

Aidan Montessori School
COVID-19 and School: Frequently Asked Questions
(May 2020)

1 - How firm is the June 1 contract binding date?

June 1 is the enrollment contract binding date for the 2020 - 2021 academic year. Aidan has a responsibility to commit financially to our employees and plan for the future. In order to do this accurately, Aidan needs to know that families have financially committed to the school. Every year, exceptions to the binding date are made on a case-by-case basis where, for example, a family may be moving out of town or is facing an uncertain employment situation. Families who would like an extension to the binding date are encouraged to send an email to the Head of School (k.clark@aidanschool.org) stating: a) the reason for their request for an extension; and b) the date until which the extension is requested.

Why June 1? This date is established as a “Principle of Good Practice” by our accrediting organization and is the contract binding date typically followed by all AISGW/AIMS schools. The binding date is established to be mutually protective of the school and its families.

2 - Will Aidan offer a tuition refund?

Aidan is not offering tuition refunds. A key decision the Board of Trustees and School administration made early on in the COVID-19 crisis was to retain and continue to fully compensate all Aidan employees through the remainder of this academic year. Aidan plans to follow this precedent in the coming year.

To date, Aidan has provided refunds to families for services the School cannot provide while the building is closed, such as Pizza Fridays, the After School Program, and Discovery Programs. Aidan Montessori School continues to offer its Distance Learning Program (DLP) and will do so until the end of the academic term. In order to provide the DLP, our teachers and staff continue to work as hard as they can to provide a quality Montessori educational experience.

3 - How does COVID-19 affect the School’s financial aid program?

Every year, Aidan Montessori School awards approximately \$600,000 in financial aid to families who demonstrate financial need. Our financial aid budget for the coming school year has been exhausted. The Board of Trustees has established the **COVID-19 Emergency Family Relief Fund** to assist families who are committed to Aidan and are facing financial burdens as a result of COVID-19. The School does not want to lose any family due to a temporary financial setback. Even if you have not previously considered your family a candidate for financial aid, and yet have become financially challenged as a result of COVID-19, please send an email to the School’s CFO, Blake Brophy (b.brophy@aidanschool.org) by Wednesday, May 20th. We simply need a short email referencing: a) how your finances have been affected by COVID-19; and b) what level of

financial subsidy would enable your family to remain enrolled at Aidan. Please make the subject line: **COVID-19 Emergency Family Relief Fund**.

4 - What about reopening school in the 2020 - 2021 school year?

In addition to preparing for a “normal” opening in September, Aidan is actively planning for the potential contingencies that may come our way in the 2020 - 2021 school year. No doubt, many of you are wondering about a “second wave,” potential rolling stay-at-home orders, and social distancing measures in a Montessori school. Please know that the School and its Trustees have been thinking about these things too.

The initial focus of Aidan’s leadership, immediately post-March 13th, was to get the DLP up and running, and we continue to put great daily effort into its implementation. We are now concurrently working hard to plan for the future reopening of our School. As was announced last week in the letter from Aidan’s Board President, Leanne Davis, Aidan has formed a Reopening Task Force. The Reopening Task Force is composed of Board members and lead administrators, and will draw on outside expertise, including health professionals, as needed. The Reopening Task Force will provide an outline of overall strategy, contingency planning scenarios, and its decision-making processes within the next two weeks. Over the summer, the Reopening Task Force will release a handbook containing the Task Force’s recommendations for a safe reopening of our School.

The situation with COVID-19 is fluid. Our planning has been nimble and contingency-based, and it will continue to be so. We welcome your input at reopeningtaskforce@aidanschool.org.

5 - Has Aidan applied for relief under the Paycheck Protection Program?

On the recommendations of our financial institution and legal counsel, and upon approval by the Board of Trustees, Aidan applied for and was approved to receive a loan of approximately \$680,000 in relief funding from the Paycheck Protection Program. The funds can only be applied to salaries and associated costs. However, we are awaiting further guidance given the evolving conditions and restrictions on the funds. Please expect further communication from the School in the coming weeks.

Many aspects of the School’s finances have been affected by COVID-19, and these effects are likely to have future implications for which the School must plan. With ongoing due diligence and deliberation by our School leadership and Board, we can state with confidence that Aidan Montessori School will come out of this crisis whole, and even more capable of meeting future challenges as a result.

6 - What will happen to the Distance Learning Program?

The School is committed to offering the DLP through to the end of the present academic year. The Reopening Task Force, the Board of Trustees and the School as a whole are preparing for the possibility that there may be additional stay-at-home orders in the future.

The School will invest significant time this summer to develop the DLP 2.0 in case we need to deploy those resources again. The DLP is an iterative process, which has greatly benefited from your feedback. We will continue to solicit and incorporate your thoughts regarding our online learning program. We will distribute another survey toward the end of the academic year seeking further input on the DLP.

7 - What if summer camps are cancelled?

At this point, Aidan Montessori School continues to plan for our summer camp, Aidan Explorers, as we await further news from the DC government regarding what will and will not be permitted to operate this summer.

In the event that summer camps in the DC Metro area are closed, Aidan is cognizant of the fact that our families would benefit from further support from the School over the summer. To that end, the Reopening Task Force and the administration are discussing various measures to support our families over the summer, including but not limited to distributing summer learning packets to all levels. The School will also leave all the Distance Learning Plans on its website over the summer so that families may continue to access the DLP at their own pace and revisit lessons at their convenience.

8 - What about summer construction projects?

Out of an abundance of caution, the Board of Trustees voted to postpone the School's planned capital improvement projects, which had been scheduled to take place this summer. While the postponement is disappointing, the Board decided that it is in the School's best interests to be fiscally conservative in these uncertain times and also to avoid any possibility--such as a delay in construction relating to COVID-19--that would prevent us from opening our doors on time in September.

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The Aidan community is a strong one, and it has been tested recently like never before--from Montessori teachers and four year-olds suddenly navigating the online world, to families grappling with managing their own work as well as that of their children. We will all get through this together, and we will come out of this stronger and better than we have ever been... That goes for the children, our families and our school; in other words, our community. ***"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."*** —***Maria Montessori, To Educate the Human Potential***

Should you have questions or input for the Reopening Task Force, please email us at reopeningtaskforce@aidanschool.org.