

## Acorn Hill Parent and Teacher Shared Community Commitment During COVID Pandemic (SY2020-2021)

It is important that families, teachers, and staff acknowledge and understand the incredible interconnectedness of our community as we move towards reopening. As we gather again in the shared community of our school everyone must agree that our actions and choices have an impact on those around us. All parents, teachers, and staff agree to a shared caring of our community including:

### Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures

1. Before school, while still at home, please take your child's temperature and check to make sure your child is healthy and well. Have your child use the bathroom and wash their hands. Please bring your own masks, thermometer, and pen to school daily.
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Maryland State Health Guidelines recommend that the same parent or designated person drop off and pick up your child every day. Anyone self-quarantining may not drop off a child. To avoid congestion, we ask that only one adult drops off and picks up. If at all possible, please do not bring siblings that do not attend Acorn Hill with you to drop off and pick up children. We have staggered drop-off and pick-up times for the different classes.
3. Adults are required to wear masks and adhere to physical distancing guidelines on school property.
4. Parents and caregivers should walk children to their designated outdoor classroom gate where there will be a health screening station. All adults and children will wear masks at the entrance area. An Acorn Hill employee will screen your child for any observable illness, ask questions about symptoms and potential exposure to COVID-19. You will take your child's temperature with your personal thermometer, and show the temperature to the employee, to confirm their temperature is below 100.4 degrees F (38.00 degrees C). The data from the health screening will be recorded. After the screening, please sign your child in on sign-in form using your own pen. Children will wash their hands using outside washing stations.
5. If your child is in a Nursery class, or is known to have difficulty with separation from you, please contact your child's teacher before school begins to discuss safe strategies that might ease your child's discomfort. Please make sure to say goodbye outside of the gate to respect the threshold and make drop off easier for your child.
6. Access to the school building and the playground is limited to students and employees. If you need to go to the office, please phone or email the office in advance to arrange an appointment. Parents, caregivers, and siblings may not use the restrooms in the school building.
7. All employees will wear face masks and complete a daily health screening, including a temperature check, prior to the children's arrival.
8. There are staggered pick-up times for each class. At pick up please wait outside your child's classroom gate, while keeping a distance to other parents. Teachers will bring the children to meet their parents. Once you have picked up your child, please promptly return to your vehicle allowing for the next dismissal. Please only send one parent or caregiver to the gate for dismissal.



## Health and Wellness Policy

Children and teachers exhibiting the following symptoms will be required to stay home and self-quarantine until the symptoms clear. Parents and employees contact the school Administrator, [monica@acornhill.org](mailto:monica@acornhill.org) to let her know they are self-quarantining, and if two or more symptoms exist she will contact the health department for additional requirements.

Cough  
Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing  
New loss of taste or smell  
Fever of 100.4 degrees (38.00 degrees C) or higher  
Chills, shaking chills or muscle aches  
Headache  
Sore throat  
Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea  
Fatigue  
Congestion or runny nose

If a child or teacher develops symptoms during the school day he or she will be separated from others and asked to go home as soon as possible. If we do not hear from parents that they are on their way, we will be reaching out to the emergency contacts to come pick the child up.

If a teacher or child's parent suspects COVID-19, receives a positive COVID-19 diagnosis or has been exposed to a person with COVID-19, you must notify the Administrator ([monica@acornhill.org](mailto:monica@acornhill.org)) who will consult with the Maryland Department of Health to assess the need to close an isolated class or the entire school.

## Healthy Hygiene and Cleaning/Disinfecting Policy

Children learn by imitation. Therefore, the teachers will continue to model healthy hygiene practices.

1. The teachers will model regular handwashing with soap and water for 20 seconds with themselves and the children (upon arrival, after using the restroom, before eating, after sneezing, coughing or nose blowing, before handling food, after touching or cleaning surfaces that may be contaminated).
2. The teachers will model and encourage the children to cover all coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the inside of the elbow. Used tissues will be discarded immediately.
3. All toys and classroom areas will be cleaned at the end of each day. Often-touched surfaces will be spot-cleaned/disinfected throughout the day.
4. We will eat snacks and lunch outside. We will set up seating to support physical distancing for the children. Teachers will maintain stringent cleanliness before serving, and also while helping other children at snack or lunch time. Second helpings will not be offered without additional hand hygiene. Please send lunches that do not require additional preparation.
5. Any toys that are put in the mouth will be removed promptly. Toys that are difficult to clean will be put into storage for the time being.



6. Rest time will happen outside. Teachers will build cozy rest-time areas under large tarps (with ground tarps, and mats). Teachers will create a warm and comforting rest-time environment to encourage healthy sleep or down-time for all children. Children will be spaced head to foot and spread apart. Additional clean bedding will be supplied by families in clean resealable bags or containers. Bedding will be stored individually in bags or boxes. Nap mats will be disinfected daily, and bedding will be sent home weekly to be laundered.
7. Acorn Hill has installed HVAC UVC amendments on our 3 A/C wall units and the rooftop unit. These upgrades, in addition to ceiling fans and open windows, will provide additional protection to children and teachers during bathroom time, and in the event it is necessary to move indoors in response to a weather or other emergency.
8. Bathrooms and other high-use areas will be disinfected frequently.
9. Each child will keep their belongings in their designated area.
10. Teachers and families must follow [Maryland State Health Guidelines](#) when travelling out of state or hosting out-of-state guests. Please take this into consideration as you make your fall and winter plans.

### **In Case of Illness**

- COVID-19 is a reportable disease. If you or a family member is diagnosed, inform the school office ([monica@acornhill.org](mailto:monica@acornhill.org)) immediately and stay at home.
- If a child shows any symptoms of illness during the day the parent will be called to pick them up as soon as possible. The child will stay in the “wellness room,” a quiet area away from other children until the parent arrives for pick up.
- The Administrator will follow the Maryland State Health Department guidance on follow-up steps with regards to closure.

### **Physical Distancing**

- Young children will not be expected to follow physical distancing guidelines and will interact with their peers during play. Therefore, the teachers will provide an environment where this can happen as safely as possible.
- Children will wear masks except for eating and sleeping. Exceptions to this policy can be seen in the [Covid-19 Guidance for Child Care Facilities](#). Acorn Hill will follow recommended guidelines.
- We will spend our days in our outdoor classrooms. We will use the bathrooms inside. Inclement weather or other emergencies may occasionally force us inside. Tarps in our outdoor areas provide comfortable spaces for children to shelter under in the event of rain.
- According to Maryland State guidelines, group size will be limited to a maximum of 13 children and 2 teachers per group. Each class will function as a “pod,” and except for siblings, there will be no mixing of persons in one pod with another pod.
- Supplies will not be shared between classrooms.
- Children will be distant from each other at snack and lunch time. Utensils and food will not be shared among the children. Physical distancing may also be practiced during structured portions of the morning, such as story, circle, and puppet show times.



- Teachers will do their best to create a warm, comfortable, positive environment that is safe and clean. We will limit exposure to risk as much as possible. At the same time we understand that it is equally important to make sure we are meeting the children's developmental, emotional, and mental health needs. We will comfort, hold, and hug the children. Teachers will wear smocks which can be changed daily (or even more often if needed) after comforting a child.

### **Community Responsibility**

Families, teachers, and employees agree to behave in socially responsible ways both in and out of school—avoiding large groups of people, wearing masks, maintaining physical distancing, washing hands frequently, sanitizing home and car surfaces, informing the school if any of these behaviors have been breached or compromised, and informing the school if there is an illness or fever in any member of the family. Our safety as a community is dependent on each and every one of us as an individual.

We are not beings in isolation, and it is essential that we maintain awareness and sensitivity to everyone's health and well-being as our lives continue to open up. We look forward to partnering with the community for a safe school year.

