

# Parent Handbook



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# Welcome from the Head of School

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Pinewoods Montessori School for our 28th school year! I feel honored to be on this journey with you and your children.

This Handbook outlines general policies and guidelines to answer your questions and provide you with information to make the most out of your experience here at Pinewoods.

Please note: There are three sections of this handbook: In-Person Policies, Distance/Remote Policies, and General Pinewoods Policies.

While much will look different at Pinewoods this year, we continue to place our mission of providing an authentic Montessori education in a safe and peaceful setting at the heart of our decision-making. We have always prided ourselves on our individualized educational approach and strong family partnerships.

These guidelines have been carefully and thoughtfully designed to provide for the best Montessori school possible and have been approved by the Board of Directors at the recommendation of the Montessori staff. Some of these policies may be different from other schools that you are familiar with but all policies have been set forth with two goals in mind:

- The safety of your child
- Staying true to the Pinewoods' mission statement and philosophy.

We welcome you and your children to a year of learning, growth, discovery & fun!

Sincerely,

*Caroline Carman*

# Our Mission

Pinewoods Montessori in Hillsborough, NC provides an authentic Montessori education in which children develop a love of learning within a safe, peaceful setting.

## **CHILDREN**

We believe in the dignity and ability of children and in their inherent right to our respect, protection, assistance and guidance in fulfilling their potential.

## **EDUCATION**

We are committed to the Montessori philosophy and a child-focused approach to education.

## **FAMILIES**

We wish to partner with families' in their efforts to raise capable, joyful, confident children in an accommodating, affordable environment.

## **OURSELVES**

We are dedicated to sharing our lives with children and to growing and learning alongside them.

## **COMMUNITY**

We are dedicated to the well-being, integrity and development of the larger Montessori community and of the local communities in which we live and work.

## **WORLD**

We desire to help bring about a peaceful world in which every person's contribution is cherished and in which all barriers to understanding and acceptance have been removed.

# In-Person Policies

## Schedule Changes

Utilizing our Risk Mitigation procedures, we are pleased to be able to offer in-person learning under Plan B for families that want or need on-campus instruction. **We have made the decision to begin the 2020-2021 school year with two weeks of Remote Learning for all Elementary students (August 17-August 28). We plan to have our in-person Elementary learners on campus beginning August 31.**

**We have also made the decision to dismiss all Primary and Elementary in-person students by mid-day every Friday for the first semester of the 2020-2021 school year.** At the mid-year point, school Administration, in partnership with teachers, will make a decision about whether to continue this schedule for the remaining portion of the year. Dismissing early on Fridays will allow our teachers much-needed time for planning and will provide dedicated times for parent communication. Because of our modified COVID-19 drop-off and pick-up procedures and risk mitigation measures, all communication between teachers and parent(s)/guardians (as well as administrators) will need to be contactless for at least the first half of the school year. One important aspect of the early dismissal will be flexible, virtual “office hours,” where teachers can contact parents (and vice versa).

# Arrival and Departure Procedures

Arrival and departure times are the busiest times of day. This year, they will be even busier with the need for daily screenings and temperature checks at drop-off and contactless pick-up. Thus, our drop-off and pick-up times have been adjusted accordingly:

<b>Staff -</b>	Arrival/Screenings:	8:00am -8:10am
<b>Elementary -</b>	Drop-Off/Screenings:	8:10am -8:25am
	Mon. - Thurs. Pick-up:	3:10pm -3:20pm
	Friday Pick-up:	12:15pm - 12:30pm
<b>Primary/Kindergarten -</b>	Drop-Off/Screenings:	8:25am - 8:50am
	Half Day Pick-Up:	11:50am - 12:00pm
	Full Day Pick-up:	2:50pm - 3:10pm
	Friday Pick-up for all:	11:50am - 12:15pm
<b>Toddler -</b>	Drop-Off/Screenings:	8:50am - 9:05am
	Half Day Pick-up:	11:40am - 11:50am
	Full Day Pick-up:	2:35pm - 2:50pm

**\*\*If you have multiple children at different levels, please arrive in the OLDEST student's drop-off and pick-up window\*\***

### **Before Coming to Pinewoods:**

Before coming to school, please make sure your child(ren) is (are) dressed in comfortable play clothes and closed-toe shoes suitable for outdoor activity. We recommend checking the weather and ensuring your child(ren) is (are) dressed for outdoor time in the current and projected weather conditions. We recommend extra layers for colder weather, rain coats, boots, etc. depending on the forecast.

**Take your child's temperature at home and check for any symptoms of illness. If the temperature is higher than 100.4F, your child seems otherwise unwell, or they exhibit one or more of the [symptoms of COVID-19](#), they may not attend school. If your child exhibits any symptoms in our [Sick-Child Policy](#), they may not attend school.** If your child will be absent, we ask that you notify your child's teacher via Montessori Compass/email **AND** call/email school Administrators.

Since drop-off will be a busy time this year and parents/guardians must stay in your vehicles and are not able to enter the school building, we request that your child(ren) "try" to use the bathroom before leaving home.

### **What to Bring:**

Before coming to school, ensure that your child has all supplies for the day, including a labeled morning snack, lunch, a large water bottle, and a clean mask (if applicable). Apply sunscreen and/or bug spray if desired.

- ❖ All full-day Toddler and Primary students and all Elementary students should come to school with a backpack that can be worn independently. Your child's lunchbox, water bottle, and any additional required items should fit easily inside of the child's backpack. Backpacks should be the right size for your child to carry independently, and should be big enough to carry their belongings to and from school every day without being too cumbersome.
- ❖ Half-day Toddler and Primary students should bring a small lunchbox that can hold your child's snack and water bottle.
- ❖ For Toddler/Primary/Kindergarten children, please bring 2 sets of extra clothes.
- ❖ **For Full Day Toddlers and Children in Primary opting for rest time:** Nap items (a sentimental item, small fitted sheet, and blanket LABELED with their name in a bag) should be brought to school **each week in your child's backpack.**
- ❖ If your child is not toilet trained, please send in 5 diapers/pull-ups and a package of wipes. These items should also fit in their backpack to avoid having multiple bags for each child.

**Drop-off Procedures:**

We have adjusted our drop-off times (above) to allow for a streamlined drop-off process this year. Please arrive in your child's drop-off window. If you have multiple children, you may arrive in the oldest child's drop-off window.

We have chosen to change the way drop-off happens at Pinewoods to accommodate morning screenings. Instead of parking and walking children to the building, parents will drive into a "circle" loop for a "car line" scenario. Cones will be used to mark off the circle drive for parents. This will allow for a quick drop-off and will alleviate the need for anyone backing up in the parking lot. Parents are not permitted to park and walk children to the playground/classroom, unless given explicit permission from the school.

Once you pull up into the carline, we ask that any adults/children not departing the car put on a mask/face covering until the screening is complete. Lower/Upper Elementary students should put on their masks/face coverings at this time. Please also get your child(ren)'s backpack(s) ready so that your child(ren) can quickly depart the car. Lastly, please have your child(ren) apply hand sanitizer.

An Administrator will come to the car, ask you 3 quick COVID-19 related screening questions and take your child(ren)'s temperature(s). After that, the Administrator will help your child(ren) out of the car and direct them to an Assistant Teacher, who will walk your child(ren) to their classroom(s).

Parents/guardians will be given a laminated "name tag" sign including your last name and child(ren)'s classroom(s) to place in the driver's side window of your vehicle. After the first day of school, please place the sign in your driver's side window for drop-off and pick-up daily.

**Pick-up Procedures:**

We have adjusted our pick-up times (above) to allow for a streamlined pick-up procedure this year. Again, families will utilize the "car line" for pick-up. Please plan to arrive in your child's pick-up window. If you have multiple children, you may arrive in the oldest child's pick-up window. Please make sure your "nametag" is clearly visible in your driver's side window daily at pick-up. Once you pull up into the carline, we ask that any adults/children not departing the car put on a mask/face covering until your child(ren) is (are) safely in your vehicle. Please remain in your car.

Administrators will use walkie-talkies to communicate with classrooms to dismiss children. Once your child(ren) has (have) arrived at your car, an Administrator will open the door for them. We kindly request that families exit the parking lot (by pulling around the circle) once your child(ren) is (are) safely secured.

**Please Note:**

It will take some practice to master these new procedures. We kindly request your patience and flexibility. If need be, we will adjust these procedures as the year progresses to first best ensure the safety of the children and secondly to make it as convenient as possible for the families.

**Authorized Pick-Up Adults:**

The NC Department of Health and Human Services recommends families designate the same parent or individual to drop off and pick up the child every day if possible. DHHS also recommends families avoid designating those considered at high risk for drop off/pick up (such as grandparents/caregivers who are over 65 years of age), if possible.

If your child is to be picked-up by someone other than his/her parent/guardian or other individual designated on the pick-up list (found on the Emergency Contact Form), please let us know ahead of time by email or signed written notice. We also request that you let the pick-up person know that we will be asking for photo identification before dismissing the child(ren).

Families are not permitted access to school facilities during school operational hours and after dismissal (including the playground after dismissal) until further notice.

## Late Arrivals/Tardy Policy

**\*\*As a reminder: If you have multiple children at different levels, please arrive in the OLDEST student's drop-off and pick-up window\*\***

Late arrivals will be exceptionally difficult for the administrative schedule with daily screenings, frequent playground cleanings, etc., this year. If your child must be late on certain days due to a support service, therapy, etc. please alert Administration via email, and please provide as much notice as possible.

Students are not permitted to arrive at school later than 5 minutes outside of their drop-off window. If you have specific concerns or questions about your drop-off/pick-up window, please contact School Administrators.

If a student is tardy more than 3 times (and no specific arrangement has been made with school Administration), a \$20 fee (per child) will be charged to the family. **The fee will be added to your TADS account.** If a family is charged this tardy fee, a message will be sent from School Administration, and \$20 will be charged for every subsequent late arrival. We greatly appreciate your understanding with this new tardy policy. **The tardy fees will reset following winter break.**

## Late Pick-Up

**\*\*As a reminder: If you have multiple children at different levels, please arrive in the OLDEST student's drop-off and pick-up window\*\***

We value our teachers and their dedicated time for breaks and planning. We respectfully ask parents to make every effort to pick up children on time. We understand that on rare occasions, it may be impossible for your child to be picked up on time; however, if this happens more than **three** times, parents will be charged an administrative fee (\$20 per day per child). If a family is charged this late pick-up fee, a message will be sent from School Administration, and \$20 will be charged for every subsequent late pick-up. **If you are more than 15 minutes late you will be automatically charged the \$20 late fee regardless of the number of instances. The fee will be added to your TADS account.**

## Midday Dismissals

Throughout the year, there are a few days marked "Midday Dismissal" on our school calendar. Further, all Fridays are designated as midday dismissal days for all in-person Primary/Elementary students. Please follow the dismissal/pick-up schedule above on these days.

Please note: Distance learners will not follow the usual afternoon schedule on these days but can anticipate communication and check-ins with their teacher(s).

## Three- or Four- Day Attendance Policy:

If a child is enrolled for less than 5 days, the days of attendance will be set with the child's teacher and/or Head of School before the child begins school. These days will not be altered due to vacations, sickness, holidays, etc.

## Risk-Mitigation Measures

### Physical Distancing, Class Size, and Cohorting

We feel it is paramount to limit children moving between classrooms and mixing groups this year. **For Fall 2020, classrooms will operate as small cohort communities.**

Physical distancing will be practiced to the extent possible for each level at Pinewoods. Physical distancing will be taught and encouraged throughout the day, in an

age-appropriate way. In preparation for this, the following changes have been made for the time-being:

- ❖ Toddler classes will have a maximum of 10 children each at the start of the school year.
  - Toddler classes will not combine into one nap class in the afternoon (In previous years, full day toddlers combined into one napping room).
  - Toddlers will eat lunch and nap with their cohort in their morning classroom.
- ❖ Primary (including Kindergarteners) classes will have a maximum of 13 in-person students each, depending on the size of each classroom, at the start of the school year.
  - Primary classes will not be moved into different classrooms in the afternoon (In previous years, afternoon students combined into napping/non-napping/Kindergarten classes in the afternoon).
  - These smaller Primary classes, in keeping with the Montessori philosophy, will continue to be multi-aged, balancing younger students and older students.
  - Each morning class/cohort will stay together all day in the same classroom.
  - In the afternoon, an opportunity for rest will be provided for our nappers within their classroom environment. Primary students who are not registered to nap will have an afternoon work cycle with age-appropriate lessons and activities. All full day primary students will have additional time outdoors in the afternoon.
  - Lead Teachers will provide the Kindergarten experience for the oldest learners in their cohort classroom throughout the day. (In previous years, Kindergarteners from across the different Primary classes combined into one group in the afternoon.).
- ❖ Lower and Upper Elementary classes will have no more than 12 students per in-person classroom at the start of the school year.
  - In-Person Learning cohorts will stay together all day for lunch, recess, and any extracurricular activities.

**If at any point it is deemed safe by the Pinewoods Administration, in consultation with the school's Board of Directors, Pinewoods will increase in-person enrollment, which will change the size of the cohorts.**

Additionally:

- ❖ Class cohorts will not share spaces with other cohorts, including bathrooms. We have installed seat lids for all toilets in all bathrooms.
- ❖ Floor markings offering a visual of “six feet apart” will be placed near sinks and bathrooms in classrooms and hallways.
- ❖ During lunch and rest times, students' faces will be spaced 6 feet apart.
- ❖ Before/ After School programs will be temporarily canceled until further notice.
- ❖ Outdoor spaces will be utilized as much as possible and our playground schedules will be adjusted, limiting exposure between classroom cohorts and allowing time for cleaning.
- ❖ PE will take place outside whenever the weather permits. In adverse weather, PE will be cancelled (no indoor PE). Other specials teachers will come into the classroom or teach virtually, instead of students traveling to different rooms.

## Masks & Face Coverings

All Elementary Students, Teachers/Staff, and essential visitors to campus will be required to wear a mask that covers both their nose and mouth **at all times\*** when inside, and also when outside, if engaged in an activity that places them within six feet of others. This will be very new for our students and staff members, and we request patience and compassion as we adjust to these new routines and procedures.

*\*except when eating/drinking, in which case 6 feet of distance will be required and masks worn again when eating/drinking is finished.*

Should a student or staff member have documentation from their doctor specifying that due to a medical condition they cannot wear a mask, Administration will handle reasonable and safe accommodations on a case-by-case basis.

Primary students are **encouraged** to wear masks/cloth face coverings IF the child is comfortable and has practiced wearing it, can put it on independently and take it off safely, isn't prone to touching their face more frequently with the mask on, **and is over the age of 2.**

*Pinewoods reserves the right to make changes to our mask/face covering requirements and other health and safety procedures and protocols based on information from DHHS and other trusted sources.*

Additionally:

- ❖ All Elementary students need to bring **two** extra masks to school and keep them in a sealed, labeled bag.
- ❖ Teachers will organize “mask breaks” as needed, where students are outside and socially distanced.

- ❖ Parents and caregivers should take the next couple of weeks to find masks that their children find comfortable, and also work to build “mask stamina” in their children.
- ❖ We understand the importance of visual cues, particularly for Toddler/Primary, and we are investigating masks with a clear panel for some or all of our teachers.
- ❖ Pinewoods will keep a supply of disposable masks as a back-up, but we request single-use masks not be used frequently so that we can maintain a necessary supply.
- ❖ Teachers/Administrators will be discouraged from handling or helping with masks near students’ faces (taking them on/off) unless absolutely necessary.

## Daily Health Screenings

Families and all teachers/staff will be asked to complete a daily health screening (see above for procedures). This will include questions about potential household exposure, and students and staff will report any occurrence of the following symptoms:

- Fever (defined as 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher)
- Chills
- Shortness of breath and/or difficulty breathing
- New cough
- New loss of taste or smell

Anyone experiencing one or more of these symptoms will not be allowed to attend In-Person school. Protocols for a student’s return to school can be found under [Health and Medical Policies](#).

In addition, all students, teachers/staff, and essential visitors will undergo a temperature check before entering school each morning. With a reading of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, families may request a second reading after 10 minutes. In this situation, a guardian would be given the option to return home with their child or directed to park their car and wait ten minutes for a second reading to ensure accuracy. A second reading of 100.4 or higher will result in the child being sent home. Any Pinewoods-enrolled siblings would be sent home as well as an extra precaution.

## Personal/Hand Hygiene

Students will be directed to wash their hands frequently throughout the day, and specifically before/after eating, using the bathroom, or using shared materials. Hand sanitizer will be readily available as a hand cleaning option when hand washing is not possible.

Additionally:

- ❖ Students will have frequent, age-appropriate lessons on proper handwashing and the importance of hand hygiene (upon arrival, before and after eating, in-between activities, and after coughing/sneezing/blowing noses).
- ❖ Signs have been posted to offer visual reminders about hand hygiene and proper handwashing.
- ❖ Bottles of hand sanitizer will be placed in each classroom.
- ❖ Touchless sanitizer stations will be placed inside and outside of the building.
- ❖ Elementary students may bring their own personal bottles of hand sanitizer. Please be sure these are labeled.

## Cleaning and Sanitization

Cleaning and sanitization have always been a priority at Pinewoods. We will be utilizing effective cleaning/sanitization practices more frequently to provide safe and healthy environments. Further, we have collaborated with our nightly cleaning crew to ensure a deeper, more thorough cleaning of our facilities each night.

- ❖ Classrooms will be cleaned and sanitized frequently throughout the day, using mostly bleach and/or CDC-approved cleaning solutions.
- ❖ We have a generous stock of cleaning supplies on campus and will continue to purchase additional supplies as needed throughout the year to ensure a robust supply. While we will be purchasing enough cleaning supplies to maintain our new cleaning practices, we would greatly appreciate any donations of supplies by parents ([see below](#)).
- ❖ Frequently touched surfaces and any shared equipment will be sanitized multiple times throughout the day. Materials will be sanitized daily and in-between uses whenever possible. Each child will have a designated work mat, instead of using communal rugs.
- ❖ Water fountains will be closed except in cases of emergency.
- ❖ Doorknobs and other high-touch surfaces will be cleaned and sanitized regularly throughout the school day.

## Parents/Guardians/Visitors

Access to our building will be limited, both during and outside of school hours. Only visitors deemed “essential” will be allowed to enter, and they will need to pass a health screening and temperature check, and wear a mask. We understand that this represents a significant change, particularly for parents who are accustomed to coming into school and conversing daily with teachers, and we appreciate everyone’s help with these

risk-mitigation measures. See the Communication and Participation Section for more information about partnerships and communication with your child's teacher(s).

## Time Outside

As stated above, teachers will prioritize time outside when it makes sense to do so for all levels, according to the parameters of our playground schedules. We will be limiting each playground area to use by one cohort at a time. In some cases, we will divide the large Primary and Elementary playgrounds into two sections, for use by two cohorts simultaneously. Surfaces/equipment will be sanitized between uses.

We are making additional purchases for our outdoor spaces (tables, equipment, etc.) to allow for more outdoor activities throughout the school day.

We are thrilled to have a fully grassed field that is available for use by classroom cohorts.

## Improved Air Quality

Despite our small size, Pinewoods has ten HVAC units in our building (air compressor and air handler). Pinewoods is using MERV 13 air filters for our units, which will be installed and replaced by professionals every two months.

With the help of some of our generous families, we have purchased additional free-standing HEPA air purifier systems for our indoor spaces.

When the outdoor temperature and weather conditions allow, we will open the windows of our classrooms during times when the students are indoors to increase air flow.

## Sharing of Materials

The sharing of materials will be limited for all levels, and the level of restriction will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. While there are many things we can do to limit sharing and mitigate risks associated with frequent sharing, we feel it is important in the Montessori classroom for students to still participate in self-selected and individualized work, with frequent movement built into the routine.

Additionally:

- ❖ Supplies such as pencils, colored pencils, scissors, etc. will not be shared and will be stored individually for each student.

- ❖ Toddler teachers will immediately remove items from the shelves that have been placed in the mouth or otherwise contaminated. Those items will be sanitized before continued use.
- ❖ Each Primary/Elementary classroom will have a “reset” shelf, where students can place materials after use, to be cleaned by an adult before the next use.

**All Primary/Elementary families will be sent a supplies list before the start of the school year.**

## Larger Gatherings and Field Trips

In adherence with public health guidelines, we will begin the year with a policy that excludes large, in-person gatherings, in-house presentations and field trips.

Currently, we are not planning off-campus experiences or in-person events during the fall semester.

In partnership with the PTO, we are considering how to remake other events to conform to health guidelines while keeping with the spirit and feel of our community. We welcome input from our community in this endeavor!

## Open Lines of Communication

Sending an [Email](#)/Compass Message or calling the school (919-644-2090) remains the best way to contact us.

**In addition, parents/guardians are highly encouraged to sign up for REMIND text messages for school alerts for the 2020-2021 school year.**

To join the Pinewoods 2020-2021 Remind group, please either text @ka27fc to the number 81010 or visit the link: [remind.com/join/ka27fc](https://remind.com/join/ka27fc).

Downloading the Remind app allows you to text our app directly, if there is an emergency or you need to quickly notify us of any health-related information.

## Donations

We are grateful for your partnership and support in these times, in whatever form it takes: kind words for your child's teacher, constructive feedback, open communication, volunteer involvement, and making purchases for our school are all equally appreciated. For anyone interested in supporting Pinewoods by purchasing needed

materials and equipment, we are including a link to our Amazon wishlist here. Thank you for being a valued member of our community. We have been humbled and are thankful to see the incredible outpouring of support coming in from families during this time of need.

In lieu of charging families a hefty COVID Fee for in-person learning, we made the decision to create supplies lists for families, which will be slightly longer than previous years.

We are also highly encouraging families who are able to donate items to our 2020-2021 school year efforts. We have created an [Amazon Registry/Wish List](#) for these items.

While we will be purchasing enough cleaning supplies to maintain our new cleaning practices, we would greatly appreciate any donations of supplies by parents/guardians including, but not limited to:

- Hand Sanitizer
- Bleach (Fully concentrated, NOT “splashless”)
- Toilet Paper
- Paper Towels

## Health and Medical Policies

Health and safety is a priority at Pinewoods Montessori School, now more than ever.

### COVID-19 Exposure Protocols

*Exposure Protocols are determined in conjunction with the most updated version of the [NCDHHS guidance for schools](#). While guidance suggests a 10 day observation period in most cases, we have chosen 14 days as an extra precaution.*

*Please note: Regarding all of the following exposure protocols, communication with the community will be provided, as deemed necessary by the OC Health Department and School Administration.*

### Preventive Exposure Measures

*Please note: The following preventative exposure measures will be part of our daily screenings for students/staff members.*

**All families will be required to notify Pinewoods immediately if a member of your household has been in [close contact](#) with someone diagnosed with COVID-19.**

**All families will be required to notify Pinewoods immediately if a member of your household has been diagnosed with COVID-19.**

**If you, anyone in your immediate family, your child, or someone outside your family with whom you have had [close contact](#) is confirmed to have COVID-19, families are required to notify Pinewoods immediately.** Your child(ren) will not be allowed to return to in-person school for a minimum of 14 days (even with a negative test), and that is only after the person infected has confirmatory testing that proves they no longer have the virus.

Children **MAY NOT** attend in-person school if a member of their household:

1. Suspects they might have COVID-19 (i.e. is experiencing one or more of the symptoms listed below),
2. Has tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 21 days, or
3. Is awaiting results of COVID-19 testing, or
4. Has been in close contact\* with anyone in the three categories above.

If your child(ren) is (are) experiencing one or more of the COVID-19 symptoms listed below, the child(ren) **MAY NOT** attend in-person school until all of the following have occurred (in addition to the requirements listed above):

1. The individual is **72 hours fever-free without fever-reducing medication**,
2. The individual is **symptom-free for at least 10 days**, and
3. The individual has a **negative COVID-19 test OR** the family receives **confirmation of alternate diagnosis** from a medical professional that would explain the COVID-like symptoms.

## Symptoms of COVID-19

- Fever (100.4 F or higher) (muscle weakness/lethargy)
- Chills
- New cough
- New loss of taste or smell
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing (please seek medical assistance)

## Symptoms Developing at School

If a student or staff member develops one or more [COVID-19 symptoms](#) during the school day:

- Staff members for the exposed cohort will go home immediately.
- Parents/Guardians of the cohort will be notified and immediate pick-up will be required.

- Students in the cohort will be moved into an isolation area (outdoors, if possible) and wait there, while supervised, until parents arrive.
- Parents/Guardians/Staff Members will receive follow-up communication from School Administration.

## Close Contact

\*CDC criteria for close contact (As of 6/17/2020):

- You were within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19 for at least 15 minutes.
- You provided care at home to someone who is sick with COVID-19.
- You had direct physical contact with the person (touched, hugged, or kissed them).
- You shared eating or drinking utensils.
- You may have gotten respiratory droplets on your person.

## Absences

As noted above, families with children participating in In-Person Learning at Pinewoods must alert the school of absence for any reason as soon as possible.

## Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 at Pinewoods

In the event of a confirmed case of COVID-19 (either a student or staff member), Pinewoods Administration will contact local public health authorities and **will follow their instructions for notification and any necessary class or school closure**. It is likely that some levels would need to transition to Temporary Distance Learning as areas are cleaned. A determination as to whether an entire class needs to quarantine will be reached in cooperation with health officials.

In the event of a confirmed case of COVID-19 in a student's household(s), the family is required to report this to the Pinewoods Administration.

While protecting names of the family (members), the school will notify Parents/Guardians should the positive case affect any potential exposure. We will err on the side of caution when it comes to necessary communication regarding a COVID-19 diagnosis. *As medical information and Health Department guidelines are updated, this policy is subject to change.*

## Additional Health/Medical Policies

### Immunizations

Medical/Health forms and required immunization records signed by a physician must be given to Pinewoods school administrators at the beginning of each school year. According to the North Carolina State Immunization Law, public and private schools are required to obtain a certificate of immunization for all children enrolled in K-6th grade programs on the child's first day of attendance. **A student cannot be admitted to class without these completed records 30 calendar days after the start of the school year. Pinewoods Montessori School will accept religious and medical exemptions as required by state law.**

### Sick Child Policy

**It is imperative for a student who is ill or suspected of becoming ill to stay at home. We expect parents to keep sick children at home.**

In addition to our COVID-19 policies, your child must stay home if any of the following conditions are present:

- Fever (100.4 degrees or above)\*
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- Unidentified Rash
- Thick white, green, or yellow discharge from the nose, eyes or ears (this is often indicative of an infection or conjunctivitis)
- Sore throat or persistent hacking/severe cough
- Contagious disease. Parents should call the School immediately if a student becomes ill with a contagious disease (such as influenza, pink eye, norovirus, strep throat, etc.), so we may be alerted to the symptoms and notify other parents of exposure. Please note: In the event of more than one student confirming diagnosis of a contagious illness, Pinewoods will consult the Center for Disease Control website ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)) and may make changes to this policy as necessary according to CDC recommendations.

**\*Please note, if your child has a temperature between 99.6 and 100.3 and seems unwell or has any symptoms of illness, the child should stay home. Should a student become ill during the school day or arrive at school too ill to participate in the activities of the day, the parents will be contacted to take the student home within a 30-minute time frame. Your child's teacher, upon observation of an unwell child in the classroom and in discussion with School Administrators, reserves the right to determine the child's ability to remain in school for the day. Factors of consideration include the developmental level of your child in congruence with our ability to limit the spread of**

germs. The younger your child, the more difficult it is to keep the spread of germs down. If a parent cannot be reached, we will begin calling persons on your emergency contact form. This is to ensure the safety of the child and continued good health of everyone at Pinewoods.

## Head Lice Policy

Pinewoods Montessori School's policy and guidelines regarding lice are based on prevention, proper treatment, effective screening and reasonable environmental interventions to reduce the risk of re-infestation.

If live lice or nits are seen or suspected by staff, we will proceed as follows.

1. The student will be removed from the class environment and brought to the main office.
2. The parent or guardian will be called to pick up the child. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to pick-up the child before the end of the school day so that proper treatment may begin.
3. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to seek medical advice/prescription medication/over-the-counter treatment if needed.
4. In efforts to minimize the spread of head lice, Pinewoods will notify all parents in the classroom(s) where the infestation occurred.

The student may return to school 12 hours after treatment has been completed.

## Medication

If your child is to be administered prescription or over-the-counter medication during school hours, the medicine must be clearly labeled with the child's name and dosage and must be supervised by a Pinewoods faculty/staff member. Parents must also complete and sign a "Medication Release Form" before the medication can be administered. All medication must be in the original container from the pharmacy (not sent in plastic bags in lunch boxes, etc.) and must be handed directly to the staff with the written and signed "Medication Release Form." This form can be found on the [Pinewoods Website](#), under the For Parents tab using the password **pw2020**. Once completed, forms can be emailed to the Office Manager.

Under no circumstances will any medication be administered without written permission.

## Allergies and Dietary Sensitivities

The school must be informed of any food or medicinal allergies your child may have. Our primary concern is your child's safety, and we must ask that you take

responsibility for keeping us informed of your child's allergies and the severity of them. There are 3 things we require in cases of allergies:

1. List all allergies on your child's health form.
2. List all allergies on your child's emergency contact form.
3. Provide a letter or medical action plan with specific information regarding your child's allergy and steps for treating his/her allergic reaction.

If your child requires an EpiPen at school, it should be in a clear plastic bag with your child's name and a card with all necessary medical information: doctor's name and phone number, address, insurance company and number, hospital preference and the best emergency contact number(s) for you as the parent.

Although we will always do our best, we cannot be expected to know the exact nature of an allergy and its severity unless we have ongoing and current information from you.

Dietary sensitivities and restrictions are becoming more common in today's children. If your child has a specific dietary restriction (gluten-free, dairy-free, vegetarian, vegan, etc.) it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to inform Pinewoods administrative staff and the child's teacher. A plan will be worked out between the child's teacher and the family in order to accommodate dietary restrictions/sensitivities.

Please keep us informed if allergies/dietary sensitivities change.

## Outdoor Play, Sunscreen, and Bug Spray

The children will be outside for a portion of each day except in extremely inclement weather. On days when rain is predicted, please send your child to school with a raincoat and rain-appropriate footwear so that we may make use of our outdoor spaces as much as possible. **A child who is not well enough to play outside should not come to school.** If you would like for your child to wear sunscreen and/or insect repellent, we ask that you apply these before coming to school.

## Environmental Allergy Policy

At Pinewoods, we are committed to providing an environment that is healthy and sanitary for all students and staff. We use high quality air filters (as noted above), which are changed every 2 months. We use nitrile gloves instead of latex. We ensure that our hygiene and sanitation policies are being followed by staff members. Smoking is not permitted on school premises.

If your child has an environmental allergy that requires an EpiPen, please follow the same procedures as listed above.

# Emergency/Injury

Every family enrolled at Pinewoods Montessori School must complete an Emergency Contact and a Medical/Health Form for each child. All student medical records are kept confidential and only available to pertinent staff members.

## **Injuries and contact with parents:**

- In case of a serious bodily/dental injury or emergency, you will be contacted immediately, and your child will be transported to the hospital of your choice.  
In case of serious bodily/dental injury and emergency, and we are not able to reach you immediately, we will seek emergency assistance as needed/appropriate.
- If your child suffers a minor injury at school that could possibly warrant a doctor visit, we will contact you so that you can make the decision as to what next steps should be taken. If your child receives a minor injury that does not warrant a doctor visit, you will be notified when you pick up your child.
- If there is a bump or injury to the head we will contact you immediately.
- If your child has a physically visible injury that is caused by another child, we will notify both sets of parents and send home an incident report that has been filled out by the teacher.
- If a minor injury occurs within 20 minutes of your child's dismissal time we will notify you at pick-up.

The health and safety of children are of the utmost importance to us. At Pinewoods, we make every effort to ensure that a safe teacher-student ratio is maintained.

# Food Policies

## Lunch/Snack

All students will bring a snack and water bottle from home each day. No snacks/food items/treats will be shared at any level (including for birthday celebrations). Full-Day and Elementary students will continue to bring lunch each day. We will be discontinuing MyHotLunchBox delivery for the Fall. Plastic utensils will not be provided. Please plan to send your child with utensils from home as necessary. Please make every attempt to send food items with students that can be opened independently.

The microwaves will be off-limits for student use until further notice. Please send meals that do not require heating.

Please label your child's lunchbox with the first/last name. We suggest making your child's lunch the night before and incorporating your child in the process, if possible. Please pack appropriate portions of healthy foods from the four food groups: whole grains, vegetables and fruits, dairy, and protein.

During meal/snack times, students will be seated 6 feet apart. When scheduling and the weather permits, classes will eat outdoors.

## Food Allergies

Any and all food allergies must be listed on your child's Emergency Contact and Medical/Health Form. Food allergies must be diagnosed by a physician. It is the parent's responsibility to include a letter from the physician along with a child's Medical/Health Form.

Individual classrooms may have restrictions on specific foods (for example, nuts) that may or may not be permitted. This changes year to year in an effort to keep all of the students safe from severe allergens. Your child's teacher will notify all families in the classroom regarding any restricted food items prior to the start of the school year.

*In the event that a severe allergy is brought to our attention, we reserve the right to change this policy to protect the health of our students.*

## Breakfast Before Arrival

It is important that your child receive a good breakfast before arriving at school. Children are active, growing individuals who need the good energy provided by nutritious food.

## Water

This year, we ask that you provide a full water bottle each day for your child(ren). Please label all water bottles that are sent to school with your child's first and last name.

## Soda and Candy

**No sodas or candy (including chocolate candies) will be allowed for snack or lunch.** The teacher will ask the child to return such items to their snack or lunch bag to be eaten at home.

## Birthday Celebrations

Birthday celebrations in Toddler and Primary classrooms will be arranged remotely/virtually this year. Your child's teacher will reach out to you prior to your child's birthday to arrange a time for the birthday celebration.

## Clothing Policies

Please allow your child to dress in clothing that he or she can get in and out of independently. Straps, buckles, belts, and small buttons that may be difficult for a child to maneuver are discouraged.

Please make sure your child is dressed appropriately for the weather, as children will spend a portion of their day on the playground, including in light rain.

Children may get dirty at school, so please dress your child accordingly. Children usually enjoy picking out their own outfits. By giving them choices when dressing, it increases their independence and helps them become aware of appropriate seasonal dress.

Children should come to school in shoes that are comfortable and sensible for the child to take on and off independently. Please avoid flip-flops, rubber boots and crocs as they are not suitable footwear for climbing structures on the playground. If children wear the aforementioned footwear, they will be asked to stay off the climbing structures for their own safety. Tennis shoes with socks are the most suitable type of footwear for school.

## Dress Code

Pinewoods Montessori School respects a student's right to choose his or her style of dress or appearance. While we encourage independence and self-expression, Pinewoods does require students to appear at school fully clothed and in an appropriate manner consistent with a proper atmosphere for learning.

- Students are not to wear clothing, buttons, patches, jewelry, make-up, face/body paint or any other items with words, phrases, symbols, pictures or signs that are indecent, profane, depict violence, contain advertisements for products or services not permitted by law to minors, or are deemed as substantially disruptive.
- Clothing and accessories that are reasonably expected to intimidate other students on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, gender, sexual

orientation, disability, age, religious affiliation, or political affiliation are strictly forbidden.

- Clothes must be worn in a way such that genitals, buttocks, nipples, torso, midriff, and undergarments are covered with opaque material.
- Wearable Technology - Some wearable technology (fitbits, etc.) are allowed as long as they are not distracting to learning. Wearable technology that can be used for texting/calls, games, etc. should remain in backpacks and may only be used with the permission of the adult in charge. Teachers will address concerns with individual students/families as they arise.
- If a student's dress or lack of cleanliness is such that it constitutes a threat to health or safety, administration may require the student and student's parent or guardian to take appropriate action to remedy the situation.

**Pinewoods Montessori School supports equitable educational access. The school staff is responsible for enforcing this dress code consistently and in a manner that does not marginalize, embarrass, or oppress anyone on the basis of their race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age, religious affiliation, cultural observance, household income, or body shape/size.**

## Change of Clothing

All Toddler and Primary students should bring **two** seasonal changes of clothing in a Ziploc bag labeled with the child's name.

We have a "Extra Clothing Needed Form" that will be coming home if we need more clothing for your child. Please send extra clothes in your child's backpack.

## Label

All coats and indoor shoes should be labeled with your child's name. We also recommend labeling winter accessories (hats, gloves, etc.). If a child's removable clothing is not labeled, the teacher will write a label in sharpie on the tag of the clothing.

Pinewoods generally maintains a "**Lost and Found**" box for Pinewoods students. This year, we will not have lost items stored in a central location. Please label all items so that any lost items can be returned to your child(ren). If you have specific items that have been lost and not returned, please contact your child's teacher or the Office Manager via Montessori Compass.

## Personal Possessions

Children do not need to bring anything to school to work or play with. The classroom environments are designed to have rich, stimulating activities for the developmental

ages of the children in the class. Please do not allow your child to bring toys from home.

If in the first couple of weeks of school, your young child has a special “lovey” that he or she needs for security that will be acceptable, and can be discussed with your child’s teacher. If your child slips something by you, the teacher will keep it for the day and it will be returned to you upon your child’s departure. Primary/Toddler students who nap in the afternoon are permitted to bring a special item to sleep with, which can be brought to school in the student’s backpack.

Accessories such as necklaces, bracelets, and rings should not be worn to school (unless serving a developmental need and prescribed by a professional). They are often a distraction in the classroom and cause children distress if lost or misplaced.

## Technology Policy

Technology at PWMS is being implemented with the following guiding principles:

- Our use of technology while teaching and learning at PWMS is guided by and completely consistent with our core Montessori principles and practices.
- This year, we are excited to use technology to bridge our education between home and school.
- All students, teachers, and staff have equitable access to technology, and PWMS Technology resources are consistent and dependable.
- Thorough research, related to our needs as a Montessori school and to future trends and best practices, will guide our acquisition and development of quality technology resources.

Personal electronics such as cell phones, smart phones, CD players, iPods, or iPads are not permitted for student use during the instructional day. Personal laptops are permitted for use by Elementary students with teacher and parent permission and supervision. Elementary students may only use laptop computers for academic/educational purposes and must be supervised and given permission by their teacher.

## Emergency Procedures

### School Closings

On the chance that weather makes for dangerous road conditions for students and the staff, Pinewoods Montessori School will delay opening or close. An announcement will be made as soon as possible on WRAL television stations and websites. We generally

look to Orange County Schools and nearby private schools to determine if we need to close.

Depending on the nature of the “closing,” the School will determine whether or not remote learning can be offered to students.

All families will be sent an email and Montessori Compass message informing them of closings or delays.

**Parents are highly encouraged to sign up for REMIND text messages for these alerts/announcements.**

If the school is open, but you do not feel comfortable driving, please know that we will understand if you choose to keep your child at home.

## Make-up Day Policy

Pinewoods plans the calendar each year, with snow and inclement weather in mind. In the event that we find ourselves with too few days of school, make-up days will be determined by the school Administrators with input from teachers. Communication will be sent to families as soon as the schedule is finalized. Make-up days may be remote learning days.

## Fire

During regular school years, monthly fire drills are held at varying times and are documented by the Head of School. In addition, documentation is posted on the Staff Board in the office area. The staff calmly escorts the children from the building and to their assigned locations. The Head of School or a designated staff member checks all rooms and areas. Plans for evacuation are posted in each classroom.

We are currently seeking guidance from the Hillsborough Fire Marshall regarding fire drill requirements for the 2020-2021 school year. Classes will remain in cohorts and will practice social distancing in the event of the fire alarm sounding or a drill.

## Weather

The school receives all weather alerts via phone, text, and email for Orange County, NC. If there is a weather advisory or alert (wind, heat, etc.), the school Administrators will decide the appropriate plan of action for outdoor play for all students.

This year, we will make every attempt to prioritize outdoor time as much as possible. Our approximate temperature guidelines are:

- If the outdoor temperature is below 25 degrees, all students will stay indoors.

- If there is a heat advisory or the outdoor temperature (or heat index) is above 95 degrees, outdoor plans will be eliminated or shortened depending on local weather recommendations.

In case of inclement weather such as tornado, hurricane force winds, etc., students at Pinewoods will adhere to the following procedure:

- Toddler and Primary Students will immediately move into storage closets and interior bathrooms and sit with teachers until it is deemed safe to return to classrooms.
- Lower Elementary students will immediately move into the bathrooms adjacent to their classroom.
- Upper Elementary students will move to the staff kitchen (an interior room) and sit with teachers until deemed safe to return to classrooms.

We recognize that in very severe weather, students and their families are likely safer in their own homes or at school than on the roads. In the event of a tornado warning in Orange County during pick-up time, parents may therefore, at their discretion, wait until the tornado warning has passed before picking up their children. In the event of an emergency-related early dismissal, parents/guardians will follow the same procedures for daily pick-up.

Please note that during a severe weather emergency, the priority of the teachers and the Head of School is to ensure the safety of the students and staff. Communication during an emergency situation between staff and parents may be limited, however, the Head of School will endeavor to notify parents with any relevant updates as soon as it is safe to do so.

Please know, in the event of a weather emergency, students/staff members may need to combine with other cohorts/classes, but we will make every effort to avoid close contact between groups of students/staff.

## Safety

Pinewoods Montessori School is committed to providing a safe and secure environment to all our students, staff, and anyone else who comes in contact with the school.

Recognizing that school safety and security is a shared responsibility between members of our community, it is essential that everyone is vigilant and does their part to ensure that our school is safe.

Please know, in the event of a safety emergency, students/staff members may need to combine with other cohorts/classes, but we will make every effort to avoid close contact between groups of students/staff. If possible, all students in temporary,

emergency situations where social distancing and cohorts are compromised, would be directed to wear disposable masks.

We have an excellent working relationship with the Hillsborough Police Department. It is essential that we immediately contact and involve them any time there is reasonable suspicion that our school is in harm's way. While we hope that Pinewoods is never affected, law enforcement officials have the training and expertise to deal with potentially criminal, dangerous or life-threatening activities. The school will always err on the side of caution and immediately contact law enforcement at the first sign of trouble, and we encourage our community to do the same.

The following are some of the safety and security measures to which everyone *must* adhere:

1. All school doors must be locked during the school day, and access will only be available using the key code or with assistance from a Pinewoods staff member.
2. Only visitors deemed "essential" (see above) will be allowed to enter the school grounds/building.
3. New persons to pick-up, or those who are added to the pick-up list, will be identified with appropriate ID before we allow a student to be dismissed.
4. Children are taught to not open the doors.
5. If a staff member, student or anyone else sees anything suspicious inside or outside the school, such as an unmarked package, bag, vehicle, or person, it should be reported to the Head of School or his/her designee immediately.
6. If you report a matter to law enforcement that may affect the school, also immediately report it to the Head of School or his/her designee.

Implementing the measures set forth in this policy will make us a safer school. The school Administration also welcomes suggestions on how we can improve our safety protocols.

In case of threat to safety of children, students at Pinewoods will adhere to the following procedures:

- The Head of School will immediately tell classrooms to go into lockdown status. If possible, the Head of School will contact law enforcement and all Pinewoods families.
- Toddler and Primary students will immediately move to the storage closets and bathrooms with teachers and all doors will be locked.
- Lower Elementary students will immediately move to Elementary bathrooms with teachers and doors will be locked.
- Upper Elementary will lock their classroom door.

Once staff has deemed it is safe, we will notify parents.

## Nap Policy

Afternoon rest is very important for young children. Each day, Toddler children will begin resting between approximately 12:45 and 1:00 PM. Soothing music will be played and backs will be rubbed (if the child wishes to have this done). Children may get up as they wake up or continue to sleep until 2:30-2:45 PM.

Each day, Primary children who nap will begin resting between approximately 1:15pm and 1:30 PM. Soothing music will be played and backs will be rubbed (if the child wishes to have this done). After 30-45 minutes if the child is not asleep, he or she can work quietly at a table or rug. The rest of the children may get up as they wake up and join the quiet work cycle going on or continue to sleep until 2:00-2:15 PM.

If at any point a child is aging out of naps, parents/guardians will discuss this process with the child's teacher.

## Visiting Alumni Policy

Unfortunately, Alumni will not be permitted to visit Pinewoods for the 2020-2021 school year.

## Rules and Discipline Policy

Pinewoods has rules established for the safety and security of all. All classes have three basic ground rules:

- We treat ourselves, each other and the environment with respect.
- We maintain an atmosphere of peacefulness.
- We resolve our problems with words.

We teach the children these rules and the consequences to these rules. The consequences are:

- A reminder to the child(ren) about the rules
- Separation from an activity
- Loss of a chance to participate in an activity

In cases of physical or verbal aggression/inappropriate language teachers will work collaboratively with parents/guardians to address the behavior so that it does not continue. Teachers will notify parents/guardians if concerns or issues arise with their child during the day and how they were addressed. Pinewoods teachers will partner

with parents to help each child learn appropriate strategies and techniques for dealing with frustrations and anger.

The staff works to set forth clear limits and boundaries and remain consistent in the practice of these boundaries. Children are given the reasons for the limits. When necessary, we redirect children to more acceptable, appropriate activities and types of behavior, acknowledging that one of the most effective ways to change behavior is to provide a positive alternative for children. Helping a child use acceptable words to deal with frustration or resolve a conflict is done directly and by example.

In cases of **repeated** physical or verbal aggression, inappropriate language, and/or bullying the following steps will be put into place:

1. Teacher will request a meeting with the parent/guardian to discuss behavior and a plan of action to address the behavior.
2. If the behavior continues, the parent(s)/guardian(s), teachers, and Head of School or their designee will meet to discuss a plan of action with a time frame in which the behavior must improve.
3. If the behavior does not improve within the allotted time frame, then parents, teachers, and the Head of School will meet to discuss possible discontinuation of the child's enrollment at Pinewoods.
4. The Head of School will present the case before the Board of Directors, who will make the final decision for withdrawal of the student and the financial obligation of the family.

It is our hope that each child's experience be a positive one and for both the parent(s)/guardian(s) and staff to agree that this is the best environment for the child.

In case of destruction/damage to school or other persons' (child or staff's) property that can be reasonably repaired/cleaned the following steps will be put into place:

1. Teacher will notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the child will be asked to clean or aid the teacher in repairing what has been damaged.
2. If such behavior happens again, there will be a clean-up day at school. The parent(s)/guardian(s) and teachers will agree on a list of items for the child to clean/repair (not during school hours) to help maintain a clean and beautiful classroom. If the offender of the damage is not known, there will be a clean-up day held on a Saturday morning for the entire class.
3. If the behavior happens a third time, the child's family will be asked to replace any and all items that have been damaged or provide the funds for the school to replace the items.

4. After all the steps have been taken and a child is still choosing to damage property, the parent(s)/guardian(s), teachers and Head of School will meet to discuss whether the child will continue at Pinewoods.

In case of destruction/damage to school or other persons' (child's or staff's) property that cannot be repaired/cleaned without incurring expenses, the child's family may be required to provide the funds to the school to replace or repair the items.

## Biting Policy

While biting is considered a normal stage in childhood, it can disrupt a peaceful classroom environment. Pinewoods Montessori School staff takes action to reduce the number of biting incidents.

If a student bites another child, the biter will be temporarily removed from the space where the biting happened. We will take note of the biting situation and talk to the child about the incident in an age appropriate way. For children ages 3 and up, it is Pinewoods policy to always notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the child who has bitten and the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the child who was bitten. This will be done while keeping names of the children involved in the incident anonymous (no names will be mentioned to either set of parent(s)/guardian(s)). For students younger than 3, biting is more common and communication will take place after more than one biting incident in a day.

If blood is drawn at the site of the bite, parent(s)/guardian(s) will be asked to take the child who has bitten home for the balance of the school day. Both sets of parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified, while providing anonymity for each child. If blood is not drawn at the site of the bite, and it is a first time biting offense for the child, the child will be spoken to by both the teacher and an administrator. Both sets of parent(s)/guardian(s) (of the child who was bitten and of the child who bit) will be notified, while providing the children involved anonymity.

If blood is not drawn at the site of the bite, but it is a subsequent offense, the child will be sent home for the balance of the school day. Both sets of parent(s)/guardian(s) (of the child who was bitten and of the child who bit) will be notified, while providing the children involved anonymity.

If a pattern develops with multiple infractions, the Head of School, parent(s)/guardian(s), and classroom teachers will partner together to construct an appropriate plan of action.

## Parking Lot Guidelines

At Pinewoods Montessori School, it is part of our mission to ensure a safe, peaceful setting. Part of the Montessori philosophy includes Grace and Courtesy, which young children learn by observing those around them. Due to the wonderful growth of our community, we thought it would be helpful to introduce Parking Lot Guidelines to ensure that our safe, peaceful setting extends from the classroom to the playgrounds, the parking lot area, and our entire campus.

We have edited these guidelines to reflect our new drop-off/pick-up procedures for the 2020-2021 school year.

- Cars are to be driven slowly (5 mph or less) within the parking lot. Driving slowly is one of the best preventive measures for safety in the parking lot.
- As our lot is small and does not have the capacity to accommodate all of our families simultaneously, drivers are to be considerate at drop off and pick up times, and must limit stopping/parking time to what is only necessary for your child(ren) to arrive at school in a timely fashion or to safely leave the campus.
- Be considerate of people entering and exiting the parking lot.
- The disability parking spaces may be used only by persons authorized with the appropriate tag/placard pursuant to North Carolina General Statute § 20.37.6. The two spaces next to the dumpster are designated for our neighbors and are not for our use during the business day.

These rules are set in place to ensure the safety and well-being of all of our children, staff, families, and community.

# Distance/Remote Policies

## Terms

*Please review the following terms for this section:*

### **(Plan B) In-Person Learning with a Self-Selected Distance-Learning Option**

**Self-Selected Distance Learning** - when a student or group of students are participating in distance learning through Pinewoods while their class is offered an in-person option at Pinewoods. Parents/guardians are responsible for formally selecting this choice, partnering with teachers, and supporting children at home (see below).

**In-Person Learning** - when a group of students are coming on-site to Pinewoods for instruction in our normal facilities and following strict risk-mitigation Measures. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are responsible for formally selecting this choice, partnering with teachers, and supporting children at home as normal and should the class need to transition to remote learning at any time (see below).

**School-Mandated Distance Learning** - when a child/family is required to stay home for an extended period due to COVID-19 exposure, symptoms or a positive test. School-Mandated Distance Learning may be imposed and/or requested by families on a case-by-case basis. This option is not intended for single-day absences, family vacations, etc.

**Temporary Distance Learning** - when an entire class of children has transitioned to distance/remote learning temporarily due to unforeseen circumstances (i.e., positive case of COVID-19, recommendation to quarantine, not enough staff present on campus, etc.)

**(Plan C) All-School Remote Learning** - When 100% of the school transitions to remote learning.

## Plan B: In-Person Learning with a Self-Selected Distance Learning Option

### Self-Selected Distance Learning

We are excited to be able to offer a robust educational option for families who wish to be enrolled at Pinewoods Montessori School without being on campus. We are providing a Self-Selected Distance Learning option for families who consider this to be their best choice at this time.

Our Pinewoods Montessori curriculum has always been deeply rooted in authentic experiences for children in all aspects of their development, while guiding learners to fulfill their own unique potential in an ever-changing world. We believe deeply in the power of giving students real-life experiences so that they can learn, grow, and take on whatever lies ahead. The pandemic has brought to light realities we never anticipated - more working from home, virtual learning spaces, connecting with others over the internet, savoring the bonds we have with those we care about, and so on. Self-Selected Distance Learning not only provides a space for individualized, Montessori off-campus learning, but also gives our students the powerful experience of guided education and practical life learning in an evolving society.

While our Distance Learners may be at home, they will have plenty of opportunities to interact with others as part of their classroom cohort community, have individualized

lessons, one-on-one time with teachers, and learn through self-directed and family-supported at-home projects. This option will also give parents a “window” into their child’s Montessori education and learning style.

We understand that distance learning may not be the ideal option for our youngest learners, but we are committed to teaching all Pinewoods children and serving our families in the option that best fits your needs at this time. We received significant positive feedback from our remote learning programs from Spring 2020, and we know many families would like to continue with Distance Learning this Fall.

Particularly for elementary-aged students, the virtual classroom provides a fantastic medium for an individualized and authentic Montessori education within a safe and peaceful setting, while also providing flexibility and real-life learning opportunities. We are committed to making Self-Selected Distance Learning a robust Montessori educational experience for the families who select this option.

The schedule and structure of the Self-Selected Distance Learning day will vary greatly by grade level (daily schedule, amount of screen time, workload, etc.) and will be planned by the classroom teacher(s) with support from school Administrators. As this is the first time we have ever balanced simultaneous in-person and off-campus learning, we appreciate your patience, as we meet your needs and expectations while balancing our in-person classes.

## Self-Selection

If, at any time, a family wishes to transition from Self-Selected Distance Learning to In-Person Learning (or vice versa), we request four weeks of written notice. After October 16th, 2020, families can request a return to In-Person Learning at any time with four weeks of written notice by contacting Jessica White Winger at [jessica@pinewoodsmontessori.com](mailto:jessica@pinewoodsmontessori.com).

## School-Mandated Distance Learning

Students who are [required to stay home](#) for an extended period due to COVID-19 exposure, symptoms or a positive test; or any other illness that requires an extended leave of absence can participate in School-Mandated Distance Learning. Should it become necessary to pursue this option, parents should contact Jessica White Winger at [jessica@pinewoodsmontessori.com](mailto:jessica@pinewoodsmontessori.com). This option is not intended for single-day absences, family vacations, etc.

As with Self-Selected Distance Learning, the exact structure of the School-Mandated Distance Learning day will vary by grade level, student capacity, and the amount of notice prior to the absence. The child’s learning will be planned by the classroom teacher(s) with support from school Administrators.

## Temporary Distance Learning

There may be times in the school year when an entire class of children (or a few classes) will transition to Distance/Remote learning temporarily due to unforeseen circumstances (i.e., positive case of COVID-19, recommendation to quarantine, not enough staff present on campus, etc.). In such a case, the class(es) will transition to Temporary Distance Learning, providing the teachers are well enough to provide remote instruction (see below). This program will mirror [All-School Remote Learning](#) on a smaller scale.

## Plan C: All-School Remote Learning

Pinewoods has also prepared a contingency plan, for transitioning to 100% Remote Learning (Plan C) if (a) it is mandated by the Governor; and/or (b) the Administration/Board of Directors determines this to be a prudent course of action given local conditions, based upon factors such as: recommendations from local public health officials as well as our expert consultants, the health/attendance of the Pinewoods staff, the health/attendance of Pinewoods students, and/or number of cases within the Pinewoods community.

If In-Person Learning becomes infeasible, Pinewoods will remain committed to fostering the education and well-being of each student while promoting engagement, community, and individualized support.

## Program Guidelines

Based on the feedback we have received from families we have created standards for distance/remote learning at Pinewoods Montessori School.

Please keep in mind that these guidelines will apply to situations in which an entire cohort, level, or the school has moved to remote learning. There is an additional section for each level for self-selected distance learners.

### Toddler

At the Toddler level, distance/remote learning standards include:

- Partnering with parents/guardians to support at-home learning

- Maintaining a sense of classroom and school community and building on the in-person work of the school year
- Fostering the highest level of functional independence for each child
- Creating developmentally-appropriate schedules for each student
- Maintaining a balance of freedom within limits
- Supporting skills the children will need to return seamlessly to classrooms
- Balancing offerings with not too much time in front of screens

At the Toddler level, Pinewoods administration and teachers will:

- Initiate individual support and communications based on each child's and family's needs
- Provide detailed updates and consultation regarding toilet learning, sleeping habits, educational activities
- Share the current class routine/schedule and then suggest guidance in setting up a daily routine at home
- Share general and individual suggestions for activities for fine and gross motor skills, providing pictures/videos/materials for parent/guardian viewing
- Provide suggestions for books and songs to support language development
- Provide videos of teachers singing and performing hand movements to well-loved class songs
- Share suggestions for practical life activities at home including recipes, food prep, household chores, clothing tips, etc.
- Be responsive to parent/guardian questions and be available to offer guidance and tips for activities or any other element of support for your child's development
- Provide daily morning circles of approximately 20 minutes. Group time will begin at 9 am each day.
- Provide 1:1 meetings between the teacher and child once weekly
- Provide materials, and instructions for using those materials, to support learning from home periodically throughout distance learning
- Provide a weekly virtual office hours for parent(s)/guardian(s)
- Provide synchronous social time for our students once weekly over Zoom.
- Provide a weekly newsletter on Fridays including upcoming week's schedule, topics, and any materials that would be helpful to have on hand. This information will also be posted to the Distance/Remote Learning Pinewoods Website.

A weekly schedule for Toddler would include:

- Daily Morning Circle on Zoom
- Small/whole group lessons by Zoom
- Time for independent student work/home activities
- Breaks
- Teacher Planning time
- 1:1 meetings with students
- Additional social opportunities
- Office hours for families

### Distance Learning Toddlers

If an individual or small group of toddlers selects or is mandated to do distance learning, we wish to provide support for families, educational materials, and check-ins from your child's teacher. It is our goal to help distance learning students and parent(s)/guardian(s) to feel part of a cohesive Toddler community.

As we wish to limit screen time for this age of child, our teachers will partner with families to provide hands-on packets and materials for students at home. Teachers will also provide individual lessons that can be executed at home. Teachers will provide FaceTime/Zoom opportunities and videos for students.

### Primary/Kindergarten

At the Primary level, distance/remote learning standards include:

- Partnering with parent(s)/guardian(s) to support at-home learning
- Maintaining a sense of classroom and school community and building on the in-person work of the school year
- Fostering the highest level of functional independence for each child
- Creating developmentally-appropriate schedules for each student
- Holding a balance of freedom and responsibility, or "freedom within limits"
- Supporting skills the children will need to return seamlessly to classrooms
- Balancing offerings with not too much time in front of screens
- Providing components of care of self, care of the environment, care of others (grace & courtesy)
- Providing opportunities for concrete, hands-on experiences
- Offering order and routine

- Offering opportunities for concentration, independence, and repetition

At the Primary Level, Pinewoods administration and teachers will:

- Initiate individual communications based on student and family needs
- Give guidance in setting up a daily routine at home
- Provide both general and individualized suggestions for activities developing fine motor skills, gross motor skills, language, numeracy
- Be responsive to parent/guardian questions and available to offer guidance and tips for activities or any other element of support for your child's development
- Share suggestions for practical life activities at home e.g. recipes, food prep, household chores, clothing tips, etc.
- Provide daily morning meetings of approximately 20 to 30 minutes which include lessons and time for socialization at the end.
- Provide office hours for parent/guardian check-ins
- Provide materials, and instructions for using those materials, to support learning from home
- Offer live, synchronous instruction in art, movement, music, and Spanish
- Offer daily live, synchronous instruction to students
- Provide 1:1 meetings between the teacher and child once weekly
- Provide a daily afternoon Kindergarten cycle
- Provide synchronous social opportunities for our students once weekly over Zoom.
- Provide a weekly newsletter on Fridays including the upcoming week's schedule, topics, and any materials that would be helpful to have on hand. This information will also be posted to the Distance/Remote Learning Pinewoods website.

A weekly schedule for Primary/Kindergarten would include:

- Daily Morning Circle on Zoom
- Small/whole group lessons by Zoom
  - Math, Language, Science, Geography, History, Art, Music, and Spanish
- Time for independent student work/home activities
- Breaks
- Teacher Planning time
- 1:1 meetings with students

- Kindergarten circles and lessons
- Additional social opportunities
- Office hours for families

## Distance Learning Primary/Kindergarten Students

It is our goal to help distance learning students and parent(s)/guardian(s) to feel part of a cohesive classroom community. Self-Selected Distance Learners will be assigned to one of our classrooms (returning students will continue to remain in the same classroom community). We will operate under the mentality that each classroom is a cohesive community of families/students, but a small portion of them happen to be remote.

We are excited to be able to offer robust and educational “Zoom in” opportunities for our distance learners, where our distance learning students can join in-person morning meetings, circle times, and small group lessons. Teachers will be utilizing class chromebooks to be able to provide this customized instruction.

More information about specific learning management platforms will be shared with parents/guardians prior to the start of the school year. It is our goal to utilize systems and concise procedures that will support distance learning in a way that is as organized and user-friendly as possible.

There will also be a small supply list (and “items to have on hand at home” list) for distance learners (purchased by parents) as well as kits/packets with additional materials that are provided by Pinewoods.

## Lower Elementary

At the Lower Elementary level, distance/remote learning standards include:

- Partnering with parents/guardians to support at-home learning
- Maintaining a sense of classroom and school community
- Fostering the highest level of functional independence for each child
- Providing individualized, developmentally-appropriate schedules/assignments for students
  - Including clear expectations for students and parents
  - Fostering accountability for at-home assignments
  - Helping students break up larger assignments into more manageable pieces
- Fostering time management skills

- Holding a balance of freedom and responsibility, or “freedom within limits”
- Supporting skills the children will need to return seamlessly to classrooms
- Providing offerings rooted in self care and grace and courtesy

At the Lower Elementary level, Pinewoods administration and teachers will:

- Provide synchronous and asynchronous learning environments in all core curriculum areas
- Initiate individual support and communications based on students’ and family needs
- Provide the current class routine/schedule and then suggest guidance in setting up a daily routine at home
- Offer a routine/daily schedule that attends to the social, emotional, academic, and physical needs of the student
- Offer guidelines and suggestions for screen time
- Share suggestions for practical life activities at home e.g. recipes, food prep, household chores, etc
- Be responsive to parent/guardian questions and be available to offer guidance and tips for activities or any other elements of support for the students’ development
- Provide daily morning circles of approximately 20-30 minutes
- Provide materials and instructions for using those materials to support learning from home
- Offer guidance to students on learning how to use technology that is needed for online learning (Google Classroom/Seesaw)
- Provide virtual office hours for parents/guardians and students
- Provide synchronous as well as asynchronous instruction in art, music and P.E.
- Provide support in navigating technology to attend and participate in lessons and turn in assignments
- Provide opportunities for presentations to the larger community (parents, specialists, administration, peers)
- Provide opportunities to receive student feedback
- Provide a weekly newsletter on Fridays including upcoming week’s schedule, topics, and any materials that would be helpful to have on hand. This information will also be posted to the Distance/Remote Learning Pinewoods Website.

The weekly Lower Elementary schedule would include:

- Daily Morning Meeting on Zoom
- Small/whole group lessons by Zoom
  - Math, Language, Science, Geography, History, Art, Music, Movement, and Spanish
- Time for independent student work/home activities
- Breaks
- Teacher Planning time
- 1:1 meetings with students, additional meetings for those who benefit from extra support/feedback
- Office hours for families/students

### Distance Learning Lower Elementary Students

It is our goal to help distance learning students and parents to feel part of a cohesive classroom community, especially because this age is so in-tune to social groupings and positive peer relationships.

Self-Selected Distance Learners will be assigned to one of our classrooms. We will operate under the mentality that each classroom is a cohesive community of families/students, but a portion of them happen to be remote.

We are excited to be able to offer robust and educational “Zoom in” opportunities for our distance learners, where our distance learning students can join in-person morning meetings, circle times, and small group lessons. Our three lead teachers will be collaborating to provide this customized instruction to each learner, both inside and outside of the classroom.

More information about specific learning management platforms will be shared with parents/guardians prior to the start of the school year. It is our goal to utilize systems and concise procedures that will support distance learning in a way that is as organized and user-friendly as possible.

There will also be a small supply list (and “items to have on hand at home” list) for distance learners.

### Upper Elementary

At the Upper Elementary level, distance/remote learning standards include:

- Partnering with parents/guardians to support at-home learning

- Maintaining a sense of classroom and school community
- Fostering the highest level of functional independence for each child
- Creating developmentally-appropriate schedules/assignments for students
  - Including clear expectations for students and parents/guardians
  - Fostering accountability for at-home assignments
  - Helping students break up larger assignments into more manageable pieces.
- Fostering time management skills
- Holding a balance of freedom and responsibility, or “freedom within limits”
- Supporting skills the children will need to return seamlessly to classrooms
- Providing offerings rooted in self care and grace and courtesy

At the Upper Elementary level, Pinewoods administration and teachers will:

- Provide synchronous and asynchronous learning environments in all core curriculum areas
- Initiate individual support and communications based on students’ and family needs
- Provide the current class routine/schedule and then suggest guidance in setting up a daily routine at home
- Offer a routine/daily schedule that attends to the social, emotional, academic, and physical needs of the student
- Offer guidelines and suggestions for screen time
- Share suggestions for practical life activities at home e.g. recipes, food prep, household chores, etc
- Be responsive to parent/guardian questions and be available to offer guidance and tips for activities or any other elements of support for the students’ development
- Provide daily morning circles of approximately 20-30 minutes
- Provide materials and instructions for using those materials to support learning from home
- Offer guidance to students on learning how to use technology that is needed for online learning (Seesaw, Google Classroom)
- Provide virtual office hours for parents/guardians and students
- Provide synchronous as well as asynchronous instruction in art, music and P.E.
- Provide support in navigating technology to attend and participate in lessons and turn in assignments
- Provide opportunities for presentations to the larger community (parents, specialists, administration, peers)

- Provide opportunities to receive student/parent feedback
- Provide a weekly newsletter on Fridays including upcoming week's schedule, topics, and any materials that would be helpful to have on hand. This information will also be posted to the Distance/Remote Learning Pinewoods Website.

The weekly Upper Elementary schedule would include:

- Daily Morning Meeting on Zoom
- Small/whole group lessons by Zoom
  - Math, Language, Science, Geography, History, Art, Music, Movement, and Spanish
- Time for independent student work/home activities
- Breaks
- Teacher Planning time
- 1:1 meetings with students, additional meetings for those who benefit from extra support/feedback
- Office hours for families/students

### Distance Learning Upper Elementary Students

As with other levels, it is our goal to help distance learning students and parents/guardians to feel part of a cohesive classroom community, especially because this age is so in-tune to social groupings and positive peer relationships.

We will operate under the mentality that Upper Elementary is a cohesive community of families/students, but a portion of them happen to be remote.

We are excited to be able to offer robust and educational “Zoom in” opportunities for our distance learners, where our distance learning students can join in-person morning meetings and whole group and small group lessons.

More information about specific learning management platforms will be shared with parents/guardians prior to the start of the school year. It is our goal to utilize systems and concise procedures that will support distance learning in a way that is as organized and user-friendly as possible.

There will also be a small supply list (and “items to have on hand at home” list) for distance learners.

## Rules and Discipline

Pinewoods has rules established for the safety and security of all, even in a virtual setting. All classes have three basic ground rules:

- We treat ourselves, each other and the environment with respect.
- We maintain an atmosphere of peacefulness.
- We resolve our problems with words.

We teach the children these rules and the consequences to these rules. The consequences are:

- A reminder to the child(ren) about the rules
- Separation from an activity
- Loss of a chance to participate in an activity

In cases of verbal aggression/inappropriate language teachers will work collaboratively with parents/guardians (virtually) to address the behavior so that it does not continue. Teachers will notify parents/guardians of concerns or issues that may arise with their child during the day and will share how they were addressed. Pinewoods teachers will partner with parents/guardians to help each child learn appropriate strategies and techniques.

The staff works to set forth clear limits and boundaries and remain consistent in the practice of these boundaries. Children are given the reasons for the limits. When necessary, we redirect children to more acceptable, appropriate activities and types of behavior, acknowledging that one of the most effective ways to change behavior is to provide a positive alternative for children. Helping a child use acceptable words to deal with frustration or resolve a conflict is done directly and by example.

In cases of repeated behavior incidents, teachers will follow the same steps as in our in-person Behavior Policies section.

It is our hope that each child's experience will be a positive one, and for both the parents/guardians and staff to agree that this is the best environment for the child.

## Technology and Access

Access to technology and reliable internet are very important for remote/distance learning. Should technology and/or reliable internet be an issue or limitation for your family with distance/remote learning, please let us know and we will do our best to provide reasonable accommodations.

If a student has any kind of hardship in procuring a device to use during remote/distance learning, Pinewoods' laptops can be checked out to those students with an agreement signed by families. Please contact school administrators if you are interested in this option.

## Feedback and Partnership

Please know, participating in Distance/Remote Learning will require a strong partnership between home and school with open lines of communication. We will do our absolute best to support families through this process, whether distance/remote learning has been chosen or not.

As we did in Spring 2020, we will “follow” your family and child through this process, providing frequent check-ins and opportunities to give feedback, while making accommodations and adjustments as needed.

As always, your classroom teacher should be the first point of contact with questions/concerns. Please see the Communication and Participation section below for information about lines of communication.

# All School Policies

## Communication and Participation

### Contact with Teachers

At Pinewoods, we truly value our partnership with families, and we appreciate frequent and timely communication. That being said, our parent/guardian-teacher communication will look different this year as we are limiting in-person contact between parents/guardians and teachers/Administrators for risk-mitigation purposes. Almost all parent/guardian communication will be accomplished through phone calls, Zoom, and other contactless methods, unless there is an emergency. Through it all, we are committed to working with each and every one of you to form the same strong partnership through Zoom meetings and phone calls as with in-person dialogue.

The need to minimize in-person conversations between parents/guardians, teachers, and Administration was a large factor in our decision to close In-Person Learning early on Fridays. Our teachers will need time to check in with families and reach out if something needs to be addressed.

We appreciate your involvement in your child's education and welcome having open communication with you about your child's progress. The Montessori Compass communication system serves as a great program for communication between parents/guardians and teachers. Through this program you can directly message your child's teachers.

We will have two scheduled, virtual parent-teacher conferences during the year.

If you have a comment, question, or concern about your child or his/her classroom, we encourage you to contact your child's teacher via **contactless** channels.

You may send a note in the morning, leave a message on the school phone, or email your child's teacher if you have a question/concern. You may also send your teacher a message via Montessori Compass. Your child's teacher will make every effort to respond within 1 business day. If you have an emergency, please leave a message on the school phone and your child's teacher or the Head of School will contact you as soon as possible.

## Newsletters

Every family will receive a weekly update from their child's teacher via Montessori Compass. This update will include a brief summary of what has happened in the classroom for that week. Please take time to read these messages as you will also find important dates, events, and information.

Other information and forms can also be found on the Pinewoods website. The password to access the section "For Parents" is: **pw2020**

## Classroom Observations

In-person classroom observations are temporarily suspended until further notice.

## Student Assessments

In the Montessori classroom, teachers are constantly observing and assessing student progress, whether in-person or distance/remote. At Pinewoods, assessment is ongoing in many ways. Some examples of Montessori assessments include:

- Self-correcting materials
- Peer and self-editing or partner work
- Teacher daily observation of student work and lesson participation

- Students giving a lesson to another student to show mastery
- Older students recording what they have accomplished on their work plans
- Teacher-student conferences to assess progress and guide learning
- Copies of student evaluations (progress reports) shared during Fall and Spring parent/guardian-teacher conferences.

Beginning in the third grade and every year following, students are administered a nationally normed, standardized test. The results of standardized testing are shared with parents/guardians. We will be researching whether testing can be offered remotely for 2020-2021.

All student assessment and progress records are kept confidential and only available to pertinent staff members, administrators, and parents/legal guardians. Parents/legal guardians may share screening or assessment results provided by outside professionals with the child's teachers. This information, when possible, will be used by the child's teachers to develop strategies and make accommodations as needed to most effectively meet the child's needs.

Pinewoods maintains a list of professional support services and resources that can be recommended to parents/guardians. This list can be made available to families upon request by parent/guardian and/or teacher.

## Support Policy for Students with Diverse Learning Profiles

Pinewoods Montessori School strives to provide an inclusive learning environment for all of our students. Because our teachers and classrooms provide teaching materials that are engaging to students of varying interests, ages and abilities it is often an environment in which students with diverse learning styles and profiles thrive. As such, we are happy to partner with you and work closely with you and your child's team of professionals (if applicable) to help your child have a successful school experience. Because Montessori is traditionally student-led, as opposed to teacher-led, we are accustomed to implementing customized learning or support plans for individual students.

While we are happy to work with your child's team of professionals (speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, counselors, etc.), Pinewoods does not employ any staff devoted solely to our students who benefit from additional support. It is the family's responsibility to secure the professional resources that their child may need. If you would like for Pinewoods staff to have permission to communicate with these outside specialists or providers, please complete a "Consent to Release Personal Information" form which is available from school administration. If you would like for Pinewoods staff to complete evaluation/informational forms for your child's medical or developmental professional, those forms will be completed by your child's teachers and sent directly to the medical or developmental professional by mail.

If your child has a known medical or developmental condition that may require medical support or care during school hours, please provide a written care plan to the Head of School and the child's teachers with a specific outline of individual needs and protocols to be followed during school hours. This may include services that occur inside the classroom or in a different location. If an outside professional is supporting your child inside the classroom and the school administration and teachers deem it necessary, appropriate notification to other families in the classroom will be sent. If the medical condition is an allergy please see the allergy section above.

## Participation

There are many ways for parents/guardians to be involved with the school and their child's class.

Please contact the Office Manager or Head of School for a list of volunteer opportunities, and/or if you are interested in joining our Parent(/Guardian)-Teacher Organization (PTO). This year, these volunteer opportunities will be adjusted to promote risk mitigation.

If you have a special talent or presentation you would like to share with your child's class, please contact your child's teacher and potentially we can put together something virtual.

Parents/guardians are also invited to attend virtual Board meetings, which are held on the first Thursday of each month unless otherwise indicated.

## Lines of Communication

Pinewoods teachers will communicate any concerns or issues that arise directly with the child's parents or legal guardians. For matters related to your child's progress or classroom activities, please contact your child's teacher. For matters related to policies, facilities, and enrollment please contact the Head of School. For matters related to finances, please contact the Head of School or Bookkeeper. For matters related to student records, please contact the Office Manager.

## Community Agreement & Acknowledgment of Risk

Having all constituents understand and adhere to all protocols and policies is a key component of a safe return to campus. We all have a role to play in this.

**Unfortunately, due to our tight budget and projected deficit for the 2020-2021 school year, Pinewoods will be unable to give any refunds/discounts this year, including for families who opt for Self-Selected Distance Learning and for any mandated School Closures/Remote Learning.** In Spring 2020, when COVID-19 was thought to be a temporary inconvenience, we were able to provide discounts. However, now that more is known about the virus and experts project this to be a long-term pandemic, we no longer have the safety net of our savings to be able to incur major financial set-backs. At this time, our operating budget for the 2020-2021 school year will be operating in the red; therefore, in order for us as an organization to survive this pandemic, we need your complete understanding of this matter in times of Remote/Distance Learning.

Having students and staff return safely to campus relies on our individual and shared commitment to protect and preserve the health and well-being of our community. This means honoring and abiding by the expectations and protocols established to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 at Pinewoods and throughout our community.

We are committed to restarting school in the safest way we can. This commitment will require us to work together and by signing acknowledgment we as a community agree to abide by the suggested guidelines for the sake of keeping one another and our children as safe and healthy as possible.

All families must agree to the following for in-person school:

1. I agree that, every day, before transporting my child(ren) to Pinewoods Montessori School, I will carefully examine or assess my child(ren) for any sign of illness including the [Symptoms of COVID-19](#) and symptoms in the school's [Sick Child Policy](#). If any sign of illness is present, I will not transport my child to Pinewoods School, and I will inform the Pinewoods' staff accordingly.
2. I agree that, if my child(ren) is/are withheld from school due to illness, I will follow the school's protocols and procedures regarding when my child(ren) can return to school.
3. I agree that, if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in my child(ren)'s household(s), I will report this to Pinewoods School Administration immediately and keep my children out of in-person school following the school's protocols for exposure to a confirmed case.
4. I understand that Pinewoods will inform local health officials if my child(ren) tests positive for COVID-19, and Pinewoods will also inform other parents in the child(ren)'s class of a positive case while maintaining privacy.

5. My child(ren) and I and any other parent or legal guardian will make every effort to abide by the policies and procedures adopted by Pinewoods School and its employees. This includes but is not limited to the COVID-19 related requirements above.
6. I understand that many protocols and procedures in this handbook regarding in-person schooling serve to mitigate risk of infection. They cannot guarantee protection against the transmission of COVID-19.
7. We, as a family, will make every effort to be cautious and careful and follow guidelines and recommendations to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our community.

**The Board of Directors reserves the right to terminate the enrollment contract(s) if a parent/guardian has violated the Community Agreement as stated above.**

## Code of Conduct

At Pinewoods, part of our mission is to create a peaceful and respectful community environment for all families. In order to maintain an orderly, respectful and secure educational environment for the students and staff of Pinewoods, it is essential that all parents/guardians, visitors, and students be aware of their responsibilities and adhere to the following expected code of conduct.

### *No person shall:*

- Injure/harm (emotionally or physically) any other person or threaten to do so.
- Damage or destroy school property or the property of a staff/community member.
- Disrupt the orderly conduct of classes, school programs or other school activities.
- Use abusive or improper language when communicating with the Head of School, school Board members, school employees, parents/guardians of students, students, or guests of the school.
- Distribute or wear materials on school grounds or at school functions that are obscene, advocate illegal action, appear libelous, obstruct the rights of others, or are disruptive to the school program.
- Intimidate, harass or discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation or disability.
- Enter any portion of the school premises without authorization or remain in the facility after it is normally closed.

- Obstruct the free movement of any person in any place to which this code applies.
- Violate the traffic laws, parking regulations or other restrictions of vehicles.
- Possess, consume, sell, distribute or exchange illicit substances, or be under the influence of them on school property or at a school function.
- Possess, consume, sell, distribute or exchange alcoholic beverages or be under the influence of them on school property unless during a school-authorized event for adults only.
- Possess or use weapons or ammunition in or on \*school property or at a school function, except in the case of law enforcement officers.
- Violate any federal or state statute, local ordinance, or policy while on school property or while at a school function.

**The Board of Directors reserves the right to terminate the enrollment contract(s) if a parent/guardian has violated the Code of Conduct as stated above. Student violations of the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action, suspension, and/or termination of the enrollment contact (depending on the nature of the violation).**

\*“School property” is defined as all company-owned or leased buildings and surrounding areas such as sidewalks, school building, playground and playfields. “Weapons” include firearms, explosives, knives (switchblade knife, gravity knife, or any knife with a blade longer than 3 inches) and other weapons that might be considered dangerous or that could cause harm.

## Child Abuse Policy

At Pinewoods Montessori School, our staff members are trained to recognize the physical and behavioral signs of child neglect and abuse. We are required by law to report any suspected abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. Definitions are as follows:

**Neglect:** Failure to provide for the child’s needs (food, water, shelter, rest, medical needs).

**Abuse:** Physical, verbal, emotional, or sexual harm.

## Grievance Policy

In the event that a parent/guardian has a significant grievance regarding his/her child in the classroom setting:

1. The parent/guardian will request a meeting with his/her child's classroom teacher to discuss the areas of concern. The meeting will be held as soon as possible after the request is made.

If there is no satisfactory resolution of the concern or disagreement:

2. The parent/guardian or teacher may request a meeting of all parties with the Head of School. A meeting will be held as soon as possible after the request is made.

If this meeting does not result in a satisfactory resolution:

3. A third meeting will be held between the parent/guardian and a self-chosen representative, the classroom teacher, the Head of School, and a Board representative chosen by the Head of School.

Following this meeting, a decision will be rendered by Pinewoods Montessori School Corporation in regards to the concern/disagreement and the child's enrollment status at Pinewoods. This decision will be communicated to the parent/guardian in a timely manner through the Official Board email. Pinewoods Montessori School Corporation reserves the right to acquire legal counsel and pursue the matter in a court of law.

**Please note:** The Title IX Coordinator at Pinewoods Montessori School is [Jessica White Winger](#), Assistant Head of School. By law, any person may report discrimination/harrasment to the Title IX Coordinator directly (verbally or written), without going through the grievance process above. Such reports may be made at any time, including during non-business hours, using the school's telephone number, email(s), or mailing address.

## Tuition and Fees

Pinewoods utilizes TADS Tuition Management for the processing of all tuition and fees.

There are several ways to pay tuition to Pinewoods.

1. Pay directly to TADS when you receive your invoice.
2. You may sign-up to have your tuition payment automatically withdrawn from your bank account on TADS.
3. You may submit a check payment for tuition via the locked dropbox located by the main entrance. Please make sure your payment is in an envelope and clearly labeled with your name and what the payment amount is for. **For the 2020-2021 school year, Pinewoods would prefer payments be made online directly to TADS.**

## Pinewoods Bookkeeper

Pinewoods has a part-time Bookkeeper, who is working remotely this year. For receipts or questions regarding payments to Pinewoods, please email the Bookkeeper directly (contact information can be found in Appendix B). For any assistance with TADS Tuition Management you can contact the Bookkeeper or TADS directly.

The Office Manager makes mobile deposits weekly. If for some reason you noticed your check has not cleared, please contact her immediately.

## Late Payment Policies

All tuition monthly payments are due and payable by the 1st, 5th, 10th, 20th day of each month, according to your selection in TADS. **A late charge of \$25.00 will be assessed for monthly payments more than five (5) days past due.**

In order to cover the costs associated with payments that do not go through, we will add a \$20.00 fee for any check that does not clear due to insufficient funds or for any reason associated with an error of entry of payment information or of payment processing.

Interest on the balance due shall be charged at the rate of three percent (3%) per month for payments more than thirty (30) days past due.

When tuition payment is 30 days delinquent, the Bookkeeper will contact the parent/responsible party directly via email regarding any past due payments. Alternative payment plans can be adjusted between the parents/guardians and the Head of School, according to the terms of the tuition contract.

Student(s) of Parent(s) whose accounts become more than ninety (90) days past due and/or incur a past due balance of at least \$2,500 may be removed from the school. More information can be found in your tuition agreement in TADS.

**\*\*\*Please note that your account must be current in order for Pinewoods to fulfill any requests for student records.**

## Third Sibling Discount Policy

If three children from the same immediate family are enrolled concurrently at Pinewoods, full tuition is payable for the third sibling (youngest) with a 15% third-sibling discount. In the event that a third sibling is enrolled, receives the 15% discount, and the oldest child graduates from Pinewoods in 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grade, the third

sibling discount will still apply for three full subsequent school years for the third sibling, pending continued enrollment at Pinewoods. If a family enrolls four or more siblings concurrently, discounts will be discussed and agreed upon with the Head of School. All third-sibling discounts will be designated by the Head of School on each child's tuition contract.

## Withdrawal Policy

At Pinewoods Montessori School we are excited by the opportunity to partner with you in the education of your child(ren). We have planned our staffing and program budgets based on signed contracts for the school year. If your child must withdraw from Pinewoods, your financial obligation to the school continues as described in your "Tuition Agreement." Please contact the Head of School for any inquiries.

# Right to Amend

Since situations can arise that were not foreseen at the time of writing this policy manual, Pinewoods reserves the right to amend the handbook. In cases where an amendment is needed, you will be informed.

# Non-Discrimination Policy

Pinewoods Montessori welcomes children, aged 18 months through sixth grade, from all racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, family structure or sexual orientation. Priority is given to staff children, returning students, siblings, and transferring Montessori students. After these considerations, children are accepted from those in the waiting pool according to their stated program preference and long-term school goals.

# Pinewoods Parent Handbook Acknowledgment

*For two-parent/guardian families, we request that both parents/guardians sign this form.*

**I have read through the Pinewoods Parent Handbook and I understand and will adhere to the policies and procedures that have been outlined.**

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_  
Please Print

Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Please Sign

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_  
Please Print

Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix A Tuition and Fees



## Pinewoods Montessori School 2020 - 2021 Fee Schedule

Monthly Tuition (10 installments, August - May) - Processing Fee of \$5.50 per month for monthly payment plans (per family).				
	3 Half Days	5 Half Days	3 Full Days	5 Full days
<b>Toddler</b>	\$530	\$675	\$825	\$895
<b>Primary</b>	n/a	\$673	n/a	\$875
<b>Kindergarten</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$830
<b>Lower Elementary</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$835
<b>Upper Elementary</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$915

Annual Tuition and Details					
Program	Age	Days	Time	Contract Deposit	Annual Tuition
<b>Toddler</b>	18 - 36 months	3 Half Days	8:40-11:45 am	\$125	\$5,425
		5 Half Days	8:40-11:45 am	\$125	\$6,875
		3 Full Days	8:40 am - 2:55 pm	\$125	\$8,375
		5 Full Days	8:40 am - 2:55 pm	\$125	\$9,075
<b>Primary</b>	3 - 5 years old	5 Half Days	8:20 am - 12:00 pm	\$125	\$6,855
		5 Full Days	8:20 am - 3:00 pm	\$125	\$8,875
<b>Kindergarten</b>	5 years old*	5 Full Days	8:20 am - 3:05 pm	\$125	\$8,425
<b>Lower Elementary</b>	1st - 3rd Grade	5 Full Days	8:05 am - 3:15 pm	\$125	\$8,475
<b>Upper Elementary</b>	4th - 6th Grade	5 Full Days	8:05 am - 3:15 pm	\$125	\$9,275

Additional Care				
	Age	Days	Time	Monthly Tuition (10 installments)
<b>Before School Program</b>	3 and up	up to 5 days/week	7:30 am - Start Time	\$70
<b>After School Program</b>	3 and up	up to 5 days/week	3:00 - 5:30 pm	\$285

**Application Fee / Acceptance Fee**

Our one-time Application Fee is \$60. An acceptance fee of \$600.00 is required for each child entering one of our programs for the first time. If two or more siblings are enrolled during the same school year, the acceptance fee is \$450.00 for the youngest sibling(s). This one-time, non-refundable fee will cover the cost of supplies/materials and is due August 1, 2020.

**Activity/Field Trip Fee**

**Activity/Field Trip Fee:** \$150 for Elementary Students, \$50 for Primary, \$75 for Kindergarten Students (No fee for Toddlers). This fee is due no later than October 1, 2020.

**\* Kindergarten Policy:** Any child who enters our kindergarten program must be five years of age on or before August 31 of that school year. Upon recommendation from the child's teacher and Head of School, children may be admitted into the program before the age of 5 based on the following factors: Number of years at Pinewoods, Montessori experience, social/emotional maturity, academic readiness, age, and/or child and family preference.

## Appendix B Staff

### Administration

Emily Bray, Office Manager [office@pinewoodsmontessori.com](mailto:office@pinewoodsmontessori.com)

Melanie Conover, Bookkeeper - [bookkeeper@pinewoodsmontessori.com](mailto:bookkeeper@pinewoodsmontessori.com)

Jessica White Winger, Assistant Head of School - [jessica@pinewoodsmontessori.com](mailto:jessica@pinewoodsmontessori.com)

Caroline Carman, Head of School - [caroline@pinewoodsmontessori.com](mailto:caroline@pinewoodsmontessori.com)

### Teachers

#### Toddler Teachers

Joy Langley-Parsons - [joy@pinewoodsmontessori.com](mailto:joy@pinewoodsmontessori.com)

Gabriela Bresciani, Toddler Assistant

Maria Saavedra - [maria@pinewoodsmontessori.com](mailto:maria@pinewoodsmontessori.com)

#### Primary Teachers

Brandi Austin - [brandi@pinewoodsmontessori.com](mailto:brandi@pinewoodsmontessori.com)

Gabisu Menendez, Primary Assistant

Lindsay Ungewitter - [lindsay@pinewoodsmontessori.com](mailto:lindsay@pinewoodsmontessori.com)

Heather Murphy, Primary Assistant

Karen (KJ) Smith - [kj@pinewoodsmontessori.com](mailto:kj@pinewoodsmontessori.com)

Bamborough Kelly, Primary Assistant

#### Elementary Teachers

Emily Armond, Lower Elementary Teacher - [emilyarmond@pinewoodsmontessori.com](mailto:emilyarmond@pinewoodsmontessori.com)

Brittany Palacios, Lower Elementary Teacher - [brittany@pinewoodsmontessori.com](mailto:brittany@pinewoodsmontessori.com)

Jo Ann Rubin, Upper Elementary Teacher - [joann@pinewoodsmontessori.com](mailto:joann@pinewoodsmontessori.com)

### Board of Directors

Kerry Plunket, Chair - [board@pinewoodsmontessori.com](mailto:board@pinewoodsmontessori.com)

Jennifer Melerski, Vice Chair

Laura Arneman, Treasurer

Erik Pearsall, Secretary

Lindsay Bartholomew

Cynthia Abell-Brown

Anne Fox

Brittany Palacios - Teacher representative

Caroline Carman - Head of School

## Appendix C - Beginning of the Year Dates

**We made the decision to start all Lower and Upper Elementary (grades 1-6) Students with Remote Learning for the first two weeks of the 2020-2021 school year (August 17-August 28). After August 28th, we plan to have our in-person Elementary learners on campus.**

The first day of school is August 17th for Elementary students (as stated above, all Elementary students will be remote for two weeks of school) and new Toddler/Primary/Kindergarten students.

All Toddler/Primary/Kindergarten students who have selected In-Person Learning will start the school year on campus. The first day of school for returning Toddler/Primary/Kindergarten students is Wednesday, August 19th. Parent/Guardian Orientation for all levels will be held via Zoom with your teachers.

Please take note of the following dates/times:

- ❖ **Aug. 13 at 6:00 pm** - Virtual Toddler and Primary Orientation for new and returning families (both in-person and distance)
- ❖ **Aug. 14** - New Family Meetings (*Primary and Toddler only*) - These will be individually scheduled with each family and conducted virtually
- ❖ **Aug. 14 at 4:00pm** - Elementary Orientation for new and returning families (Virtual)
- ❖ **Aug. 17** - First Day of School for Lower/Upper Elementary Students (Virtual)
- ❖ **Aug. 17-18** - Orientation Days for New Toddler/Primary Students (Mornings Only)
- ❖ **Aug. 19** - First Day of School for all Toddler/Primary Students
- ❖ **Aug. 31** - Planned In-Person first day of school for Elementary students whose caregivers opt for In-Person learning (see above)

Additional information and links will be provided by classroom teachers in August.

## Appendix D - 2020-2021 School Calendar

We have updated our calendar for the [2020-2021 school year](http://www.pinewoodsmontessori.com/calendar.html), which can also be accessed here: <http://www.pinewoodsmontessori.com/calendar.html>. This calendar removes many days off, prioritizing instructional days in our schedule.

The extended break from in-person instruction between Fall/Winter holidays will allow families to more safely spend time during the holiday season with loved ones. It also aligns more closely with the scheduled winter break for a number of local universities.

Our experience tells us that November and December are usually the months when sickness ramps up at Pinewoods and throughout the community, and we took this into account when planning this extended break.