

Ronald
KnOX

montessori



Welcome Back
Fall 2020



Throughout the Spring, Ronald Knox Montessori School continued vibrant teaching and learning through our At Home Learning Program. Our Opening of School Task Force and our e-learning, assembled in March, has been working diligently to prepare for the safe return to school this September. The Task Force and Leadership Team continue to monitor and respond to the worldwide outbreak of SARS-CoV-2, the virus which causes COVID-19.

We understand that families and employees have questions and concerns. Here you will find Frequently Asked Questions, public health resources and communications that we have shared with the community.

Revised Opening Week of School Schedule

Virtual Orientation Meetings via Zoom

Wednesday, Aug 26 at 7:00 pm	Toddler (Full Day, Toddler 1, Toddler 2)
Thursday, Aug 27 at 7:00 pm	Upper East with Ms. Stephanie and Lower West with Ms. Michele
Tuesday, Sept 1 at 7:00 pm	Upper West with Ms. Esther
Wednesday, Sept 2 at 7:00 pm	Lower East with Ms. Eve

Meet Your Directress in Person at Mallinckrodt Park

Tuesday, Sept 8	
9:00-9:45 am	Upper East with Ms. Stephanie Lower West with Ms. Michele
10:00-10:45 am	Full Day Toddler with Ms. Marie Toddler 1 and Toddler 2 with Ms. Jennifer
11:00-11:45 am	Upper West with Ms. Esther Lower East with Ms. Eve

Dear Ronald Knox Community,

The unprecedented events of the past five months have impacted Ronald Knox in a dramatic and meaningful way, more so than at any time in its 57-year history. As many of you are aware, I have been in constant communication with Blythe Silva to ensure the safety of our community, the quality of the school's academic program, and the maintenance of the school's financial health. Because we plan to return to on site learning on September 8th, Blythe is keeping the Board and I apprised of the many evolving guidelines and regulations from state and local governments and health and safety associations. She attends regular meetings with the Heads of Schools from local independent institutions, The Early Childhood Alliance Directors Group, The North Shore Directors Group and the Association of Illinois Montessori Schools and keeps us aware of their thoughts. The following Back to the Community plans are the result of deliberations and decisions of the school's Leadership Team and COVID-19 Task Force. I am very grateful to all of them for their work and assure you that the Board is supportive of these evolving plans. We all understand that this is a dynamic process, and preparations will continue to be guided by the status of COVID-19 and city, state and educational leadership.

The Leadership Team and COVID-19 Task Force members have partnered with experts in various fields to establish new health and safety practices to mitigate the transmission of COVID-19. The Leadership Team has reimagined how in-person teaching and learning can flourish and how remote learning can be more robust, should that be necessary. Our school will look different, and we will need the full cooperation and support of all community members in implementing these procedures to help us maintain a healthy environment. Please know that the Leadership Team is basing every decision on what is best for the students while prioritizing the health and safety of all community members. In the following Back to the Community document, we have outlined many details of our current plans to return to school for in-person teaching and learning while in Phase IV. This guide is intended to help you better understand how we are preparing to return to Elmwood Avenue as well as community expectations, new health procedures, and more.

No matter the evolution of COVID-19 in the city, state, country or world, be assured that Ronald Knox School will continue to provide an exceptional Montessori education through vibrant programs--all supported by our dedicated and talented faculty and staff. Thank you for your continued partnership and support of our community during these challenging times.

Sincerely,



Christine Roloff, M.D.
President of the Ronald Knox Board of Directors

COVID-19 Task Force

Our Covid Task Force continues to collaborate with national, regional and local organizations, including educational leaders, medical professionals, health departments, and government agencies to develop processes and plans. Task Force members have been working to conduct research, analyze information, and present options that have enabled us to make key decisions and preparations for a safe return to school. The Leadership Team and Task Force are closely monitoring the appropriate sources of information, and, as requested by Governor Pritzker, are committed to following all of the health and safety guidelines to the greatest extent possible. Our priority remains the welfare of each and every member of the community.

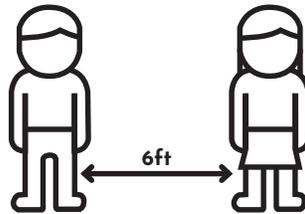
Members

Blythe Silva	Head of School
Christine Roloff, M.D.	Board President
Morgan Ruey, Esq.	Board Vice President
Elizabeth Pappano, M.D.	Board Secretary

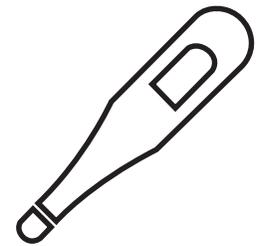
What Returning to School Will Look Like



Increased **cleaning and disinfecting** of all school facilities



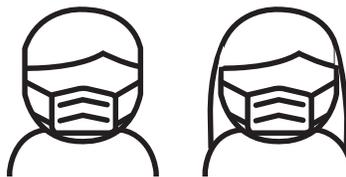
Adhering to **social distancing** mandates



Daily **temperature checks** for all students, faculty, and staff



Frequent **hand-washing** and an increase in hand sanitizing stations throughout school



Face coverings must be worn by all students, faculty, and staff at all times



Submission of a **daily questionnaire** regarding current health

Frequently Asked Questions

Schedule

Will Ronald Knox be altering their school calendar for the 2020-21 school year?

Our current plans are to abide by the published school calendar. Meet Your Directress Day is scheduled for September 8 with classes beginning on September 9. Changes to the calendar due to Covid-19 will be communicated as they occur.

Will Ronald Knox have on site learning this fall for the new academic year?

We are planning to be in school this fall in a way that adheres to state health and safety protocols including distancing and PPE guidelines. While these plans are continuously evolving, our current plan is to have all students on on site every day. We will simultaneously be ready to implement e-learning at home if it becomes necessary.

Safety Protocols

Will my child have to wear a mask?

Yes. Everyone at school will be required to wear a mask and maintain physical distancing. We strongly encourage families to ensure their child(ren) have at least five freshly-cleaned reusable masks--at least one for each school day. It is advisable for each student to have an extra mask at school/in their backpacks as they will become soiled. Requests for reasonable medical accommodations should be made directly to Blythe or the COVID-19 Task Force.

What is the school doing to ensure the health and safety of students and staff?

Since summer camp began on July 6, we have implemented strict cleaning, disinfection, hygiene, and safety protocols, and as faculty and staff return to school in September these will be expanded. When we begin the new school year, our school-wide cleaning and disinfection protocols will be in place. There will be continuous cleaning and disinfecting throughout the day. Guidelines will also be enforced knowing who is in the building and who is encountering whom should we need to implement contact tracing for known diagnoses of COVID-19.

Additionally, in order to keep our community as healthy as possible, we will be asking students, faculty, and staff to limit their movements throughout the building and reduce the number of people with whom they come into contact during the school day.

Will my child have to have a daily temperature check?

Yes, everyone on site will have a mandated daily temperature check. Additionally, parents will need to self-certify about each student's health.





How is the school preparing for the safe return of students, faculty, and staff?

- Assigning maximum people limits to each space in the classroom and setting new traffic flow patterns for hallways
- Implementing new personal hygiene practices and providing training for all students, faculty, and staff (*examples include requiring handwashing and desk/surface cleaning sessions throughout the school day, and increasing the cleaning frequency for high-traffic surfaces such as doorknobs, cubbies, lockers, etc.*)
- Modifying how and where students will eat lunch (most students will eat outdoors or in their individual classrooms, weather permitting)
- Installing physical structures such as acrylic shields in main entrances and implementing stricter visitor restrictions
- Ordering personal protective equipment
- Engaging in professional development for faculty and staff to prepare for the new school year and for e-learning at home (*if we need to implement it in the months ahead*)

How has Ronald Knox addressed the need for improved ventilation given COVID-19?

Ronald Knox has installed upgraded air-purifying filters in all of its heating and air conditioning systems to reduce pathogens, including COVID-19 and influenza viruses. HVAC economizers have been modified to allow an increase in fresh air being taken into the building, which will slow the transmission of COVID-19. We will also follow CDC and state health department recommendations to open windows when safe and feasible to reduce the spread of coronavirus, and specifically to slow the transmission of COVID-19.

What happens if someone at school shows signs of COVID-19?

Students or staff who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 will go immediately to the infirmary. After contacting parents, appropriate medical professionals and/or the employee's physician, we will assist in arranging for the person to be transported to the appropriate place as advised. We will isolate all who were in close contact with the symptomatic person and communicate with public health authorities and a student's parents or emergency contacts. The public health authority will assist in determining the next steps.

What happens if a Ronald Knox community member tests positive for COVID-19?

The response varies if a person is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19. Guidance from the public health authority will help us to determine our protocols, and it will depend on the circumstances. Among the questions to be asked include:

- When was the person last at school?
- Who else is in the person's class? Where is the person located in the building? Where did they go? Would the entire school have been exposed?
- Were all of the Safety Plan hygiene protocols followed? Was the person using PPE?
- Which areas of the school need to be thoroughly cleaned first?

The public health authority will help to determine if some or part of the school will need to be isolated, and whether these measures will be for deep cleaning purposes only or as a way to prevent spreading of COVID-19. Public Health officials will also assist in determining if or for whom a quarantine period is required.

Will parents and the general public be allowed in the school building?

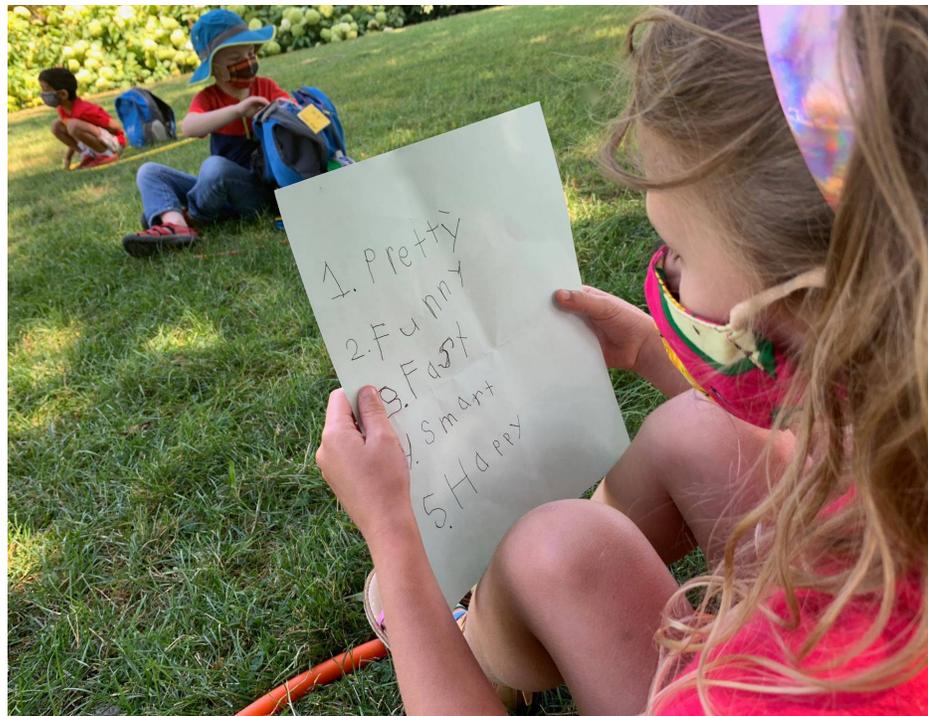
To maintain the safety of our community, only students, faculty, and staff will be allowed into the school while students are present. Arrangements will be made for deliveries and emergency building maintenance as required.

Will students be allowed in and out throughout the day?

Due to health and safety protocols, we will have specific ways to enter the building, and movement through and in and out will be minimized. When students arrive in the morning, they will go to their designated classroom. We ask that parents not schedule appointments for students during the school day requiring them to leave and return back to school.

How will Ronald Knox accommodate larger gatherings and social events when school resumes?

Currently guidelines for larger gatherings allow the school to conduct gatherings of no more than 50 individuals while maintaining social distancing and appropriate PPE. We will follow the guidelines of local and state authorities. In order to mitigate risk of exposure to COVID-19, gatherings and social events will be reinvisioned.



Are staff, students and families allowed to travel to different states or internationally?

Staff, students and families are discouraged from travel to different states and requested not to travel internationally. Staff and students who travel internationally or to states that have been placed on Cook County's travel ban (as determined by IDPH and CDC) will be required to quarantine prior to returning to school.

What happens if Cook County experiences a second wave of COVID-19?

If Illinois experiences another wave of COVID-19 and a State of Emergency is declared, we will comply and move to distance learning immediately. We are prepared for this. All students will be provided the necessary materials to learn remotely online with the Zoom platform, and our teachers will be equipped with proper technology and resources to deliver a Ronald Knox education remotely.



Educational Experience

Will classrooms look different?

Yes. We are modifying all classrooms to structure social distancing among students. We are also modifying furniture and classroom orientation to follow Illinois Department of Public Health guidelines.

Will there be distance learning for Ronald Knox students in 2020-21?

We are preparing for on-site classes and doing so with the practical and prudent understanding that consequences of this ongoing pandemic could require teachers and students to teach and learn from home at some point. Safety is our number one priority, and to achieve this, distance learning may be required.

What will the Music program look like?

Music is essential to our students' education and part of our whole-child approach. We will continue to ensure the artistic development of our students. Mrs. Clemmitt will be conducting class outside, weather permitting.

Will the school organize students into Pods?

A student's classroom will become the student's pod. Students will remain with this same group of students throughout the school day. Social distancing and masks are required as much as possible within the cohort.

Will siblings in the Primary Program be placed in the same classroom?

Yes, the administration is working to keep these siblings in the same classroom based on the guidance from the Illinois Department of Public Health.

What will the daily arrival schedule be?

8:15 am - Full Day Toddler, T₁ (Siblings of toddlers may arrive at this time as well)

8:30 am - Primary students

10:30 am - T₂

In order to maintain a smooth arrival process, students should not arrive prior to their designated time.

Understanding that the administration is creating cohort sections, may I request a certain section so I can coordinate carpools or child care?

We are working to keep siblings in the same Primary classroom, when possible, for arrival and dismissal purposes. Given that priority, we are not able to accommodate other parental requests.

Will students be allowed outside for classes?

We are fortunate to have Mallinckrodt Park and will use it for teaching and recreation as much as possible.



Enrollment

Is your Admissions Office open and accepting new students?

Absolutely. Our Admissions Office has been and will remain open and ready to help with applications or to answer questions. We have virtual capabilities for every step of the process. Please contact our Admissions Director, Anita McGing.



RKMS Leadership Team

Blythe Silva, Head of School

Anita McGing, Admissions Director

Cathy Litrosfsky, Office Manager

Jennifer Dearlove, Directress

Stephanie Diakakis, Directress

Eve Finzer, Directress

Esther Khuri, Directress

Katie Kopp, Directress

Michele Leider, Directress

Marie Rodriguez, Directress

Patty Seufzer, Directress

