- Upper School: 8:00-8:20 am; 3:30 pm (2 pm on Fridays)
- Lower School: 8:20-8:40 am; 3:15 pm
- Children's House: 8:40-9 am; 2:50-3:10 pm
- Children's House Half-Day: 12:15 pm

## Please note:

- Dismissal will no longer occur from the lobby.
- Exact times may change as we come to understand movement patterns and needs.
- No deliveries during drop-off and arrival.

# Dedicated Outdoor Spaces

## Children's House/Lower School Spaces



Upper School Spaces



- Movement will be critical for all students.
- We will schedule when pods can play outdoors. After each group uses the jungle gym, it will be cleaned with electro-static sprayers.
- Obtaining permits from the city for outdoor play spaces and classrooms
- Take neighborhood walks
- Work with the PE teacher to support movement break exercises in the classroom

## Safe Movement of Specialists Among Divisions

- Some specialists will lead intensives on a semester basis within a given cohort bubble. At the end of the semester, they will switch.
- Other specialists will not switch between cohorts all year.



# Additional Building Enhancements and Protective Measures

## Ventilation:

- Updates to HVAC systems
  - New HEPA ("High Efficiency Particulate Air") filters
  - UV coils
- 
- **Health Center:** Siloed on first floor with separate entrance and exit (former administrative offices)
  - New hand sanitizing stations
  - Water fountains will become water bottle stations



## Additional Building Enhancements and Protective Measures (cont.)

- New toilet covers to mitigate aerosol impact of flushing
- Enhanced staffing - nurse, cleaning staff, and reception greeter (monitoring and containment)
- Available masks, gloves, and other PPE supplies



M M

METROPOLITAN  
MONTESSORI  
SCHOOL

S

# Preparing for School

## How You Can Prepare for School

- Masks will be required for school. Please help your child find a mask that is comfortable for them, and help them get accustomed to wearing the mask indoors.
- Expect to have your child tested for Covid before the beginning of school. Further instructions to follow soon.
- Are you helping your child get excited for school? Children are resilient and adaptable, but we need to facilitate this big transition.
- You must follow New York State and the CDC's international travel guidelines to quarantine, which, at the moment, includes 22 states; Brazil, China, Iran, most European countries, the UK, and Ireland. Please continue checking these pages.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/map-and-travel-notice.html>

<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory>

## Expect to Hear from Us Regarding

- This week: We will send a reminder of New York State's vaccination requirements. Please make sure they are fulfilled by the start of school.
- Next week: You will receive a survey inquiring about before school care, afternoon care, lunch, and remote learning.
- Early August: Classroom assignments will be announced. Your division's leader and classroom teacher will be scheduling time to meet virtually with you.
- Invitations to future town halls to further discuss reopening policies.
  - Community conduct expectations: Limiting the spread of illness outside of school hours
  - Equity and mission-centered considerations
  - Mental health support for students, teachers, and parents as we transition back to in-school learning
  - Health screening and monitoring



M M

METROPOLITAN  
MONTESSORI  
SCHOOL

S

# Appreciation, Celebration, and Closing Remarks

# Celebration and Appreciation

- Complimentary summer enrichment classes to keep kids active and busy, and help us test out new remote learning strategies. Major thanks to teachers/academic leaders for planning these classes during the final weeks of school and serving our students and families in the summer.
- Gratitude to administrators and divisional leaders to adapt countless aspects of school life, attend Health Advisory meetings, and lead summer enrichment efforts.

## Celebration and Appreciation (cont.)

- Offering five-day, full-time in-school schedule
- Daily support from our Health Advisory Committee that is helping us comb through and interpret the latest research.
- New admissions inquiries: In classrooms with space, we will be considering these applicants. Otherwise, we're turning away families to adhere to social-distancing regulations.

# Final Thoughts and Q&A

- Keep in mind: We can't predict future waves of cases, mandated changes, or other vagaries of the pandemic. "Today's conventional wisdom is tomorrow's busted myth."
- Target reopening is week of August 24, contingent on necessary building changes.
- We are looking for places in our calendar where we can give back days to faculty/staff because of summer enrichment and our early start. Right now, we've identified **November 23** and **24** as give-back days (this is the Monday and Tuesday of the week of Thanksgiving), and we will continue examining our calendar.
- If you have additional questions, please reach out to [head@mmsny.org](mailto:head@mmsny.org).