



ST. MARY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

REOPENING PLAN

AUGUST 2020

CATHOLIC IDENTITY

St. Mary Catholic School is committed to its Catholic identity before, during, and after COVID-19. With every Catholic School, we are an extension of the Catholic Church's mission to evangelize, and we support parents as primary educators to help their children become fully formed, fully flourishing disciples of Jesus Christ, Who is the center of our school life, and whose Truth permeates our entire curriculum.

Under the patronage of the Mother of Christ, we strive to nurture an authentic Catholic culture guided by the Liturgical calendar of the Church, drawing upon the grace and inspiration of the Church's Sacramental life, as well as a consistent prayer life for everyone in our school family.

Daily prayer as a school and in class, regular School Mass (virtual), Eucharistic devotion, saint days, especially Mary days, Catholic festivity throughout all our family events, and much more, allow our families to "breathe" freely as Christians and become the best versions of themselves that God wants for them.

Our Catholic identity drives all that we do, think, and say, how we see and treat one another, and how we build our community. With Christ as the King of our school and with Mary as its mother, we will march forward and weather this storm as a family.

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.

OUR PLAN

Our goal has been to prioritize in-person learning as much as possible. Based on the square footage of our rooms, recommendations from the CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the size of our student body, we determined that we could reopen under the current model while mitigating risk to our SMCS family. At each step in this process, we have been vetting our proposals through the AOB particularly to ensure that our plan is in alignment with CDC, AOB, and State guidelines.

CDC ENDORSEMENT

The **Director of the CDC, Dr. Robert R. Redfield**, has affirmed the Archdiocesan re-opening efforts to which St. Mary Catholic School continues to align its own plan. As a Catholic and parishioner at the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen, Dr. Redfield has a special dedication to Catholic education and the Catholic school families in Baltimore. Seeing Catholic schools as part of the "critical infrastructure" of society, he firmly believes that re-opening Catholic schools is in the "best interest of public health." And wanting to "spotlight" the archdiocese, he re-affirmed the "balanced, measured, approach" the

Archdiocese of Baltimore is taking to mitigate risk and navigate this evolving landscape “safely and sensibly”.

Dr. Redfield also commended our Catholic school teachers who are keeping their joy and commitment to their vocation as Catholic school teachers ahead of the culture of fear. Dr. Redfield’s message inspires renewed confidence as we move forward to August 31st!

THE COHORT MODEL

PK-8 students will be in cohorts. Cohorts will be spread out throughout the building in designated learning spaces which allows appropriate social distancing in accordance with CDC guidelines. Students will remain in cohorts throughout the day for instruction, lunch, and recess. Based on square footage in classrooms/ learning spaces, we have stopped accepting application from new students effective August 7, 2020 in order to determine final cohort spaces.

CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

Families will have the opportunity to choose between in-person or remote learning for the first trimester. The in-person learner in all grades will attend school 5 days/week. Teachers and aids will work in teams. For example - teacher A teaches math to all the grade level cohorts; teacher B language arts; teacher C science, social studies, and religion.

- Teachers will move, but individual grade level teams will develop a schedule that minimizes teacher movement between cohorts.
- Daily schedules will include breaks for students - including outdoor mask and wiggle breaks.
- Aids will be responsible for extra rooms and monitoring other protocols such as student use of the bathroom.

The remote learner should expect to be engaged in school activities from 9 AM - 2 PM. Faculty and staff have been assigned as remote instructors to be the primary point of contact for our remote learners and to focus on supporting our remote learners and their families during this time. Remote learners will receive technology and materials at a scheduled time during the first week of school as their phase-in period. Remote learners will participate in the direct instruction portion of a class via livestream and using Google Meet. During that time the remote instructor will also be online to monitor the Google Meet and respond to the questions of the remote learners. After the direct instruction livestream, remote learners will have additional learning activities such as independent work, virtual small group meetings with the remote instructor or one-on-one meetings with the remote instructor.

TECHNOLOGY

Our technology plan allows SMCS to be able to enhance the in-person experience as well as accommodate remote instruction and to pivot to all remote instruction should that necessity arise.

- We have the capability to simulcast to and from all classrooms using state-of-the art technology sound bars and cameras.
- We have increased our bandwidth to accommodate increased use of devices
- We have upgraded to G-Suite Enterprise for all grades
- Every student will have 1:1 devices. Pre-K through 2 will be using iPads. Grade 3 will be transitioning from iPads to Chromebooks during the school year. Grades 4-8 will be using Chromebooks.

LUNCH & RECESS

Students will remain with their cohorts for lunch and recess. Lunch will take place in the classroom. Masks may be removed during lunch, but students will be spaced at 6 feet apart, with some students moving to a new location near the classroom for lunch.

The SMCS cafeteria staff will be providing hot lunch available for purchase 1 -2 times per week. They are following Health Department Guidelines for food service and all meals will be individually packaged and delivered to students who ordered them.

Teachers will have different rules and expectations for recess play depending on the age and needs of their individual classes. Blacktop space will be marked for designated cohorts during recess and breaks. Physical dividers may be utilized to help space children apart but allow for social interaction. There are many games that teachers can lead or suggest (depending again on age level) that do not involve touch.

SUPPLIES & MATERIALS

Students will not utilize lockers or cubbies, with the exception of Kindergarten and Grade 1 since there are enough lockers without having to share. The school has obtained individual buckets for each student in which they will keep personal items and extra books or materials. Each in-person student will maintain an individual set of materials that will not be shared or used by any other student. These materials will be school supplies purchased by the parents as well as materials (such as manipulatives and art supplies) that have been purchased by the school for a student's use.

DIFFERENTIATION, RESOURCE & SPECIALS EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

All extracurricular activities are suspended for the first trimester.

We still plan on offering some level of differentiation based on proficiency. There will be more direct instruction than small group instruction, however, and cohorts will not be able to inter-mingle. Therefore, we may not be able to offer the same level of differentiation as we had previously. We are positioned to provide support for our students with documented accommodations and to deliver these services in a variety of modes, including push-in support and both off-site and on-site Google Meets.

Specials classes will be offered via a combination of pre-recorded videos which the cohort teacher can access and live instruction. Remote learners will also have access to these classes. The specials teachers

will also be engaged as remote instructors for the remote learners and have other duties within the school.

MASK POLICY

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.

In a spirit of solidarity with peers, and respect for our hard-working teachers, students enrolled in Distance Learning will be expected to “attend” class wearing their regular full SMCS UNIFORM. We also ask for students to “attend” in a space other than a bedroom, and that VIDEO remain ON at all times during instruction.

Children will be provided with “break-away” lanyards to hold masks when not in use.

Frequent mask breaks will be allowed while maintaining consistent distancing protocols.

AFTER-SCHOOL CARE

SMCS will NOT offer After Care for the 20/21 school year. This will be re-evaluated mid-year for any possible change. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause our families.

DROP-OFF & PICK-UP

Both morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up will be modified to allow us to space out arrival times for families and avoid overcrowding at entrances. Families will be assigned windows of time in which to arrive for each procedure. At arrival, a staff member will attend to each car. Parents must complete daily wellness screening before a child may enter the building (information below). Students will enter and exit the building via the assigned door for their cohort.

VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERS

PARENT VOLUNTEERS will be welcome on a rotating system that will be limited to a “Core Team” per trimester, with a designated work space to facilitate contact tracing as needed.

All volunteers will need to be VIRTUS trained and submit to Daily Wellness Screening. Only the designated adult volunteer will be allowed in the school building.

SCHOOL CLEANING & SANITIZATION

All surfaces in every school space will be cleaned and sanitized regularly, according to CDC and Archdiocesan guidelines.

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. Read more about the system [HERE](#).

Please refrain from dropping-off any materials, lunches, etc., once your child has entered the building.

FACILITY VENTILATION

Ceiling fans will direct air upward. Window and wall mounted air conditioning units will be used when possible. Windows will be open when possible.

FACILITIES MODIFICATIONS

We have purchased the following PPE and are making the following changes to the facility:

- Standing sanitizer dispensers for entrances and hallways, teachers will also have sanitizer in classrooms
- Students will also be encouraged and have time to access sinks in bathrooms for frequent hand washing throughout the day.
- Directional and social distancing signage for hallways, bathrooms and some classroom areas (such as the locker areas)
- Sneeze guards as needed such as on teacher desks to create a space if they need to work in proximity with a student.
- Sneeze guards for student tables as needed such as those in kindergarten
- Classroom packs of emergency PPE - set of extra masks, hand sanitizers, etc.
- All rooms have occupancy limit signage posted
- Water bottle filling stations will be available to students. All water fountains will be disabled and covered.
- In student bathrooms, sinks, toilets, urinals have been closed as applicable to allow for appropriate social distancing
- Faculty and staff have been assigned to designated faculty restrooms to avoid overuse of any one restroom

WELLNESS SCREENING & TEMPERATURE CHECKS

Each morning, all staff and students will be required to successfully complete a wellness screening including temperature screening before entering the building. All staff and students will be assigned to one entrance/exit point that they would use to enter and exit the building. Upon entering the building, individuals will be asked to utilize the hand sanitization stations that are located at every entrance of the facility. For PK, students will follow the guidelines of the Office of Child Care, and the staff member will meet each student upon arrival and observe as the parent/guardian takes the child's temperature in their presence.

HEALTH & WELLNESS HEALTH SUITE

The school nurse will be on site each day to care for the needs of our school community. We have also completed the installation of a new health suite. We have established an isolation area that could be used in the case of an individual displaying symptoms of COVID-19. The school nurse will deliver meds to students during the day rather than having the student travel to the health suite. Students will be allowed to step out of the learning space to meet the nurse in the hallway in order to be discrete and to allow for HIPPA regulations. Teachers will be equipped with more robust First Aid kits to preempt unnecessary trips to the Nurse's office for minor needs. Policy on inhalers and EpiPens remains unchanged and depends on the needs of the student. No nebulizer treatment will be given at school this year. Parents must schedule an appointment with the Nurse to drop off medications. Medications CANNOT be carried to school with a student. Please consult with the school nurse for alternative care plans.

TEACHER PPE

Teachers will have face masks with the option of adding a face shield or goggles. Teachers will also be provided with a sneeze guard on their desk to allow them to perhaps work more closely with a student if needed. Each teacher will also have access to a special PPE kit. The AOB and SMCS are following the guidelines provided by the local health department. Please keep in mind that SARS-CoV-2, or COVID-19, is a novel virus with information ever evolving. Since March, when our students first left school, there has been a lot of new data and adjustments made due to this new information. We will continue to monitor reputable health sources and evolving best practice changes and make necessary adjustments as appropriate to keep our SMCS students and staff healthy.

RESPONDING TO COVID INCIDENTS

Administrative Steps

STEP 1: ADDRESS THE "AFFECTED" INDIVIDUAL

- Separate the "affected" individual ("affected" = with confirmed or presumptive diagnosis)
- Contact the Archdiocesan officials. Contact the Local Health Department

STEP 2: IDENTIFY CLOSE CONTACT INDIVIDUALS

("Close contact" = coming within 6 ft for a minimum of 15 minutes – masked or unmasked.)

Close contact individuals will follow quarantine protocol.

STEP 3: CONTINUE WITH OPERATIONS

Determine areas to be taken out of use- areas that the individual occupied for a short period of time (Then follow STEP 5).

STEP 4: COMMUNICATIONS

- Call each family – affected individual (and siblings) and close contact individuals.
- Follow-up with written communication – provide guidance for the requirements to return. Refer to Decision Aid for that guidance.
- Send a communication to the school community – what has occurred, the actions taken, affirming follow-up. Include:
 - When admin was made aware
 - Verification that affected individuals have been removed and that families have been notified
 - Guide others to self-monitor and/or contact medical provider if applicable
 - Advise of any alterations to school hours, activities, services

STEP 5: CLEANING & SANITIZATION RESPONSE

- Leave affected areas unoccupied for 24 hours.
- Clean and sanitize affected area(s).
- Resume the use of the space.

All decisions will be made in consultation with the AOB, the administration, the individuals involved and appropriate health agencies which includes notification of the local health department. We will take a four-pronged approach to any COVID-related situation which includes:

- Developing communication to the community/those affected.
- Develop plan for facility/any cleaning/disinfecting that may need to occur

The decision aid can be found [HERE](#).



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS DECISION AID

Exclusion and Return for Laboratory Confirmed COVID-19 Cases and Persons with COVID-19-like Illness in Schools, Child Care Programs, and Youth Camps

For the purposes of this decision aid, COVID-19-like illness is defined as: New onset cough or shortness of breath **OR** At least **2** of the following: fever of 100.4° or higher, chills, shivering, muscle pain, sore throat, headache, loss of sense of taste or smell, and gastrointestinal symptoms (nausea, vomiting or diarrhea).

NOTE: This definition was adapted from the clinical criteria in the [CDC case definition of a probable case of COVID-19](#).

NON-COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

Person (child, care provider, educator, other staff) with **ONE NEW** symptom not meeting the definition of COVID-19-like illness.



Exclude person and allow return when symptoms have improved and criteria in the [Communicable Diseases Summary](#) have been met as applicable. If person develops symptoms of COVID-19-like illness, follow processes below for person with COVID-like illness.

PRESUMPTIVE COVID-19 CASE

Person (child, care provider, educator, other staff) with COVID-19-like illness.

- Exclude person and recommend that they talk to their health care provider about testing for COVID-19 or whether there is another specific diagnosis.
- The person must isolate pending test results or evaluation by their health care provider.
- Close contacts of the ill person should quarantine per [CDC guidelines](#).

Person has positive test for COVID-19.

Person does not receive a laboratory test or another specific alternative diagnosis by their health care provider.

Person has a negative test for COVID-19.

Health care provider documents that the person has a specific alternate diagnosis (e.g. influenza, strep throat, otitis) or health care provider documents that symptoms are related to a pre-existing condition.

The ill person should stay home for at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared AND until no fever for at least **24 hours** without medication AND improvement of other symptoms.

The asymptomatic person must stay home for 10 days from positive test.

The person should stay home until symptoms have improved and the criteria in the [Communicable Diseases Summary](#) have been met as applicable.

Person should consider being tested/ retested for COVID-19 if symptoms do not improve.

Close contacts should stay home for 14 days from the date of last exposure **even if they have no symptoms or they have a negative COVID-19 test done during quarantine.**

Close contacts DO NOT need to remain at home as long as they remain asymptomatic.

POSITIVE COVID-19 CASE

An asymptomatic person (child, care provider, educator, other staff) tests positive for COVID-19.

The ill person should stay home for at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared AND until no fever for at least **24 hours** without medication AND improvement of other symptoms.

The asymptomatic person must stay home for 10 days from positive test.

Close contacts should stay home for 14 days from the date of last exposure **even if they have no symptoms or they have a negative COVID-19 test done during quarantine.**

There will be times when students who may have been kept in school last school year will most likely be sent home in these new COVID-19 times. While we are sensitive to the upheaval caused by having to pick up your sick child early from school, we have to keep in mind the health of all our other students, staff, families and even extensions of our families in the SMCS community. In the event that any or cohorts must stay home, instruction will be delivered remotely through a planned infrastructure mirroring full-time Remote Learners. In the event that the cases of COVID-19 increase and we return to Phase 1 based on directives from the State of Maryland, we will return to remote learning. In that case, we are poised to be able to pivot to that model quickly and fairly seamlessly.

APPENDIX A

Requirement to Return to School Campus

Impacted Person	Actions/Requirements
COVID-19- Confirmed Positive Test- Symptomatic	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exclude person from school campus. 2. The ill person should stay home at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared AND until no fever for at least 24 hours without medication AND improvement of other symptoms. 3. The asymptomatic person must stay home for 10 days from positive test.
COVID-19- Confirmed Positive Test- Asymptomatic	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exclude person from school campus. 2. The asymptomatic person must stay home for 10 days from positive test.
COVID-19- Presumptive Positive Test- Showing related symptoms and pending testing results or refusing or unable to be tested	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exclude person from school campus. 2. Recommend the person talk to their health care provider about testing or another specific diagnosis. 3. Person must isolate pending test results or evaluation by their health care provider. 4. If the person receives an alternate diagnosis from a physician to explain the symptoms, is released by their physician and are symptom free, they are able to return to the school campus. 5. If the person receives a positive test result, they then are to move through the requirements set forth under the COVID-19- Confirmed Positive Test- Symptomatic protocol. 6. In the absence of an evaluation by a health care provider or test results verifying the person is negative for COVID-19, the person must remain off the school campus for a minimum of 14 days from the onset of symptoms and must be symptom free.
Close Contact with Confirmed Positive Test- Symptomatic or Asymptomatic	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exclude person from school campus. 2. Should stay home for 14 days from the date of last exposure even if they have no symptoms or they have a negative COVID-19 test done during quarantine. 3. Should person become symptomatic they should contact their health care provider. 4. May return to the school campus after 14 days and so long as they are asymptomatic.
Close Contact with Presumptive Positive Test	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exclude person from school campus. 2. Should stay home until earliest time one of the following criteria are met: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Learns the presumptive positive individual has received an alternative diagnosis from a physician to explain the symptoms -Learns the presumptive positive individual has received negative test results -Completes the 14 day quarantine and is asymptomatic 3. If the close contact learns the presumptive positive individual did in fact receive a positive test result, the individual should follow the close contact with confirmed positive test-symptomatic or asymptomatic listed above.

RESOURCES

CDC case definition of a probable case of COVID-19 <https://www.cdc.gov/nndss/conditions/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/case-definition/2020/>

Communicable Diseases Summary https://mmcp.health.maryland.gov/epsdt/healthykids/Documents/Communicable_Diseases_Fact_Sheet.pdf

CDC Guidelines <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/public-health-recommendations.html>

OUT OF STATE TRAVEL

In an effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19 through the SMCS student body and faculty, if any employee or student (learning or working on-campus) plans to travel to a state with a COVID positivity rate exceeding 10% during the period of their stay, notification of such intention to travel must be communicated in writing to the School administration via this form at least 5 business days prior to departure. Those travelling will be required to quarantine upon their return until such time as they provide evidence of a negative test result of COVID-19 and are asymptomatic. If a test cannot be obtained, the individual must complete an entire 14 day quarantine. The following website contains information regarding all 50 states, territories and several popular international destinations.

<https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/testing/testing-positivity>

COMMUNICATION TO SCHOOL FAMILIES

St. Mary Catholic School maintains regular, frequent communication to families through weekly updates, social media, our COVID information website portal, and scheduled information sessions via Zoom.

St. Mary catholic School has established an onsite “Planning Ahead Team” of teachers, administration, parish staff, and our school nurse. This team met at least once a week from July through August to study and adapt the Archdiocesan guidelines and protocols for implementation at St. Mary Catholic School.

LINKS FOR MORE INFORMATION

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL (CDC)

[Guidance For K-12 School Administrators On The Use Of Cloth Face Coverings In Schools](#)

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATIRCS (AAP)

[COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance For School Re-Entry](#)

ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE DEPT OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS (AOB)

[Reopening Guidance for the 2020-2021 School Year](#)