



Plan for the 2020-21 Academic Year

Miquon's plan for the 2020-21 school year uses the strengths of our academic program, our community relationships, and the physical layout of our campus to position ourselves for a vibrant year of school, whether on campus or online. This plan is grounded in Miquon's mission and Progressive philosophy, which is defined by our [ten tenets](#).

As we negotiate the many logistical challenges of learning during this time, we are committed to continuing to nurture children's growth as whole people, and to helping them follow their own interests and ideas. We have designed it with an understanding of child development, the needs of our families for both a joyful education and childcare for their children, the realities of the public health situation, and the range of needs families have.



Here are some highlights of decisions we have made to be ready for any possible situation:

♦ **We will work in smaller groups**

- Students will be divided into **cohorts** (10 students—a half group)
- These groups will stay fixed throughout the year, each with one teacher, and will allow for us to provide a remote program that is accessible to children and an on-campus program of many small groups that will each maintain separation from the rest of the community to reduce the spread of the virus

♦ **We will continue to depend on our talented educators as experts in child development and early childhood and elementary education**

- Each grade band will have different expectations for children
- There will be consistency and routine in the schedule of a week, allowing kids and families to anticipate how they spend their time
- Our schedule for remote days and on-campus days will follow the same structure and therefore flow easily for students and teachers no matter where we are
- All academic subjects, including our special area subjects, will be taught, practiced, supported, and assessed with feedback to children and families at each grade level
- We will prioritize academic choice and opportunities for children to develop agency and independence as learners

♦ **We will use the resources of our campus**

- The campus that we love so passionately will allow us opportunities to spread students and teachers across the buildings and grounds
- The expansiveness of our campus allows each cohort to have its own classroom space and dedicated outdoor play space, again reducing potential virus spread for our children and families

♦ **We will follow the guidance of respected leaders in public health to meet or exceed recommendations for risk mitigation**

- We will clean campus with increased frequency and focus
- We will work in partnership with our families to carefully track emergent health situations and be sure that people are only on campus when they are truly well
- We will teach all adults and children to follow health and safety procedures
- We will make expanded mental health services available to students and families to support them through this challenging time

This structure provides a framework and still allows us to be nimble and flexible. One area in which we plan to be flexible is with regard to pre-scheduled breaks, holidays, and the closing date of school next June. We will provide advance notice, but if we have extended campus closures, changing our calendar may provide us with more time together on campus. We will support families who cannot make these adjustments for any reason.

Finally, Miquon's Strategic Plan 2020-2025 is still guiding us, even in this crisis. While not being on campus has been a constraint, in many ways it has also been an opportunity to focus more closely on what is essential to the Miquon experience, no matter where we are. Those aspects of learning at Miquon are threaded throughout this plan, and we look forward to continuing to advance them this year.

For academic year 2020-21 we have five main goals:

GOAL #1

Always putting health, safety, wellness, and the prevention of transmission of the coronavirus first.

GOAL #2

To provide a high-quality, Progressive learning experience for all students, whether in-person or remotely, with continuity between the on-campus and online experiences.

GOAL #3

To empower and educate students to learn effectively when it is necessary to be at home, and to provide as much teacher help with managing learning activities as possible, given many varied family needs.

GOAL #4

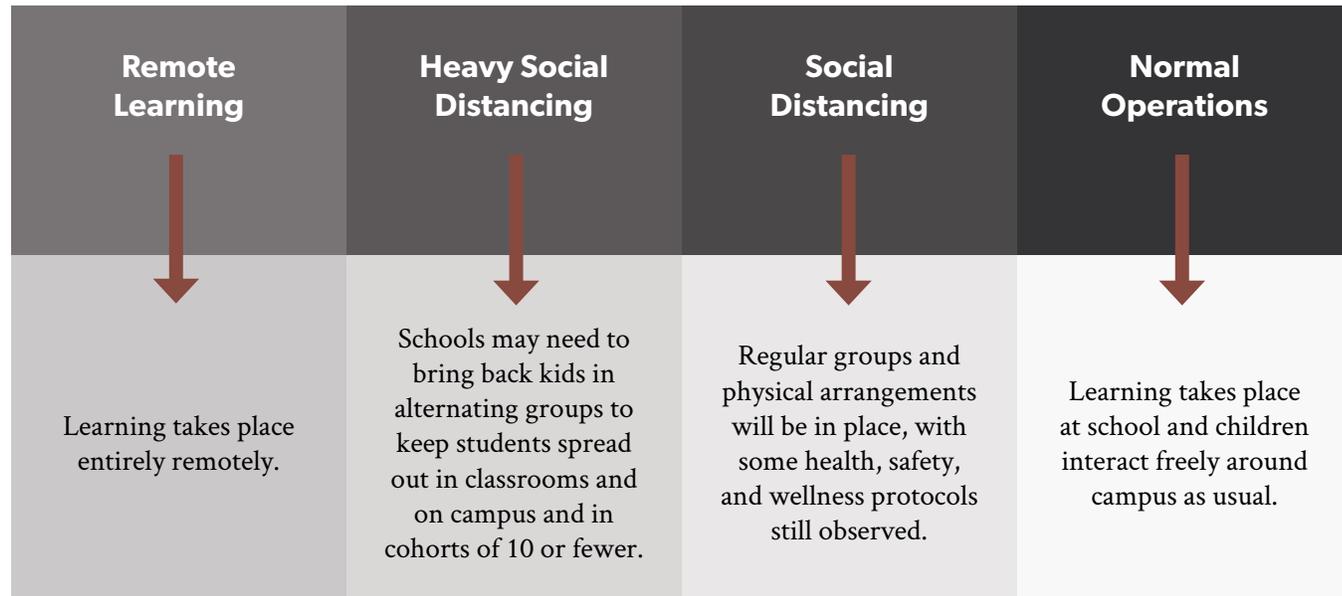
To provide financial assistance wherever possible for families whose income has decreased because of the COVID crisis, while continuing to pay our staff fairly.

GOAL #5

To provide a program that meets the unique needs of our youngest children and their families.

Always putting health, safety, wellness, and the prevention of transmission of the coronavirus first.

Returning to campus may happen all at once, or on a spectrum, depending on public health guidelines.



Miquon's campus makes an in-person return to school much more likely because of our ability to physically distance children in small cohorts around campus and minimize contact and interaction between different cohorts of children and teachers. Our campus allows us to most likely have all children on campus when many schools can only make space for some. Should this change, we are committed to prioritizing on-campus time for our youngest students who are least able to learn independently at home.

By September, Miquon will have:

- ◆ New processes and protocols for coming on to campus safely, including:
 - Taking each person's temperature daily
 - Wearing masks in inside spaces
 - Implementing hand washing many times a day at outside stations
 - Limiting childrens' contact with multiple spaces on campus (specialists will travel to children, instead of children to specialist rooms, for example)
- ◆ Guidelines from the Philadelphia School District, other districts, and Sague Bus Company around the precautions they are taking and risks of bus travel to and from school and advise you accordingly
- ◆ Clear protocols for notifying families of any possible virus exposure
- ◆ A transparent decision-making matrix for closing and reopening campus as necessary based on local exposure or illness, risk factors in our community, or if mandated by the law
- ◆ Daily, weekly, and post-exposure cleaning plans ready to implement
- ◆ A core group of staff members with enhanced first aid training to enable us to better respond to health-related concerns and to continuously review protocols and the developing wisdom around COVID 19 to make sure our approaches are as sensible as possible



We will continue to follow the most well-respected public health guidelines available, and to stay closely in touch with news from local and national agencies, including the Montgomery Office of Public Health, the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, and the Centers for Disease Control. We recognize, as we know you do, that this information will continue to change over the months between now and our hoped-for September return to campus and we will adapt this plan to respond to those changes.

Given the uniqueness of the situation and the important role we each play in helping to keep all members of our community healthy, we will be asking you to sign additional legal documents acknowledging your personal obligations as a member of the Miquon community. These documents will also serve to protect the school against liability issues related to illness when you choose to have your children come back to campus. Our school lawyer advises us that these agreements have become standard practice.

To provide a high-quality, Progressive learning experience for all students, whether in-person or remotely, with continuity between the on-campus and online experiences.

With the benefit of almost three months of testing various strategies for remote learning, and with another three months to continue to develop plans before September, we are confident that we can provide a robust and engaging program that helps children learn effectively whether we are on campus or at home, and that increases physical distancing while still providing ample interaction with others. Be assured, this is school - still fun, still differentiated, still following kids' passions, still focused on how to think over what to think, and still developmentally appropriate.

We will do this in the following ways:

- ◆ Students will be divided into nested **groups** (20 students—a full class), **cohorts** (10 students—a half group), and **pods** (5 students).
- ◆ Grade level cohorts will align curricular experiences so that the cohorts will study the same topics.
- ◆ We will continue to differentiate learning experiences for students based on their academic, social-emotional, and health-related needs.
- ◆ There will be instruction, discussion, and opportunities for practice in our **Skill-based Instruction**: math, literary (phonics, read aloud, book groups, vocabulary, grammar), and writers' workshop.
- ◆ We will make use of **Academic Choice**, a work time where teachers compile work that helps children learn new skills, practice new skills, and show mastery of skills. Children prioritize their work throughout the week and have time to work one-on-one with teachers. Work can be related to the social studies theme and skill-based instruction. Choices can also include activities such as tinkering, block building, creative writing, and student-directed projects.
- ◆ Students will have opportunities to see the meaning of skills and apply them in context through a time called **Theme**, an interdisciplinary subject that integrates many subject areas such as social studies, language arts, math, and writing.



THIRD/FOURTH GRADE BAND example schedule

8:30-9:00	Morning Meeting	Setting the tone for the day, working on listening skills, greeting friends, and creating community.
9:00-10:30	Skills-based Instruction	Reading Workshop mini-lesson Independent work - reading Math Groups Independent work - math Check in - review math work
10:30-11:00	Outdoor Choice / Snack	
11:00-12:00	Academic Choice	Math fact practice game Theme project work Listening to read aloud
12:00-1:00	Lunch and outdoor time	
1:00-2:30	Theme and Specials	Theme / social studies lesson Independent work - theme Half group Music
2:30-3:00	End of Day Meeting	Review / share writing Closing Circle to wrap up the day

If Remote

There will be daily live gatherings at regularly scheduled times with classroom teachers and classmates to start and end each day.

Students will be introduced to a concept, then can go away from the screen and do a task or activity, while the teacher stays on the call in case they have questions.

Academic Choice will allow for a weekly schedule, planned and followed by the teachers and children together that can be worked on off-line.

Children will have opportunities to pursue topics and projects following their own interests and to work with others with similar interests.

Cohorts can easily come together with others to create a range of social and academic groupings.

Specialists will provide live instruction, much like the classroom teachers.

A box of materials will be delivered to each family so that children will have the supplies they need for activities.

Teachers will provide assessment, feedback, and support for kids.

Teachers will help kids and families differentiate and adjust the plan to meet their needs.

Using Space Differently

- ◆ Classes will take place outside as frequently as possible.
- ◆ We are also researching how to use remote platforms differently, and will spend the summer assessing different online classroom platforms. Our goals are to have platforms across teachers that are uniform for students, to have one way to submit work and to access video content, and to teach both parents and children how to use them.

Assessment & Feedback

- ◆ Teachers will provide feedback on student work
- ◆ Teachers will have a set of expectations for children
- ◆ Teachers will work with children to grow toward these expectations
- ◆ Our assessment plans will meet our strategic goal to clarify the ways in which we report on children's growth and development

To empower and educate students to learn effectively when it is necessary to be at home, and to provide as much teacher help with managing learning activities as possible, given many varied family needs.



We are impressed by the work our staff was able to do this spring to pivot to remote learning and help children and families find even footing through the spring. We are not ending the spring where we started — wonderful developments have happened in each of our groups over the course of the spring, many of which are thanks to feedback from many of you. While we are proud of what we have assembled for you and your children this spring, we recognize that these areas need more attention:

- ◆ more help for parents in helping kids navigate the remote experience independently,
- ◆ more activities that help structure a full school day,
- ◆ more opportunities for children to dive fully into the individual topics and projects that excite them,
- ◆ more focused practice on developing skills,
- ◆ more opportunities for collaborative group work,
- ◆ more flexibility within the schedule,
- ◆ and more opportunities for social gatherings.

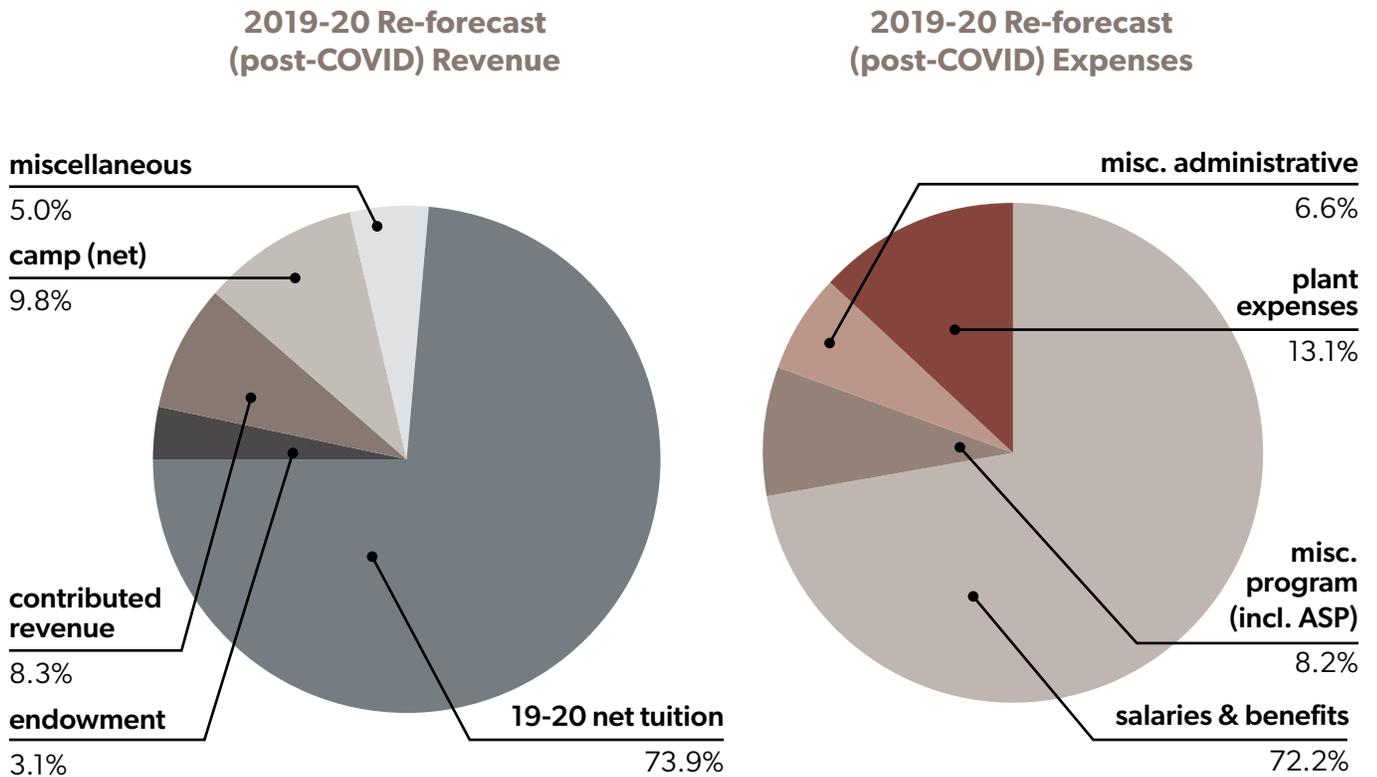
Remote learning for young children will still require parental involvement, however, we are working to reexamine the support teachers provide for both students and parents. We cannot deny that this is an incredibly challenging situation, but we will do whatever we can to make it easier for everyone if we experience long periods of remote learning again next year.

A strength in our Miquon program is the ability to differentiate our program to meet the different styles and needs of our students and families; in our plan for the fall we have done just that, and considered many ways to allow our offerings to stretch to meet many of the needs in our community. We continue to adapt and evolve our program to make it as effective as possible. This will also allow us to support the needs of children and families who are not able to return to campus when the program is able to move back to campus. Whether you choose to send your children back to campus in September, or whenever we are able to reopen, or whether you choose to stay home for any reason, Miquon will provide a robust learning experience for students and families.

Children, along with the rest of us, are living through unprecedented times, and as hard as it is for adults to make sense of this time, it is harder in many ways for children. In our roles as experts in child development, our staff is in a position to provide support and guidance, not only for our students but for our families as well. From book groups to parent support groups to additional mental health resources to specific curricular support offered by staff, we are committed to helping the whole family through this time.

To provide financial assistance wherever possible for families whose income has decreased because of the COVID crisis, while continuing to pay our staff fairly.

Miquon is a tuition-driven school. Like other independent schools, we face the ongoing problem of rising costs outpacing salary growth among our families. We supplement our revenue through philanthropic contributions, ancillary programs, drawing responsibly from our endowment, and most notably, by running Miquon Day Camp. Without Camp revenue, Miquon School does not balance its budget, and this year Camp revenue will either not be realized or be significantly lower than normal. We already anticipate operating at a loss in the 2020-21 school year, and we plan to draw significantly from our \$2 million endowment given that this appears to be a once-in-a-generation crisis.



As communicated in previous letters, Miquon has prioritized increasing financial aid for families during this crisis and we will continue to do so. Planning for the 20-21 academic year has been challenging for us all because so much is still unknown. Based on the best information available to us at this time, we are proceeding on the assumption that most children will be able to be learning on campus for a significant portion of the 165 school days next year. But whether we are learning on campus or remotely, Miquon is committed to providing a high-quality experience for students and families. We cannot do this without paying our staff.

We have developed several financial models to look at several different scenarios of tuition discounting if we were to provide remote-only education for the majority of next year. It would be very difficult for us to continue to provide a high-quality education if we were to offer families in grade 1-6 significant tuition discounts. We need to hold tuition in grades 1-6 at current levels if Miquon is to operate in the ways that will best serve you during this time, and if we want Miquon to be in a position to thrive when this crisis is over.

To provide a program that meets the unique needs of our youngest children and their families.

For our youngest students, so much of the learning takes place through exploration and play, much of which relies on the combination of a space to play and other children with whom to play. For our Nursery and Kindergarten families, the potential loss of opportunities for exploration on campus, and the need to hire childcare for children, have a heavy impact on imagining the year ahead. These important elements of our Progressive program cannot be fully replicated through remote learning. Young children's limited attention span for online activities combined with the logistical challenges of their need for much direct, in-person contact add to the challenges of a remote program.

When we first return to campus we envision Nursery and Kindergarten being on campus for shorter days that take place largely outside. This allows us additional opportunities to enjoy and explore our campus, while adding the additional layer of protection of providing more space for children and having them interact in open air. We will be working this summer to develop the specifics of this aspect of the program, and will keep families informed over the next several months.

The Nursery Plan

Our Nursery families expressed a desire to have more direct guidance for the parents about how to support their children at home, both through the programmed learning activities and through learning opportunities in the activities of daily life.

To meet these needs, our plan is to offer Nursery families a basic remote program of activities and contact opportunities with the option to pay extra for time on campus. For the 2020-21 academic year, the tuition for the remote program will be \$6,000. If families want to have the option for children to be on campus as well when campus is able to be open, they will be charged the full tuition amount for the year, and receive a per diem refund based for days when Miquon needs to close due to COVID-related issues. These costs will be prorated for the number of days per week children are enrolled and per financial assistance awards. We hope this allows families the financial flexibility to pay for childcare if and when Miquon needs to operate remotely, yet still be able to participate in person when possible.

The Nursery remote program will include:

- ◆ Opportunities for children to interact with teachers and, in a slowly building way, with their classmates. This will start out as individual meetings between the teachers and a child and their family, move into pairs of children meeting together with a teacher, and slowly build up to small groups who are able to get to know one another and build relationships.
- ◆ Children and their caregivers can engage in Inquiry activities, both live and recorded, using a box of materials they will receive at the beginning of the year. To fully make our program come alive, it is essential that families have access to the materials we would make available in the classroom. While this includes consumable materials such as paper and tape, it also includes the beautiful materials that fill our classroom shelves and inspire children's imagination. We will deliver materials to families at the beginning of the year and update them as needed in the times we are remote.
- ◆ We will offer parents and caregivers both live and recorded programs and opportunities to learn from our teachers about how to support children in their social emotional and academic development.

The remote program will allow families to participate throughout the year, without ever coming onto campus, and can operate at a reduced fee structure. Here is a description of the ways our three potential situations will differ from one another:

If Nursery is Remote	If Nursery is Hybrid	If Nursery is Normal
<p>Live contact with classroom teachers and classmates throughout the week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ≥ Two 15 minute one-on-one meetings ≥ Two 15 minute small group meetings ≥ Two 30 minute whole group meetings 	<p>Classes take place outdoors with children in small cohort groups. Activities at school 8:00 am - 1:00 pm, with N children picked up before rest time.</p>	<p>Classes take place largely outdoors. Activities at school 8:00 am - 3:00 pm, with a rest time from 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm.</p>
<p>Teacher prepared videos introducing activities, sharing stories, suggesting explorations</p>	<p>Explorations around campus with natural and classroom materials</p>	<p>Explorations in the classroom and around campus with natural and classroom materials</p>
<p>Live contact with classroom teachers takes place between 8:30 am - 10:00 am, the rest of the day is filled with learning activities supported by the at-home adults</p>	<p>School runs from 8:30 am - 1:00 pm, with Afterschool available for rest time for children signed up to stay after 3:00 pm.</p>	<p>Afterschool is available for children signed up to stay after 3:00 pm.</p>
<p>Synchronous activities with Specialist teachers delivered through Zoom</p>	<p>Specialist teachers meet with Nursery cohorts outside to share activities.</p>	<p>Nursery half groups travel to Specialist teachers to share activities.</p>
<p>All families receive a carefully curated box of learning materials</p>	<p>Some families continue at home, following the yearlong remote plan.</p>	<p>Some families continue at home, following the yearlong remote plan.</p>
<p>Parent education - live conversations and videos</p>	<p>Parent education - live conversations and videos</p>	<p>Parent education - live conversations and videos</p>
<p>Teachers help kids and families differentiate and adjust the plan to meet their needs</p>	<p>Teachers help kids and families differentiate and adjust the plan to meet their needs</p>	<p>Teachers help kids and families differentiate and adjust the plan to meet their needs</p>

The Kindergarten Plan

The needs of the families in Kindergarten are similar in the ways children need to interact with classmates, but the ways they are accessing asynchronous material is different. To meet the needs of this group, we anticipate connecting through similar methods with live opportunities to build relationships with both adults and teachers.

To meet these needs, our plan is to offer Kindergarten families a basic remote program of activities and contact opportunities with the option to pay extra for time on campus. For the 2020-21 academic year, the tuition for the remote program will be \$7,000. If families want to have the option for children to be on campus as well when campus is able to be open, they will be charged the full tuition amount for the year, and receive a per diem refund based for days when Miquon needs to close due to COVID-related issues. These costs will be prorated per financial assistance awards. We hope this allows families the financial flexibility to pay for childcare if and when Miquon needs to operate remotely, yet still be able to participate in person when possible.

The Kindergarten remote program will include:

- ◆ Fewer online asynchronous activities, replaced by a large box of engaging materials that can be explored with more independence, along with tangible, ready-to-use activities that can be explored independently or with a caregiver, on a child's own timeline. While some of the materials will be available to children throughout the year, some of the items in the box will be part of a lending library that circulates through the class over the course of the year.
- ◆ Similar to the Nursery, there will be an adult component to the curriculum, offering parents and caregivers both live and recorded opportunities to learn from our teachers about how to support children in their social emotional and academic development. This is a program that families can participate in throughout the year, without ever coming onto campus, and can operate at a reduced fee structure.

Similarly to our plan for Nursery, we will be eager to have opportunities to welcome our Kindergarteners to campus for families for whom the return to in-person school feels like a reasonable option. When campus is open, our programs will initially move outside, allowing us to make use of cohort groups and social distancing through limited interaction.

If Kindergarten is Remote	If Kindergarten is Hybrid	If Kindergarten is Normal
Live contact with classroom teachers and classmates throughout the week: ≥ Two 15 minute one-on-one meetings ≥ Two 15 minute small group meetings ≥ Two 30 minute whole group meetings	Classes take place outdoors with children in small cohort groups. Activities at school 8:00 am - 1:00 pm, with Kindergarten children picked up before rest time.	Classes take place largely outdoors. Activities at school 8:00 am - 3:00 pm, with a rest time from 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm.
Printed materials to guide activities and open explorations	Explorations around campus with natural and classroom materials	Explorations in the classroom and around campus with natural and classroom materials
Live contact with classroom teachers takes place between 8:30 am and 10:00 am, the rest of the day is filled with learning activities supported by the at-home adults	School runs from 8:30 am - 1:00 pm, with Afterschool available for rest time for children signed up to stay after 3:00 pm.	Afterschool is available for children signed up to stay after 3:00 pm.

If Kindergarten is Remote	If Kindergarten is Hybrid	If Kindergarten is Normal
Synchronous activities with Specialists delivered through Zoom	Specialist teachers meet with Kindergarten cohorts outside to share activities.	Kindergarten half groups travel to Specialist teachers to share activities.
All families receive a carefully curated box of learning materials	Some families continue at home, following the yearlong remote plan.	Some families continue at home, following the yearlong remote plan.
Parent education - live conversations and videos	Parent education - live conversations and videos	Parent education - live conversations and videos
Teachers help kids and families differentiate and adjust the plan to meet their needs	Teachers help kids and families differentiate and adjust the plan to meet their needs	Teachers help kids and families differentiate and adjust the plan to meet their needs

Nursery and Kindergarten sample day:

Morning 8:30 am start	<p>Live activities: Separate small group Morning Meetings for two pods One-on-one meetings for children in the other pods PE activities for the group</p>
Mid-day Afternoon	<p>Independent activities Explorations based on the videos and online content (for Nursery children) or activities included in the delivered materials (for kindergarten families)</p> <p>This time will also include: outdoor choice, lunch, rest, and read aloud</p>





In conclusion

We hope this description of our plans for next year has answered many of your questions about how Miquon will resume school no matter what public health situation we face. We know it cannot have answered all of them. We cannot succeed in adapting to this new reality without your honest critique--please let us know your hopes and your fears. At the same time, when examining the multitude of challenges different families face during this time, we know that no one plan will meet everyone's needs fully. All we can do is use our best judgement and try to move forward. We look forward to discussing this plan with you tomorrow evening, but if you can't be present at that meeting, there will be many other opportunities throughout the summer to give your opinions, including a survey that we will send out to all families later this month.

Your children are so important to us, and we cannot overstate how much we appreciate and take seriously the opportunity to have them in our care. This summer we plan to provide regular updates to this plan, emerging public health recommendations, and any other news that will help you and your family have the best 20-21 academic year possible.

