

Saint Rose of Lima Catholic School COVID-19 Response Plan

July 15, 2020 (updated December 1, 2020)

The following plan is the fruit of much research and input, both personal and professional. We are grateful to the following individuals who served on the committee and advised Saint Rose of Lima School administrators on how to best reopen with safeguards that enable students, teachers and staff to operate safely and effectively:

- Sr. Catherine Marie & Colleen Hawkins: Administration
- Susan Akers & DeAnne Hathaway: Front Office Staff
- Nicole Chauvin: Preschool Director
- Staci Rose: Admissions
- Lisa Luscinski: Teacher
- John Williams: Parish & School Facilities Manager
- Nathan Miller: Parent & Metro Government Facilities Manager
- Phillip O'Reilly: Parent and Food Service Expert
- Kathy Stewart: Cafeteria Supervisor
- Dr. Marie Brock: Parent and Family Medicine Physician
- Dr. Melita Bradley: Parent and Pediatric Physician
- Jane Hearnberger: Parent and Pediatric Nurse Practitioner
- Amy Swartz: Church Staff
- Nick Campos : Church Staff
- Lynn Sigler: Church Staff
- Amy Waggener- School Nurse

“The school leaders with whom I have worked with through this process are united in making the best health-related decisions for their students and staff. I know this is very true with the Catholic School leadership. Given the safety measures to be in place at the start of the year, I support the Catholic Schools in their decision to return to campus in August.”

Alex Jahangir, MD, MMHC Metro
Nashville’s Coronavirus Task Force Chair

In addition, we had the benefit of the expertise of Rebecca Hammel, our Superintendent of Catholic Schools, who served on the Metro Nashville task force with area experts and educators to develop a plan to reopen. She, in turn, formed a diocesan task force to produce protocols for our Catholic Schools. Our committee reviewed these protocols and provided us with recommendations on how best to adapt these safeguards to our particular school situation.

As a community, we have experienced COVID-19 in an ever-changing landscape. While many are not in agreement as to how this pandemic should be handled, we have tried our best to base our decisions on common sense and science. The parent surveys we received from our school community affirmed a preference for what we have long held as a priority, that is: in-person instruction with all of the social, spiritual, emotional and physical benefits that come with a Catholic education. We are grateful to the 128 parents who completed the survey. It provided us with the information we needed to communicate in a way that addresses the direct concerns of our parents. Several individuals also shared with us some practical ideas that have been incorporated into our plan.

Please note that at this time the details contained in this plan take precedence over those outlined in our handbook.

The Plan: To open on August 12

Among the resources used to inform this plan are the CDC Guidelines and the American Academy of Pediatrics *COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-entry*. The AAP “strongly advocates that all policy considerations for the coming school year should start with a goal of having students physically present in school.” They have concluded that face-to-face education is a priority that outweighs any potential risk. This conclusion was impacted by the AAP’s acknowledgement that “the preponderance of evidence indicates that children and adolescents are less likely to be symptomatic and less likely to have severe disease resulting from SARS-CoV-2 infection. In addition, children may be less likely to become infected and to spread infection.” Of course, our school community is much broader than only our children, but it is them primarily we seek to serve. Since there is still much that is unknown about this virus, the CDC and AAP advise schools to make decisions based on science and, as far as it is possible, minimize risk through the precautions advised by the healthcare community.

At this time the situation surrounding COVID-19 is fluid, and so we understand that these plans are likely to change and adapt to the circumstances at hand. While we do not anticipate another long term shutdown such as the one we experienced in the spring of 2020, we are prepared for whatever we may be required to do. This means that if the level of viral transmission in the school and throughout the community rises to a level that is not safe, we are prepared to move temporarily to an on-line format. Given the size of our Catholic school system and the fact that we are spread out in multiple counties, our decisions will not necessarily have to follow the school systems of Metro Nashville or Rutherford County/City. We want to make decisions based out of concern for our school community.

I am grateful to our teachers who served so selflessly and with such skill last spring and to our parents for all that they did to support the learning process. Both our faculty and our staff have expressed a willingness to do all that they can to provide our students with a positive learning environment. This will take cooperation, communication and imagination. We are excited to return to school again, believing the efforts we make are much needed at this time.

The School Environment

We will begin the school year with some precautions, but behind it all our goal is to enable our students to feel welcome and secure. While safety protocols are in place, the focus will be on learning and the joy-filled environment we have always sought to foster.

While social distancing will be practiced where feasible, teachers are aware of the need that students will have for breaks, fresh air and a change of scenery! We will make concerted efforts to enable students to experience the bonds that unite us as a school family, even as we build physical distance into the structure of our day.

Our Partnership with you

In our school we have children who come from families with individuals who are considered vulnerable due to cancer, age or health conditions. It is important that we as a whole community consider their need for security and unite in charity for all. With this in mind, we ask that all parents check their child’s temperature daily before they leave home so that no one comes to school with a fever or is symptomatic. Adherence to our school policy that children with a fever of 100.4 or higher be kept home is imperative. Parents must also monitor their children for symptoms such as cough, congestion, shortness of breath, or gastrointestinal discomfort. (Details to follow in the Health Concerns section.)

It is also important for us to acknowledge the inconvenience that comes with the types of distancing demanded by genuine concern for each other. Our plans include the sacrifice of some time together, including for safety reasons limiting building access to school personnel only. This in no way intends to “shut parents out” but has been recommended to ensure that we are limiting exposure to individuals who may be asymptomatic. Our partnership with our parents is only enhanced by our genuine care for the good of our children. For all of us, students, teachers, and families alike, we will be creative and open to the ways that God assuredly will provide to draw us spiritually and socially closer even when we are physically sometimes farther apart.

Social Distancing

Medical professionals have indicated that COVID-19 illness in children is rare. What is uncertain is whether the disease can be spread by children to others while they remain asymptomatic. While no precaution is foolproof, it is understood that the layering of precautions will provide the protection we desire. We are fortunate that our class sizes are small, allowing for some distancing between desks. As a precaution, we will be doing the following:

- Preschool students will be signed in by staff at the door.
- Desks will be spaced apart and face in the same direction. If desks are not able to be spaced six feet apart, students will make use of a physical barrier provided by the school.
- Preschool through 5th grade students will remain in their classrooms for most classes and subject area teachers will move so as to limit the number of contact spaces.
- Morning prayer, the pledge and announcements will be live-streamed into the classroom. This is a treasured tradition at our school, so we look forward to an adapted manner of sharing this time and prayer together.
- Lunch will be in the classrooms and hot lunch will be delivered. Students may bring their own lunch and can also purchase a beverage. We ask parents of young children to send them only with containers they can open themselves.
- Assemblies and field trips are suspended temporarily. We are exploring virtual opportunities at this time.
- Non-school staff will be limited and those who are essential will be screened daily for symptoms while school is in session.
- We will have three Masses in a week with separate grade levels so that students can spread out in the Church. At this time there is not sufficient space for parents or other adults outside of our faculty.

Health Concerns

Preventative Measures

- The bell to begin the school day will ring at 7:55 to provide an additional five minutes in the schedule for handwashing and stretch breaks. Students should arrive between 7:30 and 7:50.

- Windows and interior doors will remain open as is practical to allow for good circulation.
- Students are encouraged to bring water bottles to school that are clearly marked with their name rather than using the water fountains.
- Each teacher and staff member will be required to have his/her temperature checked each morning prior at the start of school and they will log in to answer the health department screening questions. They are also required to wear a mask/face shield whenever they are within six feet of a student or other adult.
- Student temperatures will be taken at the discretion of the teacher/staff member.
- We ask that parents supply their child(ren) in grades K-8 with two face masks (one as a backup to be stored at school). The facemasks are to be worn while inside the building. The designs can vary but should not distract from the learning environment and should be marked with the student's name.
- While preschool students will not be required to wear masks during the day, they are to arrive wearing one and will be dismissed with one in place. Parents are asked to send an additional one into school in a ziplock bag in the event a child becomes sick at school.
- Reusable cloth masks should be washed regularly. Our uniform company is offering masks in children's sizes at an affordable price if this is helpful to any of our families.
- While parents will under normal circumstances not be in our building, if it is necessary they must wear a mask, have a temperature check, hand sanitize and answer the health department screening questions.
- P.E. will occur outside whenever possible and activities will be mindful of social distancing. Face masks are optional outside during recess or P.E.
- It is highly recommended that all students and teachers get the flu shot when it is available to keep students healthy and avoid the additional complication of a flu epidemic.

Students with symptoms/positive COVID-19 diagnosis/family exposure

- If a student has symptoms and a temperature of 100.4 or higher, they will be removed from the classroom and parents will be notified. They will await pick-up in an area separate from the main office where they can be monitored and yet are out of contact with others.
- Parents are encouraged to consult with a doctor about their condition. They may return either with a doctor's note or after 12 hours of being fever and symptom free. Parents are asked to communicate with school officials as to the child's condition upon his/her return to school.
- If a child, teacher or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, the school community will be notified. The health department will do contact tracing of those who have been in close proximity

of the student for more than 15 minutes over a 24 hour period. Those who are likely to have been infected may be asked to self-quarantine. The classroom(s) will be deep cleaned. Parents will be advised to monitor their children for symptoms. Testing of all students in a class is not required by the health department.

- If a family member or other individual that the student has had close contact with tests positive for the Coronavirus, parents are expected to inform the school. The student will need to be quarantined as determined by the Health Department. This student will continue school through distance learning.

Presently, the CDC has stated that the quarantine period is 14 days from exposure. If the COVID-positive individual is in the home and not separated from the student in question, then the total quarantine period is 24 days (10 days of potential infection followed by 14 days quarantine to insure that the illness has not been contracted.)

The CDC has set up restrictions where confidentiality is required. With this in mind, we will not be identifying the names of individuals who have tested positive. Instead, you will receive a notification letting you know that we have a positive case in the school. If it involves a classmate, parents of that student will be informed to be aware of the possibility of exposure and to monitor for symptoms. Anyone who is considered a 'close contact' will be called and required to quarantine.

Cleaning Protocols

- Teachers will be supplied with an EPA approved chlorinated disinfectant spray that is known to kill the Coronavirus within 60 seconds of contact and is safe in a school setting. This is more effective than standard store disinfectant wipes. They will also have available EPA approved hand sanitizer for occasional application.
- Light switches, door knobs, bathroom fixtures and other frequently touched surfaces will be treated regularly.
- Playground equipment will be treated daily.

Sports, Extended Care and Extracurricular Activities

- At this point in time, the Diocesan Athletic Council is beginning basketball practices at the start of December with competition between schools beginning in January. If enough players sign up in the lower grades for intramural play, students will participate in practices and games between same-grade teams. The Diocesan Athletic has drafted safety protocols which will be strictly followed. All play will be suspended if it is deemed unsafe.
- For the time being, our extracurricular activities will be suspended.
- Before and After School Extended Care will continue with the same precautions as practiced during the school day.

Training

Faculty and staff have been in-serviced the week before opening on all protocols by a nurse practitioner and facilities manager on details of this plan. This included information on COVID-19 and Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in children.

Accommodating students with health concerns

If a student is out for an extended period of time due to quarantine or recovery needs, our teachers will provide a distance learning option for them. This option may be extended to a household with a vulnerable family member. Accommodations will be made on an individual basis with administration in consultation with parents.

Needless to say, in order to encourage students to take health concerns seriously, we will not be giving a perfect attendance award this school year.

Distance Learning

The homeroom teacher of the student who is quarantining will contact the parent with directions on how to distance learn within 24 hours of an initial notification. Every effort will be made to assist students in this process.

In Conclusion

I know that I speak for all of our faculty and staff when I say that an abundance of prayer and thoughtful research has gone into this plan. We take very seriously the responsibility to do all that we can to provide a secure and healthy learning environment while at the same time living up to our commitment as an educational institution. We also have genuine concern for the physical and emotional well-being of the students and reverence for your own concern for their safety and that of your family. Thank you for working closely with us as we move forward with this plan. Our school will long outlast this pandemic if we work together in faithful partnership. I know you will agree with me that we are grateful now more than ever for the good work that God does in our Catholic school through the gifts and cooperation of our entire community. We are unparalleled in the blessing of being the place of encounter with Jesus Christ in our community. May He continue to bless and protect us all!