



## **St. Giles Reopening FAQ**

**7.26.20**

### **Academics and Schedules**

**Q. What does remote learning look like? Who are the teachers? What is the curriculum?**

A. We are waiting for the Archdiocese to provide additional information regarding the remote learning option. This will be provided through an outside vendor, not St. Giles teachers. They will follow the priority standards of the Archdiocese, which we use at St. Giles. As soon as more information is available it will be sent to parents. St. Giles teachers will be responsible for the religion curriculum and details of that are currently being determined.

**Q. How will students remain engaged with their peers if they opt for remote learning?**

A. The nature of remote learning means that students enrolled in this option will be learning remotely and may not feel the same connection to St. Giles, their teachers and their peers. We are waiting to learn more about the details of remote learning and what the day-to-day will look like for students. We hope to come up with ways to keep students connected to their peers and will share more information when it becomes available.

**Q. If we opt for remote learning, can we return to the classroom when we feel more comfortable?**

A. Yes, however remote learning does require a commitment of 1 trimester. Any student who is currently learning remotely is still part of the Pride and can return in the next trimester or the final trimester. Any student who participates in remote learning is still enrolled at St. Giles and does not lose his or her spot in their Pride.

**Q. When do you have to decide about remote learning?**

A. Families must decide between remote learning and in-person learning before the beginning of the school year. Because we are still waiting on more specifics from the Archdiocese, we have not yet set a deadline for deciding; as of now, that date is TBD.

**Q. If a family begins the term in person, but decides they are no longer comfortable with in-person learning, can they choose remote learning?**

A. At this time, families need to commit to either in-person or remote learning for the trimester. Moving between in-person learning at St. Giles and the Archdiocesan remote learning during the trimester will not be possible. However, if a family enrolls in in-person learning but has a change in circumstances or change of heart, we would work with the family to determine the best resolution.

**Q. Will siblings in the same grade be put in the same cohort?**

A. Yes, for this year we will keep siblings together in the same Pride. In the event that a Pride is quarantined, that would mean both students would be home together rather than managing multiple locations for parents. If for any reason parents do not want their siblings in the same Pride, please contact the office at [office@stgilesschool.org](mailto:office@stgilesschool.org).

**Q. What will pick up and drop off look like?**

A. Our health and safety team is working on a schedule for pick up and drop off to ensure that all students are entering and leaving safely. This will include signage along the street directing parents where to drop off and pick up.

**Q. Do we have an option for hybrid learning, in-person several days, and remote several days?**

A. Most hybrid solutions are created due to size and space restrictions. The Archdiocese and St. Giles School have not developed a hybrid option as we feel we can safely distance students during classes and best meet the social-emotional needs

of the students with in-person learning. Our smaller class sizes and the adjustments to our classrooms have allowed us to spread out to remain safe.

**Q. How are the kids that are remote learning going to be re-integrated into the classrooms? When returning at the end of the first trimester how are you making sure the kids are all in the same point of lessons and not ahead or behind ?**

A. While all students will be following Archdiocesan priority standards for their grade, it is possible remote learning students will work on content and skills in a different order than in-person students at St. Giles. If a student moves from remote learning to in-person learning at the trimester, teachers will work to acclimate them to the classroom environment and assess their academic development when they return. We will continue using iReady and ACT Aspire Interim testing to assess progress and academic growth for all students.

**Q. Why are some schools that are also part of the Archdiocese of Chicago offering staggered days and St. Giles is not.**

A. At this time, none of the Chicago Archdiocese elementary schools are offering any hybrid or staggered day alternatives. Start and end times may be staggered during our first few opening days to enable appropriate training of new protocols. Our health and safety committee will determine if this practice is necessary and if so, parents will be informed promptly.

**Q. Will the playground be off-limits?**

A. Students will be able to use the playgrounds within their Prides. Playgrounds will be sanitized before use by the next Pride.

## **Masks**

**Q. What are your thoughts on eye shields/goggles for in classroom use?**

A. While not a requirement, if families feel comfortable with eye shields or goggles, students may wear them.

**Q. Can teachers wear masks with clear windows for better visibility?**

A. Teachers will be wearing the masks that they feel most comfortable with throughout the day. Many are working on finding the best fit/option for clear masks or masks with windows.

**Q. How are you going to safely manage a disposable mask "honor system?"**

A. Answers to questions like this come down to trust. We are putting our trust in parents and you are putting your trust in us. Procedures and protocols will be communicated to our school community with an expectation that they will be followed. We know that families want to and need to remain safe -- and we expect that all families will adhere to the disposable mask policy as well as all other policies and protocols outlined by the school.

**Q. Why are you allowing students to remove masks during gym/recess? How can staff ensure that students are distancing while playing?**

A. Masks will only be removed if physical distancing can be maintained. If students are playing close together, they will not be able to remove their masks. However, if students are outside and able to remain at a distance from peers, guidelines allow for the removal of masks. Whether it is PE or recess, students are monitored by staff at all times.

## **Facilities and Physical Distancing**

**Q. Can parents be provided an opportunity to see their child's classroom prior to the 1st day of school so an informed decision can be made re: in-person vs. online learning?**

A. We understand families' desires to see how classrooms look now that they are prepared for physical distancing, however having families come to school to see classrooms is not possible at this time. However, we will be creating a video welcoming

everyone back and sharing visuals of each classroom to enable you to make an informed decision about remote learning vs. in-person learning -- as well as to help students feel comfortable and prepared for what to expect inside the school building.

**Q. Would it be permissible for kids to have a small battery operated fan at their desks?**

A. Yes, students can bring in a battery operated fan as long as it does not interfere with the learning environment.

**Q. How often will surfaces be cleaned?**

A. Surfaces will be cleaned multiple times during the day throughout the building. Teachers of individual Prides will have students clean the areas of their desks regularly and desks and materials will not be shared between users without being wiped down. Regular after school cleaning will happen with new protocols for sanitation added to nightly cleaning.

**Q. Last year, the largest class at St. Giles (incoming 8th grade), was split into 3 sections. Why is the largest class (with the largest physical bodies) being reduced to two "prides" with more students when this year we need more distancing?**

A. The class of 2021 is not the largest class this year. By creating Prides that remain together all day, per our reopening plan, limitations are placed on our ability to have multiple sections in middle school classes. In previous years, students were in 3 groups for core classes but in 2 groups for other courses. We are not able to do that this year. Because Prides must remain isolated from other groups without the mixing of students, we can only have two Prides per grade to maintain our rigorous block schedule in Math, ELA and Science -- which we feel is paramount as we prepare our 8th graders for high school.

## **Health**

**Q. Does the reopening plan adhere to the CDC guidelines?**

A. Yes, the Archdiocese COVID Response Team works with the IDPH, CDPH, and ISBE following guidelines outlined for a safe return to school. Additional information regarding the health and safety guidelines used by the Archdiocese can be found [here](#).

**Q. The CDC is predicting that the virus will hit hard in the fall/winter. What will you do to protect the kids/teachers from spreading and contracting the virus? What is St. Giles doing to create a safe environment for 5 day in-person learning? How can you guarantee my child's safety from the virus?**

A. We are doing everything we can to prepare St. Giles School for a safe reopening on August 19, however no one can guarantee anyone against contracting the virus. All of the precautions we are putting into place are done to help prevent the spread of the virus and follow the health and safety guidelines from the Archdiocese COVID response team, who works with IDPH and CDPH to follow all health and safety protocols. In addition, **the entire community is called upon to adhere to proper guidelines outside of school as well, which will help prevent the spreading of the virus at school.**

**Q. Will faculty, staff, and students be required to be tested for COVID prior to starting the school year?**

A. No, we are not requiring testing prior to the school year. Individual testing should be done with guidance from personal physicians.

**Q. If a student or staff member tests positive for COVID is there a communication and quarantine plan for all students they came in contact with at school?**

A. We are waiting for final guidelines from the Archdiocese regarding the communication and quarantine plans.

**Q. Will surveys be sent to all families regarding the travel order to ensure anyone that has been to the restricted states will not be in class until after 14 days/self-quarantine?**

A. No, surveys will not be sent to families regarding travel quarantines. However, as previously stated, procedures and protocols will be communicated to our school community with an expectation that they will be followed. We know that families want to and need to remain safe -- and we expect that all families will adhere to the travel quarantine guidelines, being respectful of others in the community by self-quarantining and avoiding unnecessary travel to restricted areas.

**Q. In the past, sick children with coughs and runny noses weren't sent home. Will there be a zero tolerance level for children with cold/flu like signs and symptoms?**

A. We ask families to be diligent about checking for symptoms of any illness and not send their child to school if they are feeling ill. While we of course believe school attendance is important, this is not a typical school year. While we do not encourage students to stay home if they are not sick, we ask parents to keep students home if they do have a cold or any other flu symptoms. We will rely on parents to make these decisions and trust that they will keep students home when necessary for the protection of everyone. We will not have a zero tolerance policy.

**Q. What if a student becomes ill and a parent is not able to pick them up in a timely manner?**

A. Each family provides us with a list of emergency contacts. If a parent is unable to pick up their child, we will rely on the emergency contact to pick up the student in a timely manner.

**Q. Where will students wait to be picked up when they are ill?**

A. Our health and safety committee is working on a location near the main office where a student may wait for their parents if they become ill. Once the plan is finalized, it will be shared publicly.

**Q. Is the school trying to obtain its own COVID testing supplies?**

A. No, we are not a COVID testing facility and will not administer tests ourselves.

**Q. Will students wash their hands after every activity?**

A. Students will be reminded to wash their hands regularly and use hand sanitizer, which is in every classroom and on all supply lists, when washing is not available.

**Q. If a student or staff member tests positive for Covid will everyone in the school be notified?**

A. We are waiting for guidance and final information from the Archdiocese regarding notification.

**Q. To ensure transparency/safety, will staff and families receive free testing if a member of the staff or Pride test positive for COVID?**

A. St. Giles will not be providing testing. Testing will be done either via a personal physician or a free testing sight. A doctor's note will be required before a student or staff member may return to school.

## **Extras**

**Q. Things seem to be changing rapidly with the increase in coronavirus cases and many of the public/private schools are changing their approaches to either hybrid or all e-learning. Are we reassessing our current plans?**

A. Our plans align with the Archdiocese and they are monitoring all information through their COVID task force. They have not reassessed the plans for opening with 5 day, full day instruction. Should anything within the reopening plans change, parents will be notified.

**Q. Why do we feel more comfortable coming back then other schools? What are we doing differently?**

A. For one thing, we are using our healthy size - not too big and not too small - to our advantage. We have the capacity to distance our students within the classrooms and have created Prides in order to limit cross contact. In addition, we are nimble -- getting creative with classroom layouts, including removal of ancillary furniture, and creating workable schedules that accommodate safe use of our facilities and minimal contact between Prides. Other larger schools may not have the capacity to distance their students or adjust their internal spaces and schedules to accommodate the necessary protocols. Data gathered from parent surveys and focus groups in the Archdiocese showed that parents wanted to return to full day learning as long as it can be done safely.

**Q. Will the Archdiocese or St. Giles be staffing a school nurse during this unprecedented COVID time?**

A. Neither the Archdiocese nor St. Giles School will be staffing a nurse at this time. We will train faculty and staff to take temperatures with contactless infrared thermometers and have requested that any member of the community who has a temperature or is not feeling well to stay home. Anyone found to exhibit symptoms of illness at school will be sent home and, if treatment is needed, personal physicians and nurses can be contacted by the ill individual to receive care. While not all illnesses may be COVID, we need to be extra cautious at this time. We will rely on parents to keep students home if they are sick or running a fever.

**Q. Please explain how many students will be allowed to attend Kids Klub? How will you monitor? How will students be distanced?**

A. We are confident that we can meet the needs of our families who use this vital service in a safe and healthy way. PreK Kids Klub students will remain in the Gleeson building while K-8 students will be in the Corrigan building. Room 100 and adjacent classrooms, as well as outdoors spaces, will be used to ensure physical distancing and students will be constantly monitored by supervisors to ensure health and safety guidelines are followed.

## **PreK Specifics**

**Q. Can there be a separate FAQ for PreK?**

A. We will keep PreK-specific information with the school-wide FAQ because many parents have students in multiple grades, but we will separate out PreK questions and answers into this section. We are still waiting for additional information from the Early Childhood Director at the Archdiocese about how reopening plans might be tailored to PreK students and will share that when it is available. While some details may look a little different for our youngest students, all health and safety protocols apply to all Prek-8 classrooms.

**Q. Are the restroom facilities for Pre-K shared? Is there a supervised potty time for kids this age?**

A. Yes, restroom facilities are shared. Our newly updated Gleason Building has a female restroom, a male restroom, and a family restroom. All PreK classes will have scheduled, supervised restroom breaks and restrooms will be sanitized throughout the school day.

**Q. How many kids will be in the preschool at a time?**

A. The number of PreK students at a time varies depending on the day and time because of our flexible scheduling. PreK has a variety of programs, including half day and full day, and multiple days-per-week options. Just as we have in our other grades, we will carefully cap the numbers to allow for proper distancing. In the morning, no classroom will have more than 20 students, and at this time, all rooms have fewer than 20. In the afternoon, we can go over 20 students slightly (currently it is 21 students), but we divide the afternoon full-day students into two classrooms, so proper distancing will be upheld.

**Q. What is the plan for eLearning in a preschool environment?**

A. If St. Giles School moves to eLearning anytime during the school year, our PreK teachers will use a variety of teaching methods, including the use of Google Meet for instruction and social interaction among students. Materials will be provided for families and printing at home will not be an expectation (unless we return to a mandatory lockdown from the state, where St. Giles would be unable to get materials to families).