

**March 13, 2025**

Subject: Temporary Closure of Fernwood Montessori School Due to Lead Hazard Remediation

Dear Fernwood Montessori Families and Staff,

The City of Milwaukee Health Department (MHD), in coordination with Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS), has identified significant lead hazards at Fernwood Montessori School following a recent inspection. Based on unsafe remediation work observed and elevated dust lead levels detected in previously remediated areas, **MHD's position is that the school must close and undergo remediation to ensure the safety of students and staff, effective Monday, March 17.**

We understand that this closure is disruptive, and we appreciate your patience as we work to remediate all lead hazards and conduct necessary safety evaluations.

No additional lead poisoned children have been identified at the school. The temporary closure is out of an abundance of caution and to ensure MPS facilities teams have the space to safely address lead hazards present at the school.

#### **Next Steps & What Families Should Know**

work together to ensure a safe environment for students.

#### **Next Steps & What Families Should Know**

- The school will remain closed until MHD confirms that all remediation and cleaning efforts meet lead safety standards.
- Fernwood students and staff temporarily will relocate to Andrew S. Douglas Middle School (3620 N. 18th St.). Classroom materials and other items should be left at Fernwood.
- School hours will remain the same (7:25 a.m. to 2:25 p.m).
- If your student is already assigned a bus, your student will be taken to Douglas. If you need transportation for your child, daily shuttle buses will take students from Fernwood to Douglas at 7:10 a.m. and return them to Fernwood at 3:00 p.m. For questions, please call (414) 475-8922.
- Any student medications should be picked up from Fernwood on Friday, March 14.
- MHD will continue to monitor progress and conduct follow-up inspections to determine when the building can safely reopen.
- Families can find updates, information on upcoming screening clinics, and public health resources on MHD's website at [www.milwaukee.gov/MPS-Lead](http://www.milwaukee.gov/MPS-Lead) and [mpsmke.com/mpsleadreport](http://mpsmke.com/mpsleadreport).

#### **What Families Can Do at Home to Reduce Lead Exposure**

- Use wet wipes to clean surfaces like floors, windows, and furniture to remove lead dust.
- Remove shoes at the door to prevent tracking in dirt with lead dust.
- Wash hands and toys frequently, especially for very young children.

- Provide foods rich in iron, calcium, and vitamin C to help prevent lead absorption.
- Run tap water cold for three minutes before using it for drinking or cooking.
- Use a water filter certified to remove lead (NSF/ANSI 53).

### Health & Safety Resources

- **Lead Screening for Students:** MHD, in partnership with MPS, Children's Wisconsin, and Sixteenth Street Community Health Centers, will hold a free lead screening clinic for students at impacted schools, including Fernwood Montessori. The clinic will take place on Saturday, March 15, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Bradley Tech (700 S. 4th St.).
- **Lead Testing for Young Children:** Families are encouraged to have affected MPS students and children under age 6 tested for lead exposure through their primary care provider.

We will provide further updates as soon as more information is available. Thank you for your cooperation and support as we work to ensure a safe school environment.

Sincerely,

**Home Environmental Health**  
City of Milwaukee Health Department

**Office of School Administration**  
Milwaukee Public Schools