

Arbor Montessori School

Policies in the Event of a Communicable Disease Outbreak

Outbreaks of communicable diseases at Arbor fall into two general categories:

- Absenteeism greater than normal in any classroom due to common pathogens (e.g., viral upper respiratory illnesses or strep throat)
- Absenteeism of any degree or the report of the presence in any member of the Arbor community of a pathogen likely to have serious public health consequences (e.g., pertussis (whooping cough), bacterial diarrhea (salmonella, shigella), tuberculosis, H1N1 (“swine flu”) or H5N1 (“avian or bird flu”) influenza)

Teacher Records and Reporting

Per current CDC recommendations, teachers will begin to keep a daily log of students absent or sent home due to illness. Absenteeism >25% in any class due to illness should be reported to the Administration. Increasing absenteeism across the school over 2-3 days should prompt a call to the chair of the Health and Safety Committee and possible consultation with the DeKalb Department of Health. Any report that a student, parent, teacher, or staff member has tested positive for H1N1 should prompt consultation with the DeKalb Department of Health.

Ill Students and Staff

Anyone with a flu-like illness should stay home until they have been without fever (defined as less than 100°F taken orally), without the use of fever-reducing medicines (acetaminophen (Tylenol), ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), aspirin) for 24 hours. Students who come to school with flu-like symptoms and/or a fever of 100°F or greater should be sent to the office where they will be given a mask to wear until a parent or guardian can take them home.

Parental Notification

All Arbor families will be notified by appropriately expeditious means (email, letter sent home with student, phone call, etc.) in the event of the following:

- Absenteeism in their child’s class of over 50% of the students in the class for two or more days, with the reasonable assumption based on reports from absentee student families that most of those absent are ill with the same disease. All parents in the school will be notified if this level of absenteeism over a week’s time includes two or more classes on the same campus. Parents will be notified of any action that should be taken by them, and what action is being taken by the school to mitigate the transmission of illness to well students.
- Any report to teachers or administrators of communicable illness in an Arbor student that could have serious public health consequences. Administrators will consult with the members of the Health and Safety Committee and public health authorities

(DeKalb County Health Department, Georgia Department of Health, CDC) and notify all parents of their recommendations by appropriate means.

Preventive Measures

- The basic foundations of communicable disease prevention include staying at home when sick, washing hands frequently with soap and water (younger children) or hand sanitizer (older children and staff), and using cough etiquette. Teachers should make sure they have adequate supplies of tissues, paper towels for drying after soap/water washing, and hand sanitizer. The Office will have adult and pediatric sized masks available.
- Parents should be encouraged to make contingency plans for keeping their students home if they are sick. Students and staff who are sick should stay home except to go to the doctor and should not be out in the community where they can spread illness. Information for caregivers of people sick with flu can be found at www.cdc.gov
- CDC is currently recommending routine cleaning of areas that students and staff touch (including keyboards and desks) with the cleaners that are usually used.

School Closure

The decision to close the school and the length of school closure in the event of a serious communicable disease outbreak at Arbor or in the surrounding community will be made after consultation with public health authorities above. The Administration will be monitoring the appropriate CDC website for any changes in current recommendations.

All teachers should have contingency plans in place for carrying on lessons via alternative means if the school must be closed due to a communicable disease outbreak.