



1611 Ames Ave
St. Paul, MN 55106

August 21, 2020

Dear Families,

The staff at Cornerstone has been very busy this summer creating a distance learning plan that will meet the needs of our families. This document serves as an introduction to how distance learning and on-site care will operate this fall. Please do read it all the way through - much of the length is due to schedules and charts. A handbook, detailing our health policies, commitments to you and your children, and more in-depth discussions of our programs, will be published on or by August 26.

Distance Learning

The majority of Cornerstone children will participate in distance learning this fall. Children will need a laptop/tablet with internet access, designated workspace (a table and a chair), access to reading material, and a set of school supplies to complete their learning. Headphones and an external keyboard for tablets may also be useful. We are assessing the needs of families and will provide as much technology as we are able. The school supplies list will be distributed in a mailing early next week; extra supplies will be available for pick-up if needed. Bi-weekly material packets will also be distributed for your children to complete work off-line.

Included below are sample schedules for each level: Kindergarten/Children's House, Lower Elementary, and Upper Elementary. These schedules will, necessarily, be adjusted for each child and the services they receive; more detailed schedules will be provided by your guide.

Children's House

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00-9:15	Prepare for school day: make bed, eat breakfast, brush teeth, get dressed, prepare learning space				
9:15-11:30 Morning Work Cycle	Academic time (work through assignments from your guide; view Montessori lessons; practice math, reading, writing skills) Take frequent movement breaks (family walk, yoga, indoor exercise)				
11:30-1:30	Mid-day routine: prepare lunch, eat and clean up, large motor movement, quiet rest				
1:30 - 4:00 Afternoon Work Session	Afternoon work cycle Parent office hours	1:1/small group lessons with guide Work cycle	Afternoon work cycle	1:1/small group lessons with guide Work cycle	1:1/small group lessons with guide Work cycle
4:00-4:30	Kindergarten Zoom collective				
4:30-5:15	PE/Recess: Bikes, walk the dog, play outside (weather permitting) Board/Card games, choice of work (if inside)				

Lower Elementary

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8-8:45	Prepare for school day: organize work area, log into Schoology, watch morning greeting				
8:45-9:05	Grade level Zoom meeting		Whole class collective	Grade level Zoom meeting	
9:05-11:40 Morning Work Cycle	View daily lesson Lesson follow-on (provided by guide) Math, reading, handwriting practice Appointments with specialists				
11:40-12:00	Clean up and prepare for lunch				
12:00-12:30	Virtual lunch: children may join guide for a Zoom mealtime				
12:30-1:30	Clean up and recess/movement				
1:30 - 3:00 Afternoon Work Session	**One-on-One Meetings with Guide (scheduled bi-weekly)** Read-aloud Writing prompts Hand work				
3:00-3:20	Grade level Zoom meeting		Continue afternoon work cycle	Grade level Zoom meeting	
3:20-3:50	Big Work: Research, letter/storywriting, practical life project				

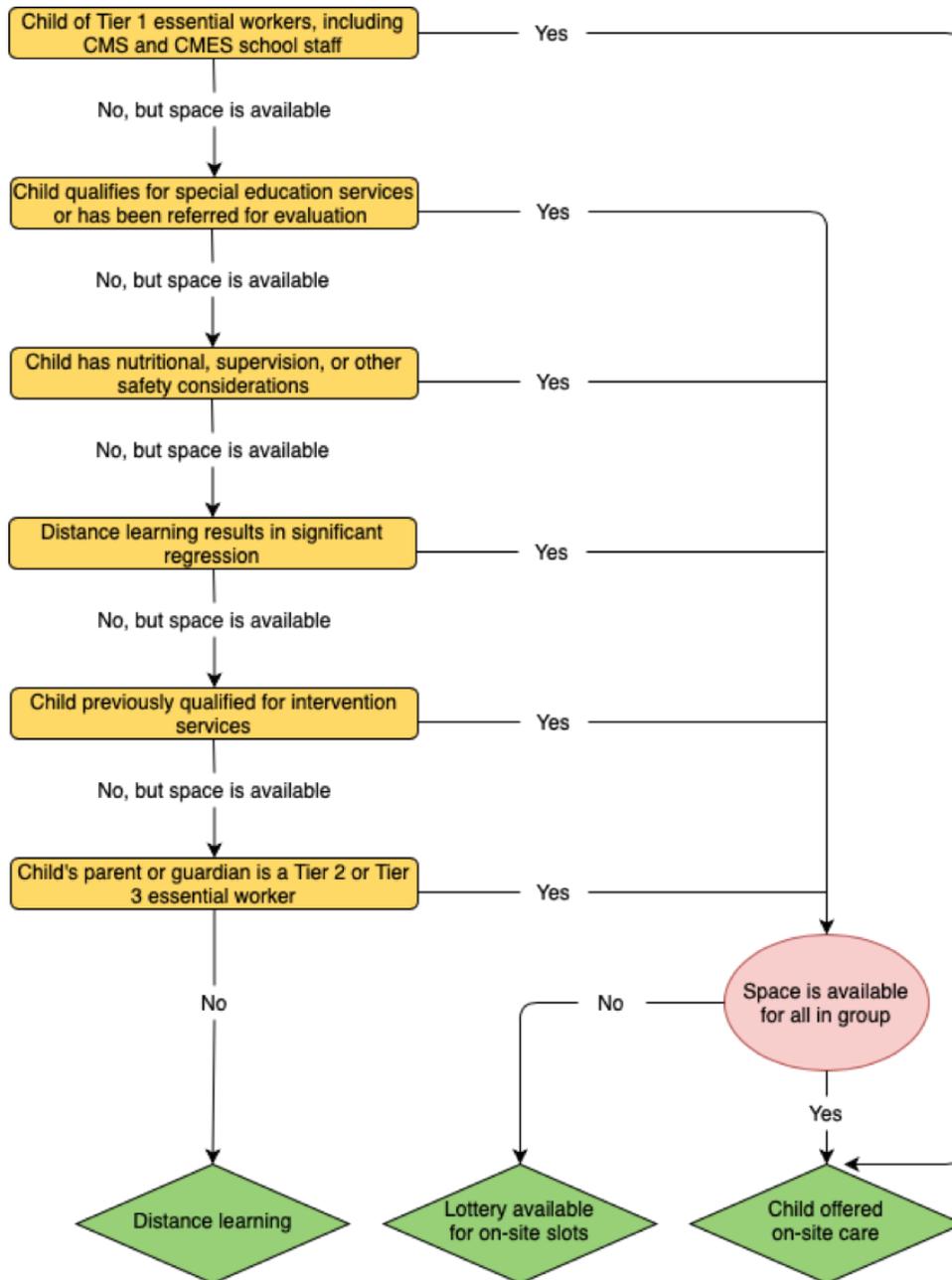
Upper Elementary

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00-8:45	**One-on-One Meetings with Guide (scheduled bi-weekly)**				
8:45-9:15	All Group Collective	Small Group Collective (half class group)		All Group Collective	
		Small Group Collective (half class group)			
9:15-12:15 Morning Work Cycle	Small group lesson meeting Daily Math, Language, Writing Monthly Project Work “Big” Work - Monthly Project Work or an additional independent work	Independent work turn-in: Weekly Math Assessment Weekly Work Submissions Weekly Reflection Daily Skill Work Progress Checks	Small group lesson meeting Daily Math, Language, Writing Monthly Project Work “Big” Work - Monthly Project Work or an additional independent work		
12:15-1:15	Lunch and Recess				
1:15 - 3:45 Afternoon Work Session	**One-on-One Meetings with Guide** (scheduled bi-weekly) **Open Work Support Sessions** (optional for most, scheduled for some) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Daily Skill Work: Spelling/Vocabulary, Math Facts, Keyboarding, Geography Skills ● Independent Reading ● Appointments with Specialists ● Read Aloud 				

On-Site Care

Cornerstone staff and administration are connecting with each family to find out their needs and if they qualify for an on-site invitation. If you are a Tier 1 essential worker in need of childcare, and have not yet heard from us, please contact me directly. Please note, the purpose of on-site care for essential workers is to provide care *if there is no one home*. If you are able to work from home or have other adults at home who can support distance learning, we ask that you keep your child home.

Children will be invited to receive on-site care according to the following chart:



Children participating in on-site care should arrive between 8:30 and 8:45 each morning, unless before-care has been requested (available beginning at 8:00). The children will be guided through their distance learning by our highly-qualified paraprofessionals and classroom assistants. Children receiving ELL or Special Education services may be given direct instruction in person. During each environment's designated lunch and free recess time, the children will eat together (at a distance) and play outside. The location of on-site care will depend on the number of children in attendance: if more than 15 children attend, they will be split into Lower Elementary and Upper Elementary groups and will work in Pond and Marsh, respectively. If fewer than 15 children attend, the entire cohort will work together in Pond. Kindergarten children will remain in the Children's House environments.

Children in on-site care must follow all health and social distancing policies as outlined in the handbook you will receive next week. Masks are required and children should be prepared to stay six feet apart, both in and outside.

If children are ill or have been exposed to a confirmed Covid case, we ask that you complete the screening form found [here](#).

Support for Parents/Guardians

Some of you expressed concern about how much your child learned in the spring – was it enough? It didn't feel like it at times and we agree. We have embraced every opportunity to learn from what went well and what we need to improve on behalf of the children and you all. We chose some key guiding words as we began our planning: ***consistency, simplicity, rigor, accountability and joy!*** Here is a brief summary of what we learned and what you can expect:

- We were operating in crisis-mode this spring – all of us. Though our current situation is so far from ideal, we are no longer in crisis. Our planning has been intentional. We have looked into and embraced components of your child's education that fit the structure we have to use, while still holding strong to supporting whole-child development with much hands-on, project-based work.
- Large group Zoom meetings were not productive, especially for the younger children. Zoom groups for Lower Elementary and Children's House will be much smaller and aimed at setting the children up for a successful work day.
- Schedules were complicated! We have put much more structure into what should be a much more consistent schedule for your child. Rather than children having different schedules each day, adults working with your children will rotate, while your child's day stays the same.
- Accountability and often rigor were lacking. We have staffed and scheduled and planned for considerable time to support, track, and hold children accountable to all types of work!

- Remote assessment was messy or non-existent. We have planned baseline assessments for all children in reading and math and a tiered system of supports, interventions and progress monitoring to ensure enough support for each child to progress.
- Parents were largely stressed and overwhelmed. We have spent considerable time planning for more support for you all; we have several ideas about what that might look like beyond the structure and expectations listed above, including virtual book clubs, support groups, and outside home visits from our beloved therapy dog (who misses the children terribly)! We look forward to hearing from you about what you would find supportive.

We are excited about the work we've done in preparation for our work with the children and with you. Even with these changes and supports, as we look to the start of school we want to acknowledge the stress that distance learning puts on many of you. For all the reasons outlined in the previous mailing, we believe distance learning is the right decision at this time. As conditions change in St. Paul, we will assess whether it continues to be the right decision and whether there are ways we can be supporting you differently. "Flash surveys" will be distributed monthly, and we will use this data and the county case rate to determine changes. Our first assessment point will be at the end of September. If, at any point, you have feedback, suggestions, or requests, please contact your guide and me.

Our distance learning handbook will include additional details about our partnership with you this fall, including what you can expect around communication with guides and specialists, how you will be asked to support your children's work, and opportunities for social/community connection for both you and your children.

In partnership,



Alyssa Schwartz

Head of School

alyssaschwartz@cornerstone-elementary.org

651-583-4181