



**STERLING  
MONTESSORI**  
EST. 1997

# REOPENING STERLING A GUIDE FOR FAMILIES



*We shall walk together on this path of life, for all things are part of the universe and are connected with each other to form one whole unity.*



-- Dr. Maria Montessori

**Version 1, July 10, 2020**

# WELCOME

To Sterling Families and Friends,

We know our community has been patiently awaiting guidance and planning for our 2020-21 school year. This has been such an unprecedented time and we have been hard at work in planning to encompass a quality educational experience, as well as waiting for guidelines from the State.

The health, safety, and wellness of students, staff, and parents are our first priority. We are ensuring that all needs of students, including access to learning materials and learning opportunities, technology, emotional and social needs, nutrition, and additional supports are considered. The plans we have created are a baseline or starting point that can be modified in collaboration with all our stakeholders including parents, teachers, students, and staff to fit our unique population and needs.

While we are still waiting on the Governor's decision for reopening schools in North Carolina, Sterling has prepared the required three distinct plans for reopening. As we look to open school on August 17th, **at this time we have made the decision to follow Plan C.** We will continue to evaluate what is best for Sterling staff, students and parents to determine when circumstances allow us to reopen for in-person instruction under Plan B. With Plan B, a Distance Learning track is available. If you are a family that registered for the Distance Learning Track, your registration will be on hold and revisited should Sterling move to Plan B.

Please direct any questions or concerns regarding reopening to [reopening@sterlingmontessori.org](mailto:reopening@sterlingmontessori.org). Through it all, we sincerely look forward to coming back together as a community, educating our students and working with you to create a memorable school year.

Josie Spreher  
Executive Director

# OVERVIEW



This guide will outline guidelines and protocols to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus that causes COVID-19. It is based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI):

- Re-entry Plans A, B, and C
- Distance Learning Track Framework
- Returning to Sterling
- Health Screening Requirements
- Health and Safety Plans
- Social and Emotional Health
- Resources

## **This information is subject to change.**

Please understand that knowledge about the COVID-19 virus and the best practices to respond to the pandemic continue to evolve. For this reason, guidance, plans, and policies related to returning to work and school at Sterling will also evolve. This is Sterling's version 1, and we will follow up with subsequent versions and more details soon. Families will be notified via email of updates. Please ensure the contact information you have provided Sterling is always up to date. We will also keep our website updated with the latest information at [www.sterlingmontessori.org](http://www.sterlingmontessori.org).

# RE-ENTRY PLANS A, B & C

The state required that we prepare three plans for the 2020-21 school year:

## DAILY IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION WITH SOCIAL DISTANCING (PLAN A)

This plan allows for students to attend school on campus. Sterling is operating under enhanced health and social distancing protocols.

## BLENDED LEARNING (PLAN B)

In this plan, Sterling will reduce the number of students in the classrooms to no more than 20 students in a class. Children House (CH) and Lower Elementary (LE) will remain on campus 5 days/week, while Upper Elementary (UE) and Middle School (MS) will be assigned to two groups, alternating on campus one week and at home one week with work plans. Siblings will be in the same alternating groups. Sterling will operate under enhanced health and social distancing protocols.

**Sterling values and wants to prioritize the relationships and continuity created by the 3-year cycle. However, it may be necessary for us to change previously made placements based on the number of our families who will be choosing the Distance Learning track for their children. When considering assigning students in Plan B, there are many factors that are considered including (but not limited to):**

- Siblings
- Teacher Needs
- Rooms Available
- Number of students returning for in-school learning

## DISTANCE LEARNING ONLY K-8th (Plan C)

In this plan, all students kindergarten through 8th grade are learning from home. Preschoolers will be face to face in smaller class sizes.

SECTION	PLAN A	PLAN B	PLAN C
<b>CHILDREN'S HOUSE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All students are on campus 5-days/week following CDC and NCDHHS requirements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All students are on campus 5-days/week</li> <li>• Smaller class sizes for all preschoolers</li> <li>• Separate Kindergarten into smaller class sizes</li> <li>• Distance Learning track available for Kindergarten only</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All K-8 students learning from home</li> <li>• Preschool will remain open (smaller classroom sizes)</li> </ul>

# RE-ENTRY PLANS A, B & C

SECTION	PLAN A	PLAN B	PLAN C
<b>LOWER ELEMENTARY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full capacity classrooms students are on campus 5-days/week following CDC and NCDHHS requirements</li> <li>Classrooms grouped for Common Areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students are on campus 5 days/week for all LE students</li> <li>Separate students into smaller groups in available classrooms</li> <li>Distance Learning track available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All K-8 students learning from home</li> </ul>
<b>UPPER ELEMENTARY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full capacity classrooms with students on campus 5-days/week following CDC and NCDHHS requirements</li> <li>Classrooms grouped for Common Areas</li> <li>Staggered playground schedule</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UE students will split into 2 groups</li> <li>Each group will alternate 1 week on campus and 1 week at home with work plans</li> <li>Distance Learning track available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All K-8 students learning from home</li> </ul>
<b>MIDDLE SCHOOL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full capacity classrooms with students on campus 5-days/week following CDC and NCDHHS requirements</li> <li>Pods separated for all classrooms and gatherings</li> <li>Staggered recess/lunch schedule</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MS students split into 2 groups</li> <li>Each group will alternate 1 week on campus and 1 week at home with work plans.</li> <li>Distance Learning track available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All K-8 students learning from home</li> </ul>

# RE-ENTRY PLANS A, B & C

SECTION	PLAN A	PLAN B	PLAN C
<b>EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN (EC)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Place students together from same groupings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assigned groupings in order to minimize exposure</li> <li>Distance Learning track option</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Students learning from home</li> </ul>
<b>SPECIALS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specials classes will be provided for K-8th grade following CDC and NCDHHS requirements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specials classes will be provided for K-8th grade following CDC and NCDHHS requirements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Students learning from home</li> </ul>
<b>BEFORECARE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To begin at 8:00am and students go to the general education classroom</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To begin at 8:00am and students go to the general education classroom</li> </ul>	--
<b>AFTERCARE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aftercare classes will be provided for PK-8th grade following CDC and NCDHHS requirements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aftercare classes will be provided for PK-8th grade following CDC and NCDHHS requirements</li> </ul>	--
<b>CLUBS/ PROGRAMS/ AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cancelled until further notice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cancelled until further notice</li> </ul>	--



# DISTANCE LEARNING TRACK

## Overview: Our Goals and Values

At Sterling, we are committed to creating a Montessori-based Distance Learning framework that serves the development of children in all areas: academic, social and emotional. It is important to us that the work that we provide students during this time be thoughtful, challenging, and rewarding. Knowing that we can't replicate what happens in our classrooms, we want to continue to nurture a culture of learning, while also considering, encouraging and accommodating the individual needs and interests of our students. We will strive to connect subject and concepts so that students feel connected to their learning and are not simply completing busywork.



### Key Components of Online learning at Sterling:

- Students will experience a consistent schedule, daily lessons, and individual feedback similar to their peers who will be engaging in face to face instruction.
- Students will be provided with opportunities to practice independence and learn time management skills.
- Students will be required to complete daily and weekly work.
- Demonstrations (some live, some recorded) using materials to show concepts (when possible). Additional resources may be used.
- Instruction will be provided through a common online learning platform.
- Social Emotional support will be integrated into lessons, meaningful group experiences and opportunities for student connection.

Families who opt-in to Sterling's Distance Learning option under Plan B will be enrolled in the program for the duration of the school year (August - June). Should family situations change mid-year, there is no guarantee a space will be available for Distance Learners to begin face-to-face.

Click to [register](#) for the Distance Learning track by July 17, 2020.

# RETURNING TO SCHOOL



To combat the spread of the virus as a community, the expectation is that all employees, students and families comply with the procedures, protocols and requirements outlined in this document and in any linked documents and websites.

In addition, the Sterling community is expected to comply with state and local regulations.

If state or local requirements differ from the guidance provided in this document, we will reevaluate our procedures and protocols and make necessary adjustments.



# HEALTH SCREENINGS

## Health Screening Responsibilities

**At Sterling, our top priority is the health and welfare of our community. Daily health screenings will help to reduce this risk. Families should assess their student's health at home before arriving at school. Anyone showing signs of illness of any kind or who may have been exposed to COVID-19 will not be allowed to attend school.**

Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, shortness of breath with additional symptoms such as chills, loss of taste or smell, vomiting or diarrhea. A fever is determined by a thermometer reading 100.4 or higher. Regular screenings for symptoms will take place throughout the day to help reduce exposure.



## Campus Health Screening Requirement During Arrival

If possible, the same parent or designated person should drop-off and pick-up their child every day. We will provide a staggered arrival schedule.

Parents will be provided with a questionnaire to remind themselves of COVID-19 symptoms. A staff member will greet students at the car as they arrive, take temperatures and ask the health questions.

# HEALTH SCREENINGS

## Campus Health Screening Requirements During the School Day

Staff will monitor students for symptoms such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath.

If a child develops symptoms while at school, he or she will be immediately isolated to a designated space under the supervision of a staff member and required to wear a face covering. A parent or guardian will be expected to promptly pick up their child from school.

More information on monitoring symptoms is available from the [CDC](#).



# HEALTH SCREENINGS



## Procedure for Reporting COVID-19 on Campus

We will report suspected, presumptive or positive cases of COVID-19 to Wake County Public Health authorities and work with them for follow up and contact tracing.

If a person with COVID-19 was on Sterling's campus, while infectious, we will coordinate with local health officials to notify employees and families while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with FERPA, NCGS130A-143, and all other state and federal laws.

In the event of a case of COVID-19 at Sterling, the affected areas will be closed for 24 hours, and then systematically disinfected.



# HEALTH & SAFETY PLANS

## STUDENT HEALTH & SAFETY

### PLAN A

### PLAN B

### PLAN C

#### SOCIAL DISTANCING

- Mark 6 feet of spacing to remind students and staff to stay apart in lines and other times where they might congregate.
- Space out seating in classrooms where possible
- Limit non-essential visitors

#### Adhere to Plan A AND

- Ensure sufficient distancing between people at all times in school facilities
- Limit density of people in school facilities to no greater than 50% maximum occupancy to ensure 6 feet of social distancing

- Follow all CDC requirements for anyone who has entered the building
- At least once a week have classrooms cleaned

#### CLOTH FACE COVERINGS

**North Carolina requires a face covering for all employees, adult visitors, and students (K-8th grade)** when they are or may be within six feet of another person, including:

- inside school buildings and anywhere on school grounds, including outside; and
- A face covering must be secured safely over the nose, mouth, and under the chin.

State Health officials strongly recommend face coverings for all individuals over the age of 2 and above, if it is determined they can reliably wear, remove, and handle masks following CDC guidance throughout the day. Individuals should be reminded frequently not to touch their face coverings and to wash their hands.

Face coverings are NOT required for individuals who:

- Cannot tolerate a face covering due to developmental, medical or behavioral health needs
- Cannot wear one due to a sincerely held religious belief
- Are "actively" eating or drinking
- Are "strenuously" exercising
- Are seeking to communicate with a hearing impaired person in a way that requires the mouth to be visible.
- Are children whose parent, guardian or responsible person has been unable to place a face covering safely on a child's face.

**Required for anyone who must enter the building**

# HEALTH & SAFETY PLANS

## STUDENT HEALTH & SAFETY

### PLAN A

### PLAN B

### PLAN C

#### COMMON AREAS

- All students and staff will utilize patio exits
- Minimize the number of students in hallways
- Directional reminders and required signs are posted
- Entry and exit doors are labeled
- Students and teachers are assigned in small groups that stay together as much as possible
- Playground schedules will reflect small groupings
- Locker and cubby assignments will minimize contact

#### RESTROOMS

- Frequent reminders to stay 6 feet apart
- Provide physical barriers between sinks and toilets
- Use floor markers to designate physical distancing
- All bathrooms to be cleaned frequently and according to NCDHHS guidelines.

#### CLASSROOMS

- Frequent cleaning following the CDC guidelines
- Furniture arranged to ensure maximum floor space
- Students to use individual work rugs
- Proper spacing with whole class and small group lessons.

# HEALTH & SAFETY PLANS

STUDENT HEALTH & SAFETY		PLAN A	PLAN B	PLAN C
CARPOOL/ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Staggered departure and arrival schedule</li><li>• Every student will receive temperature checks and screening upon arrival at their car</li><li>• Entryways are marked to designate appropriate distancing</li><li>• Late arrivals go directly to the classroom</li></ul>			
MAIN OFFICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Physical barriers - Plexiglass at desk</li><li>• Pre-arranged visits for emergency only</li><li>• Late drop-offs will go straight to the class</li><li>• Call-in to main office for early check-out of student</li><li>• No visitors allowed</li></ul>			
HAND WASHING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hand washing during key times: Upon arrival to classroom, before and after food, after restroom, after blowing nose or coughing/sneezing, after touching objects used by multiple people and after recess.</li></ul>			
CLEANING AND SANITIZING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cleaning of objects/materials/classroom supplies used by multiple people as needed and at the end of the day</li><li>• Frequently used student items are kept separately and individually labelled (pencil pouches, scissors, etc.)</li><li>• Removal of soft items or those which cannot be sanitized or easily cleaned.</li><li>• Increased cleaning of tables and high touch surfaces by adults: morning, before and after lunch, in between work cycles, and end of the day.</li><li>• Use of EPA-approved disinfectant for SARS-COV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Current cleaning and disinfectant protocols will continue to be reviewed and enhanced in terms of frequency and intensity.</li></ul>			



# SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL HEALTH

There is a lot of information in the media about COVID-19 and we know this can cause concern for parents and students. Here are some tips to help address your family's social and emotional needs:

- Share age-appropriate information with students and correct any misinformation.
- Reassure children that they are safe and that adults are working to keep them safe.
- Emphasize ways children and families can be "germ-busters" and reduce the spread of illness.
- Try to keep routines as normal as possible.
- Limit the amount of exposure to television and social media regarding COVID-19.



We are thoughtfully planning now to support all students' mental and emotional well-being upon their return to school. We will continue to use existing team structures in our Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) as needed.

If you have any concerns about your child, please contact your child's teacher at any time and/or our [school counselor](#).

# RESOURCES

We will continue to keep our website ([www.sterlingmontessori.org](http://www.sterlingmontessori.org)) updated with any latest information. If you have questions or comments about returning to school on site, please email [reopening@sterlingmontessori.org](mailto:reopening@sterlingmontessori.org).

For Wake County information, including drive-through testing sites, visit [covid19.wakegov.com](http://covid19.wakegov.com).

For information about North Carolina's response, visit the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Resources website at [covid19.ncdhhs.gov](http://covid19.ncdhhs.gov).

For federal guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus](http://cdc.gov/coronavirus).

CDC's Guidance on wearing and removing face masks can be found at:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>
- <https://www.astate.edu/a/hr/forms/COVID-19%20Accommodation%20Request%20Form.pdf>
- <https://www.irm.ucla.edu/covid-19-accommodation-request>

