

ST. MARK HEALTHY AT SCHOOL REOPENING GUIDELINES



2020-2021

This is a working document. As new guidelines are released, this document will be revised.



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Dear Parents and Guardians of St. Mark Students,

So much has happened since we were last together at St. Mark on March 13 and as we begin to take steps towards reopening on August 17, I want to thank God for all of the blessings he has bestowed on us. I also want to thank you for your faith, trust, and commitment to the mission of St. Mark. It is your belief in the Catholic education values that help us to sustain our school. We respect the sacrifices each family has made to send their child to St. Mark, and we will continue to put your child first in everything we do.

We know that you have many questions about what school will look like on our opening day and in the weeks that follow. To this end, we have been working diligently to develop guidelines that will answer as many of your questions as possible. Our plans will show that the health and safety of our students and faculty is paramount. We want to instill confidence that we will be providing a safe place for our students to learn and for our faculty and staff to work.

Our guidelines address screening, social distancing, sanitation, instruction provided to students, and the ways that we will continue to provide a faith-filled environment. When developing our plans we utilized the following guiding principles:

- Protection of the health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff
- Adherence to the mission and values on which our school was founded
- Maintenance of academic excellence
- Provision for student and family support
- Implementation of plans that are practical and fiscally responsible
- Observance of directives set forth by diocesan and government agencies

As we are working to welcome students back to school, please know that we still have a great deal of work to do to put all the necessary policies and procedures in place. We will have to depend on our faculty, staff, students, and parents to help us make it all happen, and we appreciate any support you can provide. These guidelines are based upon our best understanding of the available information at the present time. Adjustments in our plan will likely be made throughout the year in light of changing information from governing agencies and guidance from health authorities.

Returning to school for many will be looked at as a sign of a return to normal; however, it will be a challenge for some to understand the necessary changes we will have to put into practice. Even though we would all like things to go back to normal, we recognize that we must do what is necessary to provide a safe space for everyone. We love and miss our students and August 12 will be here before we know it. Please know of my prayers for each of you, as I ask for your prayers for me.

+Mrs. Cornett



HUMAN RESOURCES AND HEALTH OF PERSONNEL

It is very important for us to keep our faculty and staff healthy. All faculty and staff were trained in our “Healthy at Work” protocols established in May. These protocols were adapted from the diocesan “Healthy at Work” plan. Upon entering the school building, staff are required to wear a mask. They will proceed to the school office where they will take their temperature and answer screening questions. The office is supplied with hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, gloves, and additional masks.

All faculty and staff will be provided with masks. They will also have access to a range of personal protective equipment (PPE), including face shields and KN95 masks, dependent upon activity and risk of exposure. This variety of PPE available will allow staff to perform their functions in a safe and comfortable manner.

Classrooms will not mingle or be mixed with other classrooms so that a limited number of students will come in contact with any particular faculty member. Each classroom will have a list posted where staff will document when they have come in contact with that classroom. This will allow for easier contact tracing should that become necessary. Also, each teacher will keep an updated seating chart on file. As much as possible, substitute teachers will be assigned consistently to the same classrooms, to minimize the number of student groups with which they come into contact.

Each Aftercare Program staff member will be assigned to the same group of students each day he/she works. Aftercare staff will meet their group in the assigned classroom, where temperature checks will be taken, snack will be provided and structured activities, such as study hall, outdoor play, and gym time, will be scheduled until parents pick up. When picking up students from Aftercare, parents will call the designated number, and an Aftercare staff member will escort students to the front door. All of these measures are meant to protect faculty, staff, and students as much as possible by limiting exposure.

We will have a designated quarantine area in the school office for students, faculty, or staff who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 or other illness. Parents and visitors in the building will be limited as much as possible. Approved visitors include: persons with legal authority to enter (first responders, Department for Community Based Services, Division of Regulated Childcare, etc.), necessary utility workers, and professionals providing medical/therapeutic services for children with special needs. They must wear masks when approaching students, faculty or staff outside, when approaching the school building, and anytime they are inside the building.



SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Because of the school closure brought on by the pandemic, we all face uncertainty about our “new normal.” The unprecedented and swift shift to an online learning environment, and the effect of shelter-in-place orders, have impacted our students academically, socially, and emotionally. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) will be an essential focus in supporting students, parents, and staff as they rebuild relationships and re-enter the school building. St. Mark Catholic School is committed to providing a supportive learning environment where the entire community can heal from this trying experience, and develop social-emotional competencies that will help our students thrive in the future.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, “Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices.”

A Social-Emotional Learning curriculum supports students’ mental health. It provides students with strategies to cope with stress in healthy ways; to manage emotions; to set and achieve goals; to make good decisions; to establish and maintain positive relationships; and to feel and show empathy. At St. Mark, we approach mental health and social-emotional learning through the lens of faith formation and a strong relationship with Christ. All conversations regarding mental and social-emotional health are framed within the teachings of the Church.

Pre-K - 5th

- Once a week, guidance lessons will focus on the five domains of social-emotional learning: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and decision-making.
- All staff members will be assigned a group of families to contact via phone once a month to check-in, and to communicate results of those calls to administration through a Google Form. In this way data can be tracked, identifying students/families who are struggling, and used to put policies in place to help. This might include concerns about academics, social-emotional struggles, common technical problems, etc. This data will be kept confidential.
- In the event of a return to online learning, a monthly comprehensive survey will be utilized. One such survey will be taken prior to the start of school.
- The School Office will use newsletters, social media, and meetings with staff, families, and students to share how social and emotional skills and supportive environments can help children and adults adapt to the new ways of learning that may occur in school.
- In social studies and religion classes, the curriculum will be planned to engage students in developmentally appropriate conversations and lessons to discuss past, current, and future impacts of the pandemic on themselves, their families, their communities, and the world at large.
- Each teacher will facilitate classroom community meetings weekly, to check in on students’ social and emotional well-being, academic concerns, and classroom community goals.
- Students will be encouraged to express their feelings artistically.
- Movement is an important factor in positive self-management, a key SEL competency. Extended time in classrooms can cause frustration, anxiety, and even anger. Teachers will



provide at least hourly motion breaks for students within the classroom and will schedule outside time so that they are receiving plenty of fresh air.

Pre-K and Kindergarten

- Pre-K and Kindergarten teachers will provide students with simple strategies for exploring, discussing, and regulating their emotions. Read-alouds can offer an easy way to prompt conversations about how big changes make these students feel. Show-and-tell time will allow students to share something special with the class.

Grades 1 – 5

- A simple, daily survey (written or oral) from the teacher will allow for check in with each student.
- If fully online or in a hybrid learning situation, a weekly, one-on-one session between each student and his/her teacher will allow discernment of personal challenges each student is facing academically and socially, and to provide needed support.
- Faculty and staff will support students in developing relationship-building and conflict-resolution skills by helping them co-create shared agreements for their new class.
- Religion teachers will offer students an opportunity to reconnect and to create a sense of closure from the previous school year by writing letters to their former classmates or teachers, or discussing with peers how the last few months will impact their perspectives as they enter a new grade.

Faculty and Staff

In addition to the closure being demanding for students, it was also very challenging for our faculty and staff. As we transition back to in-person instruction, teachers will be faced with new challenges. It is our goal to help teachers manage their feelings and stressors while teaching, leading, and supporting students during the pandemic and beyond. This will be done in a variety of ways, including, but not limited to: planning time; weekly devotionals before faculty meetings; personal and informal check-ins with administration; the continuation of social time and celebrations; and articles and tips for self-care.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Due to the current healthcare crisis, St. Mark must implement many changes to comply with the guidelines established for school reopening. The most important priority is to protect the health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff, while maintaining an environment that is conducive to learning and working. And to be good stewards, our approach is to implement necessary precautions that are most practical and financially feasible for the school and parish.

Expenses

Additional expenses to enhance sanitization will include the potential hiring of an additional custodian; more cleaning products and supplies; new faucets; more hand sanitizer; personal protective equipment (PPE); and water bottle fillers that will attach to our present water fountains.



Also, the school will need to incorporate more technology for the classrooms in order to serve students who may be learning from home, due to choice, not feeling well, or quarantined for

possible exposure to COVID-19. Additional technology will come in the form of new repeaters throughout our facility, the purchase of online programs for literacy and math, and training for teachers to assist with synchronous and/or distance learning.

CARES Act Funding

The school is eligible for CARES Act funding. The Governor's Emergency Education Fund (GEER) and Elementary & Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) will be issued through Madison County Public Schools. Funds from those sources can be used for distance learning, sanitization, technology, mental health curriculum, and professional development. Through our licensed Pre-K program, we are eligible to receive funds through the CARES ACT Capacity Stipend to assist with compliance with all preschool regulations. Such funds have not yet been dispensed, but details will be forthcoming once they are received.

Paycheck Protection Program

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Lexington applied for and received the Small Business Administration Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) Loans to assist the parishes and schools with payroll and benefits costs during our closure.

Fundraising

The funding that we are eligible to receive will assist us in closing the gaps in our unbalanced budget. Due to our closure since March, our fundraising has greatly suffered. Our Lenten Fish Fry and Summer Camp were not able to happen as planned. In addition, our largest fundraiser, the 12 Grand Reverse Raffle and Gala, is in jeopardy of being cancelled. Our PTO has met to discuss alternatives but is unsure of how to move forward. Many businesses that we normally call upon for assistance with this endeavor have suffered great financial losses and we did not think it prudent to attempt to solicit donations.

Contingency Plans Affecting Finances

As we look ahead to the 2020-21 school year, Diocesan Schools are planning for contingencies that may occur due to COVID-19's continued impact. We also are considering how to best serve our families and teachers in the next school year as we deal with the ongoing uncertainty.

For students in our Preschool Programs:

- If Diocesan Preschools are directed by state or local government to close for more than 10 consecutive school days during the school year due to COVID-19, Preschool students will transition to distance learning immediately. All full-time Preschool students will be transitioned to half-day for tuition purposes and will receive a credit for the difference in the tuition for the days that distance learning is occurring.



- Tuition credits will be processed on January 15, 2021 for distance learning days in the fall and June 15, 2021 for distance learning days in the spring.

For students in Kindergarten-5th Grade:

- If school closures are mandated by state or local governments during the school year, all schools will transition directly into distance learning. Families should have appropriate technology and materials available at home to prepare for distance learning over the duration of the upcoming school year.
- Because of the uncertainty with any state or locally mandated school-wide COVID-19 closures during the 2020-2021 school year, Diocesan Schools reserve the right to adjust the 2020-21 school year calendar and schedule make-up school days. In the event Diocesan Schools modify the 2020-21 school year calendar through distance learning and/or completion of make-up days, such school days will not be credited, as provided above. Tuition will not be reduced.
- We hope to offer After School Child Care services for the 2020-2021 school year. We recognize the need of many of our Diocesan Schools families to have not only a consistent 5 day per week school schedule, but after school services as well. Our goal is to provide After School Child Care Services; however, the structure and implementation of such services will be determined as we learn guidelines and ratios that will be required of our certified programs.
- Families wishing to utilize the After School Child Care program will need to sign up in advance. Those enrolled in After School Services will not be charged for services during extended government mandated school closures.

Through collaborative efforts of the Diocesan School Principals, The Superintendent, Mr. Brown, and Bishop John Stowe, we made these decisions and changes to alleviate fears and concerns and to help parents and families as we prepare for the 2020-21 school year. Due to the sudden and unexpected closure of the 2019-20 school year, tuition credits and refunds were not a feasible financial option for Diocesan Schools in light of our other continuing financial obligations and commitments.

In reaching these decisions, we recognize that, unlike weather-related school closures, any school-wide COVID-19 delays or closures will likely not occur for a single school day or week. We have given careful thought and consideration to the feedback provided by our parents, families, and teachers. These changes and decisions are made to best serve the needs of parents, families, teachers, and our schools. While we recognize the limitations of distance learning for many of the age groups we serve, we would like to applaud our faculties for their outstanding connection, intentional planning, and creative offerings throughout this shutdown. We can now make these changes for the 2020-21 school year based on our ability to plan for them.

Despite the ongoing uncertainty, we are optimistically preparing for the 2020-21 school year. We are eager to see our families, children, and teachers back at our Diocesan Schools, and we hope none of these contingencies are necessary. We are grateful for the continued support of the families and parents in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Lexington community.



SCHOOL OPERATIONS

Screening Protocols

Morning Drop-off

- Students may begin arriving at school at 7:30am. As students may not mix in common areas, there will be no early morning drop off (7:00am-7:30am) at this time.
- Parents of students in PK-5 will drive up to the school entrance and wait to have their child's temperature taken while they are still in the car.
- Students with a temperature below 100.4 may exit the car and join the waiting line. Markers on the ground will designate a safe 6 ft. distance between each waiting student.
- The front entrance will be staffed by Mrs. Sullivan and Mrs. Cornett using handheld, non-contact, infrared thermometers. Each student must have their temperature checked. No student may enter the school building if s/he has a fever (100.4°F or above).
- Pre-K and Kindergarten students are not required to wear a mask upon entrance to school, but are encouraged to wear one.
- Students in first through fifth grade must don a mask before exiting their car and until they have arrived in their classroom.

Late Arrival or Post-appointment (e.g., doctor, dentist, etc.) Drop-off

- Students, accompanied by their parent, should ring the bell for the front office and wait for a screener to arrive.
- Once cleared, the student may proceed into the building. A febrile student will leave with the parent.

Intra-day Temperature Checks

- Before lunch, classroom teachers will conduct a temperature check of each of their students.
- Any student staying at school past 3:00pm will have their temperature taken by the Aftercare staff before entering Aftercare.

Early Pick-ups

- For instances where a student is leaving early for an appointment, or because of high temperature or illness:
- The authorized pick up person should call the office or ring the front office from the front entrance and wait, without entering the building, for the student to be released.
- The authorized pick up person should be masked at the front door, and a staff member will bring the student to the door.

Dismissal

Diagrams for updated pick-up traffic flows, which differ slightly from those of prior years, will be provided to each family before the start of school.



Pre-K ½ Day Pick-up

- ½ day Pre-K students will wait with their designated teacher or aide inside the front entrance beginning at 11:30am.
- The authorized pick up person should park alongside the curb and be waiting outside the front entrance by 11:30am.
- Students will be released to their authorized pick up person one at a time.

Pre-K Afternoon Pick-up

- Pre-K students will be released one class at a time out the front doors beginning at 3:00pm.
- The order that they will be released will be: Mrs. Pearce’s class, followed by Mrs. Barnett’s class, and then Mrs. Adam’s class.
- The authorized pickup person should be parked in one of two lines outside the front entrance to the school.
- The authorized pickup person will need to exit their car and buckle their child.
- Cars must wait to move until all Pre-K students have exited the carline.

K - 5 Afternoon Pick-up

- Students in grades K-5 will be released one at a time out the side doors beginning at 3:00pm.
- Students will exit down the stairs and will follow the sidewalk around to the back of the building.
- The authorized pickup person should be parked in one of two lines outside the gym entrance to the school.
- The authorized pickup person should not exit their car unless their child needs assistance getting buckled.

PK - 5 Aftercare Pick-up

- A cell phone number of an aftercare worker will be posted on the front door. The authorized pickup person should call the number and wait for their child to be brought to the door.
- If there is no number posted, but a sign that says ‘playground’, the authorized pick up person should drive around to the playground in order to pick up their child.

Social Distancing

“Social Distancing” refers to measures being taken to restrict where and when people can gather, as a means of stopping or slowing the spread of infectious disease. Currently, the CDC recommends 6 feet as the distance that should be kept between students within high traffic areas and areas where large groups of children are located. Our individual classrooms, that are made up of a consistent set of students and staff, offer the opportunity to closely control the environment through monitoring of symptoms and adherence to policies for staff and students who are ill. Staying within our small groups will allow staff and students to build routines for best hygiene practices upon entering and leaving the classroom. Classroom teachers will utilize the best model for creating social distancing



within their classrooms based on their furniture and square footage. Every classroom will afford each child more than 35 square feet of space as recommended by the CDC and DRCC. Emphasis on consistent staffing within each classroom will be a key component in the social distancing environment. Visual aids and signage to illustrate traffic patterns in the hallways, in common areas, entrances into the building, restroom patterns, etc. will be used to help support appropriate spacing for social distancing. Infographics will be utilized to reinforce social distancing awareness throughout the building.

Masking

Students in grades 1-5 will be required to wear masks upon arrival, dismissal, and in any high-traffic areas throughout the building. When students in grades 1-5 move throughout the building, they will wear their masks: 'We move, we mask'. Once students are in their assigned classroom, and as long as 6 feet of social distancing can be established, they may take off their mask. Masks will be stored in bags on magnetic hooks attached to their desks when not being worn.

Staff will be provided with procedures for students' mask-wearing and storage throughout the day. Each student's mask should be permanently marked with his/her name. Students should wear their

masks coming into the building. Each child's mask should fit well and not hinder their vision. The pattern of their mask should not be distracting (i.e. no profane or explicit language and nothing graphic or that could be considered scary to younger students). If masks are dropped, lost, or soiled, the school will have extras on hand.

Masks are not currently required for Pre-K or Kindergarten students. However, as more information is available about COVID-19, it is clear that mask wearing helps to prevent the spread of the disease. If Pre-K or K students wish to wear a mask, they are more than welcome to do so. However, this is not a requirement that teachers in those classes will enforce at this time.

Handwashing

In addition to masking and social distancing, handwashing is an important part of preventing the spread of COVID-19. Students will be encouraged to wash their hands frequently. They will be instructed on proper handwashing procedures, and will be reminded after restroom use, after sneezing or coughing, before meals/snacks, and when coming into the building.

Restrooms

Students in Pre-K will utilize the restrooms in the main school hallway, directly outside of their classrooms. Students in grades K-5 will utilize the restrooms outside of the kitchen. Students in grades PK-5 will have scheduled restroom breaks, but will also be able to utilize the restroom as needed throughout the day. Per social distancing requirements, only a few students at a time will be allowed in a restroom. Signage for the floor will be placed outside the restroom, as well as inside the restrooms to indicate appropriate social distancing. Teachers will go over procedures and guidelines for social distancing expectations for hallways and restrooms.



Facilities and Sanitation

St. Mark facilities are made up of the church and school. The facilities are shared between students and parishioners. During the week, the school utilizes the church, the church restrooms, the kitchen, and the classrooms leading up the hallway to the church. In addition to the school, all of these areas must be cleaned and sanitized multiple times a day.

One of the most important steps in reducing the spread of infectious diseases in child care settings is cleaning, sanitizing, or disinfecting surfaces that could possibly pose a risk to children. Routine cleaning with detergent and water is the most common method for removing germs from surfaces in the child care setting.

Sanitizer is a product that reduces - but does not eliminate - germs on inanimate surfaces to levels considered safe by public health codes or regulations. A sanitizer may be appropriate to use on food contact surfaces (dishes, utensils, cutting boards, etc.) and toys that children may place in their mouths.

Disinfectant is a product that destroys or inactivates germs (but not spores) on an inanimate object. A disinfectant may be appropriate to use on hard, non-porous surfaces such as tables, countertops,

door & cabinet handles, toilets, and other bathroom surfaces. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommends that only EPA-registered products be used.

Preschool teachers and assistants will continue to use the three-step process for disinfecting and sanitizing non-porous surfaces they have always used, which is based on the state guidelines from the Kentucky Division of Regulated Child Care. The disinfecting and sanitizing solutions will be a mixture of water, bleach, and concentrated bleach. The bleach solutions must be made fresh daily, kept away from children, and discarded at the end of the day. A cleaning and sanitizing plan shall be posted indicating the schedule for cleaning and sanitizing, as well as extra precautions required by the CDC regarding pandemic-related cleaning and sanitation. This includes the elimination of lost-and-found bins; the prohibition of the use of water fountains; and the removal of toys that children have placed in their mouths, or that have been contaminated until they are cleaned and sanitized.

Cafeteria

The cafeteria will not be utilized for dining at the beginning of the year. It does not allow students to social distance while they are eating. Students will eat in their classrooms or outside. Students will still be able to order lunch from the cafeteria, or bring their lunch from home. Lunch from the cafeteria will be loaded on carts and delivered outside or to each classroom.

Playground

Our playgrounds will be utilized. A schedule for use will be created. The playground will be cleaned regularly, and only one classroom will be permitted to be on the playground at a time. Each classroom will also have its own set of playground equipment that may be used by their class and returned to the classroom after recess.



Plan for Confirmed Cases of COVID-19

Upon learning of a COVID-19 case involving someone who has been in the school, we will immediately notify the Madison County Department of Public Health. The Health Department will help us determine a course of action for the school.

The CDC is currently recommending the dismissal of all students and staff for 2-5 days. This initial short-term closure allows time for the local health officials to gain a better understanding of the COVID-19 situation impacting the school. This also allows those officials to help the school determine appropriate next steps, including whether an extended closure is needed to stop or slow the further spread of COVID-19.

The use of small classroom sizes and record-keeping of contacts within each classroom will reduce the number of high-risk exposures of the infected student or staff member. Per current CDC guidelines, the classroom of the infected person may need to remain in quarantine for 14 days after the last exposure. This recommendation for the 14-day quarantine is based upon the presumed prolonged exposure of everyone within that classroom. During school closures, we will also cancel and school group activities, and our school-based afterschool program.

We will communicate as efficiently as possible with our school community regarding the exposure while maintaining the confidentiality of the student or staff member, as required by the American with Disabilities Act and the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act. We will communicate in a manner to reduce the potential for any stigma or discrimination.

We will encourage faculty, staff, students, and their families not to gather or socialize without social distancing and the use of masks. This includes group child care arrangements, as well as gatherings at places like a friend's house, a favorite restaurant, or local shopping centers.

During the 2-5 day closure, while contact tracing and exposure risks are being estimated, the school will focus on cleaning and disinfecting all areas potentially encountered by the sick person. As the Health Department conducts contact tracing, students will be able to learn from home.

Anyone who has been exposed to a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 needs to follow CDC guidelines for getting tested, or for quarantining for 14 days from their last exposure. This does not apply to secondary contacts, (e.g., if a student's mother has a COVID-19 exposure, her children can still attend school as long as the exposed parent is able to isolate at home).

This procedure would be the same with secondary contacts within the school (e.g. if a student has an exposure outside of school, even if they are required to quarantine, their classroom will not have to quarantine).

Students, faculty or staff should stay home or be sent home if exhibiting any of the following symptoms:

- Temperature of 100.4 or greater
- Cough
- GI issues (vomiting/diarrhea)



- New rash
- Exposure to a COVID-19 case during a 48-hour period before the onset of symptoms until meeting criteria for discontinuing home isolation.

Preventative Measures

- Children and adults will be screened for fever and contagious symptoms upon entry into school.
- The school has a designated area for quarantining sick individuals, with an ability to maintain adult supervision until the student is picked up by a parent or guardian. Students with symptoms of infectious disease will not be allowed to enter their classroom. We will assure the student is wearing a face covering while waiting for transport if there is no medical reason to prevent this.
- A staff member who demonstrates symptoms of COVID-19 must be tested for the illness. If he/she shows symptoms during the school day, it should be reported immediately. The staff member must not return to school until he/she is cleared for work from a healthcare provider.
- Children or adults that test positive for COVID-19 must follow the recommendations of their local health department and primary care physician before they return to school.
- The Madison County Health Department will provide a letter to the infected individual when they have been cleared from isolation. Documentation of the ending of their isolation must be provided prior to returning to school.
- When a child shows a fever of 100.4 or higher, or other contagious symptoms, the child must be removed from the classroom immediately and placed in a safe, secluded area. The parent or guardian must remove the child from school within one hour. The student should consult with their pediatrician to see if he/she is recommended for testing. Before returning to school, the child should receive documentation from his/her pediatrician deeming it safe to return.
- When an employee in the building shows a fever of 100.4 or higher, or other contagious symptoms, the employee will be sent home. The employee should consult a doctor to see if he/she is recommended for testing. Before returning to school, the employee should receive documentation deeming it safe to return to the building.
- The school will notify enrolled families and staff of a diagnosed case of COVID-19, while still protecting the privacy of the diagnosed individual.
- Per recommendations of the local health department, the school will close for the recommended amount of time for decontamination.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Here we will outline guidelines for faculty and staff regarding instruction and assessment, technology, and the use of common platforms, student support, and professional development. Considerations and planning have been made for in-person, distance, and hybrid learning environments. Plans for teachers and students specifically outline guidelines for asynchronous and synchronous learning in hybrid and online-only environments. Synchronous learning is online or distance education that happens in real-time, whereas asynchronous learning occurs through online channels without real-time interaction. There are directives for the consistent use of Google



Classroom across grade levels, Pre-K-5th grades. With regard to student support, guidelines have been provided focusing on academic accommodations, technology, mental health, and social-emotional curriculum. Lastly, in order to support staff in these endeavors, a plan for professional development has been put into place.

Academics

Our goal is that all instruction will be face-to-face this school year. Students will utilize Google Classroom regardless of the type of learning environment we are in, face-to-face, hybrid, or online.

The following guidelines will apply in all settings. In the event that the school is directed to transition to a hybrid or online environment, we are prepared.

Hybrid Teaching and Learning

Because St. Mark has created a plan that focuses on small class sizes, social distancing, and adding protection by requiring masks, a Hybrid Plan refers to how teaching and learning will continue in the event of a classroom quarantine, as directed by the Health Department. Teaching and learning will continue during this time. If a classroom is quarantined, teachers and families should refer to the Full Online Plan found in the Teaching and Learning section of this document. Here, a detailed description of Non-Traditional Instruction (NTI) is provided. If a child is quarantined with his/her family, the teacher and the principal will work with the family to make accommodations.

Instruction and Assessment

Whether we are providing instruction face-to-face, distanced, or in a hybrid situation, it is our goal that students will be presented with high-quality instruction. The goal is centered on the continuation of student growth, regardless of the environment. Teachers will continue to identify learning targets, utilize their standards, and develop instruction and assessments aligned to those targets. During synchronous learning, students will directly interact with their teachers, either in whole or small groups, to receive instruction, seek clarifications, and to engage in activities and/or formative assessments. Asynchronous learning will also provide instruction; however, without direct interaction with a teacher. It is our goal that teachers provide as many authentic experiences, videos, etc., during asynchronous learning, so that students remain connected to their teachers and content. Students will be assessed through both formative and summative assessments. Formative assessments are ongoing and provide feedback to both students and teachers. Teachers use that feedback to make instructional decisions in an effort to lead students to mastery. Summative assessments are more formal and allow teachers to determine the level of mastery at the end of a unit, chapter, or concept. As the year allows, we will also administer the MAP assessment that is utilized for instructional decisions.

In the event that schools close for distance or hybrid learning, the following serves as our framework for Instruction and Assessment:



Teaching and Learning Formats

- Synchronous: Live Google Meet
- Asynchronous: Learning that takes place outside of a live meeting (i.e., video lesson, reading assignment, online practice, online simulation, etc.)

Grading Categories

- Formative Assessments: Examples include, but not limited to, practice work, online programs, homework, comprehension check, quiz, exit slip, demonstrations through Flipgrid or other formats, etc. These assessments provide feedback for continued learning and help drive further instruction.
- Summative Assessments: Examples include, but not limited to, tests, projects, demonstrations, labs, presentations, etc. Usually an end of unit/chapter/concept. Should be preceded by multiple formative assessments.

Google Classroom

In an effort for consistency across grade levels, K-5 will use Google Classroom as a learning management system. The purpose of Google Classroom is to streamline lessons, assessments, and communication from teacher to student.

Google Classroom Teacher Guidelines

Management

- Use common language when naming classes
- Universal template for slide decks by grade level
- Utilize Calendar/Due Dates feature of Google Classroom (train students to do so too)

Communication

- Create a recorded video “tour” of your Google Classroom for parents and students at the beginning of the year.
- Invite parents to receive classroom information via the “Invite Guardian” Feature under people
- Utilization of the Calendar Feature
- Grade level appropriate Google Classroom Orientation for students and parents, training video will be made
- Common Supportive Platforms (i.e. Flipgrid, Brainpop) across grade levels
- Utilize Google docs to compose emails for families, set time/frequency it’s sent. Teachers will coordinate sending times and frequency

Google Meet Student Standards Grades PK-5

In the event that schools close for full distance or hybrid learning, the following are the expectations for students:

- Establish a location in your home to serve as your learning space. In addition to being prepared each day, it allows you to “leave school” when the workday is over.
- Set up your space to include the necessary supplies and schedules (e.g., paper, books, pens, pencils, charger, passwords, etc.). Executive functioning is an important



component of education, ability to focus, and success in creating a fluid workflow. This provides for helping to develop those skills.

- Google Meets should be attended from a desk/table setting with students sitting upright and attentive. During times of quarantine, students need interaction, engagement, and exercise to maintain strong mental, emotional, and physical health.
- Students should be appropriately clothed and avoid things that are distracting to themselves or others (e.g., blankets around the head, toys, basketballs, video games, eating, etc.). Teaching and learning require a level of self-control, concentration, and self-discipline. Therefore, all efforts should be made to minimize distractions to enhance learning and success.
- Stay on mute, and raise your hand to participate. When called on by the teacher, turn mute off. Normal household noises can be distracting to all students and teachers.
- Leave your camera on and focused on you. This allows teachers to know when you need a brain break, or when you have a question or comment. Engagement is enhanced when teachers and students can see one another.
- Tablets will be on loan to any student who needs an electronic device on which to work at home. They can be checked out through the school office.

Grading & Homework

Although grades are shown for assignment in Google Classroom, the official grade will be recorded by the teacher in the report card. A teacher may decide to curve a grade based on class performance on an assessment or might throw out a question. This is always in the students' favor. Also, not all assignments in Google Classroom will be taken for a grade. In addition, in an in-person and blended model, there will be assignments that aren't on Google Classroom. Lesson plans and homework will be available for parents to view, whereas Google Classroom will provide the actual assignments for students.

Grading

- Establish clear due dates that allow for timely feedback and drive future instruction
- Establish consistency in grading by age group (e.g. primary, intermediate, etc.)
- Communication of extremely low grades must be made as early as possible with the administration and the parents.
- All student grades below a C in a class must be communicated with administration and parents prior to making report cards available to parents.
- If there is a concern about lack of or poor participation, contact the parent and alert the principal as soon as possible.

Lesson Plans/ Homework

- Posted 24 hours in advance, email sent if plans change
- Be clear in what is assigned for that day, provide instructions, and other details (completion dates, assessment criteria, etc.). Some assignments may take a few days to complete if they require students to create. (Instruction should continue to take place via videos, meets, etc.)



- Provide an idea of how long each activity should take noting that students WILL work slower at home without a professional keeping them on task (encourage parents to let you know if students are working much longer).

Interaction and Engagement in Grades PK-5

Teachers have discovered that in our virtual classrooms they get far less direct feedback from their learners on how lessons are going. Even if students have their camera on, it can be really difficult to know why they aren't saying much. Maybe they are confused or think it's too easy, or maybe they've temporarily lost their Wi-Fi connection. Whatever the reason, as teachers talk more to fill the silence, classes become less and less learner-centered. As they have little control over the content or pace of the class, students switch off and can be easily distracted by anything else that's going on around them. Therefore, teachers will make extraordinary efforts to enhance interaction and engagement.

Virtual Instructional Model Grades PK-5

For remote learning, daily plans will be posted for students by 9:00 a.m. each morning. Teachers will post work to Google Classroom using a daily Google Slide(s) that can also serve as a hyperdoc, providing links to pertinent resources (e.g., videos, articles, and even other platforms like EdPuzzle, BrainPOP, etc.) used as supplements, as-well-as, instructions for the day's assignments. Throughout the school day during NTI, it is expected that teachers will be available to and engaged with, students as much as possible. The workday for faculty will be 9a.m.-3p.m. with lunch and breaks included.

Student Support

We are committed to providing student support especially to those who already receive intervention, who have student support plans, or otherwise need assistance. Student support plans will be implemented as effectively as possible and will be revisited, as needed, in order to allow each child to be successful. The principal, teacher, and other staff, will be instrumental in determining the amount and type of support they are able to provide while maintaining a safe environment for students. Teachers will be important in communicating the needs of students to all necessary support staff so that appropriate steps can be taken and interventions implemented.

Technology Support

- New Chrome extension where IT Administrator can remotely connect to troubleshoot
- Survey to families about devices at home/internet.
- Communication in August about what to do if a family has limited/no internet. If a student has connectivity challenges, a parent should make the teacher aware, the teacher will then set up a timeline for makeup work.
- Provide common troubleshooting document for students



Academic Accommodations

In-Person

- Follow Student Support Plans and protocols

Hybrid/Full Online

- Check-in with families, conducting a survey once each trimester to improve - Specifically, ask what is working /where people need support/ family situation/ technology available at home
- All teachers communicate with principal via email with information about students of concern and what steps have been made. The principal can connect the teacher/family with academic support when necessary. The principal will also monitor common areas of challenge to troubleshoot.
- Compacting assignments when necessary, consult with principal for guidance.
- Extra time is given when necessary, consult with Principal for guidance.
- Continue to follow Student Support Plans, contact principal for necessary modifications due to distance learning.

Professional Development

Professional development will be centered on four main categories that will be beneficial for distance learning and beyond. Those four overarching categories are pedagogy, technology, social and emotional learning, and personal/self-care for faculty members. These are further broken down into smaller sub-categories.

The pedagogical emphasis will be placed on student engagement. Professional development opportunities that encompass platforms (Google classroom), extensions, and apps will make up just a few of the sub-categories for technology. Social and emotional learning (SEL) is of great importance, especially as we reopen in the fall, and additional resources and strategies will be made available to teachers. A more detailed plan that includes many choices, with supplemental resources, will be made available for the upcoming year. In fact, many are already engaging in webinars, virtual conferences, and other opportunities this summer.

Training sessions will be offered on Google Classroom, extensions, and other applications before the start of the school year. It is important to note that professional development opportunities beyond these four categories will also be available to teachers as they write their individual plans for the 2020-2021 school year. It is our goal to address the overarching needs, as a result of distance learning, but also the individual professional needs of teachers.

FAITH FORMATION AND COMMUNITY

The Catholic Education Resource Center states that each Catholic school has three goals:

- To provide an environment in which students are enabled to build and deepen their relationship with God
- To foster an academic culture aimed at the pursuit of truth
- To actively promote growth in virtue



We have tried to identify how St. Mark Catholic School can continue to pursue these goals no matter how or where schooling takes place in the 2020-21 school year.

Student Faith Formation

In-Person

- Follow normal religion curricula within each classroom.
- Classrooms will pray daily together and a prayer request sheet will be shared daily. Students will lead prayer for the classroom as age-appropriate.
- Pair up 8th grade CCD students from the parish and 2nd graders from the school (sacramental years) to write each other notes of encouragement at least monthly. Other grade levels may choose to partner up in a similar manner.
- Schedule socially distanced meetings for each classroom with Fr. Tom, Dcn. Jim, and Dcn. John in the church.
- Pray Rosary daily as a whole school in classrooms before dismissal.
- After some introduction, pray Divine Mercy chaplet before dismissal on the first Friday of the month.

Hybrid/Full Online

- Continue normal religion curricula in a virtual setting.
- Continue daily prayer and prayer request sheet in a virtual setting
- Continue eighth/second-grade pairs virtually. Teachers continue to assign monthly communication. Other grade levels may choose to partner up in a similar manner.
- Clergy meet with assigned classrooms monthly for virtual visits
- Pray Rosary daily, one decade per day, virtually as a school.
- Pray Divine Mercy chaplet at the end of the virtual day on the first Friday of the month.

Staff Faith Formation

In-Person

- Continue Catechist Certification via Zoom.
- Prayer partners will be chosen at the first faculty meeting.
- All faculty meetings will begin with faith sharing.

Hybrid/Full Online

- Continuing Catechist Certification via Zoom.
- Prayer partners continue and may meet virtually for faith sharing, Scripture discussion, reflections, prayer requests, meditation, working through devotional or another book together, etc.
- Faculty meetings will be virtual and will continue to begin with faith sharing.

Liturgies

In-Person

- Weekly school Mass on Friday will be attended by all grades. Each classroom will have a new seating chart that places them 10 feet or more from any other class. Some classes will sit up front, while others sit in the back. Students in each class will sit at a safe distance from their classmates. At this time, song books will not be used.
- Religion teacher will discuss readings with students on Thursday before Friday Mass.



Hybrid/Full Online

- Weekly school Mass will be viewed virtually.
- Religion teacher will plan simple assignments to check for attendance.

Service

In-Person

- Classroom and Religion teachers will communicate established service opportunities and expectations for each grade level, will communicate religion class grade implications, and adapt as necessary to accommodate fluid circumstances.
- Emphasize and provide low-risk options, i.e. things students can do from home or virtually, or together during religion class. A list will be provided for teachers and families.
- 3rd, 4th, and 5th Grade Service Day - will most likely be small projects around school or church property done as a classroom.

Hybrid/Full Online

- Maintain service requirements that have been in place.
- Emphasize and provide low-risk options that preclude physical interaction.
- 3rd, 4th, and 5th Grade Service Day - will most likely be small projects around each student's home and neighborhood.

Sacraments

In-Person

- 2nd Grade First Reconciliation will be scheduled for February 2021 with modifications in place for distancing.
- 2nd Grade First Holy Communion will be scheduled for May 2021. Current guidelines for Mass will be followed.
- Several reconciliation opportunities will be held for grades 3-5 throughout the year. These will be done in person following all guidelines for social distancing and group gatherings.

Hybrid/Full Online

- Sacraments can be rescheduled as needed. Sacramental preparation can move online/hybrid if needed.

Student Leadership

In-Person

- Student-led service projects
- Prayer Partners – Older students will be paired with younger students. Pre-K may draw pictures for their partners and K-5 will draw pictures and write letters.
- Student prayer leaders in each classroom lead daily prayer. The prayer leaders will change so that each student acts as a leader.

Hybrid/Full Online

- Student-led service projects can be done at home or in their neighborhoods
- Prayer Partners – Exchanges can be sent digitally.
- Student prayer leaders continue to lead virtually.



Special Events (Non-Sacraments)

In-Person

- All Saints Day program will be live-streamed to parents.
- May Crowning will be live-streamed to parents.

Hybrid/Full Online

- All Saints Day will be presented in a video compilation of all student projects. Each student in 1-5 will be given special guidelines to complete their project.
- May Crowning video will be shared via Constant Contact.

Community Engagement

In-Person

- Classroom and Religion teachers will ask students, faculty, parents, family, alumni, parishioners, or clergy to provide witness, and/or share stories of their faith formation. This will be done virtually with Zoom, by email or letter, etc.

Hybrid/Full Online

- Classroom and Religion teachers ask students, faculty, parents, family, alumni, parishioners, or clergy to provide witness, and/or share stories of their faith formation. This would be done virtually with Zoom, by email or letter, etc.
- Pair families up and ask them to call to check in on each other in the event of a closure.

WHAT NEXT?

A digital survey has gone out to all families, new and returning, to get feedback on the plan laid out in this document. We are also trying to get a better understanding of what resources you will need in order to be best prepared for this coming school year. We especially need to know if your child will need aftercare services. For Pre-K students, this will determine in what class your child will be placed. We are open to all suggestions in creating the safest learning environment possible for our students.

We understand the great challenges our school families are experiencing. As school faculty and staff, we wish to help create an atmosphere in which our students can effectively learn. We strive to do our very best, but we can't do it without your support and assistance. We look forward to hearing from you and we can't wait to be together again as a school family.

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.”

1 Corinthians 15:58



REGULATIONS & RESOURCES

As a parish school in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Lexington, we follow the directives and guidelines of our diocesan governance, which is led by Bishop John Stowe. Bishop John has the ultimate authority and responsibility for Catholic education in the diocese. In parish schools, the Bishop delegates the responsibility for Catholic education to the pastoral leadership of the parish. The Bishop delegates responsibility for the administration of the schools to the Superintendent of Diocesan Schools, Mr. Tom Brown.

Due to the CoVid-19 pandemic, school closures took place throughout our nation. St. Mark Catholic School followed the directives of our Bishop and Governor Andy Beshear, activating our non-traditional instruction (NTI) plan to complete the school year with as little disruption as possible to student learning. As we made our plans to reopen for the 2020-2021 school year, we looked to directives and guidelines from our diocese, as well as the Centers for Disease Control, the Division of Regulated Child Care, the Kentucky Department of Education, the Kentucky Department for Public Health, and many other organizations. Some of the documents that provided our most important guidance are linked below:

Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

[Considerations for Schools](#)

Division of Regulated Child Care (DRCC)

[Cabinet for Health and Family Services Regulations](#)

[Requirements for Childcare Programs](#)

Kentucky Department of Education (KDE)

[Guidance on Safety Expectations and Best Practices for Kentucky Schools \(K-12\)](#)

[KY Digital Learning Guidelines](#)

[COVID-19 Considerations for Reopening Schools: Alternative Learning Design Strategies](#)

[COVID-19 Considerations for Reopening Schools: Facilities and Logistics](#)

[COVID-19 Considerations for Assigning and Reporting Grades](#)

[COVID-19 Considerations for Instruction](#)

[COVID-19 Considerations for Professional Learning](#)

[COVID-19 Online Professional Learning and Instructional Resources](#)

Kentucky Department for Public Health (DPH)

[Kentucky Department for Public Health provides five reopening aspects for districts to consider](#)