



# 2020 - 2021 DISTANCE LEARNING PLAN

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# INTRODUCTION



Chesapeake Montessori School’s **Distance Learning Plan** (DLP) describes our educational goals and institutional procedures in the event of an extended closure of one or both of our campuses. During an extended campus closure, the staff and the Board of Trustees at CMS will continue to support, nurture, and educate the children and adolescents enrolled in our school.

## Implementation of the Distance Learning Plan

Circumstances necessitating implementation of the DLP may include a pandemic (such as COVID-19), civil unrest, natural disaster, or extended disruptions due to weather, such as a major mid-Atlantic snow storm. In the event that a calamity impedes our ability to gather at one or both of our campuses, the Head of School will converse with the faculty, administrative staff, and Board of Trustees to determine whether and when to implement the Distance Learning Plan. Depending on the predicted length of a campus closure, there may be one-week periods to allow faculty and staff time to transition into DLP implementation. Students will not be expected to attend school during these transitional days, and they will be made up if necessary.

## Returning to Campus

When the situation necessitating campus closure has stabilized, the Head of School will publish a timeline for our return to on-campus schooling. This decision will be made at the governance and leadership levels and will reflect policy and practices recommended by state and local authorities. Our campus re-opening date will be determined by our ability to reasonably ensure the health and safety of our students and employees.

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## Mission and Vision

“Chesapeake Montessori School guides children and adolescents in their development to become confident, respectful, kind, and independent individuals with well-developed powers of reasoning and a joy for learning. Using Montessori theory and practice of individualized learning in a whole-school community, we are committed to creating rich and healthy environments indoors and outdoors that provide intellectual, academic, social, and emotional preparation for life.”  
- CMS Mission Statement



We follow an educational model that puts the developmental needs of the human being ahead of academic achievement, hierarchical standards, and familial pressures. Neuroscience research supports our belief that emotional and social well-being must be in place in order for academic learning to happen. We hope that you are committed to this mission as we partner with you to offer distance learning to your children and adolescents. In that respect, an amended Mission statement that includes the role of the family during times of distance learning has been drafted for the CMS community and was adopted by the Board of Trustees on May 23, 2020:

### **Distance Learning Mission Statement:**

“Chesapeake Montessori School guides families in their pursuit to support the development of children and adolescents. Together, we will help guide children to become confident, respectful, kind, and independent individuals with well-developed powers of reasoning and a joy for learning. Using Montessori theory and practice of individualized learning, both at home and within a virtual whole-school community, we are committed to providing access to rich and healthy environments indoors and outdoors that provide intellectual, academic, social, and emotional preparation for life.”

While our Distance Learning Mission still places the child and/or teen at its center, during a time of campus closure we must also include the family and acknowledge the role of the “virtual window” into their respective homes. This is also true of our staff.

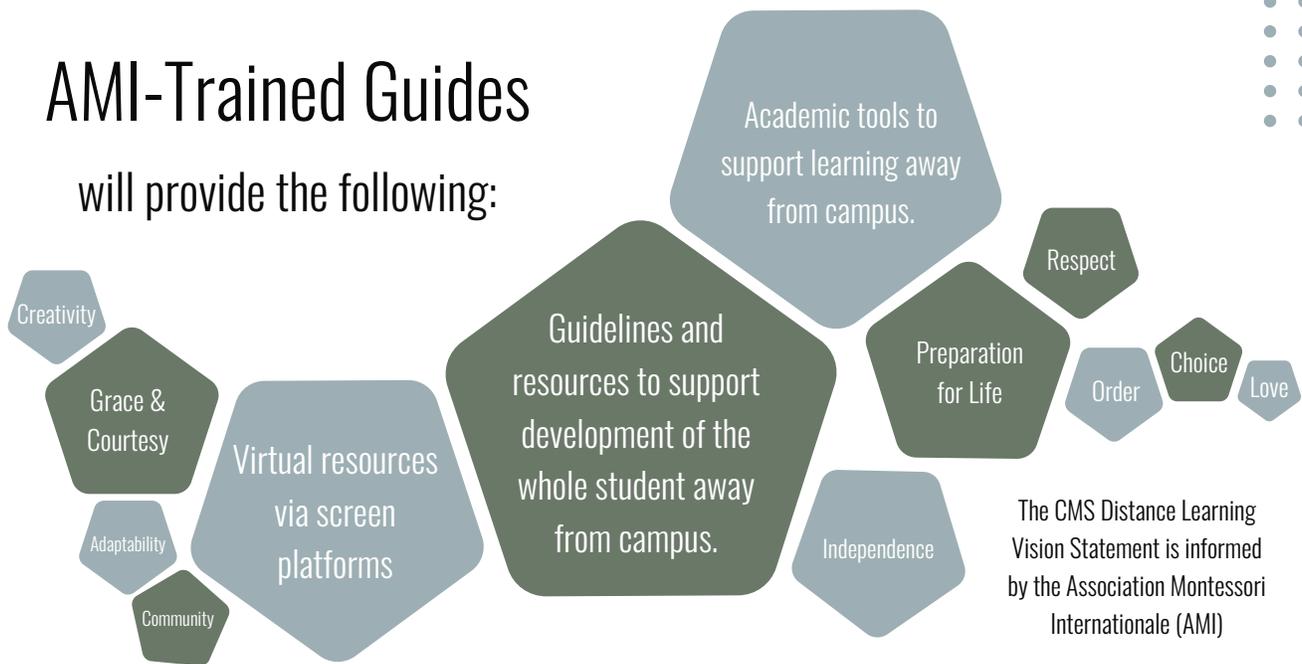
All members of our community are encouraged to model grace and courtesy during challenging times. It is part of our community agreement that discourse be respectful. Practicing these values is the single most important lesson that our children and teens can learn during a crisis.

In times of doubt, frustration, confusion, and/or angst about distance learning, you are encouraged to offer yourself and others:

empathy  
patience  
understanding **GRACE** sympathy  
respect compassion

# AMI-Trained Guides

will provide the following:



We encourage you to ask yourself the following questions every day during times of distance learning:

- “What do I want my child or children to learn today given the circumstances?”
- “What do I want my child or children to feel today given the circumstances?”
- “Where and what are the natural lessons?”
- “How is today a new opportunity to provide my child or children with a stable, caring, love-filled home?”

## Montessori Educational Philosophy

In order to understand Chesapeake Montessori’s approach to distance learning, it’s important to grasp some foundational principles about Montessori educational philosophy. Montessori education is a very specific form of education. It is worthwhile for parents to pursue a better understanding of the pedagogy and its complex underpinnings. Even within the restrictions of distance learning, we will continue to implement a **developmental education program**, which means that we will continue to meet the needs of individual students. Our Distance Learning Plan is not “one size fits all”.

The following page illustrates the principles and beliefs we commit to as an AMI-recognized school. During times of campus closure, we hope that that families will value the guidance we offer children and adolescents from a developmental standpoint more than our ability to occupy children and teens via virtual means and offer busy work. To do so would contradict our understanding of the developmental needs of our students. We exist to help children and teens grow up to be healthy, contributing, caring adults and we are able to still do this at a distance when our campuses are closed--with the support of parents and guardians who are also committed to upholding our educational values.

# MONTESSORI EDUCATION...



## ...is developmentally based vs. standards driven

We look to the needs and interests of children and follow them, sparking a love of lifelong learning. Standards are an artificial benchmark and not every child is ready for a certain standard at the same time. To read more about this subject, visit [Stanford University's Challenge Success webpage](#).



## ...trusts that self-construction is the pursuit of every young person

Human beings are always, already developing toward some end. This self-construction is intrinsic, inevitable, and evidenced by independent work. The work of the adult is merely to observe and make careful judgments. The secret of childhood and adolescence is the adult who has yet to reveal itself.



## ...fosters independent people vs. dependent learners

Students learn how to learn. They are given the gift of an educational setting that allows them to become the person they are meant to be vs. the person others want them to become.



## ...aims to remove obstacles to learning

We isolate difficulties. We break lessons down into segments. We give students time to arrive at knowledge on their own. We cannot force abstraction without causing emotional and learning blocks. Through respectful relationships and creativity, we engage with students to troubleshoot challenges together.



## ...fosters an appreciation for an interdependent life

Interdisciplinary presentation of knowledge helps children understand concepts within the context of the world around them. By teaching with as few barriers between subjects as possible, the Montessori guide models and cultivates a sense of awe for the complexity and wonder of our universe.



## ...utilizes the three-period lesson model to impart knowledge

In three "periods" or stages, new lessons are presented by a guide, explored by the student, and offered back to the guide by the student (the "test"). The process is often multi-sensory, layered, and extensively explored by the child or adolescent on their own terms. When a child's exploration of a topic is self-directed, it is more meaningful and robust.



## ...puts the child at the center of their growth and development

Montessori education is child-centered. It asks of the child and adolescent, "What do you want to know about becoming an adult?" The world our children inherit will be theirs to navigate and we must follow their lead in order to best support their preparation for life.



## ...assumes human tendencies and characteristics of certain age groups

"Universal tendencies" are traits and/or needs that are the same in all humans: exploration, orientation, order, communication, activity, self-preservation and self development, abstraction and imagination, concentration, repetition and perfection, and exactness and precision. Each age group has an additional set of characteristics.

# FINANCIAL POLICY



The implementation of the CMS Distance Learning Plan is considered part of the regular operations of Chesapeake Montessori School, and the school continues to be governed by the policies and procedures outlined in our enrollment agreement and Family Handbook Family Handbook except when specific limitations make it impossible to render those exact services. **Families that are unable to participate in Distance Learning must rescind the enrollment commitment to CMS for the 2020-2021 school year by the July 24, 2020 deadline.** This must be submitted in writing directly to the Head of School.

Should the school face an extended campus closure, the Board of Trustees will work closely with the Head of School and Finance Director to determine if there are pathways to minimize the financial impact of the closure on families. In cases where a family's economic circumstances are significantly affected by an extended campus closure, the family should immediately reach out to the Finance Director.

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## EXPECTATIONS OF ADMINISTRATION

**During distance learning, the CMS Head of School, administrative team, and Board of Trustees are expected to:**

- Stay compliant with local, regional, and national regulations to ensure the safety of our students and staff and keep our institution financially secure through tuition revenue, annual giving, grant awards, and loans.
- Issue frequent communications to the community about whole-school decisions, the state of our finances, the state of our staffing, and pertinent public health plans.
- Provide emergency tuition assistance to families who suffer sudden economic hardship, including possible deferment plans and extension of installment plans.
- Refund fees for Before-School Care, After-School Care, Transportation, and After-School Clubs (but cannot forgo or refund regular tuition).
- Stay compliant with evolving regulations issued by the OCC and MSDE and with evolving federal and state tax laws, insurance mandates, and laws governing non-profit businesses.
- Offer well-being support to the various constituents that comprise our school community.
- Support teachers and staff members with technology needed to implement distance learning.
- Keep frequent lines of communication open with our bank, Sandy Spring, as well as AIMS, AMI, NAIS, and any legal counsel as necessary.
- Continue to enroll new students and families throughout the course of the calendar year.

# YOUNG CHILDREN'S COMMUNITY



## Distance Learning Plan and Expectations

### Teachers will...

- Maintain a Google Classroom featuring recordings of the teacher reading books, singing songs, and sharing stories and poetry. It will also include information to guide parents when creating their own activities at home in the form of written ideas, photo ideas, and video recordings. CMS teachers hold the authority to determine how technology will best serve their students and what level and type of screen time, if any, is developmentally appropriate.
- Hold weekly individual Zoom meetings with your child.
- Hold weekly group meetings with your child and a few classroom peers.
- Periodically provide materials and guidance for offering these to your child at home.
- Conduct personalized virtual “home visits” to assist families in adjusting and adapting their home environment to provide a more pleasant and consistent atmosphere for their child, and everyone else.
- Provide monthly/bi-weekly parent education nights to discuss pertinent topics such as: toileting, sleep, eating, movement, development, language development, and setting limits.
- Hold monthly parent/teacher conferences to discuss individual circumstances and receive support.
- Give personalized responses, within 24 hours, to requests for advice/ideas.
- Provide progress reports at conferences and/or at the end of the semester and year.



### Parents are invited to...

- Support their child by using the offered resources at their own comfort level.
- Respect the developmental needs and characteristics of the young child.
- Establish a schedule and keep to a consistent routine.
- Prepare a home environment for their child.

### Students will...

- Engage in daily activities of the family, supplemented by resources and activities provided by the YCC teachers.

# PRIMARY COMMUNITY



## Distance Learning Plan and Expectations

### Teachers will...

- Maintain a Google Classroom featuring videos of the teacher reading books, singing songs, sharing stories and poetry, and demonstrating lessons. The classroom will include an information guide for parents to create their own activities at home. Zoom will continue to be utilized for recordings. CMS teachers hold the authority to determine how technology will best serve their students and what level and type of screen time, if any, is developmentally appropriate.
- Send a schedule at the beginning of implementation of the Distance Learning Plan.
- Hold weekly individual Zoom meetings with your child.
- Hold weekly group meetings with your child and a few classroom peers.
- Support French and Movement education.
- Periodically provide materials and guidance for offering these to your child at home.
- Give personalized responses, within 24 hours, to requests for advice/ideas.
- Provide progress reports at conferences and/or at the end of the semester and year.

### Parents are invited to...

- Support their children by using the offered resources to maintain skills and concepts.
- Respect the developmental needs and characteristics of the Primary-aged child.
- Establish a schedule and keep to a consistent routine.
- Prepare a home environment for their child.

### Students will...

- Engage in daily activities of the family, supplemented by resources and activities provided by the Primary teachers.
- Maintain skills and concepts presented by the teacher through repetition and completing the work cycle of a material.



# ELEMENTARY COMMUNITY



## Distance Learning Plan and Expectations

### Teachers will...

- Maintain a Google Classroom featuring videos of the teacher reading books, singing songs, sharing stories and poetry, and demonstrating lessons. The classroom will include an information guide for parents to create their own activities at home. Zoom will continue to be utilized for recordings. CMS teachers hold the authority to determine how technology will best serve their students and what level and type of screen time, if any, is developmentally appropriate.
- Send a schedule at the beginning of implementation of the Distance Learning Plan.
- Hold several weekly live Zoom meetings with individual, small group, and whole class lessons.
- Hold weekly individual Zoom meetings with your child.
- Support French and Movement education.
- Periodically provide materials and guidance for offering these to your child at home.
- Give personalized responses, within 24 hours, to requests for advice/ideas.
- Provide progress reports at conferences and/or at the end of the semester and year.
- **Please note:** during times of distance learning, teachers will coordinate drop off and pick up days at the Main Campus for student work to be submitted and returned. This will allow teachers to see the physical work that students are doing, beyond what they were able to observe through virtual means alone during distance learning in Spring 2020. Teachers will make suggestions and/or add extensions for students based on their observations.

### Parents are invited to...

- Support their children by using the offered resources to maintain skills and concepts.
- Respect the developmental needs and characteristics of the Elementary-aged child.
- Along with their child's input, establish a schedule and keep to a consistent routine.
- Assist in preparing a home environment with their child's input.
- Oversee live classes to enforce appropriate technology use.
- Provide opportunities for interaction and socialization, whether virtually or physically.

### Students will...

- Practice work and lessons at home, and submit their work through Google Classroom.
- Spend an average of 2 hours a day actively working on distance learning curriculum.
- Engage in daily activities of the family and take on responsibility in caring for their environment, food preparation, and creating a consistent schedule.



# AP COMMUNITY



## Distance Learning Plan and Expectations

### Teachers will...

- Maintain a Google Classroom for assigning, collecting, and providing feedback on work. Zoom will continue to be utilized for recordings. CMS teachers hold the authority to determine how technology will best serve their students and what level and type of screen time, if any, is developmentally appropriate.
- Send a schedule at the beginning of implementation of the Distance Learning Plan.
- Hold daily live Zoom meetings with individual, small group, and whole class lessons.
- Maintain set office hours for student or parent communication.
- Support French and Movement education.
- Give personalized responses, within 24 hours, to student or parent emails.
- Offer a virtual meeting time once a week for parents to connect.
- Provide progress reports at conferences and/or at the end of the semester and year.



### Parents are invited to...

- Support your scholar in areas of Physical Expressions (PEs), Creative Expressions (CEs), and Community Work.
- Design a daily schedule with input from your adolescent.
- Oversee live classes to enforce appropriate technology use.
- Provide a computer with video capabilities, internet access, and a printer for student use.

### Students will...

- Engage in daily activities of the family and take on responsibility in caring for their environment, food preparation, and creating a consistent schedule.
- Practice grace and courtesy during live class meetings
- Attend all live class sessions, with video mode on. Attendance is mandatory.
- Refrain from messaging or chatting via Zoom or other platforms during live class meetings.
- Come prepared to live sessions with all necessary materials.
- Possess a Gmail account to utilize Google Docs.