

Good Afternoon Families,

Welcome to May! Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete our recent survey on COVID-19 policies. There were 246 individuals who participated in the survey. Our leadership team carefully reviewed the results and spoke with leaders in other preschools before deciding on the policies outlined below. We appreciate your input.

Updated Travel Policy

Travel restrictions will be enforced when our community (DeKalb County) or the community you are traveling to with your child has a community level of **orange (high)** based on the CDC's [community levels](#). If the above criteria are in place when you travel with your child, then we will follow the CDC's guidelines for travel.

COVID-19 Testing Kits

We have been awarded funds from our child care licensing agency to purchase COVID-19 home testing kits. If you need a home test, please email the site director at your program. Clairmont, lfields@thecliftonschoo.org and Clifton Road, cbritt@thecliftonschoo.org.

Quarantine Updates

- Effective immediately for children under 2 years old, the quarantine period has been changed from **10 days to 7 days**.

Updated Policy for children under 2:

Children under 2 years old will quarantine for 7 days and should be tested on day 6 or 7. If the test is negative, they can return to school with a negative PCR test and no COVID-19 symptoms on day 8. If the test result is positive, they will enter a 10-day isolation period returning to school on day 11 without symptoms or a fever. (Home tests are not FDA-approved for children under 2 years old, and the children cannot adhere to strict mask wearing.)

- The quarantine practices for children aged 2+ years will remain as they are currently. Details are in the attached document.

Masking Policy

Beginning June 1, 2022, wearing a mask will be optional for all children and fully vaccinated adults when DeKalb County has a **Green** community level based on CDC guidelines. If the community level changes to **Yellow or Orange**, **wearing masks will be required for everyone over the age of 2**. All age-eligible individuals completing a quarantine period are required to wear a mask inside and outside.

The Clifton School's COVID-19 Community Levels Guidelines

	Low	Medium	High
Masking	Optional	Required	Required
Follow CDC Travel Guidelines	Optional	Optional	Required

Find your community level on [CDC's COVID Data Tracker](#)

We have received requests from families to make masking optional. We also know many families want to continue with the mandatory masking requirement. We know this is a major decision and it is one we have been weighing for quite some time. We originally planned to continue our mask requirement until all the children in the age group we serve have access to a vaccine. However, there have been many delays in the vaccine approval timeline and we are hopeful that it will be approved this summer. Our survey results helped guide our decision. You can review the full survey results [here](#).

The survey results related to our masking policy:

Very comfortable: 43.50%

Somewhat comfortable: 25.20%

Not at all comfortable 26.42%

In our survey, some individuals stated they are concerned that the numbers are underreported due to the number of home tests that are being used. In the [CDC's April 26 telebriefing](#) update on COVID-19, Dr. Walensky, Director of the CDC, stated the following related to the representation of rapid antigen test in the total case counts.

We are aware that many are using rapid antigen tests that may not be reflected in the total case counts. Our data show that we are still doing over 650,000 PCR tests daily. And while this is about a fivefold reduction in PCR testing then was done during the omicron peak in January and February, we are now recording 70 fold fewer cases suggesting that our reported cases counts do reflect a true and reliable drop in our overall cases.

- Dr. Rochelle Walensky, CDC Director

We also polled several preschools in our community and learned that most of them have already stopped mandating the use of masks. Many families listed being concerned about their children's language development and practicing interpreting others' emotions by reading facial expressions as benefits of optional masking. We know many families will choose to continue to have their children wear masks. There will also be children who are nervous about taking off their masks while inside the classroom. Teachers will talk with children about respecting each other's choices to wear a mask or not. We ask that families also speak with their children. We have provided articles related to this topic below.

Resources:

- [With school masking going away, some kids may need help adjusting : Shots - Health News : NPR](#)

- [Tips on Talking to Kids on Mask Mandates Being Lifted in Schools | Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs](#)

We know this change can be scary. If it's any consolation, we have infant and toddler rooms where children cannot wear masks due to their age, and those classrooms have not had higher rates of COVID-19 exposures or classroom closures. We attribute this to the consistent implementation of our other mitigation practices, such as frequent handwashing, cleaning and disinfecting high touch surfaces and classroom materials, and adhering to our sick child policy. We plan to continue these practices and all of our other mitigation practices in our classrooms.

Annual Auction Appreciation

Thank you to the PTA for hosting a fantastic event. It was great to socialize with the TCS community in a way we have not been able to in so long. We appreciate the room representatives who volunteered and created the beautiful baskets for our silent auction. We are grateful for the teachers and children who created unique, intricate, and fabulous works of art. We want to give a special shout-out to Eszter Johnston and Lisa Loveall for their sheer determination to host a successful event and Caryn Murillo, Kathy Munz, Charlotte Peinhardt, Anjali Khanna-Farber, and Corrine Oliver. Thank you to Ori Ukuku, who is always willing to lend her voice and enthusiasm, and all of the teachers who walked through the crowd to display the art pieces. We plan to use the funds raised to upgrade our camera system (originally purchased with auction funds) and purchase outside play materials.

Teacher Appreciation

May 2-6 is Teacher Appreciation Week. We appreciate our teachers every day. They work tirelessly to care for and teach our children. Being a teacher requires passion, patience, and love in addition to in-depth knowledge of child development. TCS teachers have all of these qualities and more. We have several activities planned this week for the teachers. Please participate by showing your appreciation with a special note and saying thank you to your child's teacher.

Important Dates

- **Spring Pictures:** Clairmont, May 4th, 5th. Clifton, May 11th, 12th. Class pictures will be taken in addition to individual photos. Your child's teacher will provide information about your child's picture day and time.
- **Bridging Ceremony:** The bridging ceremony is for children ages 3-5 who are moving on to Pre-K or Kindergarten programs outside of The Clifton School.
 - Clairmont, May 13 @ 10 AM for GA Pre-K, and May 24 for Preschool.
 - Clifton, May 18 @ 10 AM. To minimize the group size, only parents and guardians can attend the ceremony.
- **Summer Camp Orientation:** Thursday, May 12, 12:30-1:30 PM via Zoom. For families with senior campers, only.
- **Summer Conversation Series with Families.** If you would like to participate in the conversation please email me (nfeagin@thecliftonschoo.org) and indicate which session you plan to attend. You will receive a Zoom link before the session.

- Wednesday, June 22, 12 PM-1 PM: Why Children Do What They Do? For Toddler II and Preschool families.
- Wednesday, July 13. 12 PM -1 PM: Responding to Your Child's Bite. For Infant and Toddler I families.
- On May 7, The Clifton School has a team participating in the **VeloCity Move** for Grady 5K. If you would like to join our team or donate to Grady, please visit [Velocity Atlanta](#).

Be well,

Natalie Feagin
Executive Director