



REOPENING PLAN FOR OUR FAMILIES

In conjunction with the Diocese of Manchester, the St. Francis School Taskforce has come together to form a cautious yet realistic plan for students returning to the classroom this Fall.

St. Francis School will take every reasonable precaution to prevent the spread of Covid-19. In conjunction with the Diocese of Manchester, we remain open to adding new precautions as well as evaluating those that become unnecessary, counter-effective, or overly burdensome to our students and teachers. At this time, and for the foreseeable future, we are confident that the following requirements and precautions will address and enhance the safety of our school community.

THE SPIRITUAL REALITY

Our Lord's example on earth shows us that our ability to weather any crisis comes from daily and frequent connection with God our Father. From this relationship, we find deep and abiding peace. As we grow in our love for Christ, so will our capacity to love others (Jn. 15:5-12). We will respond from a wellspring of peace rather than react from a shallow point of fear and anxiety. It is only when we learn to abide in Christ more and more that our reactions change to thoughtful and peaceful responses, because we are deeply rooted in His love (Eph. 3:17-18).

Fully aware that St. Francis School encourages children to see with the eyes of Faith, and to show the love of Christ to others, all safeguards, considerations, and recommendations begin with the following prayer:

May we learn more and more to abide with Christ. In Him, we find our peace and from this vantage point we find the dignity of others and the courage to respond to them with love.

ALL STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES MUST STAY AT HOME IF THEY ARE SICK

Without question, **the most important measure** that we can take as a school community to prevent the spread of any illness, including Covid-19, is to be diligent in keeping our children home if they are sick. We must allow sufficient time for the body to rest and recover before returning to school.

If students have any of the following symptoms, they are required to stay at home:

- a) Fever in the last 72 hours, including feeling feverish, chills, or shaking
- b) Any new muscle aches or pains, headache, nausea, severe fatigue without apparent cause, or diarrhea

- c) Changes in sense of taste or smell
- d) Temperature over 100 degrees
- e) Sudden onset of respiratory symptoms such as cough or shortness of breath (unless known medical condition such as COPD or CHF). If a student suffers annually from allergies (e.g. sneezing, red eyes, runny nose and/or cough), please let the school know.

Students or employees who are ill must go home. Students who become ill during the school day will be separated from other students and retrieved as soon as possible by their parent or designated pick-up person. Parents must have an emergency pick-up plan in case their child becomes sick.

TEMPERATURE CHECKS

The next preventative measure we take is to continually monitor the health of our children. The temperature of every student will be taken at Morning Drop Off. If a child has a temperature over 100 degrees, he or she will immediately be sent home. A student must be fever-free for 72 hours before returning to school.

HEALTH SURVEY: COMMITMENT TO KEEPING THE SCHOOL INFORMED

A Health Survey must be completed on the first day of school for each employee and student. The Survey requires staff and parents (on behalf of their children) to answer the following questions before entering the school building on the first day of school.

Parents and employees are expected to inform the Front Office if there are changes to the Health Survey.

Health Survey:

1. Have you been in close contact with a someone with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the last 2 weeks? Close contact would include having a household member or co-worker with a confirmed case.
2. Have you been in close contact with anyone who has exhibited any of the following symptoms in the last 2 weeks? This would include a fever, runny nose (outside of allergies), sore throat, new onset of cough, shortness of breath (unless known medical condition such as COPD, CHF, or other pre-existing condition), flu-like symptoms, new muscle aches or pains, chills, nausea, diarrhea, headache, or severe fatigue without apparent cause. Close contact would include having a household member with any of these symptoms.
3. Have you had a fever or felt feverish in the last 72 hours, including chills, or shaking?
4. Outside of seasonal allergies or chronic illness, are you experiencing any new respiratory symptoms including a runny nose, sore throat, new onset of cough, or shortness of breath (unless known medical condition such as COPD or CHF)?
5. Are you experiencing any new muscle aches or pains, headache, nausea, severe fatigue without apparent cause, or diarrhea?
6. Have you experienced any change in your sense of taste or smell?

If there is a change in an answer, the Front Office and Principal should be made aware immediately. If, based on the Health Survey and the discussion with the principal, an employee or

student is either not allowed to enter the building, or needs to go home, options will be discussed. Recommended actions will be documented and may include but not be limited to the following:

1. Checking back in every two to three days
2. Quarantining at home for 14 days (If teaching faculty or students are quarantined, accommodations will be made for remote instruction and learning if they are well enough to work/learn at home).
3. Seeing a doctor
4. Going to the hospital
5. Obtaining a COVID-19 test

The Principal and Front Office are designated COVID contact personnel and are responsible for documentation. In the event of a confirmed COVID-19 case, the school will follow CDC guidance on disinfecting the facility. A positive test will be documented and reported to designated persons at the Catholic Schools Office and Diocese of Manchester. Any person testing positive for COVID-19 must be cleared by their physician prior to returning to the school building; the school must be in receipt of that documentation prior to the re-entry of the individual.

REMOTE LEARNING

In the event that a student needs to remain at home, be it for 72 hours or a 14-day quarantine, he or she should continue participating, health-permitting, in classroom academics via Google Classroom online. Each classroom will be equipped with video and audio capabilities to facilitate remote learning that is based on sending materials home. Parents should coordinate with their child's teacher to arrange picking up books and supplies needed at home.

COHORTS

To add an additional safeguard, we will increase the number of cohorts from two to three. Students will be divided into the following cohorts:

1. Preschool and Prekindergarten
2. Kindergarten - Grade 2
3. Grade 3 - Grade 6

At this time, children will have very limited access to students from any other cohort during the school day.

DAILY SCHOOL PROTOCOLS

The approach taken in this plan is that of keeping students contained in their own cohort, and even more so, in their own class. You will notice that while whole school interaction is minimized, the daily schedule and normalcy of the classroom learning experience is intentionally maintained.

Morning Drop Off

Our Before Care Program will begin at 7:00 AM. Before Care is only available to those families who have pre-purchased it for the year. This must be done before the first day of school. The Drop Off

procedure is that children are walked to the school entrance and a temperature check will be taken at that time.

At 7:30 AM, Regular Drop Off will commence. To begin the school year, we will abide by this Car Line procedure: families will pull up to the school entrance doors, and temperature checks will be done at the car or under the front awning. This will naturally space children upon arrival. Children from one car at a time will enter the building and go directly to their classroom. If there is a change in the Health Survey, it should be reported at this time.

School Day

St. Francis School is blessed with large and bright classrooms where there is abundant air circulation and 939 sq. ft. of space (after the space of all desks and furniture have been subtracted). This is double of what some schools have. Even at our classroom cap of 24 students, we are still only utilizing 71% of classroom space when maintaining social distancing. Desks in Grades 1-6 will be spaced as much as possible and our classrooms will function in an orderly way. Preschool, Prekindergarten and Kindergarten will establish smaller in-class cohorts. Children will remain in these cohorts as much as possible and at the direction of the teacher.

St. Francis School teachers in Grades 1-6 will wear face coverings when social distancing is not possible. If masks or face shields are worn while teaching, they will be clear to improve communication and so that children can see teachers smile.

Specials classes will be taught in the classrooms except for Art. For Music class, there will be no choir and if singing does happen, children will be socially distanced and outside if possible.

In school, we will be focusing on increased cleanliness and frequent personal hand hygiene. Handwashing signs and social distancing markings will be present in the school as teaching devices to help our students form orderly routines. Children will wash their hands after returning from recess and before eating. Classrooms will be supplied with cleaning and disinfecting supplies for use during the day. At the end of the school day, all surfaces, bathrooms and common areas will be thoroughly cleaned. Please purchase disinfecting wipes or spray for your child to bring and keep at school. Hand sanitizer will be available at all entrances and in the hallway.

Should families need to pick children up during the day for any reason, we ask that the office be informed ahead of time. We will bring your child to the front entrance upon your arrival. At this time, we ask that parents minimize the need to come into the building during the day; we are happy to help with anything you need outside of the front entrance (e.g. exchange forms, supplies, forgotten lunches, etc.). If it becomes necessary for parents to enter the building, for the time being, we are requiring that a face covering be worn. If visitors do not have a face covering with them, one will be provided by the school.

Hallways & Travel to and from Classrooms

The St. Francis School hallway has always been a place where structure and order are maintained. We will make every effort to social distance as much as possible. It should be said that despite the school taking on these added precautions, we expect there to be some education necessary, and we see the forming of routines as a work in progress.

- A traffic pattern will be clearly marked to help children follow spacing guidelines.
- Children will continue to observe a no talking policy while walking in our hallways.
- Education will be provided on the first day of school, and on a regular basis, to show children how to use our hallways with social distancing in mind.
- Our Morning Drop Off procedures allow for natural spacing as children will enter the school building from *one car at a time*. Our Afternoon Pickup Procedure at the end of our school day, likewise, ensures natural spacing as children will exit our school building to *one car at a time*.
- Grades do not comingle in our hallways.
- Except for art class, children will not switch classrooms. All shared materials and surfaces will be disinfected before student use.
- Recess will be done by cohort and dismissal from the classrooms will be staggered.
- As a further precaution, and for the sake of efficiency, Grades 3-6 will utilize separate exit doors.

Bathrooms

Preschool - Grade 2 will utilize the West Bathrooms and Grade 3-6 will utilize the East Bathrooms.

Grades 1-6 will utilize a Bathroom Pass that allows for 1 boy and 1 girl to use the bathroom at any given time. Students will be asked to wear a face covering when leaving the classroom to go the bathroom should there be close proximity with another student in the bathroom.

Outdoor Recess and Lunch

Outdoor recess is a hallmark of St. Francis School. Children experience fresh air, sunshine, and our beautiful and spacious property where they run, jump, play, and sled. We will continue to hold at least two recesses a day.

All students will continue to eat lunch in their respective classrooms or outside. We will have three (rather than two) recess periods so that each of our cohorts can enjoy time outside.

Afternoon Pick Up

Afternoon pick-up will follow the same car line procedure as in previous years, with students leaving from their classrooms and exiting out the main school doors when their last names are called. Students attending After School Group will be brought to the ASG room from the classroom as normal. The rooms that ASG utilizes will be cleaned before ASG and after. Students will be separated into their same cohorts as much as possible, and at the staff's discretion.

HOLY MASS

Social Distancing is possible at all of our school Masses, and seating places will be marked. All children will sit in the same assigned seat every time they come to Mass.

At a safe social distance, the St. Francis of Assisi Parish Church holds 231 total people, which is well below its occupancy permit of 450. We have separated the Church into four sections and calculated the total number of people that could fit with social distancing in place.

Here are those numbers:

- 72 children in Section 1
- 56 children in Section 2
- 69 children in Section 3
- 25 children and 9 in the choir loft in Section 4

In accordance with these numbers:

- All students will occupy the same seat every time they come to Church
- Grades 3-6 will continue to attend Holy Mass four times a week. On Monday, Thursday and Friday, they will be with their own cohort and further divided into Section 2 and Section 3 in the Church.
- Grade 2 will continue to attend twice a week and will occupy Section 4 on Monday and at All School Mass
- All School Mass will be on Wednesday and is closed the public. Grades 2-6 will occupy their same seats while PS - Grade 1 will occupy Section 1.

MEETINGS

Faculty and Staff will conduct Faculty Meetings with social distancing in place.

For Meet and Greet, and Back to School Night, we feel it is important for parents to come in and see our classrooms. We have already informed the parents of the modified schedule, [see here](#).

COMMON AREAS

To begin the year, our All School Meeting (the only time that we gather as a school in an indoor common area) will be on hold.

COMMUNICATION

- St. Francis School will continue to keep parents informed per our Parent Communication Plan, [see here](#).
- Any Emergency Information will be sent out via text, recorded message and email.
- Upon the release of this Reopening Plan, the principal will clear his schedule for one-on-one parent meetings either in person, remotely, or over the phone.

CALENDAR

Our School Calendar for the year will remain the same, [see here](#).

NON-ESSENTIAL ITEMS

Any non-essential items in classrooms will be removed in order to free up space.

TRAINING & MONITORING

The Teachers and Staff have been meeting regularly throughout the summer and have already begun training on implementing new procedures.

Upon the release of this Reopening Plan to the school community, the principal will clear his schedule to take appointments for phone calls, in-person meetings, and virtual meetings. The principal will remain in frequent contact with families as the school year progresses.

Please note that we expect the situation and recommended guidelines to evolve as the year progresses. St. Francis School is committed to maintaining open communication with parents and an understanding of individual family situations. We look forward to a healthy and successful school year.

FAQ

1. Will children be required to wear face coverings during the school day?

Children will not be required by the school to wear face coverings when they are in their classrooms, and for most of the school day. The only time that we are asking children to wear a face covering will be when they leave their classroom to use the bathroom. That being said, children are welcome to wear face coverings if their parents deem them safe and appropriate.

2. Will teachers and staff wear face coverings during the school day?

Teachers and staff in Grades 1-6 will utilize clear face coverings when they are not able to maintain social distance. Some teachers and staff may choose to wear face coverings more frequently.

3. What is the school going to do if a student or staff member tests positive for Covid-19?

A positive test will be documented and reported to designated persons at the Catholic Schools Office and Diocese of Manchester. Guidance from the Department of Public Health has indicated that it is in the best interest of the community to report known cases of infectious diseases to the state and that this would not be a HIPPA violation.

Any person testing positive for COVID-19 must be cleared by their physician prior to returning to the school building; the school must be in receipt of that documentation prior to the re-entry of the individual.

4. What is the school going to do if students and staff member are exposed to someone else who is Covid-19 positive?

If a student or staff member is exposed or reports exposure in the Health Survey to Covid-19, we will begin an official assessment. If it is determined that any student or staff member was in “close contact” (as defined by the CDC) with a person who was COVID-19 positive, monitoring for symptoms and possible quarantining will be handled on a case by case basis.