St. Francis de Sales
Catholic Academy
COVID-19 Reopening and Learning Plan
School Year 2020-2021

As of August 11th, 2020

This plan was developed in collaboration and guidance with the Diocese of Brooklyn Back to School Task Force, New York City Department of Health, CDC Guidelines, American Pediatric Association Recommendations and the State of New York

Note this plan is pending government approval and assumes public health requirements are met; thus, it is subject to change, given the uncertainties of COVID-19.
# Table of Contents

- Introduction
- Mission Statement
- Guiding Principles
- Layers of Protection
- Reopening Overview
- Health, Safety, and Operations
- Our Hybrid/Cohort School Design
- Saint Thomas Aquinas Distance Learning Catholic Academy Virtual Learning Choice
- Sudden School Closure (SFDS@HOME) What will the school day look like?
- Grading Policy
- What will the School Day Look Like?
- Conclusion
- Support for School Communities
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Family Resources
- Resources and Research
Introduction

If all standards of the New York State for public health are met, St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy plans to open school in September with about 75% of students and all staff attending school every day. Students and staff are grouped by homerooms and these groups are kept as static as possible by having the same group of children stay with the same staff (for young children every day and for older children as much as possible). This strategy helps to maintain a safe environment by strictly restricting student interaction, which enables rapid intervention and containment in case a student is compromised. As part of this model, our academy will try as much as possible to help mitigate risk to physically separate students within the same cohort.

Many parents are nervous given the realities of COVID-19 and the difficulties New Yorkers face — financial, emotional and childcare. There is no perfectly convenient or completely risk-free plan in these circumstances. But St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy has been reviewing many school opening plans from across the country and around the world and studying detailed guidance from epidemiologists and pediatricians. Despite the challenges and the requirements of public health, we believe that we can create a vibrant, engaging and nurturing educational experience for children, while also being healthy.

We know children of school age—3 to 14-year-olds—are at very low risk. They are the least likely to become sick with COVID-19 and the most likely to recover from it. While there have been widespread reports of the inflammatory syndrome in children, statistically the number of cases is low and recovery high. We also know that prevention works to prevent infection: masks, hand washing and social distancing have been confirmed. These moves were critical to flattening the New York curve, and are proof of our frontline workers and medical staff’s success. We can learn from their success and build upon it to reopen school safely for our students.

We operate in extraordinary times. The pandemic COVID-19 has affected every aspect of our lives and left a mark on Catholic education. St. Francis de Sales has evolved rapidly, utilizing our school faculty’s creativity, ingenuity and dedication to maintaining high quality education for our students. Through these unprecedented challenges, faculty have gained high praise from families and the general public for their incredible work.

We have consulted with public health, education and civil authorities in forming our plan. It is our intent to safely reopen our school building to all families this fall and the following pages lays out how we plan to do just that. This framework identifies key areas for St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy to consider and sustain as we safely reopen.

Our ability to reopen safely depends on every family continuing to make decisions that put the health of others ahead of our own wants. For months, we have all made difficult and uncomfortable choices in order to protect our families and friends, and we must recognize that a return to school does not mean a return to normal. Some of our students live with a grandparent or a sibling who has a risk factor. Some of our teachers live with a family member who has an underlying health condition. To prepare for our return to school, families need to start thinking now about the consequences of individual decisions impact the greater St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy community.
Mission Statement

The St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy family is committed to academic excellence, Christian service to others, and providing a Christ-centered, safe, and engaging environment where students can grow spiritually and academically towards a faith-filled future.

Dear Brave Women,

You who walked the path of Mercy before us, you’ve known epidemics in other times and places. Be guides for us now as we navigate new and frightening paths—a worldwide pandemic, universal social turmoil and economic distress, and so much fear, pain and anxiety for ordinary folks. We know that there are blessings in all of this somewhere; help us to find and share them. Walk with us. Amen.”

-Sister Patricia McCann (A Personal Communion of Saints in the Time of Coronavirus: This is a reflection on the early Sisters of Mercy who arrived in America and immediately ministered to those in need at the time of the Typhoid Epidemic in 1848)
Guiding Principles

Safety

Safety of our students and staff members is paramount, and this will require significant modifications to our systems and routines, including masks, temperature checks, and social distancing, among others. We will open only if we receive government approval and public health criteria have been met. We will do what we must so that everyone in our school feels safe and undeterred.

Containment

While much uncertainty still exists, we will need to keep students contained within the same group and within the same spaces to the extent possible. Everything possible is being done to reopen school buildings and provide a faith-filled education in a safe and timely manner.

Social Emotional Wellbeing

When we open schools, we want you and your students to say, "I had a great day at school!" Although we will ensure that public health criteria are met and that health and safety protocols are in place. We also recognize that many children are feeling the stress and emotional impact of coronavirus. Faithful citizenship is key – we expect our families to take personal responsibility for the common good as well as their own safety.

Ability to Transition Between In-Person, Hybrid, and Remote

As we navigate through this pandemic, we must plan for the need to transition between in school learning and hybrid and fully remote learning, and we want to make that transition as easy as possible for you, our students, and our staff. A transition to full remote learning may be necessary for a class or even our entire school building dependent upon a number of confirmed cases arising. It is even possible our entire diocese may need to transition to full remote learning depending upon the overall state of public health in New York City and/or New York State.
Layers of Protection

This plan describes many ways to keep the safety of our students, faculty and staff central to our COVID-19 planning and response. While no single tactic is 100% effective, when used together they add layers of protection and support a culture of safety. These proven practices address a variety of risk points and should be considered as a collection of actions to keep our environment safe in the era of COVID-19.

In 1990, James Reason, Ph.D., introduced the “Swiss Cheese Model” that has been adopted to improve safety across many industries. In any setting, there are inherent risks. Most of the time these risks are never realized because safeguards are in place to prevent them. These safeguards are represented in his model as multiple layers of Swiss cheese. However, every process has “holes” that, under the right circumstances, can line up and lead to an error, accident or “hazard” as Reason described it.

Layers of Protection
1. Wearing of Masks
2. Social Distancing
3. Staying in Cohorts
4. Temperature Checks
5. Hand washing
6. Cleaning and Disinfecting
7. One Way Staircases
8. Desk Partitions
Hybrid/Cohort Model: Welcome back to the classroom for full-day instruction.

**COHORT MODEL:** Students will be assigned to a “cohort,” which will correspond to their homeroom class and will remain with those same classmates throughout the day. Students within a cohort will remain physically as far apart as possible to prevent the spread of illness.

**Masks and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** All individuals throughout the academy building (students, staff, visitors / volunteers, etc.) must wear face masks at all times, unless they are under the age of two. During moments where masks are not worn (example: lunch and recess), social distancing must be preserved. The school will provide some masks with the understanding that the masks will be washed after each school day. Students using disposable masks will discard them at the end of school day and parents should provide extras to replace a disposable mask that has been damaged or lost. The academy will not allow the masks with distracting or inappropriate messages or images. All students and employees will receive proper mask-wearing training.

**Arrival Procedures – Wellness Checks:** St. Francis will provide pickup and drop-off procedures that ensure safe distance is maintained. All students and staff must wear face masks on arrival, and the academy will perform “Wellness Checks” on all students that consist of temperature checks to ensure any student with a fever over 100.0°F is sent home. Students will wash their hands or receive hand sanitizer.

**Dismissal:** Parents/Guardians should remain in their designated area for dismissal to ensure ongoing safety.

**Foot Traffic Flow:** Physical guides, such as tape on floors and signs on walls, will ensure that staff and children remain six feet apart in lines and at other times during the school day. We may use as much of our building space as possible to achieve social distancing and may close high-traffic portions of the building when not used. Student lockers will not be used to store anything other than coats and book bags.

**INFECTION PROTOCOLS:** Students and/or staff suffering with COVID-19 symptoms and/or positive COVID-19 tests will be expected to stay home and seek medical attention before returning to class.

**VIRTUAL LEARNING:** Students in Grades 5-8 will rotate each day between in school and at home. Families who are not ready to return to classrooms will still have the option for on-line learning through the St. Thomas Aquinas Diocesan Catholic Academy.
Facility Cleaning, Hygiene and Shared School Supplies: St. Francis de Sales will follow rigorous methods of cleaning and disinfecting. We will not allow sharing of school supplies such as pencils, markers, and art supplies. Equipment should be used by as few kids as possible, and cleaned and disinfected before and after each use. Access to hand washing facilities and hand sanitizer will be provided to all students at the school. Food and drink including student snacks, and lunches should not be shared. Birthday treats at this time cannot be brought in and shared. Food and beverage should be preserved when not consumed. Drinking fountains should be used only to fill reusable water bottles. When drinking fountains are used they are regularly cleaned.

Special Area Classes: Whenever possible, specials classes will be held in each cohort’s homeroom classroom. This is particularly emphasized for classes such as art, Physical Education, Spanish and STEM. Physical Education may opt to move classes outside, when possible, but will avoid physical exertion while students are wearing masks.

Parent–Teacher Meetings: Meetings between parents and teachers should be conducted virtually, if possible. If face-to-face meetings are required, meetings are held in large open spaces (such as unused classrooms, small hall, etc.) instead of more confined spaces (such as the main office or Content Learning Center). Meetings shall be held with the use of masks and social distancing.

Lunch: In most cases lunch will take place in classrooms to prevent the cohorts from mingling.

Recess: Physical exertion will be discouraged during recess when possible (recognizing that children, particularly young children, do need physical recreation). When recess is held outside, masks may be removed if distancing is maintained.

Medical Care: St. Francis de Sales will provide for the ongoing medical care for students, in the form of our school nurse, as per a normal year.

Visitors and Volunteers: Visitors to our school building will be limited as much as possible. Access for parents who must come to school may be limited to the main office. The use of volunteers will be minimized as well. Volunteers will be allowed at the discretion of the administration. Procedures and training will be established and communicated to all volunteers. Protocols will be established for parent pick-up of students during the school day.

Special Events (Masses, assemblies, field trips, etc.): Large group gatherings, such as assemblies or Back to School Night meetings will be conducted virtually. If events are held, social distancing must be observed and group size limited to the extent possible. Field trips will not be permitted during the pandemic. In most cases, Masses will be streamed virtually. Live Masses will be celebrated in very small groups.

“Everything has suddenly changed. What we previously took for granted seems to be uncertain: the way we relate with others at work, how we manage our emotions, study, recreation, prayer, even the possibility of attending Mass…”

-Pope Francis

Strong in the Face of Tribulation:
A Sure Support in Time of Trial
The methods of operation of St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy are grounded in best practices in health and safety. With students, families and staff wellbeing at the forefront, we must concentrate on simplicity, flexibility and thoughtfully designed programs. We will practice social distancing and avoid mass gatherings in large groups, such as assemblies, cafeterias, field trips and staff meetings.

**Cleaning**

Teachers and our custodial staff will sanitize high-touch surfaces throughout the day. If rooms are used by multiple classes they will be wiped down between uses and at regular intervals during the day.

**Hand Washing**

We will establish regular routines for students to wash their hands for 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer at regular intervals throughout the day, including before meals, and any transitions.

**Personal Protective Equipment/Masks**

Everyone — staff, students, and families — is required to wear a mask during arrival, dismissal, and while in the school building. We will issue each students and staff member two washable cloth masks, and they must bring their own mask with them every day, as we will operate with a “no mask/no entry” policy.

**Lunch**

Students will eat lunch in their classrooms in support of containment. They will bring lunch from home. Hand sanitizer will be given to student and surfaces wiped down before and after they eat. Specials lunches such as Bagels, Chicken Fingers, and Pizza are canceled until at least January 2021.

**Arrival/Dismissal**

Students and staff who are ill must stay home and follow their doctor’s recommendations. Every day student and staff temperatures will be checked at home and reported using our TempTracker App. Temperatures will also be checked at arrival and those above 100.0°F will be sent home and not allowed in school. There will be signage to assist everyone with social distancing as well.

- Arrival will be staggered with a 5-10 minute window for arrival to limit the number of students entering at any one time. The specific window for your student will be communicated closer to the start of school.
- Similarly, you can expect a staggered dismissal schedule.

**Drop-in Parent Meetings/Adults in School Building and Main Office**

We will limit adults in the building and restrict free access to the main office. Needs like medication drop-off should be handled during arrival, and digital parent meetings with the administration can be scheduled for Fridays by calling or emailing the main office for an appointment.

**Recess**

We believe in recess, and will continue to go outside, weather permitting. However free play in the school building will be restricted so that social distancing can be practiced.
Key dates for reopening

Wednesday 9/9- Grade 3 and Grades 5-8 Group 1 Report back for orientation 8am-12pm

Thursday 9/10- Grade 4 and Grades 5-8 Group 2 Report back for orientation 8am-12pm

Friday 9/11- Grades K-2 Report back for orientation 8am-12pm

Monday 9/14- First Day of Classes for all Grades

Nursery and Pre-K will start on Monday September 14th. Pre-K will attend half day in school until Monday, September 21.

Within a few weeks after launching our remote learning in March, we began to contemplate what reopening of schools would look like. There were many uncertainties then and still now around public health policies and requirements. Given the constraints under which we will need to operate, we believe our hybrid/cohort design will best optimize the health and safety of our school communities and the learning of our students. Below are key aspects of this design. (Note that given the uncertainties of COVID-19 and public health requirements, this plan is subject to change.)

Simultaneous Remote and On-campus Learning
We have established predictable weekly and daily routines to make school opening as convenient as possible for our families while optimizing student learning. Students in Grades 5-8 will alternate between in school learning and remote days. The schedule will be grade-specific. Representative schedules for Nursery-Grade 2, Grades 3-4 and Grades 5-8 can be found on the following pages.

Students will receive daily instruction across all content areas as they alternate between in school and remote learning.

In grades 5-8 students and families will use familiar online tools and programs like Google Classroom, Zoom and Our Hybrid/ Cohort School Design

Google Meet video conferencing. Every week, five days’ worth of curriculum and learning tasks will be posted on Google Classroom.

Social Distancing & Containment
We will practice social distancing and containment to the extent possible in classrooms and common spaces across our school with updated systems and routines in place. Certain of these systems and routines are highlighted in the prior Health, Safety, and School Operations section.

Academic Interventions
We are invested in ensuring all students achieve academic mastery, and we have plans in place to support students who are struggling. We will regularly assess student learning to identify and support any students who are struggling. In addition, we will continue to deliver special education services to students with IESP and refer students who would benefit from academic services. All mandated services will be offered either in person or by videoconference, depending on the nature of the service.

Social Emotional Learning Support
Your child’s social emotional health is very important to us, and this year we have seen such an increase in stressors, notably our students being unable to interact with their friends and teachers — which was also hard on our staff. We know children need consistency and structure, and, in part, that has informed how we have structured our hybrid model.
Our Hybrid/Cohort School Design  
(Nursery-Grade 2)

Our Nursery students will run a 5 day half-day schedule as previously scheduled with no more than 15 students in a classroom.

Our Pre-K through Second Graders will be in school each day and will be in a room with no more than 15 other classmates. Each class will have a teacher and an aide-who will be responsible for the in-person instruction. The teacher and aide will split time between the two groups in each class. With the teacher spending the majority of their time instructing the students especially in the subject areas of Phonic Instruction, ELA and Math while the teacher’s aide will spend most of their time reinforcing what has been taught by the teacher.

We will be using the Learning Management System called Seesaw to help prepare students for remote instruction in case the school or cohort has to close down for a time. Seesaw will be used regularly for assignment submission so that students become familiar with the platform and the ease of submitting work through it. Our foundational skills program, FUNdations, will have interactive phonics work assigned using SeeSaw. Similarly, students may be asked to keep a journal and respond to math tasks using the Seesaw program.

Our English Language Arts program, Wit & Wisdom, will be taught through a program called InSync. Your child’s teacher will work with a Great Minds teacher to deliver core knowledge instruction on a daily basis, whether at school, or if necessary virtually at home.

Students will also be assigned an email address through Google. This Gmail address will be an integral component to accessing the educational apps we use this school year.
Our Hybrid/Cohort School Design (Grades 3-4)

Our third-fourth Graders will also attend school each day. Our third and fourth graders will be using the large spaces that are available in our school. This includes the Small Hall and the Gym. In both grade levels we will have the entire grade level in the large space. The teachers on the grade level will team teach.

Team teaching involves a group of instructors working purposefully, regularly, and cooperatively to help a group of students of any age learn. The two teachers together will set goals for a course, design a syllabus, prepare individual lesson plans, teach students, and evaluate the results.

Team teaching means that one teacher will be the lead teacher while the other teacher supports instruction. In other words, one teacher actively teaches while the other assists, gives individual help as needed, or observes.

Students know there’s a teacher available to answer their questions or give help in the moment. Also, an observing teacher may collect information about how a student responds to different teaching approaches or about attention and behavior. That kind of data is valuable for IESP teams and for behavior intervention plans. It also allows teachers to discreetly address issues as they come up.

We will be using the Learning Management System called Google Classroom to help prepare students for remote instruction in case the school or cohort has to close down for a time. Google Classroom will be used regularly for assignment submission so that students become familiar with the platform and the ease of submitting work through it.

As in the past each child will use an iPad throughout the day of instruction. Students in the school building will follow their usual schedule. All classes other than Physical Education outside will take place in the cohort’s homeroom.
Our Hybrid/Cohort School Design (Grades 5-8)

For our junior high school students, minimizing transitions and movement is more challenging because of the number of different courses offered and the student composition of each class. Fortunately, our older students will be better able to independently practice social distancing. Students will have A and B week schedules that will look slightly different depending on the week. Listed below is a sample schedule for an A and B week. More specific information will come regarding your student’s schedule.

We will be using the Learning Management System called Google Classroom to help prepare students for remote instruction in case the school or cohort has to close down for a time. Google Classroom will be used regularly for assignment submission so that students become familiar with the platform and the ease of submitting work through it.

Students who are home will live stream all their core subjects using the Meeting OWL camera and Google Meet (Religion, Math, Science, SS, ELA, etc.) For special classes work will be given via Google Classroom for those students who are at home. Students in the school building will follow their usual schedule. All classes other than Physical Education outside will take place in the cohort’s homeroom.

Families will find out what group their student is in no later than September 2nd. We will make sure that siblings (brothers and sisters) are in the same group across grade levels (grades 5-8)

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Our Hybrid/Cohort School Design

Prevent COVID-19 From Entering the School and Creating Stable Cohorts of Staff and Students

All employees, students, and visitors will be screened prior to entering the building with the following questions:
1. Have you been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19?
2. Are you experiencing a cough, shortness of breath or a sore throat?
3. Have you had a fever (100.0 or higher) in the last 48 hours?
4. Have you had any of the symptoms of COVID-19 in the last 48 hours?
5. Have you traveled internationally or from any state with widespread transmission of COVID-19 per the New York State Travel Advisory in the past 14 days.

If the answer is YES to any of these questions students and/or staff are asked to stay home.

Screen Everyone Entering the School
We will ask all persons entering the building about symptoms and exposure to COVID-19, including staff, students, parents/caregivers, contractors, visitors, and government officials. Emergency personnel responding to a 9-1-1 call are exempted. Adults with symptoms or exposure to COVID-19 will not be allowed in school. Students with symptoms will be sent home. Students who are waiting to be picked up will occur in a designated isolation room (St. Michael’s Room). We will limit non-essential visitors, including volunteers. At this time all school tours and open houses will be done virtually. This will be revisited in the Winter of 2021 when new registration occurs.

Stable Cohorts of Staff and Students
We will be keeping teachers and students in the same group which will lower their exposure risk by decreasing the number of people they come into contact with each day.

- For elementary grade levels we will keep students in stable classroom cohorts with the same teacher and aide for the entire day.
- For middle school grade levels, we will limit cross-over of students and teachers to the extent possible. The cross-over of teachers between cohorts is permitted to meet students’ educational needs.
- The school staff who visit classrooms will document their visit. We will stagger schedules for arrival/dismissal, recess and lunch to prevent mixing of cohorts in the following ways:
  - Designate specific routes for entry and exit to the school for each cohort, using as many entrances/exits as feasible.
  - Minimize movement of students through hallways.

Examples of strategies to keep hallways clear:
  - Have teachers rotate into the classroom for different subjects while students remain in the classroom, when feasible.

We will create one-way stairways to minimize congestion. Place physical guides, such as tape, on floors to mark one-way routes.
We will also assign adjacent classrooms to teachers in the same cohort to minimize the distance that teachers travel between classes.
At this time larger gatherings of more than one cohort are currently prohibited (i.e., school assemblies, performances, lunch, etc.).
Physical Distancing

• Staff within our school should stay 6 feet from other adults as much as possible.
• We will set up staff workspaces so that staff do not work within 6 feet of each other.
• We will continue to have virtual meetings using video conferencing apps for parent-teacher meetings and staff meetings, even if all staff are on campus.
• Staff should stay 6 feet away from students when feasible yet may be closer to students to meet their educational needs.
• Students should be ideally stay 6 feet apart. When space is limited, which may occur at times in our classrooms, 3 foot distancing in the classroom is permissible with students and teachers wearing masks.
• We will remove furniture like bookshelves, center tables, and play areas to allow maximal spacing between student desks.
• We will be using other school spaces like the small hall and gym for instruction to allow more optimal spacing.

Elementary school: During group activities, playtime and recess, physical distancing may be relaxed for students in stable classroom cohorts who are wearing face coverings. When outside or in shared spaces, preventing interactions between cohorts should be prioritized over distancing of students within a cohort.

Middle school: Physical distancing of students is more important when student cohorts are larger than a single class, or if there is cross-over between cohorts.

In the Classroom

• We will arrange desks facing in the same direction, so that students do not sit facing each other.
• When students must sit less than 6 feet apart, we will make maximum use of the space that exists, at least ensuring 3 feet of distance.
• Students will sit in the same seats each day.

Outside the Classroom

• We will limit occupancy of bathrooms, staff rooms and similar shared spaces to allow 6 foot distancing. Adjacent bathroom stalls may be used. We will also post signs with occupancy limits.
• At places where students congregate or wait in line, spots will be marked on the floor or the walls 6 feet apart to indicate where to stand.
St. Nicholas’s Room

When students are experiencing discomfort or potential symptoms of COVID, they need to be room removed to a place where they are isolated from others with enough room that several students could sit in the room and be six- feet apart.

The concept is to provide a safe supervised staging area where students can wait until they could get a transportation from school.

We have established an area that is supervised and can fit multiple students that can be social distanced.

We will

• Provide masks to all who enter the room.
• Sanitize the room after each use.
• Provide the room monitor disposable gloves.

At all times we will keep in the room:

• Disposable paper towels
• Tissues
• Waste container with plastic liner
• Alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol
• Hard-surface disinfectant

Face Coverings

Faculty, Staff, and Students are required to wear face coverings when in the school building and maintain appropriate social/physical distancing. No Mask, No Entry!

Students should bring an appropriate face covering from home or one the has been provided by the school. The school will have surgical masks available for students as needed.

All visitors to the school for any reason will always be required to wear a face covering while on school grounds or in the school building.

All masks for faculty, staff, and students are subject to approval by the principal and Office of the Superintendent of Schools.

1. The mask must fit each child appropriately, covering both the nose and the mouth.

2. Any solid colored and/or patterned mask is acceptable. A mask featuring characters (i.e. Mickey Mouse, Paw Patrol, etc.) is acceptable. Please steer away from any mask featuring writing/words and/or logo(s) unless it is a SFDS Catholic Academy logo.

3. Masks cannot feature political-related content (words and/or images), profanity (words and/or images), or any message and/or image deemed inappropriate or distracting. All masks must reflect Catholic values.

If St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy leadership deems a mask inappropriate, extra masks will be available at the school for the student to wear if he or she is asked to change his or her mask.

As a reminder, our school will provide two (2) washable masks for each student. We encourage each student to have multiple washable masks available at home to ensure a clean mask can be worn to school every day. Each student will be asked to keep at least one (1) extra mask in the classroom or in his/her backpack in a reusable plastic bag.

Non-disposable mask should be washed daily.
covering. We will keep a supply of face coverings for individuals who have forgotten to bring one.

• Face coverings may be removed during active exercise when students are spaced 6 feet apart.
• If students have difficulty wearing a face covering for the entire day, we will designate times for them to remove face coverings, for example, when working individually at separate stations. We will remind students to put on their face covering before talking.
• Speech and language therapists may also use a face shield with a cloth drape tucked into the shirt, if a face covering interferes with their ability to work with students. A clear mask or clear portable barrier such as a plexiglass barrier may also be used. A barrier generally provides the best protection for both student and staff. Staff should wear a face covering at other times.

"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."
Isaiah 41:10

If a Community Member Tests Positive for COVID-19
If a community member tests positive for COVID-19, we will follow mandated protocols, their direction to take appropriate safety measures.

● We will provide transparency and communication to the community while meeting obligations to protect privacy.
● Each situation will be addressed on a case by case basis as each is unique.

Any individual who screens positive for COVID-19 exposure or symptoms, if screened at the school, must be immediately sent home as outlined below with instructions to contact their health care provider for assessment and testing.

• We will immediately move students who are exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms to the St. Nicholas Room where they will be monitored while they await pick-up and safe exit from the building.
• The St. Nicholas Room will be occupied by a school staff member wearing full PPE, with external ventilation increased within the area of isolation so as to encourage air flow.
• Any staff member who has symptoms will be discreetly asked to leave the building immediately and to report their symptoms to a medical professional.

We will advise sick staff members and students not to return to school until they have met the CDC criteria to discontinue home isolation for COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 related illnesses, which includes three days with no fever, and an illustration that symptoms have improved.

We will monitor staff absenteeism as well as present symptoms or types of illness among students and staff to guide decision-making and next steps.

All quarantine orders issued by the federal, state, and local government directives must be followed by students, faculty, and staff.

Reporting a Positive COVID-19 Case
• The administration will immediately notify the Diocesan Superintendent with all relevant details of any confirmed COVID-19 case.
• The school will notify the state and local health department about the case if diagnostic test results are positive for COVID-19 and follow the state and local health department guidance on notification and for next steps.
• The school will then distribute this notification to school staff members and families once approved by the Office of the Superintendent. No identifying information is to be used in any communications regarding the individual who may be symptomatic.
• The administration will coordinate with maintenance staff to ensure compliance with CDC disinfection procedures and timelines guidance.
• The school will follow all health department directives on school closures, because of COVID-19.
• The school in consultation with the local health department(s), about the requirements for determining when individuals, particularly students, who screened positive for COVID-19 symptoms can return to the in-person learning environment. This returning to learning requires a written note of medical clearance from a licensed NYS health care provider, proof of a negative COVID-19 testing after having no fever for three days, and symptom resolution, or if COVID-19 positive, medical release from isolation.

In keeping with HIPAA law, at no time will the identity of the individual, who is COVID-19 positive, be revealed. We will take extreme and extenuating measures to protect the identity of the individual. This is a critical violation of a person’s civil rights, and appropriate action for the failure to do so could result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

PLEASE NOTE: Plan is subject to change according to state and local health agencies.
Hand Hygiene

Frequent handwashing and hand sanitizer use removes COVID-19 germs from people’s hands before they can infect themselves by touching their eyes, nose or mouth.

- We will develop routines and schedules for staff and students in all grades to wash or sanitize their hands at staggered intervals, especially before and after eating, upon entering/re-entering a classroom, and before and after touching shared equipment.
- Every classroom/instructional space and common area (staff work rooms, eating areas) will have hand sanitizer or a place to wash hands upon entering. We have established procedures to ensure that sinks and handwashing stations do not run out of soap or paper towels, and that hand sanitizer does not run out.
- We will post signs encouraging hand hygiene.

Cleaning and Disinfection

COVID-19 is relatively easy to kill with approved disinfectants. We will:

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces multiple times a day
- This routine cleaning focuses on frequently touched surfaces like door handles, desks, counter-tops, phones, light switches, handles, toilets and faucets.

Arrival and Dismissal

If students and parents/caregivers from different households gather and interact with each other during arrival and dismissal, this creates an opportunity for COVID-19 to spread in the school community.

- We will stagger arrival and dismissal times, using different entrances/exits for each cohort.
- We will mark spaces 6 feet apart for students waiting to enter the building. There will be posted signs to remind family members to stay 6 feet away from people from other households when dropping off or picking up their student.
- Face coverings are required for adults who are dropping off or picking up children in person. We will provide face coverings for family members who have forgotten theirs.

Ventilation

Increasing outdoor air circulation lowers the risk of infection by “diluting” any infectious respiratory droplets with outdoor air.

- We will open windows and doors to increase circulation of outdoor air, if it is safe to do so and does not worsen individuals’ allergies or asthma.

Limit Sharing

We will limit the sharing of art supplies, manipulatives, and other high-touch materials as much as possible. We will have a separate set of supplies for each student and keep each student’s supplies and belongings in separate, individually labeled boxes or cubbies.

- If necessary we will clean and disinfect shared supplies and equipment between students.
Meals and Snacks

Eating together is especially high risk for COVID-19 transmission because people must remove their masks to eat and drink. People often touch their mouths with their hands when eating. In addition, meals are usually considered time for talking together, which further increases risk, especially if students must speak loudly to be heard.

• All lunch will occur in the cohort’s classroom.
• Students will have to still sit apart and are asked to put their masks on before having a conversation with other students.
• We will make sure that students and staff wash their hands or use hand sanitizer immediately before and after eating. We will pay special attention to younger students who are more likely to eat with their hands or lick their hands clean.

Students Receiving Special Services

• As always we will do our best to meet the accommodations and related services for special education, learning disabilities and medical conditions.

• Nurses and therapists who are not school employees but work with students in schools, such as occupational therapists and speech therapists, are considered essential staff and will be allowed in school to provide services.

• When students are temporarily unable to attend school due to COVID-19 infection or exposure, we will consider setting up telehealth video sessions for therapy as we did in the Spring.
Saint Thomas Aquinas
Distance Learning Catholic Academy
Virtual Learning Choice (Grades K-8)

During these uncertain times, parents may choose the option of Distance Learning for their child. The Diocese of Brooklyn is fully committed and prepared to provide instruction online which will meet the high standards of a St. Francis de Sales Catholic education.

The distance learning virtual school is being developed to meet the academic, social and faith-based needs of students in Kindergarten through grade 8. This virtual school will be open to all students currently enrolled in Catholic Academies and Parish Schools of the Diocese of Brooklyn.

The teaching staff will be comprised of Catholic School teachers from various Catholic Academies and Parish Schools, qualified and trained in Catholic teachings, who are ready to work with and meet the needs of all students.

Students will be provided with instructional opportunities to work and explore together. The instructional program will be developed to provide authentic learning tasks, directly connected to grade-specific curriculum, with a built-in assessment component for students to demonstrate and present evidence of their learning.

Knowledge must result from the activity of the pupil’s own mind. Along with acquiring knowledge with the aid of the teacher, he can also acquire knowledge by applying his mind by which he knows the first principles of all knowledge. The teacher often points out issues, which the pupil had not thought of and shows the relationship between the concepts which the pupil would have not noticed without the teacher pointing them out…

Saint Thomas Aquinas

St. Thomas Aquinas’ philosophy centers around the following beliefs:

- each student has been created in the image and likeness of God;
- the school community shares in the responsibility to help all students develop their God-given talents, to the best of their ability;
- the school community shares the responsibility of creating a safe atmosphere of caring, sharing, and challenge.
- each student learns most successfully through differentiated educational opportunities, and religious experiences;
- each student deserves individualized attention and recognition.
Saint Thomas Aquinas Distance Learning Catholic Academy Virtual Learning Choice (Grades K-8)

School Design
Saint Thomas Aquinas Distance Learning Catholic Academy will provide real-time instructional experiences, with students in the following ways:

- **Mini Lessons:** Students would participate in real-time mini lessons on specific topics during specific times established by teachers.
- **Small Group Instruction:** There will be instructional time devoted to teaching in small groups. One of the benefits of remote learning is that it eliminates the need to manage large classes at the same time.
- **Scheduled Office Hours:** Students can join office hours to ask questions or discuss learning with their teachers and classmates during specific times established by teachers.

Teachers will communicate student learning expectations, provide resources, collect assignments, and provide feedback, using a platform most appropriate to meet their needs.

- Students will have daily lessons in the various subject areas;
- When a learning experience includes a project or extended application of learning over multiple days, lesson updates will be posted. (If students are required to engage in a project or extended application of learning, the project will be broken down into smaller actions/outcomes with deliverables/check-ins);
- A written explanation and/or recorded video/screencast to introduce, explain tasks, or provide instruction for a lesson
- Digital/scanned resources, assignments, etc.
- Teachers will respond to student and parent e-mails/questions within 24 hours.

Saint Thomas Aquinas Distance Learning Catholic Academy will implement the following tools as part of our students’ online experience.

- All students will use iReady software for benchmark assessments and independent, standards-based activities
- Google Classroom will serve as the Learning Management System for grades 3-8
- Grades K-2 will use SeeSaw software as part of their online learning

Curriculum & Assessments
- The Academy will implement iReady software as our benchmarking assessment tool. Data from the program will be used to inform instructional needs and grouping.
- The Academy will select digital resources to supplement instruction in core subjects.
- Student learning will be assessed through a combination of project-
Saint Thomas Aquinas Distance Learning Catholic Academy Virtual Learning Choice (Grades K-8)

Instructional Plan

- Instruction will begin with whole group mini-lesson, followed by students meeting with their teacher in a small groups setting, or working individually, on an independent assignment.
- Teachers will work with select groups; students not meeting with their teacher will work on an independent assignment.
- Teachers will use interactive activities like icebreakers or other team-building activities to form connections between and among their student groups.

Sample Student Schedules

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Kindergarten Schedule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30am-9am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9am-10:30am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30am-11am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11am-12n.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.-12:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30pm-1pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1pm-1:45pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:45pm-2:30pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Sample Student Schedules

#### Sample Schedule for Grades 1-5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Religion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:30am-9am</td>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9am-11am</td>
<td>Blended ELA Instruction plus iReady Literacy work</td>
<td>Blended ELA Instruction plus iReady Literacy work</td>
<td>Blended ELA Instruction plus iReady Literacy work</td>
<td>Blended ELA Instruction plus iReady Literacy work</td>
<td>Blended ELA Instruction plus iReady Literacy work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11am-12n.</td>
<td>Blended Math Instruction</td>
<td>Blended Math Instruction</td>
<td>Blended Math Instruction</td>
<td>Blended Math Instruction</td>
<td>Blended Math Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-12:45</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:45pm-1:30pm</td>
<td>Blended Social Studies</td>
<td>Blended Social Studies</td>
<td>Professional Development (collaborative planning, workshops, etc.)</td>
<td>Blended Social Studies</td>
<td>Blended Social Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30pm-2:15pm</td>
<td>Blended Science Instruction</td>
<td>Blended Science Instruction</td>
<td>Blended Science Instruction</td>
<td>Blended Science Instruction</td>
<td>Blended Science Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:15pm-3pm</td>
<td>SEL/Art/Music/ iReady Math work</td>
<td>SEL/Art/Music/ iReady Math work</td>
<td>SEL/Art/Music/ iReady Math work</td>
<td>SEL/Art/Music/ iReady Math work</td>
<td>SEL/Art/Music/ iReady Math work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Sample Schedule for Middle School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Religion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:30am-9am</td>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9am-10:45am</td>
<td>Blended ELA Instruction*</td>
<td>Blended ELA Instruction</td>
<td>Blended ELA Instruction</td>
<td>Blended ELA Instruction</td>
<td>1-1 student conferences or Independent Student Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45am-11am</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td>Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11am-12n.</td>
<td>Blended Math Instruction</td>
<td>Blended Math Instruction</td>
<td>Blended Math Instruction</td>
<td>Blended Math Instruction</td>
<td>Blended Math Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-12:45</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:45pm-1:30pm</td>
<td>Blended Social Studies Instruction</td>
<td>Blended Social Studies Instruction</td>
<td>Professional Development (collaborative planning, workshops, etc.)</td>
<td>Blended Social Studies instruction</td>
<td>Blended Social Studies Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30pm-2:15pm</td>
<td>Blended Science Instruction</td>
<td>Blended Science Instruction</td>
<td>Blended Science Instruction</td>
<td>Blended Science Instruction</td>
<td>Blended Science Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:15pm-3pm</td>
<td>SEL/Art/Music</td>
<td>SEL/Art/Music</td>
<td>SEL/Art/Music</td>
<td>SEL/Art/Music</td>
<td>SEL/Art/Music</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What if my child’s class or the entire school needs to close?

We also need to address the possibility that at some point this school year a class or the whole school may need to return to distance learning for a period of time with a plan that ensures high-quality distance learning for all students. Decisions regarding closure will be made collaboratively with school leadership, the Diocesan Superintendent of Schools, and local health and government officials.

Based on parent feedback through surveys and teacher feedback from and surveys, we have identified key structures and strategies that lead to distance learning success. These structures and strategies, which are included, reflect our commitment to your child as an individual and includes small-group and individual personalized instruction.

If the class or school needs to close, students will attend school from home in accordance with the school’s distance-learning attendance and behavior policies. Each child will be provided with a device (iPad or Chromebook).

School Standards

- Use an online Learning Management System (LMS) such as Google Classroom (Grades 3-8) or Seesaw (N-Grade 2) as directed by principal to plan and share lessons and communicate with students and families.

- Students will turn assignments in through the LMS.

- Teachers will use synchronous and/or asynchronous learning technologies to provide those learning at a distance access to instructional materials aligned with the sequence and pacing of students learning in-person. These may include live-streaming classes and/or providing pre-recorded lessons.

- Use synchronous distance learning technologies, such as Zoom or Google Meet to engage students learning at home at least four days each week with real-time video instruction between students and teachers.

- Curate or create and share with students curriculum-aligned digital learning resources, lessons, and activities such as online videos to review curricular content teachers were not able to cover during live sessions.
Nursery and Pre-Kindergarten

- Synchronous, live whole group instruction will occur daily (at least four days each week) and will be aligned to the curriculum
- Each student will receive small-group differentiated instruction at least twice weekly

Kindergarten through Grade 2

- Synchronous, live whole group instruction will occur daily (at least four days each week) and will cover religion; phonics; reading; writing; and math and will make connections to science and social studies
- Each student will receive small-group differentiated instruction at least twice weekly to include English/language arts, reading, and math
- Live sessions for specials (e.g. art, language, STEM, P.E., etc.) will occur as directed by the school administration

Grade 3 and 4

- Synchronous, live whole group instruction will occur daily (at least four days each week) and will cover: religion; English/language arts; math; science; and social studies
- Students may receive individual or small group instruction in other content areas as needed, at the discretion of the school leader and/or teacher
- Live sessions for specials (e.g. art, language, STEM, P.E., etc.) will occur as directed by the school administration

Middle School (Grades 5-8)

- Synchronous, live whole group instruction will occur at least four times each week for each departmentalized content area (e.g. Math, English/language arts, Science, Social Studies, and Religion)
- Students may receive individual or small group instruction in other content areas as needed, at the discretion of the school leader and/or teacher
- Live sessions for specials (e.g. art, language, STEM, P.E., etc.) will occur as directed by the school administration
Grading Policy

Our report cards are linked to New York State standards for the quality of work students do. As we move forward this school year, it is important for us to share the Schools’ way of evaluating student progress and the thinking behind it:

- Nursery will receive three progress reports throughout the school year.

- The Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten report card measures progress in terms of not demonstrating, beginning, developing and secure.

- Grades 1-4 will implement the use of a standards-based report card. These report cards will look very similar to the report cards in the past as they will continue to provide information on a student’s developmental abilities and progress in relation to the learning standards outlined in each subject. The one major difference will be that this report card will use a scale of 1-4 rather than an Alpha Scale (A-F) or number to indicate progress on the grade level standards for each trimester in the five subject areas of Math, ELA, SS, Science, and Religion. Performance Level scores are not based on one assessment experience. Teachers design multiple assessment tasks and collect evidence of student learning throughout the grading period. Evidence may include teacher observations, student work samples, projects, tests, quizzes, and district assessments. Teachers review these items for evidence of learning when grading student progress for the report card. It is important to note that the Performance Level is based on the units of study and concepts and skills taught for that trimester. It is quite possible for a child to achieve a 3 or 4 the first trimester and then achieve a 2 the next.

- Grades 5-8 will have a more traditional report cards that uses a numerical scale. How these grades are determined will differ by subject and by teacher. Individual grading policy’s will be shared with families at the beginning of the school year.

- Families will receive their child’s report card or progress report in December, March, and June. Parent-Teacher conferences are held in December and March. Please refer to the school calendar for specific dates. It is our hope that the new report cards, together with teacher conferences, will provide a more comprehensive and meaningful lens for you to understand and support your child’s learning.

- The Progress code areas reflect a student’s strength or weakness in a particular work habit. Receiving a 3, or 4 are all indications that your child is meeting the standard for that particular skill area. Concern and conversation should take place if a child receives a 1, or a 2. These two codes indicate a child needs to put more energy and effort into this work area. It is recommended that during report card conferences you discuss with the teacher ways your child could improve in this area over the next trimester.

It is the School’s belief that every child is asked to only do their best and work towards their ability given to them by God. We look forward to fostering an environment where we celebrate our children’s gifts, talents and diversity in how they learn.
What will the school day look like?

We believe that in-person school is fundamental to the academic, physical and social-emotional development of children. Our plan will safely allow students to attend school in person.

**Classroom Safety Protocols**

We acknowledge that there will be a learning curve for our children as it pertains to social distancing. Adjusted classroom practices and routines have been developed which will minimize direct contact and maximize cleanliness.

- Teachers will arrange classrooms in such a way to maintain three to six feet of proper social distancing, per the recommendation of the American Academy of Pediatrics.
- When possible, student desks will be facing the same direction with partitions as shown in Images A and B. When tables are utilized, partitions will be used to designate individual learning spaces.
- Each student will have their own designated supplies at their desk.
- There will be no sharing of supplies. Manipulatives, games and other teaching tools that can be easily sanitized will be made available to students on a rotating basis. All toys/games must be made of hard, non-porous surfaces for easy cleaning and sanitization. This will happen at the end of each play session. Toys will then be taken out of rotation until sanitized.
- When class changes occur they will be staggered to avoid too many children in the hallway at one time.
- Chromebooks and Ipads will be assigned to students and will be used only by that student throughout the year.
School Safety Protocols

Vigilant Screening:
At St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy we value and trust in our partnership with parents and the family atmosphere that we have created. We are in this together and so we are asking for your help in safeguarding the well-being of our staff and students. We have formulated a cooperative screening process to safeguard the well-being of our students and staff.

Parents will be asked to screen students prior to leaving for school each morning using a mobile App. Part of the app will be to record your child’s temperature each morning along with answering a few affirmation questions. When children arrive at school another temperature check will occur.

In the event that any of the following symptoms develop, the following actions will need to take place:

- Contact school nurse for confidential documentation.
- If any student’s temperature is above 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit, they will not be permitted to attend school until they are fever-free.
- Potential symptoms to watch for are:

  - Cough
  - Shortness of Breath or Difficulty Breathing
  - Fever
  - Chills
  - Muscle Pain
  - New Loss of Taste or Smell
  - Sore Throat
  - Other, less common symptoms: Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and/or fatigue (Symptoms can range in severity from very mild to severe. In about 80% of patients, COVID-19 causes only mild symptoms.)
School Health Compliance

- Health Compliance Officers: Our school nurse, oversees health and safety standards and communication with the local health department regarding updated COVID-19 protocols, testing, and reporting.
- All classrooms will be equipped with touchless handheld thermometers.
- If a teacher feels that a child is showing signs of illness, they will be discreetly sent to the nurse for further evaluation.
- If a child is absent from school, the main office or our nurse will make a follow-up call to parents to obtain additional information. We’re required to keep a detailed record of all illnesses to ensure the safety of our school. Please be sure to respond by providing the needed confidential information that is required to ensure the safety of all.
- We have expanded our nurse’s office and created a separate area for students who are ill and waiting to be picked up from school.
- Parents needing to pick up a sick child at school will be asked to use the main entrance doors only and arrive within 30 minutes of being notified.

Enhanced Cleaning Protocols

- Our cleaning and sanitizing procedures have always been thorough and frequent, but now we are ramping up our efforts even more.
- Hand sanitizing
  - Every classroom will be supplied with hand sanitizer and disinfecting supplies.
  - St. Francis de Sales has invested in touchless hand sanitizer stations. These will be used in high traffic areas.
- Students and staff are encouraged to bring water bottles to school each day.
- Students will have limited, scheduled visits to their lockers or cubbies each day. Supervision of locker/cubby usage will be monitored by staff members to maintain safe physical distancing. High touch areas will be disinfected daily.
- Signage will be posted throughout the building reminding all to social distance and wash hands regularly. Restrooms will have specific signage containing instructions and visuals depicting appropriate hand washing techniques.
Mass
Celebrating our faith as a community is fundamental to who we are a Catholic School and will continue to be central to our mission.

- We will create a rotating liturgical schedule so that all students will have the ability to attend Mass with their grade level friends at least once per month. All current mass attendance guidelines will be in effect including social distancing and wearing a face covering. If you wish that your child not receive the Eucharist in Grades 3-8, they will simply cross their arms over their chest to designate that they wish to receive a blessing instead.
- Students who are distance learning can take part in the live stream of mass from home.

Lunch/Snack

- All lunch/snack will take place in the cohort’s classroom until further notice.
- Students will be required to wash and sanitize hands and area before eating lunch.
- Lunch volunteers will be required to wear face coverings.
- All special lunches such as Pizza Days, Chicken Fingers, and Bagel Days will be canceled until further notice.
- No Birthday treats can be sent in at this time.
- St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy continues to be a nut aware school and students are not permitted to bring in items that have nuts in them.

Recess

- Unstructured time during the school day allows for a child’s physical, social and emotional development, all of which are foundational for mental well-being, school engagement, and learning, therefore St. Francis is scheduling a modified daily recess for all students PK-8 if space allows.
- Outdoor recess will act as a face covering break.
- Students will wash and sanitize hands as they enter and exit the playground.
- Play equipment will be cleaned and rotated in between each use.

Activities & Field Trips

- At this time, field trips will not be scheduled.
- We intend to offer our regular after school starting on Monday, October 5th. (Monday-Thursday) All enrichment activities are canceled until further notice. Additional modifications may need to be made on a case-by-case basis.
Specials Classes
St. Francis de Sales is committed to continuing to expose children to a variety of disciplines including Fine Arts, Spanish, STEM, and Physical Education.

- Although there will be subject related adjustments made to classroom instruction, all students scheduled in PK-8 will continue to participate in specials classes.
- Specials classes will take place in the cohorts classroom.
- Students will be properly socially distanced and follow all other grade-level classroom procedures.

Arrival and Dismissal
- Hand sanitizing stations will be positioned at all student entry points into the building.
- Everyone must wear a face-covering during dismissal. Adults should practice social distancing and wear face coverings while waiting for their students during pickup.

Visitors on Campus
- Although we love and appreciate our parents' help, we will have to limit visitors within the building for the health and safety of our community at this time.
- Visitors will be limited to essential business only.
- All visitors are required to wear a face covering.
- Visitors are asked to remain in the designated area in which they are visiting.
- All visitors will need to conduct a personal health screening prior to coming to the school building and should not come if they are running a fever over 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or showing COVID-19 related symptoms.

School Events
- We are committed to the traditions and school events that are the hallmark of St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy. We are also committed to exploring new and creative ways to ensure that these vital community events can safely take place.

Busing
- Students will be required to wear face coverings while on the bus and students will be assigned seats and we recommend siblings sit together.
- We will follow the NYC OPT busing guidelines. More details to follow as they develop their recommendations and safety guidelines.

Meetings and Conferences
- In-person meetings should follow social distancing protocols and face coverings are required in the building.
- We ask that before all meetings or conferences, personal health screenings are conducted before entering the building.
- Staff meetings will be held virtually when proper social distancing cannot take place.
- More information will be available closer to the date for the following meetings/conferences:
  - Back to School Night
  - Parent-Teacher Conferences
Clean School Environment

Students and staff will follow enhanced protocols to keep everyone safe.

Hand sanitizing
- Every classroom will be supplied with hand sanitizer and disinfecting supplies.
- St. Francis has invested in touchless hand sanitizer stations. These will be used in high traffic areas
- Teachers will have a classroom schedule for frequent hand washing and sanitizing.
- Students and staff are encouraged to bring water bottles to school each day.
- Students will have limited, scheduled visits to their lockers or cubbies each day. Supervision of locker/cubby usage will be monitored by staff members to maintain safe physical distancing. High touch areas will be disinfected daily.
- Signage will be posted throughout the building reminding all to social distance and wash hands regularly. Restrooms will have specific signage containing instructions and visuals depicting appropriate hand washing techniques.

Extended Day Program (PK-6)

We are anticipating that After School will start on Monday October 5th.

We understand families require the option of safe care beyond the traditional school day and we will continue to offer this service. We are extending our cleaning protocols to the aftercare program as well.

- Wearing a face covering is required while in or moving around the Extended Day areas for staff and students.
- Students will be required to wash and sanitize hands before entering Extended Day, and before moving to any new activities.
- Teachers will monitor and control the number of students in the space to ensure physical distancing guidelines are followed.
- The Extended Day area will be disinfected and sanitized daily with special attention to high touch areas.
- All toys and supplies will be sanitized on a regular basis and there won’t be any sharing of supplies.
- The Extended Day teacher will sign out the students on behalf of the parents.
- Parents will be required to wear a face-covering and wait in a designated area. Staff will walk students to parents.

Kindergarten and Pre-K Safety Program

We understand the role school plays in the social and emotional development of young children. We plan to continue teaching in whole group settings while taking social distancing and safety precautions with our Kindergarten and Pre-K students.
Conclusion

This document provides the framework to plan and implement a safe, efficient re-entry in our Catholic Academy. It is important to realize that it is informed by evidence and global best practices, but it is limited by the boundaries of scientific knowledge about COVID-19 and its impact on our communities. Therefore, it is necessary to recognize that there is insufficient data to make recommendations that entirely remove risk from returning to school. It is also likely that as more information is acquired that plans will evolve. Our school is committed to using all available information to make the best-informed decisions for our students and families regarding safety procedures. Please know that we are committed to monitoring and adjusting these plans accordingly. It is our intent to review protocols every two weeks and will inform our community when any adjustments are made.

If you have questions, you may contact the main office at 718-634-2775 or by email at admin@stfrancisschoolbh.net. While there may still be levels of uneasiness or uncertainty, we can say with great confidence that we will face these challenges as a community of faith.

“The Holy Spirit upsets us because it move us, makes us walk, pushes the Church forward” (Pope Francis). Let us all look for moments of grace as we enter this school year. May our Lady shower her blessings on our school communities.
Support for School Communities

What kind of support is available for our students, families, faculty and staff?

We understand that these challenging times have brought new fears around the mental and physical health of young people as well as significant financial concerns for parents. In the coming weeks you will receive more information regarding each of the following initiatives which we hope will provide you and your family support and additional comfort as you send your child back to school.

Social Emotional Well-Being

Recognizing that this has been a potentially stressful year for students and that some students may experience some level of anxiety as they return to school, we are developing a social-emotional wellness plan that ensures that every student at every school has access to a qualified and licensed social worker. Our school guidance counselor can provide counseling to students and support to families as needed as well as a cache of resources to help families through this crisis.

Financial Support

Recognizing the very real financial implications that this pandemic has had on families and thanks to the generous donors to Futures in Education, the Diocese of Brooklyn will do the best they can to support a family’s desire to remain in Catholic education. Please note to receive any assistance from the Diocese or St. Francis an application must be completed through Futures in Education.

Faculty and Staff Support

Through the late summer early fall the Office of the Superintendent staff will increase training and support for teachers on the use and implementation of essential tools used for our personalized and distance learning programs.

For the protection of students and for themselves, faculty and staff members will be given training on all safety protocols. Schools will provide supplies for personal protection and sanitation, including soap, hand sanitizer, paper towels, tissues, disinfectant wipes, and personal protective equipment as needed.
Frequently Asked Questions

Health & Safety Measures

Will all students be allowed to return to school at the same time?
No. Our plan provides for about 75% of our students in the building at a given time. Nursery-Grade 4 will return for full-day instruction grouped by cohorts while our 5th-8th grade will be on a Hybrid schedule.

What does “reopening our school” really mean?
Gathering as a school community is an integral part of Catholic education. Our plan is to reopen our school building to as many students as possible this fall. This means that all students in Grades N-4 are welcome to return to classes for face-to-face instruction, while our 5th-8th graders will be in school every other day. We have developed an in-depth plan that addresses numerous aspects of the reopening process, and how our school will function once reopened.

Will students be required to physically distance at school?
Our plan calls for each student to be part of a larger group of students called a “cohort.” Each cohort will roughly align with a homeroom class. When students are with their cohort, they should remain as far apart as possible, but do not need to keep at least six feet apart. Homeroom teachers are also part of cohorts, and can walk around their classroom to monitor student classwork. When students are around other cohorts, they should remain at least six feet apart. We believe the cohort model provides for better containment should there be a positive case of COVID-19.

Will students and staff receive regular temperature checks?
Yes. Student and staff will report temperatures from home through the TempTracker App. Student and staff temperatures will be checked at arrival each day, and individuals with temperatures above 100.4°F will be sent home.

Should I take my child’s temperature every day before school?
Yes. A high fever is a key symptom of COVID-19. Parents should take their child’s temperature every day before their child is taken to school. If your child has a fever of over 100.0°F, your child should be kept home from school. You should contact your child’s doctor and the school’s main office. Similarly, you should ask your child if he/she has any of the other symptoms of COVID-19, such as a sore throat, coughing, or nausea. If your child complains of these symptoms, you should keep him/her home and contact your doctor and the school office.

Will St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy be providing masks to students and staff who do not have them?
St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy will issue each student and staff member two washable cloth masks, and everyone must bring their own mask with them every day. We will be operating on a “no mask/no entry” policy: Everyone, including all staff, students, and families, will be required to wear a mask during arrival, dismissal, and while in the school building. We will provide details about distribution of masks closer to the opening of school. All students and adults must wear a mask at all times in the school building. There will be no exceptions. Masks may be removed for brief periods of time under certain circumstances (such as outdoor play or lunch). However, when masks are removed, students must remain physically distant from one another (at least six feet). For disposable masks, each mask must be thrown away at the end of every school day and parents should send plenty of extra disposable masks to school with their child. For reusable masks, should be cleaned after every use and students should send at least one extra reusable mask at school.
Frequently Asked Questions

Will teachers teach children how to use masks? 
Yes. We know that students (especially young children) will need training to learn how to properly wear masks. We will spend time at the beginning of the year helping children learn how to safely keep masks in place.

Has St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy considered teachers using face shields instead of masks for easier communication?
Following guidance from the CDC and the American Association of Pediatricians, as well as best practices from school systems that have opened around the world, St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy will be providing masks to all students and staff members to wear throughout the day. We are not considering the use of face shields at this time.

How will dismissal work?
There will be staggered times in order to practice social distancing.

How does St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy plan to protect families against asymptomatic carriers of COVID-19?
The safety protocols that will be in place in schools — including mask wearing, frequent handwashing and use of hand sanitizer, and staggered arrival and dismissal times — are all geared toward protecting students and staff from asymptomatic carriers.

Once developed, will the COVID-19 vaccine be mandatory for students and staff?
We will follow NYC Department of Health guidance around vaccination.

Are health forms (physical, immunization, etc required to go back to school?
Yes all physicals and immunizations will be required to come back to school. Due to the difficulties of scheduling doctor’s appointments during the pandemic, families will have until September 23rd 2020 to be in compliance. This will provide additional time for families to comply with the medical requirements if needed.

How will the 504 forms for children with medical conditions be handled?
All families can submit their child’s 504 to Mrs. Buckley at mbuckley@stfrancisschoolbh.net. Our 504 team will review and reach out to the family to confirm accommodations.

Are there any modifications being made to how the students interact within the building?
Yes. To reduce the risk of virus spread, students throughout the school will remain in one classroom throughout the day, with teachers rotating into classrooms. Transitions will be limited to recess, bathroom breaks, and dismissal, and will be staggered to prevent crowding in the hallways or stairwells. In addition, new signage will direct one-way traffic to prevent close contact across hallways. During recess, free play will be restricted to enable social distancing.
What happens if there is a COVID-19 surge in New York City and the state imposes more restrictions on schools?
If a COVID-19 surge occurs, we will work closely with state officials to determine whether we can continue face-to-face instruction (even on an alternate schedule). If necessary, we will return to at-home virtual instruction.

Will there be plexiglass or a similar blocking material around the desks?
Yes, we will have plastic barriers around each desk.

St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy shares the school building with Religious Education, CYO, and other Parish groups. How will our students be safe if they are sharing a building with other people who might not be maintaining such strict social distance practices?
As is our current practice, St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy will coordinate shared space with the parish leadership to minimize concurrent use of entrances, stairwells and common spaces. Decisions in regard to other groups using the building are made at the diocesan and parish level.
Infection Protocols

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?
The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has identified several symptoms of COVID-19, including high fever (above 100.0°F), sore throat, coughing, nausea, headache, muscle aches, loss of taste or smell, runny nose, fatigue, diarrhea and difficulty breathing.

What should I do if my child has symptoms of COVID-19?
If your child shows symptoms of COVID-19, you should contact your doctor. Your doctor may ask that your child participate in a COVID-19 test. You should alert the school’s main office and not send your child to school. If the symptoms occur during the school day, your child will be immediately sent to the office and you will be contacted to pick your child up from school.

My child had COVID-19-like symptoms, but tested negative for COVID-19. When can he/she return to school?
If your child does not have COVID-19, but has another illness, you should keep your child home until 24 hours after symptoms have disappeared. If tested, you will be asked to provide a negative COVID-19 test and/or a doctor’s note before your child can return to school.

What should I do if my child tests positive for COVID-19?
You should immediately contact your doctor for additional instructions. You should also contact the school’s main office. You should not send your child to school.

When can a student return to school after receiving a positive COVID-19 test?
If a student tests positive for COVID-19 or does not seek medical attention, students must isolate and not return to school until they have met each of the CDC’s criteria to discontinue home isolation. This includes:

- Three or more days without a high fever;
- A reduction of other COVID symptoms by at least 75 percent; and
- At least 14 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

What should I do if a member of my household (who is not my child) tests positive for COVID-19?
You should immediately contact the school’s main office. We will ask that you keep your child home for at least 14 days. If your family member recovers from COVID-19 (through meeting the criteria in the previous question) AND your child shows no COVID-19 symptoms for the 14-day period, your child should return.

What happens if my child’s teacher tests positive for COVID-19?
Should any employee have COVID-19 symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19, we will follow the same protocols used for students (see above). If your child’s teacher becomes sick and is unable to work, we will provide a substitute teacher.
What happens if another student in my child’s class tests positive for COVID-19?
The school will follow the Department of Health protocols that are given to us.

Could St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy school building be closed down due to COVID-19 this year?
We will do our best to ensure a safe and healthy environment in the coming year. However, if numerous cases appear in a single school, resulting in the isolation of multiple classes/cohorts, we may need to close the school building and transition all students to virtual learning for a time. Parents will be updated regularly should that need arise.
Academics and Programming

Will my child’s curriculum be changed this year?
St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy will still deliver high-quality instruction in core subjects (religion, language arts, math, science and social studies). Special requirements will be in place for departmentalized classes and special area subjects. The implementation of safety and health requirements (outlined earlier in this FAQ) will create new complexities in instruction, but our commitment remains to provide your child the best possible faith-based education.

Will my child’s classroom look different?
We will spread out desks and tables in classrooms as much as possible. In order to maximize floorspace, we’ve asked teachers to remove non-essential furniture and other items. We have also asked that desks and tables be arranged so that they face the front of the room. These steps were taken to minimize risk of any infection in the classroom.

Will students share school supplies?
No. We are asking that students not share school supplies (e.g., books, crayons, technology, etc.), including for such subjects as art. Exceptions may be made for activities outdoors (such as outdoor physical education classes). If it is impossible to avoid sharing supplies, such supplies must be cleaned after every use.

I have a child in preschool or kindergarten. Is high-quality learning possible?
Yes. We are working very closely with our early education teachers to continue the best possible quality of instruction in preschool and kindergarten. While health and safety requirements are in place, our teachers will continue to work hard in the coming year to ensure your child grows intellectually, emotionally and spiritually.

Will students still change classes?
In order to protect classes in cohorts, we are asking that students not move to different classrooms in departmentalized settings. Instead, the teacher will go to the students’ homeroom and teach them there.

Will St. Francis still offer classes in special subject areas (e.g., art, STEM, PE, and Spanish)?
Yes. As with departmentalization (see last question), we will ask special subject area teachers to travel to each class’ homeroom for instruction whenever possible. This will be particularly likely for such subjects as art and foreign language. If students visit spaces such as the gymnasium or the STEM lab, the room must be cleaned after every cohort.

Will tests still be given this year?
Yes. It is important that we continue to gauge student academic growth throughout the school year. As such, you should anticipate tests to be administered in your child’s class. These tests will include the standardized tests of the diocese: the TerraNovas for students in grades 3–8. The New York State Education Department has not issued guidance on state tests or Regents Exams for 2021.

Will students participate in field trips?
Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are not planning to participate in in-person field trips during the 2020/21 school year.
My child has a IESP because of an identified learning, behavioral or physical need. Can the needs of my child still be met this year?

As each IESP is different, we will be evaluating each IESP to determine whether additional modifications are needed in light of COVID-19-related health and safety protocols. We will contact you if it is determined that changes to the ISEP need to occur. We will continue to deliver services to students with IESPs and refer students who would benefit from academic services. All mandated services will be offered either in person or by videoconference, depending on the nature of the service. If you have urgent questions, you should not hesitate to contact Mrs. Buckley at mbuckley@stfrancisschoolbh.net

I need to meet with a teacher or the administration. Can these meetings occur?
Yes. These meetings can take place virtually via phone or video chat by appointment.

Will school masses still take place?
The diocese has defined a specific plan for St. Francis Parish that allows for the celebration of mass under very specific conditions. Schools will be asked to follow this plan, in close coordination with the local pastors and parishes, in determining how/whether masses may be celebrated. More than likely many masses will be done virtually or with individual grade levels for the time being.

Will First Communion, Reconciliation, and Confirmation take place this year?
All sacraments are coordinated by your local parish. For the celebration of the Sacraments, parishes must follow a specific plan defined by the diocese. We will work closely with both Blessed Trinity and St. Francis Parish in communicating the information from the parishes.

What assurances can you give that you are not planning to lower the standards of learning during this new process of schooling?
We consider it our responsibility to hold our students— and our educators — accountable to high academic standards — whether in school, remote, or both. We are committed to ensuring that students who lost ground last year and are struggling receive extra attention.

How will extracurricular activities be impacted this year?
Our plan provides guidance on specific extracurricular activities. The academy will provide After school care Monday-Thursday from 2:30pm-5:30pm as we did in the past starting in October. From September 2020-December 2020 all other extracurricular activities will be canceled or postponed. We are hoping to be able to start extracurricular activities again in 2021.
Frequently Asked Questions

*Miscellany*

How will new students and families be integrated into the school community when so much of the experience will be remote?

We are committed to making sure that our new students feel welcomed into our community and build strong relationships with teachers and peers alike.

Will my students have to wear uniforms?

Yes students will have to wear their uniform when coming into school. In addition, we worked with our uniform vendor, FlynnO’Hara, to arrange for all families to receive free shipping throughout the summer. Students will also be able to wear their gym uniform each day in an effort to make learning as comfortable as possible at least until December 2020.

Are the stores opened to purchase uniforms in person?

While FlynnO’Hara stores are open, we strongly encourage families to purchase uniforms through their website or by phone. Returning families and new families who need to purchase additional uniform items will receive free shipping all summer.

Who decides when a school has met the requirements to reopen? When will this happen?

Schools must complete a plan and submit it to the diocese and the state for review. The state, diocese and Board of Directors will determine if/when our school is ready to reopen.

What does the plan say about safety and cleanliness requirements for school buildings?

Our plan includes very specific requirements for the ongoing cleaning and sanitizing of our school building. Generally speaking, the academy building will be cleaned very frequently, with a particular focus on high-traffic areas and common surfaces. Windows should be opened to maximize air flow. Barriers will be installed in main office areas and front lobby. Our plan contains instructions on managing shared areas such as hallways, gymnasiums, small hall and bathrooms.

How will lunch take place when school reopens?

All students will eat lunch in their classrooms.

What about recess?

We will still conduct recess, we will fulfill defined safety requirements. For example, cohorts must be spread out from one another. When recess is outdoors, masks may be removed, but students will stay at least six feet apart.

Can I still volunteer at school?

At this time we have asked been asked to minimize the number of volunteers this year in an effort to mitigate risk. Thus, the level of volunteers will decrease significantly.
Frequently Asked Questions

Will St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy still collect tuition this year?

Yes. While this school year may look different, our school will continue to provide a rigorous academic experience while supporting the moral and spiritual development of each student. Our Catholic school depends upon tuition revenue to pay our employees who do this work and support other school-related expenses. For more information on how to pay tuition please click here.

I am having difficulty paying tuition, as my own workplace has been impacted by COVID-19. What do I do?

We know that some families may have difficulties paying tuition due to the loss of pay during workplace closures and are ready to support those in need of assistance. If this is happening to you, please apply for Diocesan assistance through Futures in Education. Please note to receive any assistance from the Diocese or St. Francis an application must be completed through Futures in Education.

Will fees be changed this year?

Fees will still be collected this upcoming school year. However they will not be collected on a separate date, instead they have been added to your tuition to be paid over a ten month period (August-May).

What services will be made available to children regarding transition and social/emotional development as a response to the quarantine?

Our teachers and leaders are trained to recognize signs of psychological trouble; to address mild forms of sadness, anger, or other disturbances; and to help children develop healthy coping strategies. We also will be using the Diocesan Counseling services offered by PDHP when needed.

My child and/or another member of my household is in an at-risk group for COVID-19. Should I send my child to school?

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has defined conditions in which certain people may be more at risk for severe illness through COVID-19. If your child or another member of your household is in an at-risk group, we encourage you to speak to your doctor. Ultimately you should decide whether it is safe for your child to attend school. A virtual learning option is available for families that do not wish to return (see next question).

What do I do if I do not feel safe sending my child back to school?

We have taken every step to ensure the safety of students at our schools this fall. However, we understand that some families still may not wish to return. Some families may include individuals in at-risk groups for COVID-19, while others may feel general anxiety. As such, the school will offer a virtual learning option that will be available to any family that does not wish to return in the fall of 2020. The family will remain enrolled at their current school and will be asked to continue paying tuition. If you feel you do not wish to return for physical instruction this year (or at least at the start of the year), please contact the principal and more information will be provided.

Will there be NYC OPT busing (yellow bus available for my child?)

All yellow bus decisions are decided by the New York City Office of Pupil Transportation. As of the publication of this plan no decision has been made.
Mental Health and Wellness

As students head back to school, many may express feelings of anticipation and excitement related to reuniting with teachers and peers; however, it is expected that they may experience feelings of worry, nervousness, and fatigue. The following actions can assist with supporting your child as they transition back to school:

- Assist your child with exploring and discussing feelings related to disruptions in the last school year as well as thoughts and feelings related to the current school year. Recommended talking points include:
  - What did you miss about school during the spring?
  - What did you like about virtual learning?
  - What don’t you miss about school?
  - What don’t you like about virtual learning?
  - What are you worried/anxious about this upcoming school year?
  - What are you looking forward to this school year?
  - How can I support you in order to make this a good school year for you?

- Prior to the start of the school year, establish and practice a healthy eating, sleep and hygiene routine in order to support your child in preparation for their return to school.

- Encourage your child to maintain peer relationships and interactions during the summer break while maintaining social distancing standards.

- Review safety protocols with your child in order to familiarize them with expectations. Reassure your child that these protocols are in place for their safety as well as the safety and health of others.

- Provide opportunities for your student to practice wearing a face covering so that they become accustomed to the physical sensation of wearing a face covering for long periods of time.

- Continue to monitor your child’s exposure to social media and news sources that may provoke anxiety and fear.

“Lord, may you bless the world, give health to our bodies and comfort our hearts. You ask us not to be afraid. Yet, our faith is weak and we are fearful. But you, Lord, will not leave is at the mercy of the storm. Tell us again: Do not be afraid” (Mt 28:5). And we, together with Peter, “cast all our anxieties onto you, for you care about us” (1 Pet 5:7).

-Pope Francis

Strong in the Face of Tribulation: A Sure Support in Time of Trial
Engage your child to engage in open conversations where they have the opportunity to ask questions and gain clarification about what to expect during the next school year. This will help in reducing worry and provide them the opportunity to process their feelings in a healthy and supportive manner.

Remember that sharing your feelings about COVID-19 can increase or decrease your child’s fear. If your child expresses concern for their safety/health, remind your child that the academy is doing everything within our power to keep students safe and well.

During conversations, carefully listen or have them draw or write out their thoughts and feelings and respond with truth and reassurance.

Recognize warning signs and symptoms of more pervasive mental health concerns, such as a change in habits, a decline in mood, withdrawal, decreased social and academic functioning, erratic or changed behavior, and increased physical complaints as well as warning signs of suicidal ideation.

Encourage your student to develop and practice coping and calming strategies that may include:
- Meditation
- Physical exercise
- Deep breathing
- Gradual Relaxation
- Journaling

Should you have any concerns related to your child’s mental health or if you would like to request additional resources, please feel free to contact your child’s teacher or our school guidance counselor, Ms. Jenn in the fall.

For our virtual learners, we recommend the following additional suggestions to assist with promoting mental health and wellness:
- Encourage ongoing contact with peers and healthy social supports utilizing virtual platforms
- Limit and monitor the use of screens and social media outside of virtual learning to ensure safety and well-being. For more information and support, visit www.commonsensemedia.org
- Establish a consistent routine that incorporates breaks and unstructured “down time”
- Encourage your child to spend time outside when weather permits
- Encourage physical activity whenever possible in order to maintain health and stamina
- Reach out and connect with school staff if you have concerns about your child’s ability to cope and/or ability to keep up with assignments or activities
- Work with your child to ensure that they are completing assignments and attending virtual meetings/lessons. This will assist in reducing anxiety/worry. Opportunities to connect with peers and school staff will assist children with transitioning back to the physical school environment
- Encourage your child to express their thoughts and feelings about not being at school and provide hope and reassurance for their return to the school environment
Family Resources

What kind of resources are available to keep my family safe?
If you need additional resources to keep you and your family safe, please check out the resources below from the CDC:

- What to do if you are sick?
- How to protect yourself and others?
- Symptoms of Coronavirus
- Stop the spread of Germs
- 10 Things you can do to manage your symptoms at home
- Feeling Sick? Stay Home!
- Stay Healthy! Wash Your Hands!
Tips For Success in Helping Your Child Wear a Mask

Your child may not want to wear a mask and have a hard time keeping it on. Wearing a mask can be really hard for some children. Your child may be extra sensitive to the way the mask feels on their face, head, and ears. Some children may even feel panicked when a mask is put on them. Some kids won’t like the way mask looks on themselves or others, and might feel scared. Other children just won’t like it because it is different and doing something different is hard for them.

Tips For Success in Helping Your Child Wear a Mask

Here are some ways you can help your child feel comfortable:

**Tip 1: Consider the type of mask you get and how your child wears it**

Your child may be more likely to wear a mask if:
- The mask has their favorite color, sports team, character, or special interest on it
- Your child finds the mask more comfortable
- You give your child choices

**Tip 2: Prepare your child for wearing a mask:**

It will be important to set your child up for success before your child needs to wear their mask. Although this varies by child, it may take repeated prep and practice. Consider starting at least a week or so before needing to go out in a public setting. This can be done with Explanations, Modeling, Using Visuals and videos such as: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lnP-uMn6q_U

**Tip 3: Try out these things when your child goes out with their mask:**

- **Rules**- You may find it helpful to make clear rules for your child about when, where, and why they may need to wear a mask. Using visuals as reminders or to explain what you want them to do may be helpful. For children who understand language well, simply reviewing the rules before you go out as a family could also work.
- **Breaks**- Your child may need breaks from wearing the masks. Make sure you give your child a clear way to ask for breaks if they need it. You may agree on a hand signal, checking in with them verbally, using a new button on their communication device, or creating a “break” card to hand you. You could give your child a break from the mask by taking them out of the place you are (e.g., leaving the store to go into the car for a few minutes), or by asking other people present to leave (e.g., ask the doctor to step out of the room for a minute).
- **Rewards**- Just like getting your child comfortable with the mask, rewards can go a long way in getting a child to cooperate. Wearing a mask in the “real world” can be treated like a chore and “getting a paycheck” for doing it may help quite a bit! Let your child know what they can earn for doing a good job keeping their mask on. You may need to set this up for them ahead of your outing, or bring something with you that your child would like to earn.

Wearing a mask is hard for a lot of people, and can be really hard for children. You can pick and choose what tips here might work best for you and your child. If your child has special needs, we encourage you to talk to your child’s therapists and healthcare providers before exploring these options. This toolkit was developed by licensed psychologists at the Division of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics at the University of Rochester Medical Center.
How to Properly Wear a Face Covering

Always wash hands before and after wearing your mask and clean resuable masks after use. Avoid touching the mask at all times and only use the bands or ties to put on and remove.

DON'T wear your mask below your nose
DON'T wear your mask low on your nose
DON'T leave your chin exposed
DON'T wear your mask under your chin or temporarily remove it in public
DON'T let your mask hang loosely with gaps around your face
DO wear your mask up to the top of your nose and under your chin; snug and without gaps

Source: San Francisco Department of Public Health
Proper Hand Washing Technique

- Rinse water
- Use soap or hand Sanitizer
- Wash your palms
- Scrub each finger
- Rub back of hands and between fingers
- Rub base of your thumbs
- Scrub nails on palms
- Wash your wrist
- Rinse off soap with water
- Dry hands with towel or dryer
- Turn off faucet with paper towel
- Hands are clean
Pandemic Prayer from the U.S.C.C.B. President Archbishop José H. Gomez

Holy Virgin of Guadalupe,  
Queen of the Angels and Mother of the Americas.  
We fly to you today as your beloved children.  
We ask you to intercede for us with your Son,  
as you did at the wedding in Cana.

Pray for us, loving Mother,  
and gain for our nation and world,  
and for all our families and loved ones,  
the protection of your holy angels,  
that we may be spared the worst of this illness.

For those already afflicted,  
we ask you to obtain the grace of healing and deliverance.  
Hear the cries of those who are vulnerable and fearful,  
wipe away their tears and help them to trust.

In this time of trial and testing,  
Teach all of us in the Church to love one another and to be patient and kind.  
Help us to bring the peace of Jesus to our land and to our hearts.

We come to you with confidence,  
knowing that you truly are our compassionate mother,  
health of the sick and cause of our joy.

Shelter us under the mantle of your protection,  
keep us in the embrace of your arms,  
help us always to know the love of your Son, Jesus.

Amen.

Note this plan is pending government approval and assumes public health requirements are met; thus, it is subject to change, given the uncertainties of COVID-19.
Resources and Research

The Back to School Task Force has spent several months reading various research to put the best practices in place for a safe return to school. This includes but is not limited to:

- American Academy of Pediatrics - COVID-19 Planning Considerations


- KidsLink School: Policies & Procedures Manual; Everything you need to know about returning to On-Site Instruction during the COVID-19 Pandemic


- https://www.uhhospitals.org/-/media/Files/Coronavirus/UH-Rainbow-Healthy-Restart-School-Playbook.pdf?a=en&hash=42B9125CF14E840260E475A5DAEF76EC83E17A0A


- https://wenmoth.net/2020/06/22/the-amplification-conundrum/

- https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/9-ways-online-teaching/

- https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2020/05/01/a-blueprint-for-reopening-this-fall-what.html?r=1085607289
