

Montclair Public Schools
Development Learning Center (DLC)

2020-2021 Handbook



Welcome to
Preschool

Dear DLC Families,

Our team has worked tirelessly to be prepared for your children to safely begin in-person instruction on 1/25/21. As there will be many changes to our “normal” program, procedures and policies, we have adapted our annual handbook to reflect the current guidelines and necessary changes to our program. We hope to gradually re-introduce and re-normalize those parts of our program that have been temporarily postponed or modified. We will have to work together as a community in order to ensure the best and safest experience possible for staff and families. We ask you to remember that this is a complex and fluid situation and we will continue to adapt our plans as they evolve to offer the most that we can within guidelines.

With hope and determination,

The DLC Team

Overview of DLC Classrooms

The Montclair Public School District is extremely proud of the Developmental Learning Center (DLC), our Preschool Program for children between the ages of three and five. As parents and educators, we know how important quality early childhood educational programs are for the youngest members of our community.

As it is our mission to provide inclusion opportunities for all students, all of the programs within the Developmental Learning Center provide inclusion opportunities with typically developing peers. Our current programs located at the DLC include:

1. **Inclusion classrooms:** This innovative program provides children with a child-centered environment in addition to the supports and services needed to achieve valuable learning outcomes. Children learn to form and maintain productive social relationships and foundational academic skills. The inclusion pre-school classrooms are small learning environments taught by a dually certified teacher. Inclusion classrooms utilize a high quality general education preschool curriculum, supplemented by literacy and math curriculum aligned with current district initiatives. All classes are supported by occupational, physical, and speech therapists. Consisting of half-day (am or pm) sessions, this program is open to special education and general education students.

2. **Self-Contained Classroom:** Using the high quality curricula of our inclusion programs as a guide, this program incorporates the principles of applied behavior analysis to address student's individual goals. Students learn through both one to one teaching and group instruction from a special education teacher and trained paraprofessionals. In addition to speech, occupational, and physical therapists, a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) is available to support this program. Within this classroom, opportunities for inclusion with typically developing peers are built into the child's day and individualized based on each student's current level of social awareness.

In addition to the programs at the DLC, the staff has developed positive relationships with several community preschools. Students who are recommended to attend these outside preschools are considered "DLC" students and will have a full continuum of support available to them.

2020-2021 Program Information

To provide the highest quality education for all of our students, the program for the 20-21 school year will consist of hybrid instruction and remote only instruction. As dual modality instruction (teachers providing instruction for in-person and remote students simultaneously) is not an effective mode of instruction for early childhood, students will be matched with either a hybrid or remote only teacher/classroom starting on 1/25/21 . While most teachers will remain the same, there are a select few students that will need to be reassigned to a new teacher/classroom. Affected Families will be contacted individually to discuss this change and develop some fun activities to make the transition seamless.

Hybrid Instruction (in-person)

Days: 5 days per week (Monday- Friday)

Hours: 9:15-12:15

Hybrid Schedule:

- 8:50: Staff Arrival
- 9:00-9:15: Student drop off/arrival
- 9:15-12:15: Classroom Instruction
- 12:15: Student Dismissal
- 12:20-1:10: Student/Staff Lunch
- 1:10-2:00: Classroom prep
- 2:00-3:15: Asynchronous Assignments, 1:1 sessions where applicable

Related Services: As the DLC does not have enough office space to allow for social distancing, related services will be provided remotely at this time (either within the classroom or at home in the afternoon) for all students. Schedules will be communicated by related service providers directly to families.

Remote (live synchronous and asynchronous)

Days: 5 days per week (Monday-Friday)

Hours: 9:15-12:15

Remote Schedule:

- 9:15-12:15 (virtual live instruction)
 - Live morning circle (approx. 20 minutes)
 - Social opportunity (snack time) (approx. 15-20 minutes)
 - Story time/ Language Arts lesson (approx. 15-20 minutes)
 - Math lesson (approx. 15-20 minutes)
 - Small group/ 1:1 instruction (15-20 minutes rotated among students)

- Breaks will be encouraged between activities for movement and creative play
- Additional Assignments/ extension activities will be provided via seesaw.
- 12:20-3:00: Staff/student lunch, teacher prep, and 1:1 sessions where applicable

Related Services: Related services will be provided remotely. Schedules will be communicated by related service providers directly to families.

Arrival and Dismissal for in-person students

WE APPRECIATE YOUR COOPERATION AND REMIND YOU THAT THE SAFETY OF YOUR CHILDREN IS ALWAYS OUR FIRST CONCERN! We ask that you follow the procedures below everyday to ensure that all children are safe and secure in and outside of the building.

Arrival and departure times will be staggered with the MCPK to ensure that we can efficiently and effectively administer temperature screenings and limit traffic. Our school day program begins at 9:15 and ends at 12:15 pm. **The car lines will take place from 9:00—9:15 am every morning.** The DLC faculty and supervisor will be outside ready to greet each child and ultimately escort all children to their classrooms. **It is essential that children arrive on time each day.** Lateness causes disruption of classroom daily routines and will make staffing our morning check-in more challenging (see Attendance & Tardiness.)

MORNING DROP-OFF ROUTINE

Parents can either drive-up or walk-up to the entrance on Education Way (the straight driveway between the MCPK building and parking garage) and wait for a DLC staff member to administer the daily temperature screening. Drive up families will wait in their car for a staff member, while walk up families will wait at 6 foot intervals for a staff member at the walk up table. **Parents may not leave until the temperature screening is complete.** Once a staff member gives the "okay", parents will help their child out of their cars and the staff member will escort the child to their class tent/area to wait for a staff member to bring them into the building by group. Children and parents must wear masks to drop-off. Any child with a temperature of 100 or higher after two readings must return home with their parent until he or she is fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication. Students must have a written medical clearance from their doctor to return to school.

****DLC will send home a car placard and name tag with your child's name and classroom number prior to 1/25/21 . Please make sure to display this placard in your passenger***

side window every day. Placards and name-tags will help us make children feel welcome and comfortable and they will facilitate the drop off process.

AFTERNOON PICK-UP ROUTINE

Teachers will bring groups to the entrance on Education Way for pick-up. Parents or caregivers must walk up to the pick-up location and sign their child out every day. All adults must wear masks to pick-up and maintain physical distancing guidelines at all times. All children over the age of 2 who accompany caregivers also must wear a face covering. It is essential that children are picked up on time.

ATTENDANCE & TARDINESS

It is very important that you call the school in the morning (973-509-4208) if your child will not be attending school. After an absence of three or more days due to illness, the nurse must be notified in order for your child to return to school.

The DLC follows a daily schedule of activities, projects and a multitude of learning experiences. **IT IS ESSENTIAL YOUR CHILD IS AT SCHOOL ON TIME IN ORDER TO OBTAIN THE FULL BENEFITS OF THE PROGRAM.** Consistency of a routine will also allow for a smooth transition into the classroom.

Families who arrive with children after 9:15 am must come to the front door and wait for a staff member to complete the daily temperature check. The child will then be escorted by DLC staff to their classroom as soon as possible so as to cause minimal disruption to the class that is already in progress.

Health and Safety Guidelines for Hybrid (in-person) instruction

Multi-tiered efforts to mitigate risk for our students and staff will be in place. While there cannot be a guarantee against the spread of Covid-19, our guidelines follow the recommendation of the CDC, the NJDOH, and our medical team including our School Physician, Supervisor of Nursing and the MPS School Nurse Team as well as the Montclair Department of Health. Parents/Caregivers will be required to sign a health and wellness contract on Genesis prior to re-entry and periodically.

- Masks
- Symptom Check including on-site temperature check
- Physical Distancing
- Hand Washing/Hand Sanitizer

- Stay home with any possible symptoms of Covid-19

Required Medical Forms: All routine required medical forms must be on file with your child's school nurse *prior* to re-entry. This includes New Jersey Universal Child Health Form referencing the child's most recent physical; completed and signed by the pediatrician, , updated immunization forms, medication forms, life-threatening allergy, diabetes, seizure and asthma for the 20-21 school year.

All forms are located on the district website. Please call your child's school nurse with any questions.

Influenza vaccinations are required for all children under 5 years of age.

Mask Policy: All students and staff members are required to properly wear a mask (over the nose, mouth and chin) at all times. The MPS will distribute 2 cloth 3- ply masks to each student and staff member. One face shield will be provided to each staff member to wear with his/her/they mask. Face shields alone (without a mask) may only be worn by students or staff members with permission from the Medial Team, as deemed necessary, on a case by case basis. Students and staff may wear their own 2-ply or above cloth masks or surgical masks from home. Please note that **Bandanas, gaiters, scarves, fleece and masks with valves are not permitted.** The school will not supply daily surgical masks to staff or students. They will be available for emergencies only.

The Pre-K student population may remove masks for snack-time. Snack-time should occur outside with 6 ft. distancing as weather permits. During inclement weather, a large snack room will be designated. Distancing of 10 ft. will be required for indoor snacks. All students must wash their hands or use hand sanitizer before and after snacks. Adherence to our Food Regulation will be enforced.

Students may lift their masks for quick sips of water (from personal water bottle) if physical distancing is maintained. Water fountain spouts will be unavailable for use. Students may refill their water bottles at designated stations in each building. Edible reinforcers (ABA population) must be delivered and consumed in a similar manner as sips of water.

Bus: Masks must be worn at the bus stop and at all times on the bus...no exceptions. Eating and drinking is prohibited on the bus. Students may not remove their masks on the bus. Physical distancing will be adhered to when possible.

Parents/caregivers are strongly encouraged to monitor their child for signs of illness daily before leaving home for the bus, as they are the frontline for assessing illness in their children. Students who are sick should NOT attend in-person school. Please notify the teacher and your child's healthcare provider.

Covid symptoms include: sore throat, new uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (for students with chronic allergic/ asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline), congestion/runny nose, nausea, diarrhea, vomiting or abdominal pain, new onset of severe headache, loss of taste or smell.

Parents/caregivers are asked to wait at the bus stop with their child/children until the bus arrives. Students must use hand sanitizer provided at the bus stop.

Staff members: are required to perform a self-symptom check prior to leaving home. If any symptoms of Covid-19 are evident, the staff member should stay home, call their supervisor and contact their healthcare provider.

Each student and staff member will be required to use hand sanitizer upon entering the school building. Daily temperatures will be taken by a staff member with a no-touch thermometer, note: **Students/staff will not be allowed in the building with a temperature of 100 degrees or higher or the following symptoms:** Sore throat, new uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (for students with chronic allergic/ asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline), congestion/runny nose, nausea, diarrhea, vomiting or abdominal pain, new onset of severe headache, loss of taste or smell.

Physical Distancing

Classrooms, hallways and common areas will be set-up to maximize physical distancing to the greatest extent possible for students and staff (6 ft. or greater). Students and staff are required to follow physical distancing signage in the hallways, stairwells, outside the bathrooms, main office and nurse's office and outside on school property to help maintain physical distancing when outside the classroom.

Hand washing/Hand Sanitizer (CDC recommends alcohol-based hand sanitizer that is minimally 60% alcohol). Young children will be assisted/observed to ensure proper hand hygiene:

- Upon entry to school bus
- Upon entry to school
- Before and after snacks and lunch
- After toileting, wiping nose, sneezing
- When returning from outdoor play
- Before leaving for the day
- When hands are soiled

Designated times for hand washing/hand sanitizer for all students and staff members. Every 90 minutes, on a schedule, students will be taken to the sink to wash hands for 20 seconds with soap and water.

Isolation/Use of Nurse's Office

Students or staff members with a fever of 100 degrees or above will be sent to an isolation space until they leave the building. Staff will go to a separate designated isolation space. Students will be sent to an isolation space within the nurse's office. Parents/caregivers are urged to update their child's emergency contacts so a designated person is available to pick-up the child within 30 minutes of receiving the call.

All students and staff members without a fever, but with any symptom of Covid-19 during the school day, will be assessed by the school nurse. The school nurse will use medical judgement, the NJDOH symptom-based exclusion rubric as well as an approved Covid-19 screening algorithm to make the decision if a student/staff member must be immediately isolated and excluded from school, or may receive treatment and rest pending a rapid resolution of the problem. If the problem is rapidly assessed and treated by the nurse, the student/staff member may return to class. The nurse may choose to isolate and exclude any student or staff member based on her medical judgement.

To preserve a sanitary and safe nurse's office, physical distancing will be maintained. Staff members should accompany students (age appropriate) or call before sending a student. Students/staff must stop at the door of the nurse's office prior to entry. Students may not use the nurse's office for phone calls, snacks, naps or any reason other than medication, first-aid, injuries or illness.

Sick Policies for non-Covid related illness: If your child becomes ill in school you, or the emergency person designated, will be notified by the school nurse. In the event that this occurs, please make arrangements to have your child transported home as soon as possible.

When a child is not feeling well, we recommend keeping the child at home. If your child has any of the following symptoms please keep him/her home until cleared by a private physician.

- Temperature greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit
- Rash
- Vomiting or diarrhea

Communicable diseases such as chicken pox, strep throat, whooping cough, etc.... must be reported to the school nurse immediately. Students should stay home until cleared by a private physician.

Reporting Absences: If your child will be absent, please contact the DLC office at 973-509-4208 to report the absence and reason.

Allergies: Some classrooms at the DLC have food restrictions based on student need. Your teacher will send a notice regarding specific restrictions in your child's classroom, however, before bringing in a snack for the class to enjoy please check with your child's teacher.

Medication: Students are NOT allowed to bring their own medication to school. If a child needs medication, the parent/caregiver must bring the medication to the school nurse and follow the appropriate protocol.

Classroom Cleaning and Maintenance: The following cleaning procedures will be followed daily:

- High Touch surfaces (doorknobs, handrails, etc...) will be cleaned multiple times per day.
- The playground will be sanitized prior to each group entering the playground
- Classrooms will be cleaned daily after dismissal using approved cleaning products
- High touch surfaces in the classroom will be wiped down frequently with district approved wipes/ cleaning spray
- Toys that require cleaning will be separated and set aside for cleaning at the end of the day.

SAFETY and Security PROCEDURES

At this time, **we are not allowed to have any visitors enter the building.** This includes parents, other family members, grandparents, guardians, etc. We will provide virtual opportunities for our families and valued contributors to participate in the classroom experience.

Children will be considered "signed-in" when the daily temperature screening at morning drop-off has been completed. Caregivers **must sign out** children at dismissal time.

Children must be accompanied by an adult at all times. A staff member must be with all children in the building, including on the stairs. No children under the age of 10 are allowed

in the stairwells without adult supervision. In addition, DLC students may NOT be dropped off/picked up by their siblings **under the age of 16.**

Children may not be released to an **unauthorized** person. Please make sure that all emergency contacts are updated in the Genesis Parent Portal. If a person outside of these emergency contacts will be picking up your child, we must have a **WRITTEN** consent to release a child. The person authorized to pick up a child must present identification upon arrival.

****This year it is extremely important that all families have an emergency back-up plan for pick up within 30 minutes of contact from the school.***

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PROCEDURES

The New Jersey Department of Education requires that all schools have an emergency plan in place that includes their preparation for a variety of situations including fire, evacuation and lockdowns. The requirement on fire drills states that we must conduct fire drills each month (at a variety of times) to ensure that children are able to exit the building in the event of a fire. Each classroom is assigned a primary and secondary route that they would use to get out of the building safely. The evacuation plan includes both a primary evacuation location (Hillside School) and a secondary location (Unitarian Universalist Congregation on Church Street). In addition we must conduct lockdown drills to ensure that the children are comfortable with the process. Each classroom has a “lockdown” location within the classroom or bathroom that is not visible from the door. (All classroom doors are locked.) We use the words “MOVE, QUIET, QUICK” as the code words to signal the children to go to the lockdown location. We explain to the children that just like in terms of a fire, we get out of the building to be safe, there are times that something might be outside of the building that causes us to want to be safe inside. We never use any words that would frighten the children. All administrators are assigned the responsibility of ‘sweeping’ the building to ensure that all children and faculty have been safely evacuated or are safely locked down.

Other Important Information

School attire: Students should arrive to school in proper school attire including:

- Comfortable play clothes and sneakers for outdoor play.

- If your child is in diapers, please dress them in clothes that are easy to take off and put on. This will allow the staff to assist the child as quickly as possible, thus minimizing classroom distraction.
- **All students should bring two clean masks to school every day—one that they wear and a second in a labeled ziplock bag. Masks must cover the nose, mouth and chin.**
 - Any damp or soiled mask will be returned home for washing in that same bag.
 - Cloth masks that have been worn should be washed at home before they are re-worn.
 - We will have disposable masks available in case of emergency, but we know that children are more comfortable wearing a mask that is familiar and our supply is limited.
 - Please reach out to Mrs. Finnerty, DLC Supervisor, if you are struggling to access an adequate supply of masks for your child.

Snack Time: The children will have snack time during the day. It is only a snack and not meant to take the place of breakfast. Please provide a small, healthy snack such as fruits or vegetables for this time.

Outdoor Playtime: Outdoor time is an important part of your child’s daily schedule. Classes have **outdoor activities scheduled everyday (weather permitting)**. The DLC requires sneakers or rubber soled shoes for students as they are the best and safest footwear for active children. Please avoid sending children to school in shoes that are not supportive (i.e. flip-flops or shoes with uneven soles.)

The playground will be divided into quadrants and classrooms will be assigned to a specific quadrant each day. Classrooms will be able to rotate throughout all the quadrants so that they have an opportunity to experience the entire playground. The structures and high-touch areas will be cleaned and disinfected with a fine mist sprayer throughout the day between groups. In addition to playground time, groups will have access to designated outdoor classroom areas for appropriate learning activities.

Birthday Parties: Many children wish to share the excitement of the birthday with their classmates. Please consult with your child’s teacher to determine the best way to celebrate this special day.

Lunch: There will be no lunch period during hybrid instruction. If you need access to free and reduced lunch please reach out to Ms. Finnerty to arrange for lunch to be provided prior to dismissal for your child to take home.

Parent/Teacher Conferences: Parent/Teacher conferences will be held based on the MPS school calendar. If you would like to schedule a conference outside of these times, please contact your child’s teacher to arrange an alternate time.

Progress Reports: Progress reports are provided for all children three times a year (December, March, and June). This report will reflect a picture of your child’s current education progress.

Transportation: If your child is eligible for transportation, the transportation office is responsible for the scheduling and assignment of all buses. If you have any concerns about transportation please contact the transportation office directly at 973-509-4062 or 973-509-4055.

Class Parents: The Classroom Teachers will ask for volunteers to be class parents in the beginning of the school year. This is a great opportunity to be a part of the class by planning holiday parties and other events throughout the school year.

Contact Information

DLC Secretary & Main Office	Cathy Roth croth@montclair.k12.nj.us 973-509-4208
Supervisor of Pupil Services/DLC Supervisor	Jennifer Finnerty jfinnerty@montclair.k12.nj.us 973-509-4208
School Nurse	Melissa Groffman mgroffman@montclair.k12.nj.us 973-509-4500

Teachers:

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Related Service Providers:

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Miya Thompson-Smith	LDT-C: mksmith@montclair.k12.nj.us

**** All Teachers, Related Services Providers, and CST can be contacted via telephone by calling the Main Office at 973-509-4208*****

