



ST. JOSEPH

Catholic School™

*Leading students to Christ
through academic excellence, respect for others, and community service*

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**Return-to-School COVID Response Plan
Fall 2020**

Introduction

“Though I walk through the valley of darkness, I fear no evil, for the Lord is with me.”

Psalms 23:4

We have all experienced times when the path in front of us is dark, and we are unsure where it leads. Yet often in these times, we push ahead in the belief that what we are doing and where we are going are worth the effort. In the COVID-19 crisis the whole world stands in just such a valley of darkness. Our greatest hope is to find the determination within our communities to accomplish the things that are worth accomplishing.

Catholic education is worth accomplishing! The students who walk through the doors of St. Joseph Catholic School each day do so for a reason, that is, to Learn, to Love others, and to Act like Jesus. While the extra protocols listed in this document will be a new challenge, we will work together to succeed in this challenge because what our amazing students do at St. Joseph Catholic School is worth doing. And, above all, we know that our Lord is with us as we navigate the unknowns of this valley.

Many people have been hard at work throughout the summer of 2020 to prepare for the re-opening of schools. The school administration has been in frequent communication with the Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Little Rock and the Arkansas Nonpublic Schools Accrediting Association. Additionally, the administration has been reviewing re-opening plans and protocols from around the country. On June 26th, the school distributed a survey about reopening to all school parents and teachers. The survey asked parents their thoughts about many of the most important aspects of school re-opening. The school administration then gathered a School Reopening Task Force to make decisions about what reopening would look like at St. Joseph based on the survey and other protocols and best practices from around the world. The task force consisted of school parents, school board members, medical professionals, and St. Joseph faculty, staff, and administration. This document is the result of that process.

A common saying regarding preparations for important events is “no plan survives first-contact with the enemy.” This document includes the school’s best-laid plans for reopening during the coronavirus pandemic. However, we must all be prepared for the reality that many of these practices will be adjusted or completely changed as we proceed due to either new recommendations or unforeseen practical limitations. The big-picture strategy of the St. Joseph Task Force is to prioritize cohorting (i.e. maintaining homerooms throughout the day), mask wearing, hand washing, and physical distancing. The faculty and staff, with parent support, will strive to teach and model these new skills and practices to the students with the same consistency, patience, and grace that we expect in all learning opportunities. Many thanks are due to every member of the St. Joseph community for getting us to this point, and many more will come as we successfully navigate this school year together.

We go forth with the grace of God, and the intercession of our patron Saint Joseph!

Saint Joseph – *Pray for us!*

Please note that this and any school plan regarding COVID-19 can and will change frequently and immediately based on the best available information. The principal will notify all families as quickly as possible of any changes and send a revised document. The last revision date will be noted in the header of this document.

All families will be required to sign a COVID-19 SCHOOL STUDENTS ASSUMPTION OF THE RISK AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY from the Diocese of Little Rock prior to attendance on the first day of school.

Mask Wearing

Students

- All students in Kindergarten through 8th grade are to wear masks with some exceptions (as listed in this document).
- Masks are optional for Pre-Kindergarten.
- All students are to bring at least 2 extra masks as backups. These will stay in student backpacks.
- Students will remove masks while eating and drinking.
- Students may remove masks for outdoor recess and outdoor PE classes.
- Teachers will be strongly encouraged to find times in the day for mask breaks. These breaks will only occur when the teacher can ensure 6 feet or more of distance between all students.
- Students are welcome to keep their mask on during any mask-free time if they choose.
- Each student will be given a lanyard to connect to their mask so that it remains close-by when they can take it off and to prevent it from hitting the floor if dropped.

Teachers/Staff

- All teachers and staff will wear masks with some exceptions.
- Teachers/staff will remove masks while eating and drinking.
- Teachers may remove masks during student mask breaks when 6 feet of distance or more can be ensured.
- Certain subjects require that students can see the teacher's mouth movements. A clear mask option will be provided for all teachers who need it.

The following mask features are NOT ACCEPTABLE:

- Masks may not have words or phrases, and any masks deemed inappropriate by the administration may not be worn.
- Masks must not be too big or too small. The masks must cover the mouth and nose and stay in place.
- Masks may not have an exhale vent. These vents prevent particles from entering the mask but do not prevent particles from leaving the mask.



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Student Routine

Classroom setup

- As much non-essential furniture as possible will be removed from rooms to allow for as much distance as possible.
- All classrooms will have assigned seating.
- Individual student desks will face the same direction, be placed in rows, and will maximize space.
- All student tables that cannot be spread apart or will not allow students to face the same direction will have clear partitions added for separation.
- Students will be permitted to move around the room as needed and with permission from the teacher and with his/her mask in place.

Movement through the building

- All hallways will be marked at six foot intervals with stickers.
- Arrows on the floors will show traffic flow direction.
- Hand sanitizer will be available outside all classrooms, and students will use hand sanitizer before entering the classroom each time.
- When classes exit the building, they are to use the door that gets them outside as quickly as possible and minimize travel in the hallways.
- Students in grades 5-8 will rotate classrooms based on subject as usual so that teachers have full access to the resources and materials they need for their particular subject.
 - Individual classrooms will take turns accessing lockers and using the restroom.
 - Students within the same homeroom will be assigned lockers that are well-spaced from the other students in their homeroom.
 - Each classroom will have spray bottles filled with soap and water. Each desk will be sprayed and wiped down with a paper towel prior to class transitions.
 - Once all students have their materials for the next class, the classes will rotate to the next room in unison following directional arrows and without stopping to minimize passing time.

Restrooms

- Each restroom will have a posted maximum occupancy which will be enforced by teachers. Remaining students will wait in the hallway on the 6-foot-spaced stickers.
- Masks will be worn both in the restroom and while waiting in the hallway.
- Only one homeroom should use a restroom or wait for the restroom at a time. The school will create a bathroom schedule for all homerooms that share a restroom.

Recess

- Students are to clean their hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer BEFORE recess.
- During outdoor recess, students will be grouped by grade level rather than homeroom.
- No more than three grade levels will be present on the playground at a time.
- On the small playground, Pre-K and Kindergarten will not be present at the same time as is their normal routine.
- Each grade level will have a designated area of the playground that does not overlap with any other grades. Grades will rotate to a new designated area each week.
- Extra playground equipment will be purchased to minimize sharing.
- Masks will be OPTIONAL during recess. Teachers will not attempt to enforce mask-wearing at recess.

Lunch

- Pre-K will use the cafeteria.
- K-8 will eat lunch in their classrooms.
 - Eating lunch outside will be encouraged as often as is feasible.
- K and 1st will be served lunch in their rooms by cafeteria staff.
- 2nd-8th will come through the cafeteria to carry their own trays back to their classrooms
- All silverware, napkins, etc. will be placed on individual trays by cafeteria staff before students take their trays.
- Hot lunch, brown bag, and salads will all be available. Salad bar will not be available, but salads will be prepared by the cafeteria staff.
- Only cafeteria staff will be allowed in the kitchen area.

Specials

- Specials teachers will travel to homeroom classrooms for instruction with these exceptions:
 - PE, which will happen outdoors unless raining
 - Junior High Advanced art will meet in the art room
- Band and choir will be suspended until it is determined that they are safe to resume. Students normally in those classes will receive more general music instruction.

Morning Prayer

- Students will remain in their classrooms for morning prayer.
- Students will lead the morning prayer as usual but from their classrooms.
- The principal will join the class that is leading prayer and will broadcast it via YouTube Live (<http://youtube.com/stjosephcatholicsschool>). Other classrooms, remote students, and interested parents will watch and participate in morning prayer from their respective locations.

Mass

- Students in 1st-8th grades will attend Mass once every other week. PK and K will not attend Mass.
- Only two grades at a time will attend Mass.
- We will follow the “[Restrictions and Options for Worship amid the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)” of the Diocese of Little Rock as long as they are in effect.
- Students will sit in the center pews and the choir-loft side pews/chairs. Alternating rows will be left empty. Students will sit 6 feet apart. To the fullest extent possible, students will be seated next to the same students as in their classroom assigned seating chart.
- Mass will not be closed to visitors. Visitors will be instructed to use only the side entrance and sit in the ambo-side pews. The wellness check questions will be conspicuously posted at the side entrance
- Students will sit with their classes at Mass even if their parents are present at Mass. This includes children of faculty and staff.
- Parents, if you prefer that your child not receive communion at this time, please email your child’s teacher.
- There will be no congregation singing at Mass.
- Classes not attending Mass will participate in regular morning prayer from their classrooms. Following morning prayer, teachers will conduct religion lessons during the remainder of Mass time.

Athletics

- Decisions about athletic seasons will be made by the governing bodies of the league. If leagues and seasons open, St. Joseph teams will participate.

Field Trips

- Students will not travel off-campus for field trips at this time.

Aftercare

- Pre-K aftercare will follow normal procedures
- K-8 aftercare will use the cafeteria and outside. Based on last year's average attendance numbers, we will be able to ensure 6 feet of physical distancing in the cafeteria.
- No drop-ins will be allowed for aftercare this year. All aftercare students must be signed up and maintain a regular attendance schedule.
- Masks are required for all aftercare students while inside the building.
- Snacks will be individually served by aftercare staff. Students may remove their masks, but they must maintain 6 feet of distancing.
- Students who have homework may remain inside wearing their masks. Students with no homework will go outside.
- Parents whose children are inside when they arrive for pickup, should not enter the building. Parents should speak with the outside staff who will call in for the student, or, if no one is outside, text or call the aftercare phone number.

Morning arrival

- As stated in the "COVID-19 SCHOOL STUDENTS ASSUMPTION OF THE RISK AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY" published by the Diocese of Little Rock, parents will be required to conduct the following wellness check of their children each morning before arriving at school.
 - Have you had a fever as defined by the Arkansas Department of Health ("ADH") and within the period of time determined by the ADH?
 - As of the first publication of this document, this is defined as: 100.4 degrees within the past 48 hours.
 - Have you had a new or unexpected cough during the past 7 days?
 - Have you been around anyone exhibiting these symptoms within the past 14 days?
 - Are you living with anyone who has been sick, has exhibited symptoms of COVID-19, or is currently under quarantine for exposure to COVID-19?
- If the answer to any of the foregoing questions on any given school day is "Yes," then the child is not permitted to attend school, and the parent should contact the child's doctor immediately for guidance.
- All employees will be required to answer the same foregoing questions prior to the start of work each day. The school will keep a log of employee answers.
- All visitors who are approved to enter the student areas will be required to answer the same foregoing questions prior to entry. The school will keep a log of visitors who enter the student area.
- The school will not take student temperatures upon arrival.
- Students will go directly to their classrooms and use hand sanitizer or wash hands with soap and water immediately upon arrival. Drop off will still begin at 7:30. While drop-off at that time is a

necessity for some families, families are encouraged not to drop off students prior to 7:45 if at all possible to minimize student down time in the classrooms.

Afternoon pick-up

- First pick-up will begin at 3:10 p.m. for grades K-3. Pickup for 4-8 and their younger siblings will begin at 3:25. These times may be adjusted as needed for smooth and timely transition. The school will notify parents of such a change.
- Staff on duty will report names of families in car line to other staff on duty inside the building. Students will remain in classrooms until their name is called.
- Second pick-up will begin as soon as all first pick-up cars are finished and will use the same procedure of reporting names and calling individual families.
- As always, students may only be released to authorized pick-ups. Parents are highly encouraged to double-check their pick-up lists in the FACTS Family Portal. If someone not on the list will pick-up your child, it is essential that you call the office as soon as possible that day.

Pre-Kindergarten

- Our Pre-Kindergarten is licensed by the Arkansas Department of Human Services. Some DHS requirements will supersede some protocols in this document. These adjustments will be communicated to families as they become available.

School Visitors

- All steps to reduce visitor traffic will be taken. Parent cooperation in this will be essential.
- Note: The second set of glass doors at the main entrance will now remain locked. A buzzer has been added before these doors that allows the office staff to see and speak with visitors before unlocking the doors.
- Besides St. Joseph employees, only authorized visitors will be permitted to enter the student areas, such as therapists, maintenance contractors.
 - All adults who will enter the student area, including employees, must complete a health screening before entering the student areas.
- Parents/students arriving after 8:15:
 - Parents park at the curb within sight of the main entrance, have the student walk in, and call the office.
 - The parent should remain on the phone until the office staff confirms that the student has arrived in the office.
- Parents/students leaving early:
 - Park at the curb within sight of the main entrance and call the office.
 - If possible, a staff member will walk the child outside to the car.
 - If only one staff member is in the office, the parent will come through the first set of doors and press the buzzer. The student will be sent to meet the parent in the foyer.
- Pick-up/drop off of items:
 - When a parent arrives to pick-up or drop-off items, the parent is to call the office. An office staff member will walk outside to exchange the items or instruct the parent to leave the item in a designated area.
- If a parent does enter the building without calling ahead, the office staff will give instructions through the video/intercom to the fullest extent possible.

Cleaning

- We continue to employ 4 full-time janitorial staff to conduct a full-building cleaning each evening. This will include sanitization of all high-touch surfaces
- We are working to install touchless sinks, however, supply is very limited at this time.
- Teachers will be responsible for the following:
 - A mid-day sanitization of high touch areas such as door handles, faucets, etc.
 - End of the day cleaning of plexiglass dividers.
 - End of the day cleaning of classroom manipulatives.
 - End of the day cleaning of class Chromebooks. Students with class sets of Chromebooks will use the same device each day and will take it from class to class.
 - Students may help with classroom cleaning when they can do so safely.

Parent expectations

- Follow all procedures listed in this document and ensure that children follow them.
- Conduct the daily health screening on all students before drop-off.
- Contact the school immediately if any student has a temperature above 100.4.
 - Keep students out of school until the student's temperature has been below 100.4 for 48 hours without fever-reducing medications.
- Contact your doctor immediately for anyone in the household with possible COVID exposure for reasons including, but not limited to:
 - High fever
 - Repeated failure of the wellness screening questions
 - Exposure to a known COVID-positive person
- Contact the school immediately if anyone in the household gets tested for COVID and again when the results are received.
- Contact the school if anyone in the household leaves the state of Arkansas.

Remote Learning

- Prior to the first day of school, all remote students will receive a "Remote Learning Code of Conduct" which the student and parent will be required to sign and follow during remote learning.
- Each student will receive a weekly schedule informing them of the daily schedule of Zoom meetings and other activities.
- If a remote student needs to transition back to in-person learning, parents must notify the principal as soon as possible. The school will return the student to class as quickly as possible. However, some arrangements may take time if extra desks, partitions, etc. must be added to the classroom.
- If an in-person student needs to transition to remote learning, parents must notify the principal as soon as possible, and the transition will take place as quickly as possible.

COVID response

If a student displays COVID symptoms:

- Immediately sent to the nurse's office for evaluation.
- If COVID cannot be ruled out, the student will be placed in an isolation room, and a parent will be contacted for pick-up immediately.
 - Room 210, near the nurse office, will be setup as an isolation room.

If a student or employee obtains a COVID test due to showing symptoms or a probable close contact:

- Student or employee tested is to remain in quarantine while awaiting test results
- When results are received, whether positive or negative:
 - Contact the school.
 - St. Joseph will direct the student or employee according to the current protocols published by the Arkansas Department of Health. (Attached below)

If individual or multiple students are required to quarantine:

- In-person students will transition to remote learning. When the required quarantine is completed, students may return to in-person learning.
- Remote students continue as usual.

If a teacher is required to quarantine/isolate:

- Asymptomatic teachers:
 - Will continue to provide instruction to the class via Zoom and a projector in the classroom.
 - An aide will be assigned to the class for classroom management.
- Symptomatic teachers:
 - A long-term substitute teacher will be assigned.

If any of the above situations occur, the school administration will communicate with all school families regarding any necessary actions. Personal details of those involved will remain confidential while still being able to fulfill necessary contact tracing if required by the Arkansas Department of Health.

Department of Health Definitions (as of 7/22/20):

- Close Contact
 - An individual confirmed by ADH Contact Tracing who was within 6 feet for 15 cumulative minutes or longer within a 24-hour period a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 during the infectious period, regardless of face covering. The Close Contact will be required to self-quarantine for 14 days from the last date of contact with the infected person. It is highly recommended that all close contacts get tested for COVID-19, but individuals must complete the 14 days of quarantine even when the results are negative. They will be in contact with ADH for the duration of the quarantine period.
- Probable Close Contact
 - District identified individuals that have likely been within 6 feet for 15 cumulative minutes or longer within a 24-hour period to a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, regardless of the use of a face covering. This person(s) will be expected to

self-quarantine immediately for 14 days from the last date of contact with the positive case and await their Close Contact status to be confirmed by ADH Contact Tracing.

- Secondary Contact
 - An individual who has had contact with someone identified as a Close Contact to a person who has tested positive for COVID-19. These individuals do not require quarantine.

