

COVID-19 Mitigation Plan for Reopening St. Joseph Catholic School



ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC SCHOOL | 750 PEACHTREE STREET, HERNDON, VA. 20170 | P: 703.880.4350

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COVID-19 Mitigation Plan for Reopening St. Joseph Catholic School

Overview:

The St. Joseph Catholic School Reopening Plan reflects collaboration among the reopening team members, and recognizes the benefits to students of live, in-person instruction, and also respects the obligation of parents and caregivers to return to work. All relevant stakeholders were given voice in the process; parents were surveyed twice and faculty and staff were consulted through ZOOM meetings and were invited to comment.

In addition, the reopening team members appreciate that COVID-19 continues to be a community health threat, and attention has been given to creating a plan that is based on the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), follows the reopening guidance articulated by the Phase Guidance for Virginia Schools, published June 15, 2020, and implements personal behavior and social distancing precautions to minimize risk to students and staff.

St. Joseph Catholic School plans to reopen school in August 2020, with all students in attendance. Our combined church and school facility allows for all students to be in attendance and maintain all mitigation strategies delineated in the Phase Guidance for Virginia Schools. Students who are high-risk for serious infection, or who have contact with family members who are at high-risk for serious infection will have the option for a virtual learning environment, or other multi-faceted instructional (hybrid) learning model.

Essential Elements

- St. Joseph Catholic School seeks to open the 2020-2021 school year in August 2020, with all students in attendance.
- Groups of students stay together throughout school days and groups do not mix.
- Students remain 6 feet apart, to the greatest extent possible, in classrooms and do not share objects
- All students will wear face covering at arrival and dismissal, and at other times where social distance is difficult to maintain, or at the direction of the teacher.
- Parents will check student temperatures daily.
- Daily faculty and staff health survey.
- Afternoon dismissal will be staggered; morning arrival is organically staggered.
- Teachers and staff will wear face shields with or without additional mask.
- No large gatherings of students are permitted. Recess is limited to 50 students in Hall A parking lot and in the lot by the gym doors
- CDC recommendations for maintaining a healthy environment are followed.

1. Planning to reopen

- A. Establish a COVID-19 team within the school division and a point person at each school facility.

The St. Joseph Catholic School COVID-19 reopening team: Father Tom Bourque, T.O.R, Pastor; Denise Rutledge, Principal; Anne Ezenwa, RN; Danny Rucker, Facility Director

- B. Know the contact information and procedures for reaching the local health department.

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C. Plan for health and absenteeism monitoring.

The registrar or other front office personnel keeps track of all student absentees and also forwards this information to the nurse daily, with the reason for the absence, if known. When appropriate the nurse follows up with the families for directives on when to return to school. The nurse will notify the local health department about large increases in student and staff absenteeism, particularly if absences appear due to respiratory illnesses (like the common cold or the “flu,” which have symptoms similar to COVID-19).

Consecutive days absence report can be run daily to track students who are absent more than one day. Students and employees will be actively encouraged to stay home when they are sick. In order to discourage parents from sending their children to school sick, the attendance award will be suspended.

D. Develop a communications strategy that includes:

- i. Orientation and training for staff and students specific to new COVID-19 mitigation strategies;

Teachers and Staff will undergo full orientation and training relative to COVID-19 mitigation strategies during the week prior to the opening of school. Training will be provided by the school nurse and will include best practices for preventing the spread of COVID-19. Students will receive training from their teachers during the first day and week of school.

- ii. Plans for communication with staff, parents, and students of new policies;

Appropriate methods of communication are well-established within the St. Joseph Catholic School community and include Constant Contact, SchoolMessenger, email, website, social media platforms Twitter and Facebook, and each is accessible by all constituent groups including parents, students, faculty and staff, building staff, and administrative staff including Church offices. Only the pastor and/or the principal can authorize official communications or changes in policies on behalf of St. Joseph Catholic School.

Communication on new policies with staff, parents, and students continues to be through twice weekly Constant Contact. Additionally, staff will meet in person or over ZOOM as appropriate to share updates and information. Students will receive information and updates on new policies from their parents, as primary care-givers, or from teachers, administration or nursing staff as warranted. Email/phone blast from SchoolMessenger is also available for emergency and immediate broadcast.

iii. Plans for how to communicate an outbreak or positive cases detected at the school.

Communication on behalf of St. Joseph Catholic School remains the purview of the pastor and/or principal. Communication of a COVID-19 outbreak will come after consultation between the Principal, Pastor and Nurse, and in conjunction with the Office of Catholic Schools. The school nurse will communicate with the Health Departments, while the Principal and Pastor will confer on official statements disseminated to the parents, students, faculty, building staff, church staff and the wider community. The Principal will communicate directly with the Office of Catholic Schools, and act as point of contact for all other communications.

E. Participate in community response efforts

St. Joseph Catholic School will participate in community response efforts by sharing information relative to COVID-19 within the school. St. Joseph Catholic School will work closely with St. Joseph Catholic Church to ensure adequate response to protect the wider SJS/SJC community and the Herndon community as well. This includes, but

is not limited to the sharing of information and resources as appropriate, and as authorized by the pastor and/or the principal.

F. Prepare your division's student health services:

- i. Assure provision of medical-grade PPE for health services staff;

Under the direction and supervision of the school nurse, medical grade masks, gowns, shoe covers, face shields, and gloves have been ordered in quantities sufficient to meet the needs of the health services staff.

- ii. Assure and maintain typical (non-COVID-19) health services;

First Aid:

Minor first aid situations will be handled in the classroom by the student under the direction of the teacher with physical distancing in place. This is to prevent the clinic from student congregation and possible cross exposure. Each classroom teacher will be provided with extra supplies of gloves, band aids etc. The goal is to keep healthy students out of the clinic where they can be exposed to illness.

Teachers will be instructed to inform the nurse/clinic prior to sending a student to the clinic if they are unsure of how to handle the minor first aid incident and in general before sending any student to the clinic. This allows the nurse to don the appropriate PPE and prepare the space for the student before they arrive at the clinic.

Appropriate Clinic Visit	May Consider Classroom-Based
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Symptoms of COVID-19 ● Scheduled medications that may not be delivered in class, allow physical distancing; stagger times ● Avulsed tooth ● Scheduled Specialized Physical Health Care Procedures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Diabetic care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Scheduled medications where the nurse may deliver to the students in the classroom. ● To the extent possible, students self-administer medication that may be self-carried by law -if approved by physician & nurse

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Catheterization ▪ G-Tube Feedings ● Altered levels of consciousness/ concussion ● Difficulty breathing ● Head injury/complaining of neck pain- DO NOT move, keep the student calm. Call 9-1-1 ● Sudden vision impairment ● Diabetic “lows” or unconscious ● SEVERE bleeding or other traumatic injury; Call 9-1-1 ● Severe abdominal/groin pain ● Seizure (uncontrolled movement) do not hold down, remove objects that may cause injury (Action plan will be followed as directed by physician) ● Signs and symptoms of Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C), which may include rash, swollen red eyes, hands, and feet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Minor Toothache / Primary Tooth comes out ● Small paper cuts, abrasions, picked scabs ● Wound care/ Ice pack for small bumps/bruises ● Localized bug bites. ● Minor headache or fatigue with no other symptoms (teacher to encourage student to drink some water & rest head on table, have a snack, if no relief after 20-30 minutes, send student to the clinic). ● Mild stomachache or nausea that resolves in less than 20 minutes ● Readily controlled nosebleeds, where the student can deliver self- care. ● Anxiety/stress/psychological issue- try calming techniques and/or contact school psychologist or counselor
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iii. For the provision of mental health services.

School counselors will serve as the point of contact regarding student and parent social-emotional well-being. The school master schedule will provide time for dedicated weekly meetings between students and counselors in a class setting, with opportunities for students to meet with counselors individually, or in small groups. The well-being of parents as well as faculty and staff is supported by timely and accurate communication from administration, allowing all stakeholders to have a voice, as appropriate.

Additionally, Counselors have evaluated appropriate social-emotional curriculum materials to provide continuity across grade levels in messaging that supports student social-emotional health. Counselors will continue to hold parent ZOOM meetings to facilitate communication regarding parent stress issues and ways the school can support parents.

2. Promoting Behaviors That Reduce Spread of COVID-19

A. Create an education/training plan for staff, students and families. Consider COVID-19 prevention education (hand washing, staying home if ill, etc.). Education should be part of staff and student orientations and to be sent to all parties before reopening schools and include:

- Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette,
- Use of cloth face coverings,
- Staying home when sick,
- Encouraging physical distancing.

St. Joseph Catholic School will conduct continuous training on hand-washing, face coverings, staying home when sick and social distancing. Training will include in-person training of faculty and staff during the week before school starts. Ongoing training will include information provided to parents on an continual basis through established means of communication mentioned above.

B. Maintain adequate supplies to promote healthy hygiene.

St. Joseph Catholic School maintains a basic supply (see list). Supplies sufficient for 6 months have been ordered. Supply use will be monitored and inventoried and restocked as needed.

C. Provide signs and messaging to promote healthy hygiene.

Hygiene signage will be placed in restrooms and in appropriate locations to remind students of the importance of handwashing. Signage reminding students of social

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distancing and best practices to reduce the spread of the virus will be throughout the school. Morning school-wide news broadcasts (WSJS) will be used as a communication tool to remind and reinforce best practices in students and staff.

D. Promote physical distancing

- i. Modify layouts of classrooms, communal areas and buses to ensure social distancing is maintained.

Classrooms have been set up to maintain 6' of clearance for each student, to the greatest extent possible. Satellite classrooms are also set with the 6' rule in place for all students

- ii. Develop strategies for food/dining services; these should be consistent with plans to optimize physical distancing.

Lunch will be in each classroom to help keep the interactions at a minimum between classrooms. No hot lunch will be provided during COVID-19.

- iii. Limit size of gatherings consistent with Executive Orders and impose strict physical distancing place during gatherings.

St. Joseph Catholic School has complied with, and will continue to comply with all Executive Orders from the Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

- iv. Follow relevant Virginia Phase Guidance for Schools and CDC guidance for recreational sports, for school-related sports, and other recreational activities.

St. Joseph Catholic School will comply with the guidance provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as published on the website, with respect to school sports and activities. Coaches will be asked to undergo mitigation training in the same manner as faculty and staff, and the SJS CYO commissioner will collaborate with the principal, pastor and facility manager to develop the mitigation plan that will be shared with CYO coaches.

3. Maintaining Healthy Environments

A. Plan for daily health screening questions of staff and students.

Hygiene Practices:

- i. Create cleaning and disinfection protocols that include frequently touched surfaces; transport vehicles; schedules for increased cleaning, routine cleaning, and disinfection; ensuring adequate cleaning supplies and correct use/storage.

St. Joseph Catholic School will follow all CDC requirements for cleaning and disinfection. We will have staff for day and night cleaning to maintain the high standard of cleanliness.

- ii. Provide additional hand sanitizer/handwashing stations.

All classroom have hand sanitizers installed in each room. Additional bottles of hand-sanitizer will be available in each classroom, along with wall-mounted stations.

- iii. Ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing to the extent possible (e.g. dedicated student supplies, lab equipment, computers, etc).

Each room will have its own supplies. In addition, students will provide dedicated bags of student supplies (pencils, crayons), as well as individual bags of manipulatives and other student learning tools, as needed. Sharing will be minimized and hand washing between uses will be part of normal routine.

- iv. Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible.

All rooms will have the maximum fresh air allowed and/or the weather condition allow.

- v. Ensure that water systems and features are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown.

Water system already tested and safe to use after prolonged facility shutdown.

4. Maintaining Healthy Operations

- A. Implement protections for staff and children at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

Students and employees at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 should check with their healthcare provider before returning to work or school

People of any age with certain underlying medical conditions are at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19, (CDC)

People of any age with the following conditions are at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19, (CDC)

- Chronic kidney disease
- COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
- Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from solid organ transplant
- Obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 30 or higher)
- Serious heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies
- Sickle cell disease
- Type 2 diabetes mellitus

Per CDC, Children who are medically complex, who have neurologic, genetic, metabolic conditions, or who have congenital heart disease are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 than other children.

Protections for Staff and Children at Higher Risk for Severe Illness from COVID-19 are as follows: Options for staff at high risk (including older adults, and people of all ages with certain underlying medical conditions) such as telework, modified job responsibilities that limit their exposure risk will be provided as feasible. Options for students at high risk such as virtual learning opportunities will be provided as feasible. The privacy of all people regarding their underlying medical condition will be protected

- B. Align plans for gatherings, field trips and volunteer restrictions consistent with any Executive Order in place.

St. Joseph Catholic School will align plans for gatherings, field trips and volunteerism consistent with Executive Orders.

- C. Implement sick leave policies and practices that enable faculty, staff and students to stay home or self-isolate when they are sick or have been exposed.

Sick leave policies for school employees are defined by the human resource department of the Diocese of Arlington and allow for employee leave while ill. Students and faculty and staff should remain home if they feel ill.

An important part of keeping schools safe is actively encouraging sick staff and students to stay home if they are ill.

- D. Develop policies for return to class/work after COVID-19 illness.

Persons with COVID-19 who have symptoms, and were directed to care for themselves at home may discontinue isolation under the following conditions (CDC):

- 10 days since symptoms first appeared **and**
- 24 hours with no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and**
- Other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving*

**Loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation*

Persons with COVID-19 who have symptoms, tested positive and were directed to care for themselves at home may discontinue isolation under the following conditions(CDC):

- Resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications

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- Improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath)
- Total of two negative test results collected ≥ 24 hours apart

Persons who tested positive for COVID-19 but had no symptoms (CDC update as of August 16):

- “If you continue to have no symptoms, you can be with others **after 10 days have passed since you had a positive viral test for COVID-19**. Most people do not require testing to decide when they can be around others; however, if your healthcare provider recommends testing, they will let you know when you can resume being around others based on your test results”. However, **If you develop symptoms after testing positive, follow the guidance above for “person with COVID-19 with symptoms”**

If you are severely ill with COVID-19 or have a severely weakened immune system (immunocompromised) due to a health condition or medication. When can I be around others?

- “People who are severely ill with COVID-19 might need to **stay home longer than 10 days and up to 20 days after symptoms first appeared**. [Persons who are severely immunocompromised](#) may require testing to determine when they can be around others. Talk to your healthcare provider for more information” CDC.

People exposed to a person with COVID-19, within or < 6 feet of space for 15 minutes, are advised to stay home per CDC guidelines and self-monitor for symptoms and follow CDC guidance if symptoms develop. Per CDC guidelines, data is insufficient to precisely define the duration of time that constitutes a prolonged exposure. Symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure to the virus**. If a student or staff has a family member who is sick with COVID, **they** should stay home, call their health care provider, notify the school and follow their healthcare provider & CDC guidelines (stay home for 14 days after last exposure, self-monitor for symptoms including temperature checks).

Students and staff returning to school after an absence due to COVID-19 related illness may report to school with one of the following criteria met:

- The individual tested negative for COVID-19 with documentation of negative result and is otherwise well enough to go back to school **OR**
- The individual was seen by a healthcare provider who documents that she/he is COVID free and cleared to return to school and the healthcare provider has documented a reason for the symptoms other than COVID-19 **OR**
- All are true: 1) at least 10 days since the start of symptoms AND 2) fever free **WITHOUT** anti-fever medicines for **24 hours** AND 3) symptoms are getting better

St. Joseph Catholic School requires clearance from healthcare provider to return to school.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-in-home-patients.html>

People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever (100 degrees F) or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

CDC will continue to update this list

E. Train back-up staff to ensure continuity of operations.

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Substitute teachers are identified, and hired to ensure continuity of operations. Remote learning options will be available to students who represent high-risk populations, or who are in self-quarantine, active illness, or in recovery phases.

5. Protecting vulnerable individuals (e.g. 65+, underlying health conditions):

A. Create policy options to support those at higher risk for severe illness to limit their exposure risk (e.g. telework, modified job duties, virtual learning opportunities).

Reasonable accommodations will be afforded to all at-risk employees, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

B. Implement flexible sick leave policies and practices that enable faculty, staff and students to stay home or self-isolate when they are sick or have been exposed.

Sick leave policies for school employees are defined by the human resource department of the Diocese of Arlington and allow for leave while ill. Remote learning options while students isolate or self-quarantine after exposure, or during recovery are available.

C. Develop policies for return to class/work after COVID-19 illness.:

Vulnerable individuals who are ready to return to work/school after exposure or illness should follow policies noted above for return to school/work.

6. Preparing for When Someone Gets Sick

A. Separate and isolate those who present with symptoms:

The nurse/clinic staff should be notified prior to the arrival of a sick student/staff to the clinic. The individual should be masked prior to coming to the clinic. If the individual is unable to walk to the clinic alone, the nurse should be notified so that she may walk down donned in appropriate PPE to assist the individual to the clinic. The individual will be taken to the isolation room for assessment, if the individual falls into the criteria for signs of COVID related symptoms, the individual will remain in the isolation room while the parent/family member is immediately contacted. If symptoms

are emergent warning signs such as: trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion, inability to wake or stay awake, bluish lips or face (this list is not all the possible symptoms), 911 will be called. Operator will be notified that we are seeking care for someone who may have COVID-19. If an individual does not fall into the criteria for having COVID related symptoms, they will be treated appropriately in the clinic and sent back to class or home as needed. ***Administrators will communicate to parents and staff that anyone who is ill must be picked up within an hour or less. Hence, plans should be made ahead of time by families to list reliable emergency contact names on the emergency forms prior to the beginning of the school year.***

B. Facilitate safe transportation of those who are sick to home or healthcare facility:

If the student/staff cannot be picked up within an hour or less by the family member, the parent/family will be notified that 911 will be called for their child/family member, and the child/family member will be transported to the hospital.

C. Implement cleansing and disinfection procedures of areas used by sick individuals.

St. Joseph Catholic School will follow the CDC recommended cleaning procedure for cleaning a room after a sick person has left the facility.

D. Develop a communications plan with the local health department to initiate public health investigation, contact tracing and consultation on next steps:

After consultation with the principal and/or pastor, the nurse will contact the public health department when she is notified that a student or staff member tested positive or has been diagnosed with COVID-19 signs and symptoms.
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/principles-contact-tracing.html>

- In contact tracing, public health staff works with a patient (student or staff member) to help them recall everyone with whom they have

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had close contact during the timeframe while they may have been infectious.

- Public health staff then warn these exposed individuals (contacts) of their potential exposure as rapidly and sensitively as possible.
- Contacts are only informed that they may have been exposed to a patient with the infection, they are not told the identity of the patient who may have exposed them.
- Contacts are provided with education, information, and support to understand their risk, what they should do to separate themselves from others who are not exposed, monitor themselves for illness, and the possibility that they could spread the infection to others even if they themselves do not feel ill.
- Contacts are encouraged to stay home and maintain physical social distance from others (at least 6 feet) until 14 days after their last exposure, in case they also become ill. They should monitor themselves by checking their temperature twice daily and watching for cough or shortness of breath. To the extent possible, public health staff should check in with contacts to make sure they are self-monitoring and have not developed symptoms. Contacts who develop symptoms should promptly isolate themselves and notify public health staff. They should be promptly evaluated for infection and the need for medical care.

7. Planning to close down if necessary, due to severe conditions.

- a. Determine which conditions will trigger a reduction in in-person classes.:

If the nurse notices a spike in cases of students/staff with respiratory symptoms, flu-like symptoms, etc, she will investigate and, after consultation with the principal and/or pastor, contact the local health department to re-evaluate if in person class sizes allow for a decreased risk environment or if it needs to be re-visited.

After consultation with the principal and/or pastor, the nurse will immediately notify the local health department and the diocesan school nurse once she is aware of the

presence of a COVID-19 case in the school. The local health department will determine if a temporary closure of 2-5 days per CDC guidelines is required to allow time for the local health department to contact-trace and to determine the approximate next steps. During this time, based on the local health department directives, communication is shared with the school staff families.

B. Determine which conditions will trigger complete school closure.

Complete school closure will be determined by the local health department after an overall investigation based on the current up to date information about COVID-19 and the extent of the data and cases in the community.

8. Overnight boarding schools should consult *the Virginia Higher Education Reopening Guidelines* and [guidelines for Congregate Settings](#) for additional information and recommendations.

St. Joseph Catholic School is an elementary day school. As such, there are no overnight, residential students, nor does SJS sponsor overnight field trips or other overnight activities.

The St. Joseph Catholic School reopening team has collaborated to design this COVID-19 Mitigation Plan in order to safely reopen St. Joseph Catholic School for the 2020-2021 school year. This plan represents the planning recommendations and guidelines of the Virginia Council for Private Education, in conjunction with recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and follows the reopening guidance articulated by the Phase Guidance for Virginia Schools, published June 15, 2020. However, no plan can eliminate all risk, and while administration, faculty and staff of St. Joseph Catholic School will exercise all reasonable precautions, parents assume the risk of sending their children to school.