



St. Paul Catholic School, Highland IL

Updated COVID-19 Guidelines

UPDATED: AUGUST 20, 2020 Updates are highlighted in gray

St. Paul Catholic School believes in the value of each child as a unique individual loved by God. We strive to create an environment which will challenge students to grow in their faith, to reach their fullest potential, and to develop a healthy acceptance of self and a Christian respect for others.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT THIS YEAR: This plan is fluid and subject to State and Diocesan mandates.

In late July the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois released Back in the Classroom: How our Catholic Schools will Open Safely and Responsibly Plan for the 2020/21 School Year. This plan is designed to help schools and parents successfully and safely reopen our school buildings to students this fall. The plan also reflects important guidance from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), and guidance from the CDC. Our Illinois Catholic schools have a long history of providing a top-quality Catholic education. We look forward to continuing that education in the years to come.

ALL STUDENTS

Our plan allows us to manage the potential risk of students and staff becoming affected.

LAYERS OF PROTECTION

1. At home screenings are required (temperature test, visual screening, stay at home if in contact with someone with COVID-19 or symptomatic)
2. School-day monitoring (visual screenings and temperature checks throughout the day)
3. Frequent hand washing and the use of face coverings when safe distancing cannot be maintained

RESPONSE TEAM

- Implement the health and safety guidelines for the school
- Lead the communication effort for current families, students, and staff
- Lead the communication effort and any safety and health precautions for new family tours or orientation
- Monitor and screen the students and staff for COVID-19 symptoms
- Communicate concerns, challenges, and lessons learned related to COVID-19 planning and implementation as needed with staff, students/families, and the Curia School Reopening Task Force

STUDENT CONSIDERATIONS

- Maintain a balanced curriculum of physical education and other special subjects to enhance core subject areas
- Re-evaluate student abilities through communication with previous teacher and current teacher, along with school administration and essential personnel
- Assess student skill level and make plans to address any lost academic progress due to school closures
- Set realistic academic expectations for both students and teachers
- Parents/guardians will cooperate with teachers when determining academic needs of student
- Update student health records to include all well-care visits and immunizations
 - Due to the public health emergency, there will be NO extensions for families to submit annual paperwork, such as current immunizations, required to start the school year. ALL paperwork must be submitted before September 1, 2020.
- Before and After care will continue to be an option for parents and follow all applicable school guidelines

SAFE DISTANCING

- Maintain safe distancing in all common areas and classrooms
- When necessary, use alternative spaces with greater capacity to allow for more physical space between people
- Consistently remind students and staff to maintain 6 feet of distancing (e.g., lunch, hall, arrival/dismissal, restrooms)
- Staff will be present in building to curtail students from congregating

- Parent/guardian will remain in car, or if necessary, walk student to appropriate door then only the student will enter the building escorted by a staff member
- Arrival and pick-up times and locations will be communicated to students/parents by their classroom teacher
- Nonessential visitors and volunteers are restricted from entering the building
- Group gatherings will be limited by number of participants and contact time
- Non-contact arrangements will be made by classroom teacher for any school materials student may need due to absence
- Grade level cohorting will be followed as much as possible during the school day
- Students must bring a lunch from home until further notice
 - Please consider other students who have food allergies when preparing home lunches
 - Please refrain from bringing fast food to school during the day as that adds another level of infection/contamination control and causes unnecessary risks
 - Students will not have access to microwaves so please refrain from asking teachers/staff to heat up lunches
- Student pick-up and drop-off will occur outside
 - Please refrain from escorting your child from the vehicle
- Teachers will be encouraged to hold classes outside when possible
- Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to drive students to and from school and not utilize public bus service

HEALTH MONITORING & SCREENING

- All families will be required to screen students before bringing them to school
 - Students must be screened before leaving home
 - Parents are strongly encouraged to document a log of daily screening symptoms, to identify patterns
 - It is critical that parents are completely honest and truthful about communicating all signs of illness to the school
- SPS staff will visually screen for symptoms and conduct ongoing self-monitoring throughout the school day to help identify signs of illness and help reduce exposure
- All staff will perform home screening wellness checks before entering the building
- Staff and students will be instructed to self-monitor for symptoms throughout the day
- Staff or students who develop symptoms during the school day must notify a school administrator or teacher immediately
- No one will be allowed in the school if they have a fever of 100.4 degrees or above
- Students or staff must stay home if:
 - They have tested positive for or are showing COVID-19 symptoms
 - Have recently had close contact with a person who tested positive for COVID-19
- Adult volunteers and visitors will have limited access in the building
- All volunteers and visitors permitted into the building will be screened and monitored for symptoms
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) must be worn when 6 foot social distancing cannot be maintained
- SPS will be provided the necessary education to identify signs and symptoms of COVID-19, and when they/their children should stay home and when they/their children can return to school/work
- Guidelines will be in place for students and/or staff who arrive ill and do not pass screening
 - Distance learning options
 - Social distance separation/isolation room
 - Pick-up procedures
- Cross-train staff to allow for changes in staff due to illness

***Home Screening Requirements - Students may not report to school if:**

- They have a temperature of 100.4 degrees or above when taken by mouth
- They are experiencing shortness of breath
- They have unusual chest tightness or muscle aches
- They have a sore throat or cough that is unusual (not associated with seasonal allergies, or asthma)
- They have extreme fatigue, loss of taste or smell
- They have diarrhea, vomiting, or abdominal pain
- They have a severe headache, especially with fever

Home screenings must be documented, dated, and communicated to school administration if symptomatic.

Practicing preventive behaviors is the safest and most important action we can take to ensure a safe learning environment.

CLOTH FACE COVERINGS/MASKS

- All individuals above the age of 2 must have a personal face covering/mask
- All individuals must wear a face covering/mask at all times when entering, exiting, and when unable to maintain 6 foot distancing
- Exceptions to wearing face covering/mask will only be for medical reasons due to health risks and trouble breathing, and must be documented with the school office; face shields will only be allowed under these circumstances

- Face coverings/mask may be removed by students and staff while eating, during instruction when safe distancing can be maintained, and outdoors when physical distancing of at least 6 feet can be maintained
- Adherence to social distancing should be maintained when face coverings are removed in limited situations
- Face shields may be worn as an extra layer of protection but face covering/mask is required when unable to safely socially distance; it is strongly recommended that all cloth face coverings be washed daily
- Any person who gets lightheaded, a headache, or begins to have any difficulty breathing due to a face mask, may remove it immediately and report to the school office and a determination will be made if the person needs to be sent home or just needs fresh air
- CDC does not recommend use of athletic face coverings/neck warmers as a substitute for cloth face coverings
- Students who decline wearing a face covering/mask, which puts others at risk, will be sent home

HYGIENE PRACTICES

- Daily hygiene will be enforced
- Hand sanitizers are available and placed in frequently used areas
- Proper times and use of hand washing with soap and water will be reinforced
 - Arrival and dismissal
 - Before and after eating
 - After using the restroom
 - After blowing one's nose, coughing, or sneezing
 - After touching objects that have been shared
 - During and after classroom activities
- Educate and monitor hand sanitizer use by students
- Identify students who are sensitive or have skin reactions to hand sanitizer and have the use soap and water

CLEANING AND MATERIALS HANDLING

- Daily environmental cleaning and disinfecting of high touch surfaces and shared equipment will take place
- Cleaning products will not be used near children
- Cleaning products will only be used when adequate ventilation is ensured, to prevent the chance of inhaling fumes
- Cleaning products will be stored away from children
- There will be limited use of high-touch materials to allow for disinfecting between use
- There will be no sharing of electronic devices, books, toys, or other games and learning aids when possible
- Limited books will be available for student use
- Personal items of students will be contained in their exclusive space or locker
- Teacher/staff will disinfect contact areas used at the end of each day

WATER AND VENTILATION SYSTEMS

- Water and ventilation system checks will be performed after prolonged facility shutdown
- CDC guidelines for reopening buildings will be followed when applicable
- Increased use of outdoor air by opening windows will be exercised when possible and safe
- Drinking fountains will be cleaned and sanitized daily
- Students are encouraged to bring their own water to minimize the use and touching of water fountains

STRATEGY FOR MEAL TIMES

- Students are required to bring a sack lunch from home
- Mealtimes will be staggered to minimize the number of people inside one gathering space
- Teachers are encouraged to take students outside to eat
- Consistent grades will dine at the same time each day when possible
- Common surfaces between groups will be cleaned and disinfected after use
- Pre-packaged individual snacks are encouraged
- Sharing of food or snacks is prohibited

HANDLING SUSPECTED OR CONFIRMED POSITIVE CASES

- Designated staff members from the SPS COVID-19 Response Team will be responsible for handling positive cases
- School staff and families must contact the school principal if students or staff have symptoms, test positive, or had close exposure to someone with COVID-19 within the last 14 days
- The Response Team will help coordinate with local health authorities
- Privacy is of the utmost importance and HIPAA and FERPA laws will be followed
- Symptomatic individuals will have a designated quarantine room while waiting to go home
- Students who are symptomatic and waiting to go home will have visual supervision from a safe distance
- Both the symptomatic student and the supervising staff member must be wearing face coverings

- Signage will be posted at the main entrance(s) requesting that people who have been symptomatic do not enter the building
- Information, in accordance with local health officials and in accordance with FERPA, will be communicated to notify staff and families as needed if a person with COVID-19 was on the school premises while infectious

PLAN FOR COVID-19 SYMPTOMS AND EXPOSURE

(No fever means a person must be fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications)

Low risk symptom and no exposure:

- Return to school 24 hours after symptoms resolve and no fever

One or more high-risk symptoms but no exposure:

- Evaluation by PCP
 - Negative swab - return to school 24 hours after no fever and symptoms improve
 - Positive swab - return to school 24 hours after no fever and symptoms improve
 - Local health department and PCP must approve return to school

Symptoms present and positive exposure:

- Quarantine if you have been in contact with someone positive with COVID-19
- Return to school after 14 days from last contact unless symptoms develop
 - If symptoms develop, obtain swab
- If you think or know you have had COVID-19 you may be around others after:
 - At least 10 days since symptoms first appeared
 - At least 24 hours with no fever without fever-reducing medication
 - Symptoms have improved

If there is a positive case on campus, the Response Team will evaluate the situation and determine the safest way to proceed with in-person learning and communicate that decision to staff and families.

If there is a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 within our school, decisions for temporary closure of the school will be made by our COVID Response Team in consultation with the LHD during its investigation of a case or cluster of cases. If the LHD determines that there is a risk to the school community, the school may be closed temporarily for cleaning and disinfection. This initial short-term dismissal allows time for the local health officials to gain a better understanding of the COVID-19 situation impacting the school. This also allows the local health officials to help the school determine appropriate next steps, including whether an extended dismissal duration is needed to stop or slow further spread of COVID-19. (IDPH)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Will SPS have a virtual learning option for students?

A: At this time, a virtual option will only be considered for students who are in a high-risk category and have documentation from a medical provider indicating that based on health reasons in-person learning is not a safe option for the student or household members.

Q: What if my child and/or another member of my household is in an at-risk group for COVID-19?

A: We encourage you to speak to your doctor. The CDC has defined conditions in which certain people may be more at risk for severe illness through COVID-19. Ultimately you should decide whether it is safe for your child to attend school. A virtual learning option will be considered on an individual basis for families who have specific documented medical necessity.

Q: Can we travel out of the country or out of state during this pandemic?

A: It is recommended that individuals not travel out of state/country during the current pandemic. However, if travel is necessary, we encourage you to become familiar with State Travel Guidelines. If you or a member of your household travels to another country or to a state identified as having a surge in COVID-19 cases, we may ask that you quarantine 14 days before returning your child to school.

Q: What should I do if a member of my household (who is not my child) tests positive for COVID-19?

A: You should immediately contact the school's main office. The school's administration will ask that you keep your child home for at least 14 days. If your family member recovers from COVID-19 AND your child shows no COVID-19 symptoms for the 14-day period, the school should allow your child to return.

Q: What happens if my child's teacher tests positive for COVID-19?

A: Should any employee have COVID-19 symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19, we will follow the same protocols used for students/staff. If your child's teacher becomes sick and is unable to work, the school will provide a substitute teacher.

Q: What happens if another student in my child's class tests positive for COVID-19?

A: The school will make parents aware that a student has tested positive for COVID-19. All students in the grade/cohort will be monitored closely for COVID-19 symptoms. If more than one student tests positive for COVID-19, it is likely that the entire cohort will be isolated (sent home) for at least 14 days. Students will be allowed to complete work virtually while the cohort is away from school.

Q: Could my child's school building be closed down due to COVID-19 this year?

A: We will do our best to ensure a safe and healthy environment in the coming year. However, if numerous cases appear in the school, resulting in the isolation of multiple classes/cohorts, we may need to close the school building and transition all students to virtual learning for a time. Parents will be updated regularly should that need arise. Every effort will be made to continue in-person learning for Early Childhood students.

Q: Will my child's curriculum be changed this year?

A: Schools will still deliver high-quality instruction in core subjects (religion, language arts, math, science and social studies). The implementation of safety and health requirements, and possibly virtual learning, does create new complexities in instruction, but our commitment remains to provide your child the best possible faith-based education.

Q: Will my child's classroom look different?

A: We have instructed schools to spread out desks and tables in classrooms as much as possible. In order to maximize floor space, we've asked teachers to remove non-essential furniture and other items. We have also asked that desks and tables be arranged so that they face the front of the room. These steps were taken to minimize risk of any infection in the classroom.

Q: Will students share school supplies?

A: No. Students are not to share school supplies (e.g., books, crayons, technology, etc.). Exceptions may be made for activities outdoors (such as outdoor physical education classes). If it is impossible to avoid sharing supplies, such as computers in a computer lab, such supplies will be cleaned after every use.

Q: I have a child in preschool or kindergarten. Is high-quality learning possible?

A: Yes. We are working very closely with our early education teachers to continue the best possible quality of instruction in preschool and kindergarten. While health and safety requirements are in place, our teachers will continue to work hard in the coming year to ensure your child grows intellectually, emotionally and spiritually.

Q: Will students still change classes?

A: SPS does offer departmentalization, in which students change classes for core subjects (religion, language arts, math, science and social studies). At this time, this model will continue. Precautions will be taken to maintain social distancing during transition times.

Q: Will standardized tests still be given this year?

A: Yes. It is important that we continue to gauge student academic growth throughout the school year. As such, you should anticipate the NWEA tests to be administered.

Q: Will students participate in field trips?

A: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we will not participate in in-person field trips during the 2020/21 school year, or until such time field trips are deemed safe.

Q: My child has a Student Support Plan because of an identified learning, behavioral or physical need. Can the needs of my child still be met this year?

A: School staff will be evaluating Student Support Plans to determine whether additional modifications are needed in light of COVID-19-related health and safety protocols. The school will contact you if it is determined that changes to your child's plan need to occur. If you have urgent questions, you should not hesitate to contact the school.

Q: I need to meet with a teacher or the school principal. Can these meetings occur?

A: Yes. These meetings can take place virtually via phone or video chat.

Q: Will the students still attend weekly in-person mass?

A: Yes, in coordination with Parish.

Q: Will First Communion, Reconciliation, and Confirmation take place this year?

A: We will continue to provide preparation for the Sacraments of First Communion, Reconciliation, and Confirmation. For the celebration of the Sacraments, schools and parishes must follow a specific plan defined by the Diocese and Parish. Our school will work closely with our Pastor and Parish to determine the timing and schedule of these sacraments.

Q: How will athletics be impacted this year?

A: We will have athletics this year and follow guidelines from the Illinois High School Association, Southern Illinois Junior High School Athletic Association, and the Southern Springfield Catholic Athletic Conference of Illinois.

Q: Will students be required to dress out for PE?

A: No. Until further notice, students will not dress out for PE.

Q: Will my child(ren) be allowed to ride the school bus?

A: Yes, but as an added layer of protection, we strongly encourage parents to drive their children to school.

Q: What happens if my child misses school because of other illnesses such as the common cold, flu, asthma, or seasonal allergies?

A: Students will be able to complete missed school work in accordance with the Parent-Student Handbook guidelines on pages 37-38.

Q: Why are parents asked to log and check for symptoms and communicate them with the school if symptomatic?

A: Logging symptoms helps identify when an illness began, and can help with contact tracing, if tested positive for COVID. It will also help identify an infectious illness, which can be transmitted to others, versus non-infectious illnesses such as asthma or seasonal allergies.

Q: Are we required to turn in the Daily Home Screening checklist for Students?

A: No, we are requiring parents to perform this screening at home before leaving the house. If your child presents with any of the symptoms indicated or has had close contact with someone who has been exposed, then we ask that you communicate that with the school and keep your child home. We must trust all parents to be honest about their child's health and symptoms of illness. We ask that you truthfully monitor and communicate any infectious symptoms to the school.

Please visit the following websites for current up-to-date information pertaining to COVID-19:

www.cdc.gov

www.dph.illinois.gov

www.co.madison.il.us