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Pandemic Policy 2021/22

Unfortunately we are still dealing with the COVID-19 Pandemic and its various variants. Our number one priority is the safety and welfare of our students. We urge our parents/grandparents/uncles/aunts and all eligible family members to get vaccinated! The more of us that get vaccinated the less we need to worry about quarantines and school closures. The Delta variant is exponentially more aggressive than the B.1.1.7 (UK variant) that forced us to temporarily close in January. We realize that the news has come at a dizzying pace and we have wished to get this information to you sooner but new guidelines are still trickling out and we want our policy to be consistent with what the community is doing as long as it is comprehensive and sound.

Masks for students will be optional at Andover Academy BUT **recommended** for our VPK students. Students under 2 years of age WILL NOT be wearing masks. Our Preschool and Toddler rooms is where mask-wearing for students is a little complicated. News and media primarily focus on K-12, and when CDC recommends that 2 and older can wear masks - they are primarily talking about going out to supermarkets, malls, doctors' offices, airports, etc. some of our Toddlers are here from 6:45am to after 5pm for 5 days a week. WHO does advise that children 5 and under not be required to wear masks (<https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-children-and-masks-related-to-covid-19>) Our Toddlers and Preschool students are developing their speech, so it is important for them to see the mouth and lips. Teachers and Staff MUST wear masks but during reading time in their circles, the teacher who is reading will be distanced but have a face shield or alternative that MAY not be as protective as a fitted mask. During nap time only our teachers and staff will be wearing masks (only our students will be napping!) but during outside play our students AND staff can shed their masks. We are recommending mask-wearing for our VPK students as this will help transition them into kindergarten where mask-wearing will be more prevalent and possibly mandatory IF we are still dealing with the pandemic. It is important to remember that these are guidelines - "how can masks be safe for a 24month old but not safe for a 23month old?" is a valid question but authorities do need to set markers - masks are probably safe for a 23month old but we need to follow guidelines/rules to operate.

Pickup and drop-off will be done outside under the overhang. Parents are only allowed inside the lobby area IF they are wearing a mask, pass a temperature check, AND have an appointment. We



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are currently doing our tours during nap time when all of our students are in their respective classrooms and tours are ONLY done with parents who are masked and have passed a temperature check. The only other time tours are conducted is IF the parents cannot make it during nap time hours and we set an appointment at 6pm or later; any students who are in attendance will be in the multipurpose room not in the lobby and will be isolated from the parents doing the tour.

We ask our parents to wear masks when picking up and dropping off even though they are outside regardless of vaccination status during peak pickup/drop-off times when a crowd is likely to form.

We will revisit our Pandemic Policy every 30 days. We are in consultation with some of our parents who work in the health care industry as well as other preschools and elementary schools in the community. There will be more information forthcoming as we relay with the Health department regarding new protocols and procedures but they have been bombarded with the Delta variant...as soon as we get updated information, we will share with you!