



St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School

Reopening Plan 2020-2021

Version Date: July 1, 2020

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Dear SFA Parents,

The disruption to all of our lives caused by the COVID-19 health crisis has been profound. Thank you for your patience and understanding during these weeks as we prepare plans for reopening. There is no one answer for what the coming school year will look like, but it will be different from the fall of 2019.

Our plans for reopening school are built around our school mission and vision. We will continue to provide an excellent whole-child, Catholic faith based learning experience emphasizing academic, personal and social-emotional health in a safe and nurturing environment that embraces the values of our school and parish community.

This document is a compilation of guidelines developed by the CDC, the Iowa Department of Education, the Iowa Department of Public Health, parent survey data, staff input and the practical realities of managing school operations. The measures we are taking mitigate, not eliminate, the virus spread. Given the continued uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic and the fluidity of continued modifications and restrictions, we need to be flexible and adapt to changing conditions. Our plans are subject to change based on future conditions and/or recommendations/requirements put in place by state and local health agencies and in consultation and approval from the Diocese of Des Moines Catholic Schools and the Pastor.

Again, we thank you for your patience and understanding during these challenging times. Please be assured despite all the challenges, we are compelled, out of love for our students to provide an environment that is safe, academically rich, socially rewarding and grounded in our faith as a Catholic community. We look forward to seeing all of our students in the fall.

Sincerely,

Jon Aldrich

Principal

Overview

We plan to reopen our school on Monday, August 24, 2020 with a full-day instructional program for Kindergarten through 8th Grade and extended care. Kindergarten will end the first week (Aug 24 - 28) at 1:30 pm. We plan to reopen our Preschool program on September 9 as planned. The key components of the reopening school plans address the health and safety of our students, teachers and staff at school. It is every person's responsibility to help us keep our school community safe.

These are plans as of July 1. As this is a fluid situation, we will continue to update you as we approach the opening of school on August 24. You will be informed about protocols (e.g. revised drop off and pick up procedures) prior to the start of school.

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I. General Measures:

The following provides a snapshot of changes that will be implemented to improve the overall safety and well being of our students and staff.

- Access to school building and campus limited to students, staff, authorized guests and volunteers
- Parents practice social distancing when at school
- Limit shared objects and materials used at school
- Prohibit use of drinking fountains (except for refilling stations)
- Encourage students and staff to bring water in reusable containers
- Water bottles must go home daily to be cleaned
- Student belongings kept separated
- Student belongings sent home each day to be cleaned
- All student field trips and travel are cancelled until further notice
- Lunch food program workers follow safety guidelines for food packaging and distribution
- Regular meetings with the school's Return to Learn Team during the school year to monitor effectiveness of COVID-19 plans

II. Promoting a Healthy School Environment:

A. Enhanced Cleaning and Disinfecting Measures: Our facilities team in conjunction with our faculty will implement all-new cleaning protocols on a daily basis.

- Routine cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces within school building throughout the day
- Thorough cleaning and sanitizing if school closes
- Protocol for intensive cleaning and disinfecting if the school needs to be closed temporarily
- Cleaning regimen to use EPA approved cleaning and disinfecting products and equipment for use against viral pathogens including COVID-19
- Ensure that all ventilation systems are cleaned and operating properly

B. Health and Safety

- Parents screen students before leaving for school. Students should stay at home if any of the following symptoms are displayed:
 - a temperature 100.3 or higher
 - Substantial congestion (not caused by allergies)
 - Cough
 - Sore throat
 - Nausea
 - Stomach ache
 - New loss of taste/smell
 - Diarrhea
 - Headache
 - Shortness of breath
 - Body/muscle aches
 - Symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or if they have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Students and staff temperatures screened daily upon arrival to the school. No-touch thermometers will be used.

- Students and staff ill upon arrival at school will be sent home
- Students' temperatures will be screened mid day
- Temperature check all visitors and guests who enter the school building to ensure temperature does not exceed 100.3.
- Protocol for handling students/staff who become ill at school
- Action plan for handling confirmed cases of COVID-19 that have entered the school.
- Protocol for staff/student/parent/guardian to self-report to the school if they have tested positive or were exposed to someone with COVID-19 within the last 14 days, while maintaining confidentiality.

C. Healthy Hygiene Practices

- Daily routines enabling students and staff to regularly wash hands and use hand sanitizer
- Practices that ensure personal health and safety including: handwashing techniques, avoiding contact with one's eyes, nose and mouth, and covering coughs and sneezes
- Hand sanitizer stations (with CDC recommended sanitizer) in every classroom, the gym and library, at the lunch tables and every entrance to the school

D. Protective Equipment

- Students will wear face coverings (face masks/shields) when entering/exiting the building and when maneuvering in the hallways (e.g. the bathroom). Face coverings are particularly helpful when physical distancing is not feasible.
- Staff will wear face coverings (face masks/shields) when entering/exiting the building and when maneuvering in the hallways
- Proper wear and use of face coverings will be taught and reinforced by classroom teachers

E. Physical Distancing

To the extent possible, we will practice physical distancing in classrooms, hallways and bathrooms, on the playground during recess/lunch and during drop off/pick up. To promote physical distancing, the following measures will be taken:

- Teaching physical distancing practices
- Maximizing space between student desks as much as possible
- Facing student desks forward - reduce extra items from the classroom to allow for more space
- Discontinuing student locker use for grades 2-8
- Avoiding congestion when students use bathrooms
- Designating hallway patterns throughout the school to avoid congestion (i.e., one-way hallways, designated entry and exit points, etc.)
- Staggering recess/lunch and designating play areas by grade
- Limiting direct contact during drop-off and pick-up procedures
- Promoting physical distancing in the office area

III. Academics:

Our primary objective is to provide a learning rich environment grounded in our Catholic faith to all students. Our highly trained faculty is ready and prepared to provide a quality education that facilitates mastery of all Iowa Common Core and Diocesan Content Standards. The team is also ready and prepared to provide both asynchronous (recorded) and synchronous (live) learning *should it be required* in the event of a school closure.

A. Classrooms

To the extent possible, we will minimize mixing students in classrooms, hallways and bathrooms, on the playground during recess/lunch and during drop off/pick up. To minimize mixing, the following measures will be taken:

- **Preschool - 4th Grade: Self-contained Classrooms (Family Model)**

- Students remain with their homeroom teacher in a self contained class
- Specials push in to the homeroom
- Minimize sharing materials and supplies
- Materials stay with students or in their classroom/discontinue lockers
- Limit parents, guests and visitors to the classroom
- Student field trips and travel are cancelled for the foreseeable future
- Preschool follows state licensing DHS guidelines
- Recess/lunch schedules shared with parents in August prior to returning to school

- **Grades 5 - 8: Departmentalized Classrooms**

- Plan is being considered for students to remain in homerooms while teachers rotate
- Staggered release times from classrooms to reduce the number of students in the hallway at any given time
- Students go outside with classmates for recess and lunch in designated grade level areas
- Minimize sharing materials and supplies
- Materials/supplies stay with students or in their homeroom. Lockers will not be used
- Student field trips and travel cancelled for the foreseeable future

IV. Continuity of Education:

A key component of our reopening school plan is to prepare contingency plans should there be a need to implement a distance learning program due to extended absences or a mandatory school-wide closure.

A. Bridging the Classroom and Home - Google Classroom (4-8) and Seesaw (PS-3)

Google Classroom and Seesaw are cloud-based platforms through which the delivery of instruction, workflow, communication and collaboration takes place in one central location. Google Classroom and Seesaw are technology components that support in-school classroom instruction and provide a means for maintaining continuity should the school be required to close and move to distance learning.

- clear workflow system for student-teacher feedback
- completing and turning in assignments
- access to frequently used educational tools
- live instruction video capabilities

B. Absence Due to Illness Distance Learning

We understand that at any given time a student may be required to stay at home to recover from illness. The learning plan for these students is to provide continuity between in-class and distance learning on a short term basis (two weeks or less) to minimize the disruption to learning. This plan is not meant as a replacement for in-class instruction; individual live instruction is not available due to teacher instructional schedules. Students who are home due to illness or quarantine will be able to access daily lessons, assignments, hand-outs, and resources via Google Classroom or Seesaw. Parents and students can keep up with assigned work and follow along with the pace of the class; Google Classroom (4-8) or Seesaw (PS-3) should be checked

daily. Students are encouraged to keep in contact with their teachers via email and Google Classroom/Seesaw.

C. School Closure Distance Learning

The distance learning program is necessary if the stay-at-home order is reinstated or for an intermittent closure for cleaning due to an exposure risk. Distance learning can occur asynchronously (recorded) or synchronously (live). Based on teacher and parent feedback, should we have to move to a distance learning, we will use a combination of both styles of learning. Asynchronous learning is when instruction and learning do not happen at the same time for all students. The teacher provides instruction (pre-recorded videos), resources and tasks to Google Classroom and Seesaw. Students access learning at a time that works for them and their families. Synchronous learning is an approach where students and teachers are engaged online and learning at the same time. This occurs through video-conferencing. Expectations will be clearly defined for students, parents, and teachers. Specific models of consistent learning experiences for each grade level, such as the time spent in teacher instruction and independent student work time will be shared once school resumes.

Preschool-8th grade models will all include:

- Daily live instruction via video conferencing
- Daily interactive assignment completed through Google Classroom/Seesaw
- Optional social grade-level and homeroom virtual meet-ups
- Weekly teacher office-hours

C. Full Time Distance Learning

At this time there are no plans for the school to offer a full-time distance learning program for families who wish to have their children stay at home rather than return to school.

V. Promote Student/Staff Social-Emotional Health

We understand the importance of establishing a positive, safe and supportive learning environment as our students navigate the unprecedented challenges due to the disruptions caused by the pandemic. We are committed to helping our students by infusing social and emotional support into our students' experience at school.

- Opportunities for students to interact with their classmates, teachers and staff in the classroom as well as during recess and lunch
- School counselor is developing plans to identify and address student needs
- We hope to provide after school activities to the extent possible (sports, dances, enrichment classes)

VI. Limit Large Group Gatherings

Alternative plans for large group activities (e.g. assemblies) will be developed. Students will attend weekly mass on Wednesdays either in the church or via live stream. Each week one grade level will attend Mass in the Church while other students will attend via live stream in their classrooms. The grade level(s) attending Mass will rotate on a set schedule. The number of grade levels attending Mass in the church will be based on Diocesan phased reopening distance guidelines for churches and in conjunction with the Pastor.

VII. Communications

We are committed to ongoing, timely, and informative communication between school and home. In order to provide effective communication, the following will be provided:

- Website: The school will post resources and updates on the COVID-19 resource tab
- Parish Post: Section in the weekly e-newsletter will be updated as needed

- Email: The school will use email to notify and inform parents about time sensitive COVID-19 information