

RETURN-TO-SCHOOL PLAN

IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

ST. FRANCIS CATHEDRAL SCHOOL

August 2020

SFCS Reopening Taskforce

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Thank you to the SFCS Task Force members who helped shape this document for our school. Your time, energy, and input are greatly appreciated.

INTRODUCTION

This plan has been created to aid in navigating the reestablishment of our school where employees, students, and families feel safe and to reduce the impact of COVID-19 conditions upon returning to the school. The guidelines referenced in this plan are based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO), and the State of New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) *The Road Back*. Regular updates will be made to this plan based on information provided by the CDC, WHO, and applicable federal, state and local agencies.

This plan will be re-evaluated and adjusted as necessary per CDC and NJ Department of Education guidelines.

SOURCES

Center for Disease Control: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html#anchor_1589931942037

New Jersey Department of Education:
<https://www.nj.gov/education/reopening/NJDOETheRoadBack.pdf>

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In order to ensure the continued well-being of our employees and students the following guiding principles have been put in place:

1. EMPLOYEE AND STUDENT SAFETY MEASURES
2. HEALTH GUIDELINES

PHASES AND TIMELINES

Information and direction about the phases and timeline will be sent to all employees and parents before implementation. Please see below for a summary of the phases and timelines.

Phase	Timing	Items
Planning	July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplies, equipment • Prepare detailed work schedule for phases • Prepare building and transportation for reopening with thorough cleaning
Phase 1	August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement social distancing protocol and open facilities with limited access/use
Phase 2	August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand use of school based on recommendations and data from CDC, NJDOH, New Jersey Governor, and applicable state and local agencies
Phase 3	September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open school • Expand full operation based on recommendations and data from CDC, NJDOH, New Jersey Governor, and applicable local and state agencies • Determine what restrictions/guidelines stay in place

HEALTH PROTOCOL AND SCREENINGS (EMPLOYEE AND STUDENT)

Students and employees will have a temperature check daily. Students will have their temperature taken using a contactless thermometer prior to entering the building. PreK – 8th students who are dropped off via a vehicle will be checked while in the car. Students who arrive via bus or walking will be checked by staff before entering the buildings.

Parents are asked to screen their child daily for the symptoms described below and confirm with staff that students are free of COVID-19 symptoms.

COVID-19 symptoms including:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea
- Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit
- Known close contact with a person who is lab confirmed to have COVID-19

All screening information will be kept confidential by the school and school nurse.

Students:

Students must wear face coverings. Please contact the school if doing so would inhibit the student's health. Enforcing the use of face coverings may be impractical for some young children or individuals with disabilities.

- Parents are asked to screen their child daily for signs of illness and to keep them home when they are sick.
- Student health checks will be conducted safely and respectfully, and in accordance with any applicable privacy laws and regulations.
- Results must be documented when signs/symptoms of COVID-19 are observed.
- Our screening policy takes into account that students with disabilities may need accommodations in the screening process.

Employees:

School staff are required to wear face coverings unless doing so would inhibit the individual's health.

- If an employee becomes ill at work or if another person is exhibiting symptoms of COVID19 at work, they will leave work and go home or to the nearest health center.
- Employees returning to work from an approved medical leave should contact HR. Employees will be asked to submit a healthcare provider's note before returning to work.
- If an employee has been diagnosed with COVID19, the school, Office of Schools, and local health department must be contacted. The health department will determine the next steps.

Protocol for Symptomatic Staff and Students

- Students and staff with symptoms related to COVID-19 will be safely and respectfully isolated from others.
- Students are to remain in isolation with continued supervision and care until picked up by an authorized adult.
- Continuous monitoring of symptoms
- Follow current State of New Jersey Communicable Disease Service guidance for illness reporting - <https://www.nj.gov/health/>
- If the school becomes aware that an individual who has spent time in the school tests positive for COVID-19, school officials must immediately notify local health officials, staff, and families of a confirmed case while maintaining confidentiality.
- Adequate amount of personal protective equipment (PPE) available, accessible, and provided for use.

If an employee or student becomes ill with COVID symptoms on campus, he/she will be assessed by the nurse and will go to the **nurse's isolation room (Art Room)** and the case form will be completed.

Once the employee or student arrives at the isolation room, they will be immediately provided with a mask and gloves, if needed. This is to help protect other employees and students and prevent the spread of the potential virus.

- The nurse must call the local health authority and seek advice.
- The nurse and others attending the suspected infected person, will wear a protective mask and gloves while working with the suspected infected person. If a mask is not tolerated by the child, staff should use a face covering and follow social distancing guidelines (6 ft. away).
- The nurse will direct the ill employee to leave work or call the parent of the student to be picked up and then sent home.
- The nurse and principal must identify persons who may have come in contact with the suspected infected person. *Unless required by the local health authority, the name of the employee should not be provided.*
- Advise employees that they may have been in contact with a suspected employee and to carry out self-screening every morning, and based on the results, contact the HR department.

- The isolation area and suspected employee's or student's work area/classroom must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected, in addition to all other common surfaces recently touched by the employee or student.

When an individual does test positive for COVID-19, the facility should immediately notify local health officials, staff, and families of a possible or confirmed case while maintaining confidentiality.

Facilities will be prepared to provide the following information when consulting public health:

- The identity of the person with COVID-19 or probable COVID-19 (i.e. staff, child in care, household contact).
- The date the person with COVID-19 or probable COVID-19 was last in the building
- The date the person developed symptoms.
- Types of interactions the person may have had with other persons in the building or in other locations.
- How long their interactions were with other persons in the building.
- If other persons in the childcare program have developed any symptoms and
- Any other information to assist with the determination of next steps.

Re-admittance Procedures After Recovery From COVID:

SFCS will follow the recommended guidelines as deemed by the NJ Department of Health. Please click on this link:

https://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/COVID_guidance_reopening_childcare.pdf

SOCIAL DISTANCE

Social distancing is an effective way to prevent potential infection. SFCS employees, students, and parents should practice staying approximately 6 feet away from others and eliminating contact with others.

- In classroom students will be seated at least 6 feet apart. Social distancing guidance will support a 3-foot radius around each student desk (from the center), resulting in a 6 foot total distance between any two students. Teachers will consider the flow of student traffic around the room.
- Additional modifications may be needed at times. These include using physical barriers between desks and turning desks to face the same direction (rather than facing each other) or having students sit on only one side of the table, spaced apart.
- Markings for physical distance will be instituted.
- When weather allows, windows may be opened to allow for greater air circulation.
- Non-essential or informal meetings and visiting will be avoided.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

In order to minimize exposure to COVID-19:

Masks:

Students and employees must wear face coverings. Please contact the school if doing so would inhibit the student's health. Enforcing the use of face coverings may be impractical for some young children or individuals with disabilities.

Gloves: Touching your face with contaminated hands, whether gloved or not, poses a significant risk of infection. Wearing gloves does not diminish the need to wash your hands. Students will be reminded to wash their hands properly as it is the number-one defense against any virus. Additionally, the proper removal of gloves reduces the risk of being exposed to contamination.

Please note that social distancing will still be practiced even with the use of gloves and masks.

In addition to using PPE, students and staff will be reminded to:

- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth
- Cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing or use the inside of elbow

CLASSROOM AND COMMON SPACE

Students will remain in their classroom area except for recess and bathroom use. Students are not to visit another classroom. Employees will disinfect their own personal workspace (teacher desk, phone, etc.) throughout the day, giving special attention to commonly touched surfaces.

Classrooms:

- In classroom students will be seated at least 6 feet apart. Social distancing guidance will support a 3-foot radius around each student desk (from the center), resulting in a 6 foot total distance between any two students. Teachers will consider the flow of student traffic around the room.
- Where applicable, teachers will change classrooms, with students staying in the same classroom. For all grade levels, students will be directed under the supervision of the teacher to clean their personal space (including desks, cubby and/or lockers). This includes students using approved cleaning products to wipe down desks when leaving the classroom and arriving in the classroom.
- SFCS is using the cafeteria and gym as classrooms. Classroom protocols will apply to these areas.

- Classes will not be able to gather in the same area, including at recess. Students will have recess with the students in their specific class. Each group will play in a designated area outside, weather permitting.
- Hand sanitizer will be in every classroom as well as the entrances to every classroom, in accordance with CDC guidelines.

School Entrances, hallways, and common spaces:

- Everyone entering is required to wear a mask and maintain physical distancing (six feet). Physical guides will be used, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls, to help ensure that staff and students remain at least 6 feet apart in lines and at other times.
- Arrival and dismissal protocols will be changed to limit close contact between students.
- Social distancing in hallways and common areas will be reinforced. We will minimize the number of non-essential interactions between students and staff throughout the school day.
- Students will remain with the other students in their classroom as an effective strategy to limit exposure and contact. This means:
 - Little or no commingling between classes or other groups of students.
 - No large group gatherings
 - Staggered release from classrooms to limit the number of students in the hallways.
- Signage will be posted around school buildings to provide hygiene advice and reminders.
- We will increase the frequency of cleaning all surfaces, including walls (to the appropriate height based on age of students) by having maintenance staff stationed in the school throughout the day.
- We will use a physical barrier (plexiglass) in the school office as well as social distancing protocols.

Other Considerations:

- The use of supplies and equipment will be limited to one group of children at a time and cleaned and disinfected between uses. Teachers will develop a list of supplies and books that each student must have of their own to eliminate sharing supplies.
- Sharing of the school's toys, books, and other games or learning aids, will be discouraged. If used, items will be cleaned and disinfected between uses. Electronic devices that are shared will be thoroughly clean and disinfect between use. Students are not allowed to bring personal toys or devices to school, except in PreK and Aftercare, and perhaps, recess.
- Each students' belongings will be separated from others' by using individual lockers, cubbies or containers.
- The circulation of outdoor air will be increased as much as possible, by opening windows and doors, unless this poses a safety or health risk (e.g., risk of falling, triggering asthma symptoms) to children using the facility.
- The school day schedule will be adjusted to allow time for students and staff to wash their hands. Teachers will build in the practice of handwashing throughout the day, particularly during transition times.

FACILITIES CLEANING

The safety of our employees and students are our first priority. Upon reopening, our school will be completely cleaned and disinfected. All necessary safety precautions will be adhered to throughout the day. In addition to the deep cleaning of the office and school before employees and students return, the cleaning steps outlined below are to be taken to disinfect workplace surfaces, chairs, tables, etc. to protect employees and reduce the risk of spread of infection.

Employees will be required to maintain this safety standard by continuously cleaning and disinfecting based on the frequency stated below. Deep cleaning is triggered when an active employee or student is identified as positive for COVID 19 based on testing.

GENERAL DISINFECTION MEASURES

Category	Area	Frequency
Workspaces	Classrooms, Offices	At the end of each use/day
Appliances	Refrigerators, Microwaves, Coffee Machines	Daily
Electronic Equipment	Copier machines, Shared computer monitors, TV's, Telephones, keyboards	At the end of each use/day and/or between use
General Objects Used	Handles, light switches, sinks, restrooms	Several times a day
Buses	Bus seats, handles/railing, belts, window controls	Responsibility of bus company
Common Areas	Cafeteria, Library, Conference rooms, Gyms, Common Areas	At the end of each use/day; between groups

Hand sanitizing stations with alcohol-based hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol) will be maintained:

- In each classroom (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer).
- At entrances/exits of buildings.
- Children ages 5 and younger should be supervised when using hand sanitizer.

Classrooms that have existing sinks will be stocked with soap and alcohol-based hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol).

- Students should wash hands for at least 20 seconds at regular intervals, including before eating, after using the bathroom, and after blowing their nose/coughing/sneezing.

Our PreK 4 year old classes will be held in the CYO utilizing the room upstairs for instruction and eating. The gym will be used for naptime and large motor play:

- Students will be six feet apart for instruction, when eating, during nap time, and doing other activities.
- The schedule for the day will designate times for students to wash hands with soap and water, including:
 - at the start of the day when children enter the classroom
 - before snacks and lunch
 - after using the toilet or helping a child use a toilet
 - after sneezing, wiping, and blowing noses
 - after snacks and lunch, particularly if hands are sticky, greasy or soiled
 - when students come in from outdoor play or recess

In limited cases, hand hygiene with an alcohol-based sanitizer or alcohol-based wipes, when there is no visible soiling of hands, are alternatives to hand washing with soap and water by children over 24 months of age, under the supervision of the teacher. The CDC recommends an alcohol-based sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol and to rub the product over all surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry, about 20 seconds, then wash hands with soap and water as soon as possible.

SIGNAGE

The signage that will be placed throughout the offices and school includes:



BUS PROTOCOLS

Municipalities that provide busing to SFCS students must follow the state guidelines for health and safety protocols. We will follow the protocols outlined by the local district providing busing. Bus companies will need to follow health and safety guidelines.

RESTROOM USAGE DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

Maximum capacity has been established for each of the restrooms in the school building, the early childhood center, and the CYO to allow for social distancing. Maximum capacity signs will be on the door as well as an aide to help younger students. Classes will also be assigned to use a specific bathroom.

LUNCH, RECESS, SPECIAL CLASSES, PHYSICAL EDUCATION LOCKERS AND LOCKER ROOMS

- Students will eat lunch in their classrooms.
- Each classroom of students will be assigned a recess time and a space to allow for open space between groups. Cones and chains will be used to create boundaries between the groups.
- Students will wash hands immediately after outdoor playtime.
- Students will remain in their classrooms for specials - Art, Computers, Library, Music, Physical Education and Spanish. The specials teachers will rotate to the classrooms.
- Physical education will take place outside or in the classroom. Each class will be assigned a gym day and period. Students wear their gym uniform with sneakers on the day their class has gym.
- SFCS will limit direct contact with gym equipment and try not to use it if at all possible. If equipment must be shared, it will be cleaned and disinfected between each use.
- In classrooms with individual lockers or cubbies, students will be assigned lockers/cubbies. Teachers will monitor students going to lockers/cubbies to allow for social distancing. Classes without individual lockers/cubbies will be provided with an individual bin to store items.
- The locker room in the CYO will not be used by the school.

VISITORS ON CAMPUS

Until further notice there will be no visitors allowed on campus or in the school building. Fewer people entering the school building allows for greater implementation of safety measures. A drop-off box will be located at Door #1 for parents to leave forgotten items, such as lunches. Parents are to ring the doorbell at Door#1 to alert the office staff that an item is there. If a parent needs to retrieve their child during the school day, please ring the doorbell at Door #1 and the nurse or office staff will bring the child to the door.

CAFETERIA AND MEAL PERIODS

The school will continue to provide families with the opportunity to purchase lunch through our food service provider, Pomptonian. Further information on ordering lunches will be sent closer to the opening of school. Students may also bring in their own complete lunches. Students will eat lunch in their classroom.

WATER BOTTLES, SNACKS AND FOOD DELIVERY

Each student must bring in their own water bottle(s) as the water fountains will be covered to prevent the spreading of germs. Snack time is permitted, but students should bring their own snack items and drinks to school. Bringing refreshments to share during school is prohibited in order to limit the risk of contamination. We ask that there be no food delivered and that food be kept at assigned spaces.

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

SFCS uses the following communication methods to keep our school community updated on the most current information:

1. Honeywell alerts for the critical information. The school enters one phone number when setting up a Honeywell account for a family. Parents need to visit their profile page on Honeywell to add phone numbers and contacts as well as their email addresses.
2. Constant Contact to send important information, diocesan and school letters and reminders of upcoming events.
3. The school website, stfranciscathedralschool.org
4. PowerSchool Student Information System for students' grades and progress.
5. Google Classroom for PreK 3- 8th grade.
6. Teachers' school email addresses
7. Parent emails using the addresses provided at the beginning of the school year.
8. School's official Facebook and Instagram pages, St. Francis Cathedral School

ACADEMICS

There are three considerations for instruction (Traditional, Hybrid, and Remote) for returning to school, depending upon state and local health guidelines. At SFCS we are incorporating all three of these instructional methods at the start of school, depending on the grades.

In-School and Hybrid Instruction

The school building, the Early Childhood Center in the parish center, the cafeteria, and the CYO will all be used for in-school and hybrid instruction. PreK 4-year-olds, Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th grades are scheduled at school every day for the full day. Our middle school students will have a hybrid schedule with half of each class in-school and the other half at home for two days, then the groups switch for the next two days. All middle school students will have distance learning on Fridays.

Classrooms may house between 10 - 14 students, depending on the square footage. The plans below are subject to change based on the number of students for in-school instruction:

PreK 3-year-olds will meet in the gym on Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 8:30am – 11am.

PreK 4-year-olds will use the upstairs room of the CYO for instruction and lunch, then the gym area for nap time and play from 8:00am – 2:20pm. These classes will also use the PreK playground if possible.

Kindergarten will use the Early Childhood Center on the top floor of the parish center. Kindergarten will use all five classrooms, including the PreK 4 and Kindergarten classrooms. Kindergarten students will be assigned to one classroom. The three teachers and three aides will rotate between classrooms to ensure instruction and supervise.

First grade, 2nd grade, 3rd grade and 4th grade students will be housed in the school building using the grade's classrooms as well as the 5th grade classrooms, the Computer room, and the Library to provide for social distancing. Teachers will rotate between classrooms if a grade needs more than the two usual classrooms with aides and additional staff supervising students.

5th grade students will be housed in the cafeteria. The space allows for all 5A and 5B students to be socially distanced using the divider. Students will report directly to the cafeteria in the morning and store their personal items in bins.

6th, 7th and 8th grade students will use a hybrid schedule. Students designated as the Group A will attend in-school instruction on Monday and Tuesday while students in Group B will attend through live streaming at home. On Wednesday and Thursday, Group B students will attend in-school instruction while Group A students are attending via live streaming. All middle school students will attend via live streaming on Fridays.

Remote Instruction

All families with children in PreK 3 through 8th grade may opt for full time remote instruction via live streaming. Teachers will provide a schedule of instruction - when each subject will be taught during the day. Students at home will be expected to attend each subject. We are using webcams to livestream, which do allow for interaction between the teacher and students at home. Assignments will be posted on Google Classroom to allow for interaction between students and teachers.

SFCS's goal is to design flexible instructional plans that work best in both traditional face-to-face and remote environments. The following will be considered:

- Create year-long plans to facilitate more meaningful, interdisciplinary units that can be delivered face to face or remotely.
- Ensure all instructional experiences include modeling, guided instruction, collaborative work, and independent work rather than over-reliance on independent work during remote learning. This requires strategic use of synchronous and asynchronous lessons.
- Review and implement best practices in synchronous and asynchronous instruction to meet student needs and engagement.
- Make adjustments to school-based services plans for students with special needs to account for accommodations and modifications needed in a remote learning environment.
- Ensure meaningful support is provided for English Learners and their families including that teachers, students, and parents are adept at utilizing translation tools.
- Create an "early warning system" to identify and intervene with students who may be exhibiting academic and/or behavioral concerns.
- Develop a plan for benchmark screening and intervention delivery during face-to-face and remote learning.

In order for the school to properly staff and schedule instruction, families will need to commit to in-school instruction or at-home instruction by August 12th.

CATHOLIC IDENTITY

Catholic schools have a two-fold charge: to provide an education that is academically excellent and one that is deeply rooted in Catholic identity. Catholic values will be infused intentionally across all grade levels and all subject matter. Participation in liturgy and prayer will continue to be encouraged for both traditional face-to-face and remote settings. Service learning opportunities will remain a priority in our schools.

GRADING AND ATTENDANCE POLICY

To receive credit for the courses for this school year students are expected to complete the assignments. The grading policy is located in the school handbook. Students are expected to be visible – in-school or at home – in order to be considered “present”. Students who are not visible online will be considered absent. The parent must contact the teacher with the reason for the child’s absence.

DISTANCE LEARNING

In the event that the school has to close due to the pandemic in 2020-2021, we will follow our Distance Learning Plan. Please click on this link to our plan which is also on our website under the “Parent and Student” tab.

<https://stfranciscathedralschool.org/distance-learning-plan>

BEFORE AND AFTERCARE PROGRAMS

SFCS is planning to offer Before Care starting at 7am and After Care ending at 6pm. Social distancing requirements and cleaning protocols will be followed. Information about Before and After Care will be provided closer to the start of school.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Extra-curricular activities at SFCS include choir, Drama, Helping Hands, Student Council, STEM club and track. It does not include sports (basketball and cheerleading) that is administered through the CYO Board. SFCS will limit our extracurricular activities at the start of school until we are sure the activities may be held following safety protocols. We will investigate using technology and online resources for these activities.