



St. Mary School
S W O R M V I L L E

*Dedicated to the Whole Child....
Serving the Entire Family*

RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN

July 31, 2020

RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN

FOR FALL 2020 IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

The Diocese of Buffalo and Saint Mary School's Administrative Team in coordination with the Saint Mary Faith Community Reopening Task Force have developed a Return to School Plan that places the health and safety of our entire community: students, faculty, staff, and families, as our top priority in opening the campus for onsite learning in the 2020-2021 school year. Our campus and classrooms are being prepared to open the school year as planned on Wednesday, September 9th in consideration of local, state, federal and CDC/DOH guidelines and recommendations.

Over the coming weeks and months, this plan may be revised to remain current with updated mandates and recommendations. Any updates will be shared with the Saint Mary School Community via email, website, and if warranted, the SchoolMessenger communication system.

Our goal is to provide a safe and healthy learning environment for all our students with minimal interruptions to the instructional environment as we focus on educating the whole child.

What We Know...

- SARS-COVID-2 is a coronavirus that is primarily spread through aerosol or droplet exposure. This virus gives rise to the COVID-19 illness.
- The mouth and nose are reservoirs for coronavirus.
- The main source of the coronavirus's spread is through respiratory droplets from an infected person who coughs, sneezes or talks in close proximity to someone else. (CDC)
- COVID-19 spreads mainly through close contact from person to person. While it may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose or possibly their eyes, this is not thought to be the major way the virus spreads. (CDC)
- Wearing gloves will not necessarily provide protection and may still lead to the spread of germs. Exceptions: when tending to a sick individual or using cleaning supplies that recommend the use of gloves. (CDC)
- Coronavirus is unstable in water. Hence, frequent hand washing and use of hand sanitizers is recommended.
- “Exposure” is defined as a 15-minute or more direct (unmasked) interaction (within 6 feet) with an individual who is infected with COVID-19, or a direct contact with droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person.
- Plastic separators/barriers/shields are light transmitting plastics (in compliance with Building Code Section 2606) that are recommended for use in locations where social distance or mask requirements cannot be met.
- “Social Distance” refers to an unmasked distance of at least 6 feet between individuals in social/classroom settings, and a minimum of 12 feet between individuals in a physical education/athletic/band/choral setting.
- “PPE” refers to personal protective equipment, such as masks, which are recommended in instances when social distancing cannot be maintained. Masks should fit snugly against the face and reach below the chin and up to the bridge of the nose. Double-layered cloth masks dropped the wearer’s risk of infection between 50% and 80% (W.H.O.) and the risk of infection to others at an even higher rate. MASKS WORK in preventing the spread of coronavirus!
- It is not known if face shields provide any benefit as source control to protect others from the spray of respiratory particles. The CDC does not recommend use of face shields for normal everyday activities or as a substitute for cloth face coverings.
- There is a dose/response relationship to coronavirus exposures: The larger the dose, the more severe the expected response.

SCHOOL OPERATIONS PLAN

Overview of Plans and Protective Measures

- School will reopen on Wednesday, September 9th for in-person instruction.
- Students and faculty/staff will be instructed in proper distancing, hygiene (frequent hand washing and use of sanitizers) and use of face masks.
- Social distancing will be practiced to the greatest extent possible, utilizing floor markers, individual desks rather than student tables, alternate larger rooms wherever possible, cohort teaching wherever possible, minimizing changing of classrooms (teachers will go to cohort groups), and employing signage throughout the school and in classrooms to remind student and faculty/staff to distance. A minimum distance of 12 feet will be maintained between individuals while participating in aerobic activities including singing, playing of wind instruments, or heavy breathing during a PE class.
- PPE in the form of face masks will be required to be worn by faculty/staff/students/visitors when not appropriately distanced from others. This includes while in the classrooms, hallways and bathrooms. Exhale-vented masks are not allowed. NYS DOH is currently reviewing whether face coverings may be removed while trifold plastic shields are in use. When masks are required in the classroom, frequent “mask breaks” (10 minutes every 45 minutes) will be instituted. We require that each student bring a spare mask. Disposable face masks will be on hand in each classroom and the office to replace any soiled PPE. Hygiene, proper use of face masks, hand washing and sanitizing will be reviewed at each class level. Hand sanitizers are located at the entry to each classroom and bottles of hand sanitizer will be located at each desk.
- Alternate spaces such as the cafeteria, may be repurposed for instruction where improved social distancing is necessitated.
- Large group events such as whole-school gatherings, and field trips will be eliminated until and unless appropriate social distancing can be guaranteed, or until “green-lighted” by the CDC and local health departments. Brown bag lunches will take place in the cafeteria within cohorts, and when necessary, in classrooms. Recess periods will be held outdoors, whenever possible.
- Ventilation will be maximized with open windows and doors as weather allows.
- Shared surfaces such as desk tops, will be cleaned between any class changes.
- Visitors to school grounds will be limited.
- Student drop-off and pick-up will be restricted to designated areas as depicted in a school map and distributed to all parents/bus companies. See Appendices B and C.
- Drinking Fountains will be “capped” so that only the bottle filling stations are functional.

Health Screenings and Response

- Mandatory health screenings will take place before each student/staff member/visitor enters the classroom each morning. “Touchless” thermometers will be used by each homeroom teacher. Any student with an elevated temperature will be sent directly to the Health Office and a call will be made to arrange for transportation home. If a temperature meets or exceeds 100.4° Fahrenheit, medical follow-up and testing will be required prior to return to school.
- Students will be periodically surveyed re: exposures/symptoms, including gastrointestinal symptoms. Faculty and staff will be surveyed daily, and noted as within normal limits or not (WNL/NOT). Notation will be documented and kept on record for all.
- Positive cases will be reported by SMS to the County and State Departments of Health and return to school will be predicated upon at least ten (10) days of isolation, three (3) days fever free and improvement in symptoms, as per CDC and DOH guidelines.
- In the event of a positive case in school, determination of affected locations and close contacts will be made. We will follow County guidelines for closure, when necessary.
- Parents will be notified via the SchoolMessenger system and/or email of case events and closure guidelines and protocol.

Containment

- If a case of COVID-19 is documented in the facility, County and State Health Departments will be notified by SMS. The classroom(s) or school will be closed from 2-5 days. After a waiting period of at least 24 hours, complete facility-wide disinfection will take place.
- Access to affected classrooms will be restricted until completion of disinfection to avoid full school closure.
- Return to school after a positive diagnosis will be predicated upon:
 - i. 24 hours fever-free with no medication, and
 - ii. Improved respiratory symptoms, and
 - iii. An isolation period of at least 10 days after the onset of symptoms, and
 - iv. Health care provider documentation for return to school in coordination with the local health department
- When a student/faculty/staff member presents with an elevated temperature at or above 100.4° Fahrenheit, he/she will be sent directly home or isolated in the School Health Office. Parents/guardians will be instructed in pick-up protocol and the need to follow-up with a health care provider. Students with elevated temperatures below 100.4° Fahrenheit will also be sent home for parental observation and medical follow up should the temperature meet or exceed 100.4° Fahrenheit.
- Exposed individuals – defined as those individuals who have had a direct, unprotected exposure to aerosol or droplets, or those individuals who have had an unprotected (unmasked/un-distanced) exposure of 15 minutes or more to someone testing COVID-19 positive, will be asked to quarantine until discharged in coordination with the local health department.
- Quarantined (exposed), isolated (positive for COVID-19), and immune-compromised students with a doctor's letter stating such, may have special arrangements made for distance learning while school is in session. Families who are uncomfortable with in-person learning may advise the school and efforts will be made to accommodate. Such plans will be devised on an individual basis.

Closure

- If full closure is necessitated by widespread virus transmission in the school or the community, Saint Mary School is prepared to resume distance learning for all grade levels.
- In the event of a full closure, school will resume after a 14-day closure period, or when allowed by community standards and mandates.
- Hybrid models may be introduced to reduce exposure in the event of a community or localized (classroom) outbreak.
- For a contained grade-level case, the classroom(s) involved may be closed for two to five days, pending DOH approval, and students will be housed in other classrooms or be instructed via distance learning until the classroom(s) reopen.
- Upon any form of closure, a 24-hour wait period will be followed by a complete cleaning and disinfection.

PROTOCOLS

Visitor Protocol

- Visitors will not be permitted on campus when students are present, other than in the main school office.
- Drop off and pick up will take place outside the school as per the directive attached in Appendix B. Parents may not escort their children into the school building or to the classroom.
- This protocol is being implemented beginning on the first day of school to limit the exposure of our students, faculty and staff.

Cleaning, Disinfection and Other Safety Protocols

- Enhanced protocols have been established to clean and disinfect the campus and classrooms throughout the school day as well as after school hours.
- High touch surfaces in bathrooms will be cleaned and disinfected throughout the school day with non-toxic cleaning products.
- Common areas (such as the cafeteria) will be cleaned after each individual use with non-toxic cleaning product.
- The BruTab electrostatic disinfection system will be utilized daily in each classroom after school hours.
- Faculty and staff will be provided the necessary cleaning and disinfecting materials along with training on best practices, for use during the day.
- Hand sanitizer stations have been installed in each classroom for use before and after class.
- Personal hand sanitizers are requested of each student to be kept on desks for use during the day.
- There will be frequent visual (with signage) and verbal hygiene reminders.
- We will limit capacity in shared spaces such as bathrooms (no more than two at a time) and locker rooms (no more than 4 at a time). Masks must be worn in these spaces.
- Fire drills and lock down drills will continue to be held, with modifications to ensure appropriate social distancing.
- In the event of a possible COVID-19 case, all suspected spaces will remain unoccupied until proper disinfection procedures can occur in those spaces.

Communication Protocol

- Due to FERPA and HIPAA protections, we are unable to share personal information regarding a potential contact.
- Information will be shared on a case-by-case basis by the Department of Health with the families who may have had close or direct contact with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19.
- As needed, we will use the SchoolMessenger notification system, email, and telephone calls to facilitate communication.

THE SCHOOL DAY

Arrival

- Upon arrival, faculty, staff, and administration will have temperatures taken and complete a daily health questionnaire. See Appendix A.
- Drop off for Montessori students must take place at the circle at Door C6. Parents are advised to remain in their cars and teachers will greet the children outside.
- Drop off of all other students must take place at door A4. Parents are advised to remain in their cars. See Appendix B for details.
- When children from one family are in both Montessori and the regular school program, please drop off at door A4 first, and proceed to Door C6 thereafter.
- Doors to the school will open at 7:30 a.m. and students are to proceed directly to classrooms.
- Classrooms will open at 7:30 a.m. for student arrival.
- Floor signage will enable students to maintain social distancing while walking to the classroom.
- Each student will be screened for temperature before entering the classroom. If a child has an elevated temperature, he/she will be sent to the nurse's office to be picked up by a parent/guardian. Students will also be given a health questionnaire periodically. See Appendix A.
- If multiple students arrive in one vehicle, all students will be asked to return home for monitoring if one person has a fever of 100.4° or higher.
- Students must wear appropriate masks while entering the school, walking in the hallways, and entering the classroom.

Classes

- Teacher movement to classes will be implemented wherever possible, to reduce the amount of classroom changes, and to reduce the number of students in any given hallway.
- Where classroom changes are necessary, social distancing in hallways will be maintained.
- Whenever a student is away from his/her desk, in the hallway, bathroom, or locker room, a mask must be worn.
- Each child will be assigned a personal trifold plastic shield for use in the classroom(s).
- NYS DOH is currently reviewing whether face coverings may be removed while trifold plastic shields are in use. When masks are required in the classroom, frequent “mask breaks” (10 minutes every 45 minutes) will be instituted. We require that each student wear a mask and bring a spare mask. Disposable face masks will be on hand in each classroom and the office to replace any soiled PPE. Masks should be washed daily.

Cafeteria

- We are currently asking that students bring bagged lunches, individual condiments, snacks, and refillable water bottles to school.
- Hand sanitizer will be used upon entry to or exit from the cafeteria.
- If we are able to resume a hot lunch service, students will remain in their cohorts while in-line for school lunch, with appropriate social distancing.
- With the use of personal trifold plastic barriers, students will be assigned to appropriately spaced, grade level seating.
- All lunch and recess monitors will wear a mask.
- Lunch tables will be cleaned and sanitized after each use.

Recess

- With the help of lunch and recess monitors, recess will continue to take place daily, as weather allows.
- Students will stay within their grade levels and remain socially distant from other cohorts.
- Masks will be worn to enable cohorts of students to be in closer, play-time contact.

Dismissal

- Dismissal for all Montessori pick-ups will take place at 2:00 p.m. at Door C6. Parents are asked to remain in their cars and wait for your child to be brought to you. See Appendix C.
- Dismissal for all remaining student pick-ups will be at 2:15 at Door C6. Parents are asked to remain in their cars. See Appendix C.
- Students who take the bus will be called to their bus station by grade.
- All students will wear a mask and maintain social distancing in the hallways during dismissal.
- Students are expected to adhere to all safety precautions mandated by the transportation services.

Mass, Sports, and Other After-School Activities

- School Mass will take place each Friday at 9:00 a.m. Masks must be worn and social distancing maintained as per CDC and Diocesan guidelines. If necessary, only a part of the school will attend each week.
- All athletic events must adhere to state and local guidelines.
- Other after-school activities may be held if adequate protection through the use of masks/social distancing/personal trifold barriers may be implemented.
- Band is being redesigned to become accessible while meeting CDC and DOH guidelines.
- Social distancing will be observed in all common spaces within the school.

Social Distancing

- Classroom spaces will be organized to maximize student space and to minimize face-to-face interactions. Social distancing markers will be applied to all hallways.
- All faculty, staff and students are required to wear masks. Trifold plastic barriers will also be assigned to each student. The NYS DOH is currently reviewing whether face coverings may be removed while trifold plastic shields are in use.

DISTANCE LEARNING

- In the event of a school closure, each K-8 student will be given his/her individual Chromebook to take home (or we will have a drive through pick-up) along with a schedule of classes and instructions for access.
- Classes will be held daily in all core subjects and attendance will be taken as per NYS guidelines. “Specials” (Art/Music/PE/Spanish/Technology) will continue to be offered.
- During Distance Learning, all extra-curricular activities and sports will be cancelled.

HYBRID MODELS

Should the need arise to shift to a hybrid model of in-person learning on some days and distance learning on others in order to minimize exposures, we will assess the feasibility of:

- Three days of distance learning and two days of in-person learning per week, implementing our distance learning model.
- Extended in-person half-days for all grade levels, focusing upon core subjects, with distance learning for other subjects.
- Maintaining in-person learning at some grade levels, and shifting into distance learning for other grade levels.

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL WELL BEING

It is unrealistic to expect that students will return to instruction as they left it months ago. To create a welcoming and caring school community that ensures its students are met with the compassion and support needed to achieve and thrive:

- Access to our school counseling program will continue.
- Our school counselor will collaborate with classroom teachers to facilitate outreach to whole classes and individual students and their families.
- Restorative Justice practices, including virtual or community meetings, will enable students to express their anxieties or concerns, and increase social sharing and healing.
- Teachers have been trained in ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) and trauma-responsive practices such as Restorative Justice to help support individual student needs.
- We continue to encourage communication between teachers and parents if concerns or issues arise.

APPENDIX A

Survey Questions for Faculty/Staff/Students/Visitors

The following questions will be surveyed daily for faculty/staff/visitors, and weekly for students:

- Have you knowingly been in close (unmasked/un-distanced) contact with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 14 days?
- Have you knowingly been in close (unmasked/un-distanced) contact with anyone who has or had symptoms of COVID-19 in the last 14 days?
- Have you tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days?
- Have you experienced any symptoms of COVID-19 in the past 14 days (upper/lower respiratory or gastro-intestinal symptoms) and had a temperature greater than 100°?
- Traveled internationally or from a state with a widespread community transmission of COVID-19 per the New York State Travel Advisory, within the last 14 days?

Any individual who screens positive for these exposures or symptoms, must immediately be sent home with instructions to contact his/her health provider for assessment and testing.

Name: _____ Week of: _____

	TEMPERATURE		CLOSE CONTACT COVID POSITIVE? Y/N	CLOSE CONTACT WITH SYMPTOMS? Y/N	TESTED POSITIVE IN PAST 14 DAYS? Y/N	ANY SYMPTOMS IN THE LAST 14 DAYS? Y/N	ANY RESTRICTED TRAVEL WITHIN 14 DAYS? Y/N
	WNL	NOT					
Monday							
Tuesday							
Wednesday							
Thursday							
Friday							

The following are listed as the most common symptoms of COVID-19:

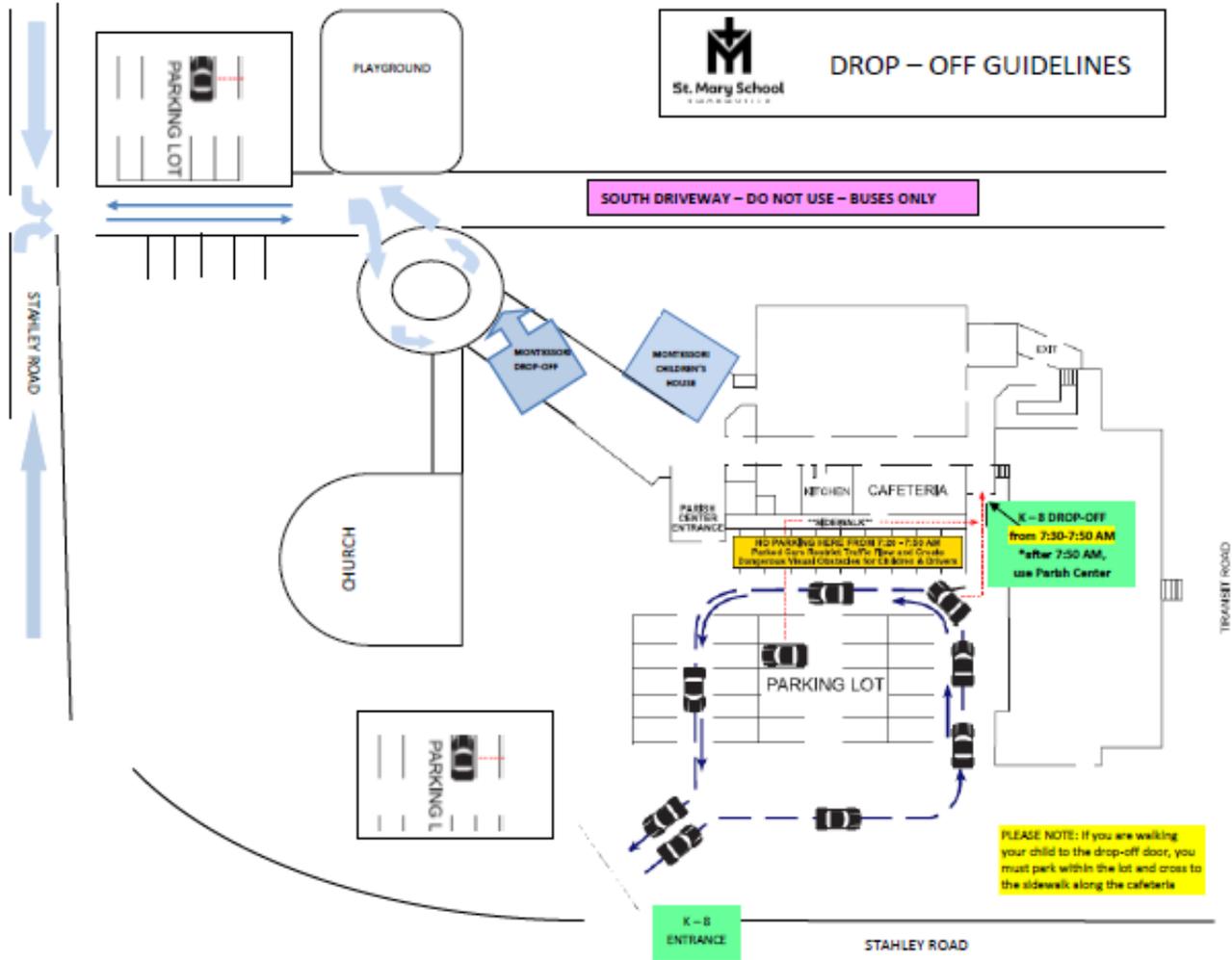
- Chills or fever (100° or higher)
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Please be observant for these additional signs:

- Flushed cheeks
- Rapid or difficult breathing (without recent physical activity)
- Fatigue and/or irritability
- Frequent use of the bathroom

APPENDIX B

Drop Off/Arrival Map



APPENDIX C

Pick-Up/Dismissal Map

