



Diocese of St. Petersburg



St Stephen Catholic School

Back to School 2020-2021: A Plan for Safety and Success



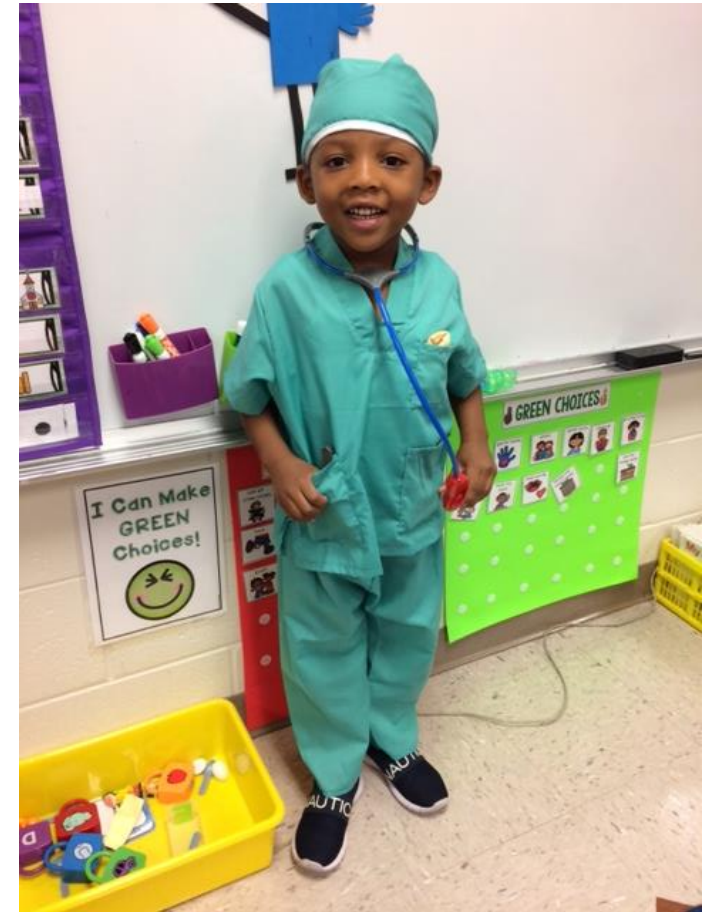
A faith-filled community committed to the safety of your family.

Revised 7/14/20



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Please note that this is a living document which will be revised according to guidelines issued by the CDC, the State of Florida, the Florida Department of Education, other health agencies and after consultation with the Office of Catholic Schools and Centers of the Diocese of St. Petersburg.



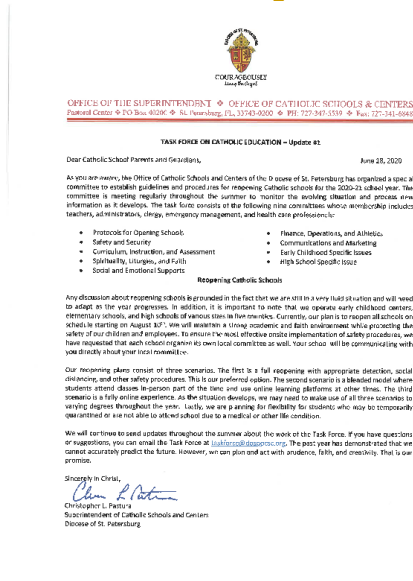
Diocese of St. Petersburg



St Stephen Catholic School

Dear St. Stephen Families,
St. Stephen Catholic School is devoted to ensuring a safe learning environment for all of our students. Please read the attached letters from our superintendent and principal about our return to school for the 2020-2021 school year.

Letter from the Superintendent



Letter from the Principal



St Stephen Catholic School

Dear St. Stephen Catholic Schools Families,

We approach the coming school year with both joy and sadness. We have deep joy that we will be back together again soon, able to see our precious students and celebrate the milestones of life that we have missed so over the past four months. At the same time, we are deeply saddened by the many loved ones who are no longer here to celebrate with us. We also mourn the loss of many of the events that typically mark the beginning of a new school year. Yet we pray for the patience and wisdom that God grants us to continue steadfastly in our mission with his guidance.

In this document, you will find our plan to reopen St. Stephen Catholic School in as safe a way as we possibly can while keeping in mind the vital importance of helping our students fill the learning gaps they may have experienced over the past few months due to COVID-19. In a recent statement by pediatricians, educators, and superintendents, it was stated, "We recognize that children learn best when physically present in the classroom. Returning to school is important for the healthy development and well-being of children, but we must pursue reopening in a way that is safe for all." ([American Academy of Pediatrics, 2020](https://www.aap.org/child/2020/09/22/child-reopening)) Along with guidance from the CDC, state and local government, the Diocese of St. Petersburg Office of Catholic Schools and Centers, and our local school-based committee made up of staff and parents, we have prepared this document to help explain the preparations and precautions St. Stephen is taking to move towards this goal. Our option for a Flexible Learning Plan for students who need to learn from home allows the remaining students to come back to school in-person, on-campus while protecting the vulnerable.

While our faculty and staff spend these last few weeks of summer preparing to come back to school, there are some things you can do at home to help make the back-to-school transition smoother for your child. First, our school COVID-19 committee recommends you begin shopping for comfortable re-usable masks or neck gaiters for your child now. Finding a mask or face covering your child is comfortable is a long way to making this procedure more successful. Second, start practicing with your child the proper way to put on, wear, and take off their mask. Lastly, practice proper hand-washing procedures with your child. This practice cannot be stressed too much!

Please take the time to read through our plan carefully, and as always, reach out with any questions you may have. We are so grateful for the support of our families and our entire parish community, and we will continue to pray for your safety and health.

In Peace,

Linda Knoch

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Mission Statement
St. Stephen Catholic School is devoted to inspiring students to achieve their full academic potential while demonstrating a desire to continue Jesus' mission by applying Catholic morals, beliefs, values, and practices in their everyday lives. We are committed to motivating students to cultivate a lifelong love of learning.

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Mission Statement

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SSCS COVID-19 Task Force Local Committee

	Committee Members	Role
Parents	• Mrs. Jennesica Siffermann	• Parent Advisor
	• Mrs. Rachel Ross	• Parent Advisor and R.N.
	• Mrs. Anu Dominic	• Parent Advisor and Hospital Pharmacist
	• Mrs. Erin Black	• Parent Advisor and V.P. of Risk Management at Coca-Cola
	• Mrs. Jacqueline Higginbottom	• Parent Advisor and Certified Nurse Practitioner
	• Gina Robles	• Assistant Principal
Faculty and Staff	• David Plumer	• Middle School ELA Teacher
	• Julie Pollock	• PreK 4 Teacher
	• Renee Oliveti	• Extended Day Aide



St. Stephen Catholic School Plan Overview

The Administration, Faculty, and Staff of St. Stephen Catholic School are committed to welcoming students and families back to a faith-filled and safe school community. Below you will find guidelines that will be implemented to ensure a successful 2020-2021 school year. Please note that this is a living document that will be revised according to the current CDC, Health Department, and Diocesan Guidelines.

St. Stephen Catholic School is prepared to receive students in person on campus beginning August 10th, 2020. In certain circumstances, some students may need to continue learning from home, utilizing a flexible learning model. If during the year a student must shift from In-person, On-campus Learning to Flexible Learning, any appropriate synchronous instruction will begin on day three of the student's Flexible Learning experience to ensure adequate lead time for the student, parent/guardian(s), and teacher. Families may switch from in-person to Flexible Learning at any time throughout the school year*, given their need is COVID-related, as defined by the School. The Flexible Learning option will remain in place as long as COVID-19 continues to be a concern, as determined by the St. Stephen Catholic School administration in consultation with local and state governments and the Diocese of St. Petersburg Office of Schools and Centers. Complete the [linked form](#) to request your child utilize the [Flexible Learning Plan](#).

Temporary Transition to Online/Distance Learning

All or some grades at St. Stephen Catholic School may temporarily move to online/distance learning at some point throughout the year, depending on the level of viral transmission in the school or local community and after consultation with public health authorities and the Office of Catholic Schools of the Diocese of St. Petersburg. In this instance, we would implement the "Mandated Distance Learning" plan included in this document.

Tuition

Tuition will be the same whether a student attends class in-person or opts for the flexible learning plan. Should face-to-face learning be suspended due to a COVID-19 local outbreak, tuition will not be discounted or refunded.

**as long as Flexible Learning remains an option due to the COVID-19 pandemic*



In-Person, On-Campus Learning Details

St. Stephen Catholic School will resume in-person, on-campus teaching and learning for the 2020-2021 school year.

Morning Care starts at 6:30 am Monday-Friday.

Classrooms open at 7:30 am.

School begins at 7:50 am.

➤ Drop Off/Pick Up Procedures

St. Stephen Catholic School will implement a staggered drop-off until further notice. All students will be dropped off on the sidewalk closest to the Angel's Wing gate and proceed directly to their classroom. Morning carline for K-8 students will run from 7:30 am through 7:45 am. The preschool carline will run from 7:50 am through 8 am. Preschool parents will walk their child to the preschool playground gate, where a teacher or aide will be present to supervise students going into their classrooms. Preschool parents must wear a mask when walking their child to the playground gate.

SSCS will use a new app system from [Pickmykid](#) to streamline the pick-up process and eliminate the mixing of students during car line. More information will be coming soon.

➤ Classroom Procedures

Students in grades 1-8 will be required to wear a mask in the school building whenever social distancing is not possible. Kindergarten students will also be required to have a mask at school every day, but will only wear them in certain situations.

Classrooms will be set up to maximize social distancing with desks separated as much as possible. The American Academy of Pediatrics suggests that when students are wearing face coverings, desks as close as three feet apart have around the same social distancing effect as those that are placed six feet apart (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2020). However, whenever possible, teachers will seek to maintain six feet of distance between students.

Students in each class will be treated as a cohort "isolating" within their classroom rather than moving throughout the school for encore classes and events. When different teachers need to teach a class that is not their homeroom, the teacher will move to the new classroom rather than having the class move. These teachers will maintain a strict six feet of social distance from students when in their classroom. All other adults and visitors will be restricted from entering a classroom except in the case of an emergency. Also, classes will be encouraged to spend more time outside utilizing the school property to conduct classes and free-time outdoors whenever possible.



Students will have individual supplies in labeled containers (such as pencil boxes) kept in their desks or cubbies in the classroom rather than sharing classroom supplies to minimize unnecessary cross-contamination. All high-touch surfaces in the classroom will be sanitized multiple times throughout the day. Group work will be conducted by implementing collaborative technology whenever possible, and a whole-class or independent model will be used when this is not possible. If groups must work together, the teacher will have the group spread out on the floor to maintain a minimum of three feet between each student.

St. Stephen Catholic School is budgeting some of the CARES Act funds towards the purchase of additional class sets of Chromebooks. Once these devices are available, students in grades 2-3 will be assigned a Chromebook for their use in the classroom to eliminate the sharing of technology. Students in grades 4-5 will use the class sets of Chromebooks currently available at school. Students in grades 6-8 have their own Chromebooks, which are used at school and at home.

Each classroom will have a shelf or “mailbox” next to the door of the classroom for deliveries. Items needing to be delivered to the classroom will be left on the shelf for the teacher or instructional assistant to collect and deliver.

Teachers will use a staggered system for students to visit cubbies and lockers to avoid crowding and ensure safe social distancing.

➤ Lunch/Recess Procedures

Until it is safe to return to standard school procedures, lunch procedures will look different. St. Stephen Catholic School will not offer a lunch program until that point. If a student forgets their lunch, parents will be contacted and asked to bring a lunch to school. The school will still offer pre-packaged ice cream on Fridays. We are working with our local committee to outline the best procedures for where each class will eat lunch. This section will be updated as procedures are determined.

Birthday treats and lunch visits will be suspended until further notice. Parents may purchase pre-packaged ice cream treats for the class as an alternative.

Recess will be staggered to only one class on the playground at a time. Classes will not mix during recess. According to the AAP, “Enforcing physical distancing in an outside playground is difficult and may not be the most effective method of risk mitigation. Emphasis should be placed on cohorting students and limiting the size of groups participating in playground time. Outdoor transmission of the virus is known to be much lower than indoor transmission” (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2020).



➤ Celebration of Mass

St. Stephen Catholic School is dedicated to ensuring students and staff celebrate Mass during the school year. We will begin the year by streaming live Mass celebrations into the classroom. All classes will participate in the Mass through live stream until further notice.

➤ Communal Spaces

Communal spaces, such as the media center and the art room, will not be used by classes until further notice. There may be times when small groups will need space to work when these rooms are utilized. In these cases, the area will be disinfected and sanitized after use.

➤ Visitors/volunteers

St. Stephen Catholic School will plan for appropriate times for volunteers to come to campus and will work to provide service hours to families that do not include personal contact with students or staff. Until further notice, no visitors or volunteers will be allowed past the front office into the building. Whenever possible, parents should attempt to resolve issues through phone calls, emails, and virtual meetings. If a visitor must come inside the building, they must wear a mask at all times and should limit the time spent in the office as much as possible.

Flexible Learning Plan Details

St. Stephen Catholic School is committed to continuous learning for all students while protecting the vulnerable. For this reason, we will offer a Flexible Learning Plan for K-8 students and families who have a need. If a family has reservations about returning to begin the 2020-2021 school year, they must inform the school in writing by August 1st, 2020, using the [Flexible Learning Request Form](#).

If during the school year, a student must shift from In-Person, On-Campus Learning to the Flexible Learning option, **any appropriate synchronous (live-streamed) instruction** will begin on day 3 of the student's Flexible Learning experience. This will ensure that the students, teachers, and families have adequate time to prepare for schedules and establish proper home technology set-up.



Families have the option to switch from In-Person Learning to Flexible Learning at any time throughout the school year, given their need is COVID-19 related as defined by the DOSP. The Flexible Learning option will remain in place as long as COVID-19 continues to be a concern as determined by the DOSP Task Force. Although families will have the option to switch to Flexible Learning at any time during the school year, reentry points for In-Person Learning will be determined by the school at specific windows of time such as the beginning, mid-point, and conclusion of an academic trimester.

All students K-8 opting for the flexible learning plan will participate in the live-streaming of math and ELA. Other core classes, such as social studies, science, and religion, will also be live-streamed for students in grades 3-8. Live-streaming for these core subjects for students in grades K-2 will be decided on a case-by-case basis, depending on the student's individual needs.

The Flexible Learning Plan is not to be confused with remote learning. Flexible Learning student schedules remain the same as on-campus schedules.

	Flexible Learning Pan	Mandated Distance Learning
Definition	Educational alternative designed to support students and families that are out temporarily due to COVID-19 related concerns. Whenever possible, it will align to the in-person learning experience on campus but may lag a few days during the initial onset for students and teachers to adjust to a new way of delivering content.	Educational alternative to in-person learning when it is mandated by the Bishop and/or government and health officials that it isn't safe to open schools for the majority of students to return on campus.
Who does this affect?	A small percentage of the overall student population will be involved. Students who must quarantine for 14 days or longer should use this option. Also, students who must isolate due to health conditions or to protect vulnerable family members may also use this option.	An entire class, grade level, or school is involved.

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What does this look like for students?

Students engaged in flexible learning will maintain a daily connection with their teachers and classmates through live-streamed classes and Google Meets.

What does this look like for parents?

Parents must designate an adult in the home who will help facilitate and monitor the student's classes and schoolwork.

What does this look like for teachers?

Teachers are providing simultaneous instruction to both in-person and flexible learning students. A designated staff member will be assigned to facilitate the student and teacher's flexible learning plan. Teachers will check in with each child individually a minimum of one time per week during flexible learning.

Students engaged in remote learning will maintain a connection to their teachers and classmates using collaborative technology such as Google Classroom, Google Meet, and other online tools. Classes may be synchronous or asynchronous.

Parents must designate an adult in the home who will help facilitate and monitor the student's classes and schoolwork.

Teachers are providing instruction to all students exclusively in a virtual environment.

The math behind bridge construction (Counting, grouping, weighing, and multiplying):

1. Counted and grouped popsicles in 20s to separate 200 (max).
2. Count and label all available elephants (19 grown and 6 babies).
3. Weight in grams (g) all available elephants.
4. Group them by weight: 50g, 75g, 125g and 275g.
5. Multiply the weight by the quantity then add them together.
 1. $50g * 14 + 75g * 1 + 125g * 1 + 275g * 4 = 2000g$



Elephants (g)				
1. 75	50	75	125	275
2. 50	14	1	1	4
3. 50	75g	125g	100g	
4. 50				
5. 50				
6. 25				
7. 25				
8. 50				
9. 50				
10. 50				
11. 50				
12. 25				
13. 25				
14. 50				
15. 50				
16. 50				
17. 50				
18. 50				
19. 25 (6 babies)				
20. 25				



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Mandated Distance Learning

In the event that the Bishop mandates school campus closures, St. Stephen Catholic School will provide instructional continuity through remote learning. Following a schedule of synchronously-streamed core classes, and independent work for encore classes, students will access content and submit work through Google Classroom or RenWeb LMS as directed by their teachers. In this model, teachers will focus on lessons that embrace a whole group assignment style where concepts are taught and practiced together before any independent work is expected.

Mandated Distance Learning: A Hybrid Blend of Learning Online Together and Working Offline Independently



What this looks like for students and teachers:

- Students engage in a mix of online and offline learning experiences.
- Some of these experiences take place at a set time together (synchronous).
- Some experiences are completed independently.



Requirements for families:

- Have technology access and a sufficient data plan
- Support a set schedule of "classes" or learning experiences.
- Manage learning experiences and potentially answer and support student questions.



Requirements for teachers:

- Set up online and offline learning experiences.
- Lead online learning experiences.
- Support families through the online and offline learning process.

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Comprehensive Safety Plan

Parents will be required to sign a waiver for their child to begin the school year in-person, on-campus.

➤ Illness and Symptom Guidelines

Parents must be diligent in keeping their children home when they are ill. According to the CDC, children may be less likely to have a fever, may be less likely to present with fever as an initial symptom, and may have only gastrointestinal tract symptoms. Therefore, parents must watch their children for any possible symptoms of illness before sending them to school. Parents may be asked to complete a daily symptom screening form before sending their child to school each day.

Parents will submit a simple daily digital screening acknowledgment prior to drop-off, and students will be screened for symptoms when entering the classroom with a non-contact forehead thermometer. Students with a fever of 100.4 or higher will be escorted to the nurse's station in the front office and parents contacted. In addition, students displaying any other symptoms of COVID-19 will be brought to the front office for parents to further screening.

According to the CDC, children with COVID-19 may experience the following signs or symptoms over the course of the disease:

- Fever
- Cough
- Nasal congestion or rhinorrhea
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath
- Diarrhea
- Nausea or vomiting
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Myalgia/Muscle Pain
- Poor feeding or poor appetite

Less common symptoms in most cases are diarrhea, nausea/vomiting; however, these symptoms may be more common as presenting symptoms in children (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020).

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➤ Drnking Fountains

Drinking fountains will be off limits until further notice. Students must bring a refillable water bottle to use throughout the day. Students now have access to a touchless water bottle filling station in the main building.



➤ Face Mask Guidelines

All SSCS faculty and staff will be required to wear face coverings when inside the school building and when social distancing is not possible until further notice. In addition, students in grades one through eight will be required to wear face coverings when inside the school building. Kindergarten students will also be required to have a mask at school every day, but will only wear them in certain situations. Re-usable cloth masks or neck gators are available from many local retailers as well as online stores. St. Stephen Catholic School recommends parents work with their child to find a mask that the child is comfortable wearing for more extended periods of time.

Masks must be taken home to be washed daily. Parents should provide a sealed, plastic Tupperware-type container for storing the mask in the classroom when not being worn.



Please provide a sealable plastic container, as pictured here, for your child to store their mask while at school.

Please refer to the following guidance from the CDC on cloth face coverings, including how to make, wear, and wash cloth face coverings: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>.

➤ Hygiene Guidelines

According to the AAP, “The main mode of COVID-19 spread is from person to person, primarily via droplet transmission. For this reason, strategies for infection prevention should center around this form of spread, including physical distancing, face coverings, and hand hygiene” (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2020). In following this guidance, all students/staff are required to wash hands after using the bathroom, before and after meals, and before and after the use of the playground or P.E. equipment. Hand sanitizer will be used when soap and water are not readily available.

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Prior to entering a classroom, teachers and staff will be required to wash their hands thoroughly or use hand sanitizer. After they leave the class, they will wash their hands again.

➤ Social Distancing

Throughout the school building, students, faculty, and staff work to maintain social distance whenever possible. Teachers and instructional assistants will maintain a six-foot distance from students whenever possible and will adhere to a strict six-foot social distance when interacting with other adults. Teachers who must teach in more than one classroom will be especially vigilant in maintaining social distancing from both students and staff. The AAP recommends other risk-mitigation strategies in place of strict social distancing enforcement for younger students, such as sanitation and increased vigilance in hand hygiene (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2020).

➤ Sanitation (Cleaning and Disinfecting Guidelines)

The school will have a full-time maintenance employee dedicated to the school buildings who will be going through the school building to clean and sanitize throughout the day. The school cleaning company will be cleaning and sanitizing nightly. In addition, teachers and aides will disinfect and sanitize frequently touched surfaces in the classroom multiple times per day (door handles, light switches, etc...).

Extended Day

St. Stephen Catholic School will offer morning care and aftercare with modified procedures. Groups will be smaller and separated into different rooms to reduce the exposure to multiple people. Students will be re-screened with a touchless thermometer before entering their assigned extended day location and must wash their hands before entering.

All students and staff in extended day must wear face masks at all times when indoors. Students must bring their own snack and drink to extended day until further notice, and snacks will only be eaten outdoors. Students and staff will wash their hands thoroughly before and after snack as well as every hour during extended day. Parents will remain outside the extended day door when picking up and dropping off, and a staff member will bring the child to the parent.

Extracurricular Activities

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Diocese of St. Petersburg



St Stephen Catholic School

Extracurricular activities that require mixing of students from different classes or grade levels will be offered virtually whenever possible. If that is not feasible, the activity will be canceled until it is safe to resume normal activities.

St. Stephen Catholic School will be guided by the decisions of the Diocese of St. Petersburg regarding our sports program.



**WE ARE ALL IN THIS
TOGETHER!
GO MUSTANGS!!!**

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Revised 7/14/20



Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What if there is a confirmed COVID19 infection on campus?

A. Parents must notify the school office if a student or family member of a student tests positive for COVID-19. If we are notified of a positive case of COVID-19 from a parent or staff member, St. Stephen Catholic School will follow the directions given by Local Health Department and consult with the Office of Schools and Centers. SSCS will follow all CDC and Health Department protocols to sanitize or temporarily close any at-risk areas of campus. All or some grades at St. Stephen Catholic School may temporarily move to online/distance learning at some point throughout the year, depending on the level of viral transmission in the school or local community and after consultation with public health authorities and the Office of Catholic Schools of the Diocese of St. Petersburg.

Q. Who qualifies for Flexible Learning?

A. Students who must observe a quarantine due to COVID-19 or students who must observe strict social distancing due to their unique medical or familial needs are eligible to participate in flexible learning. To request the Flexible Learning Plan for your child, please fill out the [request form](#) and send it to grobles@sscsfl.org by August 1st.

Q. Will my child remain in one classroom throughout the day?

Yes, students will be with a “cohort” of their classmates throughout the day. Teachers will be encouraged to utilize the school grounds to take classes outside when possible where they can remove their masks and stay well apart. Encore teachers will come to each classroom to teach their class rather than the class coming to them while maintaining a strict minimum of 6 feet away from students.

Q. What if my child is out of school for a day or two, but not with COVID-19? Can they use the Flexible learning Plan?

A. Students who are ill with a mild, common childhood illness or away due to travel for one or more days would not utilize the flexible learning plan. In this case, parents should follow the normal absence policy procedures found in the Parent-Student Handbook by notifying the front office of the reason for the absence (see chart below). Students will make up any missed assignments upon their return to school. See the chart below for more detail. Any student

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who is absent due to illness displaying any possible symptoms related to COVID-19 must have a note from their pediatrician that they have been screened for possible COVID-19 infection before returning to school.

	Short-term Absence	COVID-related
Examples	<p>Student remains home from school for a day or more due to mild, common childhood illnesses.</p> <p>Student is away due to travel, extracurricular activities, etc.</p>	<p>Student is observing a 14-day quarantine per CDC guidelines due to a household member's travel to a COVID hotspot.</p> <p>Student is observing strict social distancing due to their or a household member being immunocompromised.</p>
Timeline	Case by case	14 days or more
How to Notify the School	Call/email the school office or submit absence notification form on the school website.	Call/email school Administration to initiate the process of beginning a flexible learning plan.
Content Delivery	<p>Students will receive class content and assignments from teachers. Any missed assessments may be made up upon the student's return to school.</p>	<p>Once administration is notified, and the request approved, the student will be enrolled in the Flexible Learning Plan.</p> <p>If materials are not with the student, the family may arrange for contact-free pick up at the school.</p>

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