

Dear Parents,

We hope this letter finds you all healthy! We have been working very hard to plan for the upcoming school year and we are ready to welcome families back as part of the Desert Garden Community. We have missed you!

We fully understand how difficult these times can be while we are facing this uncommon reality. As a result, we have created multiple options to best support our community. While we would always prefer that teaching, guiding, and learning occur face-to-face on our campus, we must be socially responsible and we must also try to meet our families' needs, to the best of our abilities, during this time.

We are thoroughly preparing for three potential scenarios. Please review the details of each below. Safety is our number one objective. In addition, we are also preparing for the longevity of our thriving, beautiful community.

In health,



Shetal Walters
Executive Director

CURRENT OVERVIEW

At the time of this communication, we are planning to start the school year in **Plan B**. We will update you of any changes by **July 15, 2020**. We will strive to transition to Plan A when it is most appropriate and responsible for the health and safety of our students, staff, and families.

APPLICABLE TO ALL THREE PLANS

2020 – 2021 School Calendar Adjustment

- Start date changed to August 10 (*new* Infant/Toddler/Primary students start August 12).
 - This start date may be pushed further due to Arizona COVID-19 numbers.
 - Previous start date was August 3 (*new* Infant/Toddler/Primary students start August 5).
 - Designated make-up days for these missed days will be scheduled later in the school year. These would potentially be **October 5 – 9, 2020**, which is currently scheduled as Fall Break.
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DETAILS OF THE THREE PLANS

PLAN A – *Business as Usual*

Plan A is our traditional Desert Garden Montessori experience. Additionally, this plan includes significant campus improvements we completed in April and May to improve our overall campus safety and functionality. These improvements include major restroom renovations, airflow improvements, and the implementation of contactless sanitization stations where possible.

PLAN B – *Modified Opening*

IN-PERSON and ONLINE learning options

General:

- School hours: 7:00 am – 4:00 pm.
 - There is the possibility of adding Extended Day hours based on family needs. Families will be able to communicate their needs via a survey at a later date.
 - Students who are at the school more than a half hour after their school day ends will be charged a flat fee of \$8.00/hour.
- School buildings and campus are open only to enrolled students and staff.

- Drop off and pick up is curbside only. To ensure social distancing, curbside services are scheduled at staggered times.
- Electives and Specials for Elementary and up will be offered remotely during the school day (please see classroom technology note below).
- No after school Enrichments (chess, hiking, etc.) are offered at this time.
- [COVID-19 Safety Protocols](#) will be followed at all times. Protocols will be updated and communicated as health and safety guidelines evolve.
- Masks
 - Not required for Infant, Toddler, and Primary students
 - Optional for students in Elementary and up
 - Allowed for any student who personally desires to wear one
 - Requirements may change based on government mandates
- Parents have the option to start with IN-PERSON and move to ONLINE learning (and vice versa) with a two-week notice to the school.

Classrooms:

- Each IN-PERSON classroom is considered a "Classroom Family," which consists only of the students and teachers/staff assigned to that specific classroom.
 - Classroom Families do not comingle/interact with each other throughout the day. i.e. Classroom 1 will not use the playground at the same time as Classroom 2.
- All Classroom Families have dedicated outdoor time a minimum of three times per day.
 - Classroom Families do not comingle/interact during this time.
 - The playground areas will be disinfected between Classroom Families.
- Reduced classroom headcounts allow for a minimum of 36-square feet per student. For this reason, headcounts may vary from classroom to classroom.
- Each student wears designated indoor/outdoor shoes. Indoor shoes remain on campus and are laundered, as needed, by DGM staff on site.
- Students eat lunch in the classrooms with their Classroom Families.
- All classrooms will be retrofitted with appropriate classroom technology to connect our online learning students and providers to the in-person community on campus. This may include, but is not limited to:
 - Classroom TVs for connecting community to community
 - Pan/tilt cameras for synchronized classrooms
 - Software to support synchronized classrooms

Tuition & Fees:

- The monthly tuition for the Infant, Toddler & Primary ONLINE program is \$495 per month. With this fee, your enrollment spot will be held, and your student can take advantage of our full-day ONLINE offering.
- The tuition for Elementary and MYHS ONLINE instruction is the same as for IN-PERSON instruction.
- Students will receive full-day ONLINE instruction with one or more members of our regular staff.
- Our teachers have been working diligently this summer and have significantly enhanced our ONLINE offering for the Fall opening.
- Most ONLINE offerings will be recorded and available to families to access at their convenience.
- There will be a COVID-19 Supply fee of \$175/student (maximum \$350/family) added to all accounts to help cover the costs of preparing for the additional infrastructure related to the pandemic. These fees will be applied to:
 - Classroom TVs for connecting community to community
 - Pan/tilt cameras for synchronized classrooms
 - Additional staff to support new protocols for classrooms and sanitization procedures
 - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
 - Sanitation equipment and products
- Classroom supply costs for families will be reduced to essentials for 2020-21. Students will only be required to obtain items personal to their own use, with the exception of MYHS, which may have a few additional requirements.

PLAN C – *Government-Mandated*

Stay-at-Home Order in place (or other *mandated* campus closure)

Plan C would take effect in the instance of a government-mandated campus closure. All student programming would take place ONLINE*.

- All Infant, Toddler, and Primary students would be changed to ONLINE learning status and their tuition would be adjusted to \$495 per month.
- Tuition for Lower Elementary and above would not be adjusted.
- *There is the possibility of very limited numbers of Infant/Toddler/Primary In-Person care based on critical need and available staff, per Childcare governmental guidelines.

YOUR STUDENT'S 2020 – 2021 ENROLLMENT:

All registrations that we have received for the 2020 – 2021 school year remain intact.

Tuition Insurance Plan

There have been changes to our Tuition Insurance Plan. Please review carefully.

The School's Tuition Insurance Plan provides protection from financial loss due to the unanticipated early withdrawal of a student from the School before the end of the school year. The cost of the insurance is \$1,000 per student and is due in full on July 1, 2020 or with the first tuition payment for students starting after the first of the school year.

Please NOTE: Students who utilize their Tuition Insurance Plan benefit will be completely withdrawn from the DGM school community. Students who would like to be re-considered for 2020-21 will be processed as new students and/or wait-listed as space permits.

Participation in the Tuition Insurance Plan is optional. For those families who decline to purchase Tuition Insurance there is a \$2,500 flat fee per child for withdrawal any time after July 1, 2020, due at the time of withdrawal.

If you do not require any changes to your child's enrollment, there is no action for you to take at this time. We will expect and prepare for your child to be at school for IN-PERSON learning beginning in August. Classroom assignments and details will be distributed at a later date.

If you would like to make changes regarding your preferred Instruction Type (Online or In-Person) or your Tuition Insurance selection, you must [Complete this Form](#) by **June 25, 2020**. Based upon your original enrollment, billing notifications will go out on June 20, 2020. However, billing will be updated according to changes received by **June 25, 2020**.

We understand you have many things to consider while making these important decisions for your children and family. We hope that you have found a plan that works for your family. We vow to work very hard on your behalf, and to preserve the integrity and commitment to our school community.