



**STERLING
MONTESSORI**
EST. 1997

REOPENING STERLING A GUIDE FOR FAMILIES K-8TH GRADE



“Education is a natural process carried out by the child and is not acquired by listening to words but by experiences in the environment.”



-- Dr. Maria Montessori



Updated December 2020

WELCOME

To Sterling Parents and Guardians,

We know our community has been patiently awaiting plans for the remainder of our students to return to campus. The health, safety, and wellness of students, staff, and parents are our first priority. The plans we have created are to support our unique population and needs with the belief that each of your voices are critical in designing strategies to best support the health and well-being of our students. Based on survey responses, parents/guardians want options for their children. While some are ready to return to campus, some are not. We have plans to provide both options.

Kindergarten students will return on November 16th and 1st through 8th grade will return January 5th.

Please read through all the material as some things have changed since the last version. Sterling will continue to follow guidance from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) and update protocols and procedures as recommended.

At the February board meeting, we will continue to evaluate our current direction and work with the board, faculty and staff in making any necessary adjustments. 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 our learning tracks as well as 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):

- Health Monitoring & Screening Requirements
- Reporting Positive Cases
- Health and Safety Plans
- Social and Emotional Health
- Blended Learning Track
- Re-entry Plans
- Timeline Calendar
- Distance Learning Track
- 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 school at Sterling will also evolve. Families will be notified via email of any 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.

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 MONITORING & SCREENINGS

Health Monitoring & 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 to school. Students must stay home if:

- They have tested positive for COVID-19 and have not met the criteria for returning to school;
- They have recently had close contact with a person with COVID-19 and have not met the criteria for returning to school;
- They have a fever of 100.4 degrees or higher. A fever is determined by a thermometer reading 100.4 or higher.

Students must be free of any symptoms potentially related to COVID-19 to be on campus. At this time, these symptoms include one or more of the following:

- fever or chills,
- shortness of breath or difficulty breathing,
- new cough (persistent dry cough unrelated to allergies),
- new loss of taste or smell.

Anyone who has been exposed to COVID-19 and has not met the criteria will not be allowed to attend school.

Regular monitoring 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 an extended arrival time from 8:25-9:00.

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 to parents. All parents must remain in the car and wait until their child has been checked before driving off campus.



HEALTH MONITORING & SCREENINGS

Campus Health Monitoring & Screening Requirements During the School Day

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

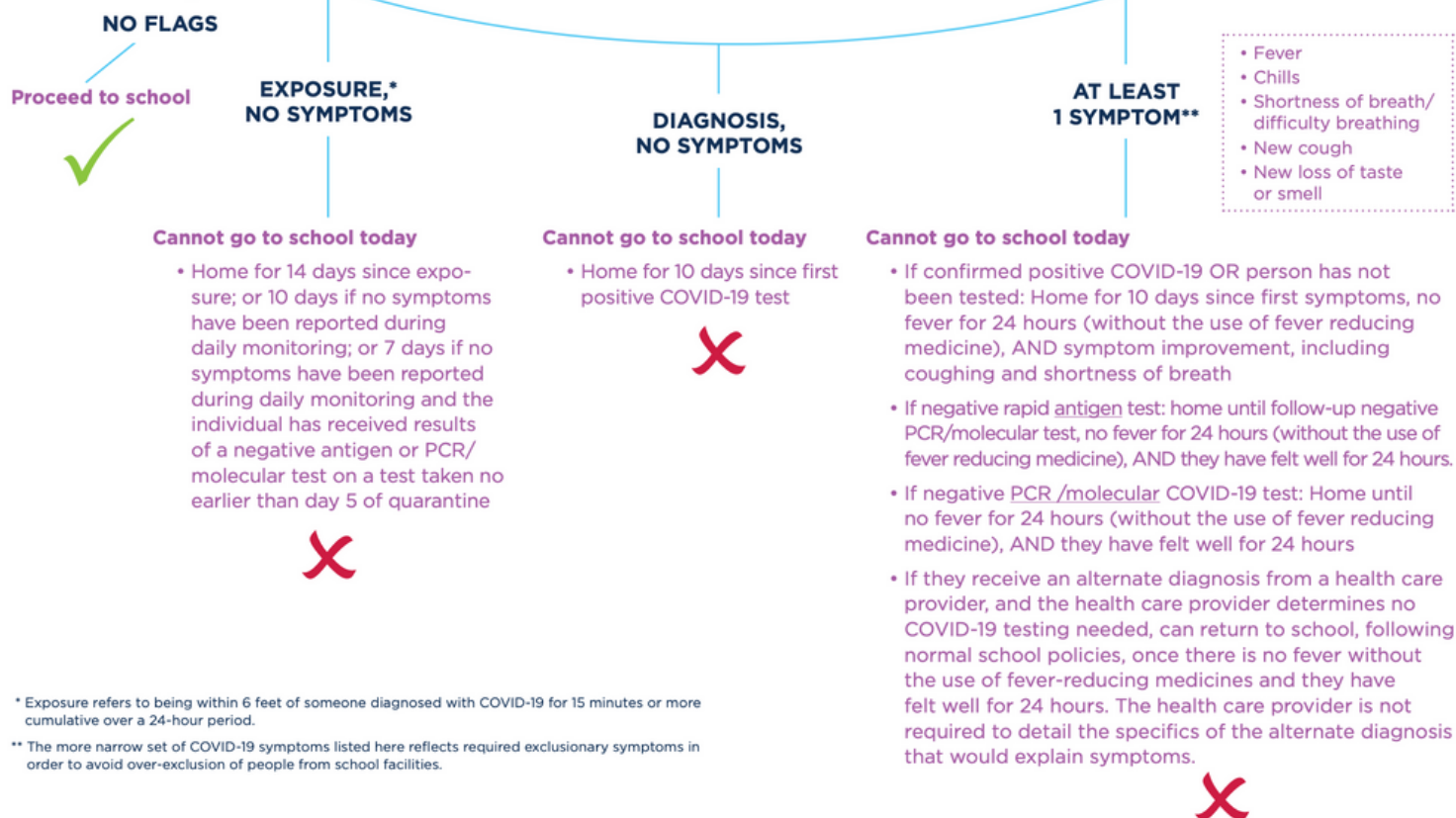
If a child develops symptoms while at school, he or she will be immediately isolated to a designated space under the supervision of a staff member and required to wear a face covering. A parent or guardian will be expected to promptly pick up their child from school.

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



SCREENING COVID-19

Screen for COVID-19



COVID-19 Screening protocols from North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services - [Public Health Toolkit K-12](#) (link). Please refer to this document for more details, as Sterling will continue to follow NCDHHS guidelines for our school.



REPORTING COVID-19 CASES



Procedure for Reporting COVID-19 on Campus

Each individual's health information is a private matter. No one should publicly declare another employee or student as sick. In the event others need to be notified of a suspected or positive case of COVID-19, local health officials will notify them and provide them further instructions. To protect individual privacy, notifications will not identify anyone by name or contain information that could be used to identify them.

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

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

Close contact is defined as being within six feet of someone diagnosed with COVID-19 for a cumulative total of 15 minutes over a 24-hour period.

In the event of a case of COVID-19 at Sterling, the affected area will be systematically disinfected. Our disinfectant is EPA-approved for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

HEALTH & SAFETY PLANS

STUDENT HEALTH & SAFETY

MODIFIED PLAN A

PLAN B

SOCIAL DISTANCING

- Minimal social distancing allowed
- Remind students to stay apart in lines and other times where they might congregate.
- Space out seating in classrooms where possible

- Moderate social distancing
- Limit density of people in class to ensure 6 feet of social distancing

CLOTH FACE COVERINGS

In all public and nonpublic schools, all workers, teachers, guests, other adults and **children five (5) years or older** must wear face coverings when indoors, **at all times**, unless an exception applies, **and when outdoors and within six (6) feet of another person**, unless an exception applies.

Face coverings are **not required** to be worn by an individual who:

- Should not wear a face covering due to any medical or behavioral condition or disability (including, but not limited to, any person who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious or incapacitated, or is otherwise unable to put on or remove the face covering without assistance);
- Is under five (5) years of age
- Is actively eating or drinking;
- Is seeking to communicate with someone who is hearing-impaired in a way that requires the mouth to be visible;
- Is giving a speech for a broadcast or to an audience;
- Is working at home or is in a personal vehicle;
- Is temporarily removing his or her face covering to secure government or medical services or for identification purposes;
- Would be at risk from wearing a face covering at work, as determined by local, state, or federal regulations or workplace safety guidelines;
- Has found that his or her face covering is impeding visibility to operate equipment or a vehicle; or
- Is a child whose parent, guardian, or responsible person has been unable to place the Face Covering safely on the child's face.

Documentation for all medical exemptions must be provided from a medical professional prior to coming to campus.

Parents should **provide students with a clean face covering each day** and two spare face coverings to be held at school in case it is needed. Face coverings will be provided for students who do not have access to one.

HEALTH & SAFETY PLANS

STUDENT HEALTH & SAFETY

MODIFIED PLAN A

PLAN B

COMMON AREAS

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

RESTROOMS

- Frequent reminders to stay 6 feet apart
- No more students in a bathroom than number of toilets
- Use floor markers in the bathroom and outside the bathroom waiting areas to designate physical distancing
- All bathrooms to be cleaned every 3 hours and when needed according to NCDHHS guidelines.

CLASSROOMS

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

HEALTH & SAFETY PLANS

STUDENT HEALTH & SAFETY

MODIFIED PLAN A

PLAN B

CARPOOL/ ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

- Extended arrival schedule 8:30-9:00am, with new [Carpool Routes](#) (please follow link)
- Every student will receive temperature checks and screening upon arrival at their car
- Entryways are marked to designate appropriate distancing
- Late arrivals must park in the Main Parking lot and parents will escort their child to their student's classroom patio door for health screening and temperature check.

MAIN OFFICE/ VISITORS

- Physical barriers - Plexiglass at desk
- Only essential visitors will be allowed and must be pre-arranged. All will go through the same screening process as students and employees.
- Late drop-offs will go straight to the class, as defined above
- For early pickups, email classroom teacher and main office with time of arrival. Once here, call-in to main office for early check-out of student. Bring drivers license and wear a mask for health screening and checkout procedure.

HAND WASHING

- The CDC recommends everyone wash their hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. Teachers will be teaching hand washing in the classroom and reinforcing it during key times.
- 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.
- If soap and water are not readily available, individuals are encouraged to use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (containing at least 60% alcohol). We will provide hand-sanitizing stations and bottles throughout the school where necessary. If your child has sensitivities to hand sanitizer, please communicate this with your child's teachers so they can provide your child other opportunities to clean their hands.

WATER FOUNTAINS

- In response to COVID-19, students will be prohibited from drinking directly from water fountains.
- All students are encouraged to bring their own bottled water or reusable water bottles.
- All water bottles should be clearly labeled with the student's name.
- It is the student's responsibility to keep track of their water bottles and take them home for regular cleaning

CLEANING AND SANITIZING

- Cleaning of objects/materials/classroom supplies used by multiple people as needed and at the end of the day
- Frequently used student items are kept separately and individually labelled (pencil pouches, scissors, etc.)
- Removal of soft items or those which cannot be sanitized or easily cleaned.
- Increased cleaning of tables and high touch surfaces by adults: morning, before and after lunch, in between work cycles, and end of the day.
- 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.
- All classrooms will be professionally sprayed and disinfected between each group attending, typically on Fridays, with an electrostatic spray which is electrically charged, allowing the disinfectants to wrap around and evenly coat all surfaces for a more complete clean.

HEALTH & SAFETY PLANS

Consequences for Violation of Health Protocols

Face covering requirements and other health protocols are **critical tools** for creating and maintaining a healthy environment in our schools and limiting the spread of COVID-19.

As part of our return to in-person instruction, teachers will **educate** and **support** students and families on the importance of health and safety guidance to support, encourage and model the behaviors we expect of all students.

In instances where a student inadvertently violates health safety guidance, the staff will remind the student of proper protocol.

When reminders, support and non-disciplinary interventions are not enough to change student behavior that may risk the health and safety of the school, it could result in an involuntary **transfer** to the **Distance Learning** environment.



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](#).

BLENDED LEARNING TRACK

[Children's House
Blended Learning Track
Information](#)

[Elementary
Blended Learning Track
Information](#)

[Middle School
Blended Learning Track
Information](#)

Click on the links above to get details of each level plan



Blended learning requires a thoughtful design process. The key to a successful blended learning environment is bringing face-to-face instruction and take home work plans and activities together in a seamless and complimentary way. That can mean there are many moving parts for which to keep track to minimize confusion and take advantage of the opportunities for deeper learning and improved outcomes. All students in class will be able to receive and practice lessons throughout the day. Students will be equipped with take home work plans and activities each Friday in order to work from home the following week.

OUTDOORS

We believe one of the best ways to prevent the spread of germs is for us to be outside when it is feasible to do so. For this reason, children need to arrive dressed appropriately for outdoor conditions each day.

SNACK & LUNCH

Students will need to bring their own snack and lunch to school. At this time we will not have a lunch service. Free and reduced lunch will be available for those who qualify. **We will no longer use the microwave to heat up meals.** Everything your child needs for lunch and snack must be provided in your child's lunchbox daily including utensils. Each child should also bring a water bottle. The water bottle and lunch box should be taken home each day, sanitized and brought back the next morning. Please label all lunchboxes, water bottles and containers. Sneeze Guards will be placed on all tables for lunch where there are two or more students.

SIBLINGS

All siblings will be on the same schedule for weeks attending on campus.

Students who opt-in to Sterling's Distance Learning Track will be enrolled in the program for the duration of the school year (November - June for kindergarten and January - June for 1st through 8th grades). Should family situations change, you can opt out of the in-class Blended Learning Track and join the Distance Learning Track. Students can not join the in-class Blended Learning Track once enrolled in the Distance learning Track.

RE-ENTRY PLANS

The state required that we prepare three plans for the 2020-21 school year (Plans A,B, & C) and Sterling has created a new plan (Modified Plan A):

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

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

DISTANCE/ON-CAMPUS BLENDED LEARNING TRACK (MODIFIED PLAN A)

In this plan, classrooms will work with reduced ratios, one-week on campus, one-week at home. Sterling is operating under enhanced health protocols, and minimized social distance protocols.

DISTANCE/ON-CAMPUS BLENDED LEARNING TRACK (PLAN B)

In this plan, classrooms will work with reduced ratios, one-week on campus, one-week at home. Sterling will operate under enhanced health protocols and moderate social distancing protocols (ensuring 6ft apart). Preschoolers will be on campus in smaller class sizes.

DISTANCE LEARNING ONLY K-8th (Plan C)

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

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 and those who choose the Blended Learning track. When considering assigning students, there are many factors that will be considered including (but not limited to):

- Sibling tracks
- Teacher Needs/Balancing the Classroom
- Rooms Available
- Number of students returning for in-class learning

SECTION

CHILDREN'S HOUSE - KINDERGARTEN

MODIFIED PLAN A

- Blended Learning track class split into 2 groups
- No more than 13 students in a group
- Each group alternates 1 week in-class then 1 week from home with work plans
- Enhanced health protocols
- Masks worn by all
- Minimal social distancing
- Distance Learning track available

RE-ENTRY PLANS

SECTION

LOWER ELEMENTARY

MODIFIED PLAN A

- Blended Learning track class of 28 split into 2 smaller groups
- Each group alternates 1 week in-class then 1 week from home with work plans
- Enhanced health protocols
- Masks worn by all
- Minimal social distancing
- Distance Learning track option

UPPER ELEMENTARY

MODIFIED PLAN A - 4th & 5th Grade

- Blended Learning track 4th and 5th grade UE students in a class will split into 2 smaller groups
- Each group will alternate 1 week in-class and 1 week at home with work plans
- Enhanced health protocols
- Masks worn by all
- Minimal social distancing
- Distance Learning track option

PLAN B - 6th Grade

- 6th grade students will split into two groups
- Each group will alternate 1 week in-class and 1 week at home with work plans
- Enhanced health protocols
- Masks worn by all
- Moderate social distancing
- Distance Learning track option

MIDDLE SCHOOL

PLAN B

- MS students in each pod will split into 2 groups
- Each group will alternate 1 week in-class and 1 week at home
- Enhanced health protocols
- Masks worn by all
- Moderate social distancing
- Distance Learning track option

RE-ENTRY PLANS

SECTION	MODIFIED PLAN A	PLAN B
EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN (EC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place students together from same groupings as best as possible Enhanced health protocols Minimal social distancing for all students K-5th grade and Moderate social distancing 6-8th grade Students with disabilities may require modifications to the general health guidelines in order to provide required services and maintain healthy practices. We are committed to working closely with students with disabilities and their families to address individual concerns and needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place students together from same groupings as best as possible Enhanced health protocols Masks worn by all Moderate social distancing
SPECIALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All classes can attend outdoor PE Spanish 4th-8th grade will continue to be remote even if on campus Music class will be remote or in class Chorus will meet remote and/or outdoors Art resources will be provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All classes can attend outdoor PE Spanish 4th-8th grade will continue to be remote even if on campus Music class will be remote or in class Chorus will meet remote and/or outdoors Art resources will be provided
BEFORECARE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To begin at 8:00am and students go to the general education classroom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To begin at 8:00am and students go to the general education classroom
AFTERCARE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No aftercare provided for kindergarten through 8th grade at this time with exception of staff children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No aftercare provided for kindergarten through 8th grade at this time with exception of staff children.
CLUBS/ PROGRAMS/ AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indoor clubs remote only Band will meet remotely or outdoors Outdoor sports programs allowed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indoor clubs remote only Band will meet remotely or outdoors Outdoor sports programs allowed

TIMELINE CALENDAR

ALL KINDERGARTEN THROUGH 8th GRADE

Week of January 4th - QUARANTINE PERIOD REMOTE LEARNING for K-8th

Week of January 11th- QUARANTINE PERIOD REMOTE LEARNING for K-8th

Week of January 18th - Group 1 (January 18th - NO SCHOOL MLK Day)

Week of January 25th - Group 2

Week of February 1st- Group 1

Week of February 8th- Group 2

Week of February 15th - Group 1 (February 15th NO SCHOOL President's Day)

Week of February 22nd- Group 2

Week of March 1st - Group 1

Week of March 8th - Group 1 (March 11th & March 12th **Remote Learning Days****)

Week of March 15th - Group 2

Week of March 22nd - Group 1

Week of March 29th - NO SCHOOL SPRING BREAK

Week of April 5th- Group 2 (April 5th- NO SCHOOL- PD Day)

Week of April 12th- Group 1

Week of April 19th- Group 2

Week of April 26th- Group 1

Week of May 3rd- Group 2

Week of May 10th- Group 1 (May 13th- NO SCHOOL- PD Day)

Week of May 17th- Group 2

Week of May 24th-Group 1 (1st and 2nd grade **Remote Learning Days****) (EOG Testing)

Week of June 1st- Group 2 (May 31st- NO SCHOOL-Memorial Day)

June 7th- Group 2's last Day June 8th - **Remote Learning Day****

June 8th- Group 1's last day June 7th - **Remote Learning Day****

**** Remote learning days are for Blended AND Remote Learners. On Remote Learning Days there will be no LIVE LESSONS. All teachers will send assignments for students to work on through their learning platforms. Students must complete some assignments to be in attendance for the day.**

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 in-class 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.

[Children's House
Distance Track Information](#)

[Elementary
Distance Track Information](#)

[Middle School
Distance Track Information](#)

Click on the links above to get details of each level plan

Families who opt-in to Sterling's Distance Learning Track will be enrolled in the program for the duration of the school year (November - June for kindergarten and January - June for 1st through 8th grades). Should family situations change, you can opt out of the in-class Blended Learning Track and join the Distance Learning Track. Students can not join the in-class Blended Learning Track once enrolled in the Distance learning Track.

RESOURCES

We will continue to keep our website (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.

For Wake County information, including drive-through testing sites, visit 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.

For federal guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), visit 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>

