

12/7/20 FAQ

The below information was adapted from the original FAQ document sent August 12, 2020. The original document has also been available on the St. Mark Website since that date.

Why can't all students return in person on the same days? Why does it have to be at 50% capacity?

The current NYS health and safety guidelines indicate that students must be at least 6 feet apart and wear a mask. Our largest classroom size is 25 ft X 25 ft and most classrooms are smaller than that, making it infeasible to host a full class of 20+ students plus a teacher while remaining 6 feet apart.

Why can't the school provide full-day synchronous instruction for those who want to be Distance Learners AND full-day in-person instruction for those who want in-person learning?

Our teachers are experts in their field and will provide quality instruction in person, synchronously or asynchronously, but we cannot expect them to do all three simultaneously, as that would be three full time jobs. On days students do not attend in-person schooling, there will be a combination of synchronous learning (learning that involves students and teachers having in-the-moment interactions with each other) or asynchronous learning (students accessing content that is posted on Google Classroom or Google Sites by teachers for students to be completed independently). Contractually, teachers are paid to teach during a regular school day. Under a Hybrid Model, which we must implement until social distance requirements are changed, that means teachers are teaching all day in person. Under a fully remote Distance Learning model, that means teachers are teaching all day virtually. We do not have the funding to hire a separate staff to teach fully remote Distance Learning while our current teachers teach in person. For a variety of reasons, including technology, educational best practices and privacy concerns, it is unreasonable to expect all teachers to teach both in person while simultaneously "streaming" their instruction to students at home.

From the NYS Reopening Guidelines for Religious and Independent Schools (7/27/20) :
"Hours of instructional time are not defined as a student's time spent in front of a teacher or in front of a screen, but time engaged in learning under the guidance and direction of a teacher. These experiences might include but are not limited to: completing online modules or tasks; viewing instructional videos; responding to posts or instructor questions; engaging with other class participants in an online or phone discussion; conducting research; doing projects; or meeting with an instructor face to face, via and online platform, or by phone."