



## A note from Julie Bragdon, the Head of School

IT'S LIKE WE'RE PEN PALS



MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF DENVER

Dear MSD Community,

Happy Monday! We all love having students back on campus and seeing their happy faces! It's been a long summer without them around. Our first days of Toddler, Elementary, and Middle School last week were a success, and we look forward to welcoming our Primary and Kindergarten students back to their new classrooms later this week. In addition to some changes to Back to School Night on September 9th, we've received several questions about our COVID-19 policies since our last communication and I wanted to address and clarify these here.

### In this update:

- Update on Back to School Night on September 9th
- Update on our Travel policy
- What we need from you

We've made the difficult decision to host our annual **Back to School Night** on September 9 **online instead** of in-person. While we'd hoped to welcome our entire adult community back on campus for a fun, informative evening and getting re-connected, we feel uncomfortable with the whole of our community gathering as a large group and indoors in classrooms with faculty. The technology available to us makes this an unnecessary risk to take. Please stay tuned for Zoom links to our school-wide and individual classroom sessions that evening, and mark your calendars for 6-8pm on September 9. (Bonus – no babysitters required, and you can wear whatever you like! I owe you a taco next year.)

---

With a holiday weekend approaching, we've received many questions about upcoming travel. In my previous emails, we provided links to the CDC's recommendations for travel via our COVID-19 Guidebook and added a question in our daily health screening on SchoolPass in order to monitor unvaccinated student travel based on those recommendations.

Tonight, we have removed this question from our SchoolPass daily health screening.

While the CDC [recommends](#) unvaccinated domestic travelers test 1-3 days prior to travel, and again 3+ days after travel in addition to a 7-day quarantine regardless of result, the CDPHE [recommends](#) travelers "should monitor for symptoms and get tested if symptoms develop."

This conflicting guidance, in addition to being unable to monitor the *off-campus behavior* of every one of our community members in every situation, has led us to the following recommendation:

**Please avoid unnecessary travel. If you do travel, please do so responsibly.** Use the same layered mitigation strategies as we do in school, including masking, distancing, and hand washing. Consider each family member's vaccination status, the assumed vaccination status of your child's classmates, mode of transportation, and destination location. Make the safest decision possible for your family, classmates and teachers, and for our MSD community as a whole. You cannot use too much caution regarding sending your child to school. MSD Faculty and Staff will continue to adhere to the CDC's recommendation for travel.

**Why can't we monitor off-campus behavior?** We've all had more than a year and a half of practice at this. As you know, MSD has worked incredibly hard to implement and maintain a layered approach of best practices to COVID-19 prevention, and as a result, we were able to have a full year of in-person learning last year.

This year, even with vaccines available (and required for school employees), we've asked all our faculty and staff to do even more by submitting to weekly testing. Our focus is on monitoring this new requirement for almost 75 people and tracking vaccination status of students, along with the daily wellness screenings for 329 students (in addition to that education work that we are actually here to do!), we cannot also track your vacations, schedules, and testing. Please continue to make smart choices and help our community stay safe and preserve in-person learning as much as possible.

---

#### **What we need from you:**

- Please take federal, state, and local guidance seriously and make ample use of the [free testing](#) available. The tests are kind of growing on me. And I do really appreciate the good swabbers!
- Please read the [MSD COVID-19 Guidebook](#) and adhere to the policies and procedures outlined within. Use it for reference when questions arise, and please always keep in mind that guidelines and information are constantly changing, so our own MSD guidance will too. This is a living document that will be updated as new information is learned, and date stamped with the current version.
- We are currently working on a scenario chart to help families make the best decisions possible regarding playdates, carpool, sports, and other gatherings. This will be updated as necessary and stay posted on Virtual Campus and on the Blackbaud resource page.
- Please continue to email any questions or concerns to the [MSD COVID-19 Task Force](#).

Please be a thoughtful MSD community member and keep your families' COVID-19 exposure and thus, the risk to *all of us* low by following all MSD, CDC, and Denver guidelines. As I have said many times and will continue to say until we get through this

(hopefully not too much longer!), our extensive good planning and efforts around keeping our community safe only work if we are each 100% committed to each other and uphold our community expectations.

As always, please be in touch with any questions, concerns, or insights. I appreciate your patience and grace as we get a new school year up and running with some of the same (and some exciting new) complications.

Onward.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Julie Bragdon, M.Ed**

Head of School, Montessori School of Denver

1460 South Holly Street, Denver, CO 80222

303-756-9441 ext 111

[www.montessoridenver.org](http://www.montessoridenver.org)