



St. Mary Catholic School Weekly Update

August 6, 2020

Feast of the Transfiguration of Jesus

Principal's Update

Dear School Family,

Greetings everyone! Today's **Feast of the Transfiguration** reminds me of what St. Peter said to Jesus on top of Mt. Thabor: "Lord, it is good for us to be here" (Mt. 17:4).

We too can't wait to say to Jesus, "Lord it is good for us to be here", with the whole school family back in action on that first day of school, just a few weeks away!

Great news! Our Pastor, Father Cibelli, will lead our faculty and staff in a **Solemn Blessing** of the soon-to-be-full again school building on Friday, August 28th at 1:30pm We will try to live stream this event for families. And our first whole **School Mass** will be on Friday, September 4th at 10:30am. This will be a live streamed Mass for all to "attend" remotely from classrooms and from home.

While today's Update provides a set of new details and some reminders, please be sure to review last week's **Special Update** (attached) for additional information.

God bless.

Mr. Nicely

Short video message from Mr. Nicely: Click [HERE](#)

Archdiocesan Updates

- The Archdiocesan **Planning Ahead Task Force** issued their **Guidelines and Plans** for rolling-out the re-opening of schools and we sent it to you recently. Click [HERE](#) for that document.
- All archdiocesan principals continue to meet weekly with the Archdiocesan Office of Catholic Schools, with a continued primary focus on action plans for a safe, strong, and smooth re-opening of school.
- Yesterday, the Archdiocese of Baltimore **Planning Ahead Task Force** sent all schools a thorough set of **PROTOCOLS** for schools to follow in a broad range of areas, including how we handle cases of staff or students who show COVID-related symptoms. Nurse Paula Radley, BSN., and our St. Mary Planning Ahead Team, have begun planning how we will implement these protocols.
- Parents will receive an abridged form of these protocols, and we will address them at our Orientation Sessions.
- All Archdiocesan schools will require daily “**Health and Temperature Screenings**” for every child before he or she is allowed to enter the building. This morning check by parents (on their smart phones) will generate a spreadsheet for school personnel to monitor as children enter the building. *You will receive detailed information on this procedure in the coming weeks and at SMCS Parent Orientation.*
- Per state regulations, preschool parents will be required to take student temperatures in the presence of school staff upon arrival. Our preschool staff will share details on this procedure soon.

St. Mary Catholic School Updates & Reminders

Intent Forms and Enrollment

- Thank you to all who submitted their **Intent Form** for the coming school year. For the enrolled families we haven't heard back from, we will plan for your children to be on site at school unless we hear otherwise.
- We will now complete our on-site class lists and desk count based on the intent forms we have received to date. As you know, once a child is enrolled remotely, we will not be able to switch him/her back to on-site learning until the next trimester. Thank you for your understanding.
- No new applications will be accepted after this week. Our final enrollment will be set next week.
- The Archdiocese emailed all families a “**Parent Update Form**” yesterday. Please complete this form by **August 13th**. This information is critical for us in our communications and especially for our daily “**Health and Temperature Screening**” procedure mentioned above.

School Family Solidarity

- In a spirit of charity and solidarity, we ask families to consider ways to help protect the integrity of our mitigation efforts at school. We all know the regular list of things: handwashing, distancing, masks, etc.
- Beyond the regular list, the Archdiocese is encouraging all Catholic school families to **stay in town** for the two weeks before school starts.

- **The Archdiocese is requiring that all school staff and (on site learner) families who travel to a state with a COVID-19 positivity rate of 10% or greater notify the school. This applies to all travel within two weeks of the start of school as well as after school begins.**
- We also encourage families to do all they can to limit contact with people outside their household before school starts as well.

Orientations

- St. Mary Teachers will provide a recorded on-line **Student Orientation Session** for primary, intermediate, and middle school on **August 24th**, followed by a Q&A session with their homeroom teachers on **August 26th**. Stay tuned for more details.
- The St. Mary Administrative Team will provide a **Parent Orientation Session** on **Thursday, August 20th at 6:30 pm** via Zoom. Stay tuned for more details.

Masks and Screens

- Although students will be required to wear masks both indoors and outdoors each day as part of the school uniform, there will be regular, frequent **“Mask Breaks”** throughout the day both during class time as well as lunch/recess time, especially with younger children.
- More details on how mask breaks will work will be provided at our Orientation Sessions, but please know that mask breaks will vary from grade and will be as frequent as possible both indoors and outdoors. Middle school kids will have a break at least every 45 minutes, and younger kids will have them at least every 30 minutes. Teachers will alternate breaks small groups in class so as to maintain safe spacing without a mask.
- Children will have safe, breakaway lanyards to hold their mask when not in use.
- Parent are asked to provide children with two masks for each school day. In sync with the CDC, Pediatric Association, and the AOB we recommend two-ply, filtrated masks.
- Masks should be appropriate in design, that is, simple, with minimal graphics/writing, such as the SMCS “Tag Day Shirt” expectation.
- Masks that are gaiter or may not be filtered are allowed, but the recommendation we are giving is two-ply with filters.
- Extra masks will be available for students as needed.
- Students who are not able to wear a mask for medical reasons are asked to supply a doctor’s note.
- Every desk will also have a small protective screen (about 24 inches high).
- Each student will have a 5 gallon bucket next to their desk for extra supplies.

Cleaning and Sanitation

- We are excited to be on track to have a state-of-the art sanitation and cleaning system for our building and outside, thanks to a large grant. Stay tuned for more on this.

Water Bottles

- Students will need to bring translucent plastic water bottles to school. No hydro flasks or aluminum water bottles allowed.

Lunch and Snacks

- The SMCS hot lunch program will continue but we will begin on a small scale with two days a week. Stay tuned for more details on this, but please plan on sending a bag lunch on most days.
- Mid-morning breaks will also continue, but students will need to bring their own snacks.

Immunization Requirements

- The following requirements apply to ALL SMCS students regardless of them being remote or on site, per Archdiocesan policy:
- All new students, updated students, and new 7th grade immunizations **MUST be SUBMITTED by the FIRST day of School**, August 31st, to SMCS Nurse Paula Radley, BSN. For questions, please email Nurse Radley at pradley@stmarycatholicschool.org

Class Sizes

- Keeping class sizes to a reasonable limit will facilitate safe spacing in classrooms. To that end, we will not be accepting new enrollment applications after August 7th.
- We will also “cap-off” certain classes that already have enrollment we do not wish to exceed.
- For classes with a larger enrollment (such as 3rd and 4th grade), our creative, resourceful teachers and aides will implement a variety of models to split classes as much as possible throughout the day.

Cohorts

- The schedule and student movement through the building is being optimized to limit the number of places and people a student interacts with throughout the day to reduce potential exposure to groups of students.

Visitors and Volunteers

- Visitors will not be allowed into the building.
- Parent volunteers will be welcome, but we will establish a rotating system that will be limited to a “Core Team” with a designated timeframe and work space to facilitate contact tracing as needed. Stay tuned for more details.
- Volunteer “hours” will be re-evaluated and edited for the new school year. Stay tuned!
- **Used Uniforms** will be made available soon. We are working on a smooth, safe procedure for this and will communicate it soon. We apologize for any confusion in this area and ask you to bear with us as we navigate this and so many other new procedures.

Prayer to Mary

The prayer below, “We Fly to Thy Patronage”, is traditionally thought of as the oldest prayer to Mary since the Hail Mary! It is part of the official prayer written by Pope Francis during the Pandemic, and we pray it at all our principals’ meetings. We offer it to all our St. Mary

Catholic School families as a special, short family prayer to our school Patroness, asking for her powerful help during this historic time.

“We Fly to Thy Patronage”

We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God; despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us from all dangers, O glorious and blessed Virgin. Amen.