

Returning to Learning Plan / Fall 2020

Sacred Heart School

56 Purchase Street
East Providence, RI 02914
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Message from the Principal

Dear Parents, Students, and Staff:

The following document is a detailed strategic plan developed by a committee of Sacred Heart School (SHS) staff and administration that was convened to prepare scenarios for the reopening of school in the fall of 2020 to conform with the Governor's, Rhode Island Department of Health's, and Department of Education's directives.

Members of the Committee are:

Rev. Silvio De Nard, Pastor
Emily DaSilva, Principal
Sharon Chalmers, Teacher
Philip Desrosiers, Teacher & Band Director
Shannon Luiz, School Secretary
Faculty Members and Parents for the final revision

Guidance and, in some cases, mandates were provided by:

Centers for Disease Control (CDC)
Diocese of Providence Catholic Schools Office (CSO)
Governor's Office (GO)
Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE)
Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH)

Since March, Zoom conferences with the diocesan superintendent of schools and other Catholic school principals have been held weekly to encourage timely discussion of pertinent issues and sharing of information. Mr. Guernon, along with other principals throughout the state, had also participated in several phone conferences with the Director of RIDOH and the Commissioner of Education. Weekly conferences with the Commissioner have now been scheduled. This ongoing consultation is necessary due to the state of flux in which we find ourselves relative to COVID-19.

In developing this plan, the committee faithfully adhered to all mandates and directives and tailored recommendations to best serve the unique needs of the entire Sacred Heart School community.

**Formulation of this plan was guided by our uncompromising commitment to
SAFETY FIRST.**

While it is obvious that no plan, however thorough, can guarantee with 100% certainty the absolute safety of every member of our school community from COVID-19 infection, we have developed the most practical policies and protocols to significantly reduce the chances of infection for everyone in the school.

Because additional guidelines/mandates will be issued periodically by some, and perhaps all of the aforementioned groups, this plan is subject to change. As a result, our committee has limited flexibility in some respects: mandates must be followed while recommendations are optional. Any and all changes, if they become necessary, will be communicated to you as soon as practical.

It is important that all – parents/guardians, students, faculty, and staff -- become familiar with all details in this plan as it evolves.

To realize the greatest and most extensive protection possible, it is essential that all members of the SHS community adhere to every aspect of this plan with fidelity and at all times.

The pandemic that has wrought such devastating havoc in all of our lives is a continuing menace. Here at SHS we have, in some instances, greater flexibility of options to maximize safety than most schools due primarily to our small classes and large classrooms that allow for distancing and other safety measures as outlined in this document. Nevertheless, our enrollment for this coming year continues to increase, a significant reversal of a long trend of decline in all Catholic elementary schools. As a result, it has become necessary to cap the number of new registrants in some grades so that we can maintain adequate social distancing.

As the school year progresses, we will closely monitor the effectiveness of our policies and will respond accordingly. It is important to reiterate, therefore, that modifications of this plan will be made periodically to improve it.

The committee welcomes input from all of you as we head into these uncharted waters. Let's keep the lines of communication between home and school open and dedicate ourselves as a closely knit school community to working in close cooperation to achieve the common goal of safety for all. You will be given further opportunity to express your opinions and suggestions as well as ask questions regarding our tentative plan prior to the opening of school. More detailed information in that regard will be forthcoming.

Thank you in advance for your anticipated support in this united endeavor. We humbly ask God's blessings for success in providing our students with excellence of

instruction while protecting the health of all. Saint Louis Guanella, please pray for us.

Sincerely,

Emily C. DaSilva, Principal

Returning to Learning at Sacred Heart School Fall 2020

Core Beliefs

Health & Safety: All decisions in the preparation of this plan have been driven by our most important priority: the safety of all students and staff.

Equity: The school will make every possible effort to provide all students with what they need to maximize learning, given the constraints necessitated by the need for maintaining safety.

Collaboration: We have and will continue to seek the input of all stakeholders in formulating and implementing the provisions of our final plan.

Innovation: We have begun and will continue to develop innovative solutions to ensure the best possible safe delivery of education to all students.

Resilience: We will continue our collective commitment to doing whatever is necessary within our means to successfully provide our students with the excellence of education for which SHS families have become accustomed and to which our students are entitled.

Lessons Learned from Spring 2020

Large numbers of parents have provided their feedback on the efficacy of the distance learning that SHS provided last spring. We recognize that this approach to teaching was new for students, parents, and teachers and that there is a need for improvement. While the parents who contacted us regarding our teaching methods last spring were overwhelmingly satisfied with the process, we want to build on that success so that we are prepared to provide even more effective tools and procedures to ensure the optimum delivery of educational services to all our students should that become necessary.

Return Scenarios

RIDOH is requiring schools to plan for three opening scenarios:

1. Full In-person for All:

- “Schools resume 100% in-person operations, with social distancing protocols still required based on current health information.”
- “Distance learning is integrated with in-person programs & utilized as necessary.”

2. Partial In-person Learning

- “Elementary grades re-enter in person...”
- “Prioritize in-person re-entry for vulnerable populations.”
- “Remaining groups begin with distance learning.”

3. Limited In-person

- “General population resumes distance learning from home...”
- “Prioritize in-person re-entry for vulnerable subpopulations...”

Please note that our Full In-person and our Partial In-person plan are the same plan. We are also giving parents the option to choose virtual learning even if we return to Full or partial in person scenario.

Plan Components

I. Health & Safety (COVID-19 Control Plan)

*If we adopt the **all-in-school model** or the **hybrid model**, where some students are in school while others are at home, the following health and safety protocols and measures will apply. (In the **all-at-home model**, teachers will be allowed in the school to teach but will follow social distancing, mask-wearing, and hand-washing requirements.)*

Face Masks and Coverings

- ✓ Though students will be organized into stable groups throughout the school day and will consistently maintain at least six (6) feet of distance from others in their stable groups or pods throughout their time in the building, all students must wear face coverings to add another layer of protection.
- ✓ Visitors to the school, other than parents, are highly discouraged. Parents are asked to call the school ahead of time to make an appointment. When visiting the school, all parents and visitors must wear face coverings. Parents at this time due to Covid-19 will not be allowed beyond the foyer at the Purchase Street entrance unless absolutely necessary. There will be a table in the foyer area to sign in, to collect your child’s belongings, and to drop off any forgotten items for your child.

- ✓ Face masks will be provided at no cost to students who are not able to procure their own.
- ✓ The office will provide face coverings for any student or staff member who has forgotten to bring it to school or has lost it.
- ✓ Those wearing face coverings should wash reusable ones between each use and dispose of disposable types following each use.
- ✓ The school secretary will wear a mask, face shield, gown, and gloves when assessing students with health complaints.
- ✓ Faculty members and classroom aides must wear face masks while maintaining at least six (6) feet of distance from others. If six (6) feet can not be maintained, the face shields must be worn as well.
- ✓ Adults other than the permanent classroom teacher who enter a class must wear a face covering and face shield. This includes -- but is not limited to -- visiting aides, resource teacher, principal, and substitute teachers.
- ✓ Lunchroom and recess monitors must also wear face coverings and face shields.

Social Distancing and Organizing Personnel

- ✓ Students will be organized in stable groups, meaning that they are asked to not interact with students who are not members of their stable group or pod.
- ✓ Pods will consist of the following combinations: Kindergarten and Grade 1; Grades 2 and 3; Grades 4 and 5. Grades 6-8 will combine as a single pod. (This will be re-examined based on additional enrollment.)
- ✓ Students in grades 6, 7 and 8 will remain in their homerooms throughout the school day and subject teachers will rotate from room to room.
- ✓ There will not be any combined classes for specials: music, art, computers, and physical education.
- ✓ All individuals within a pod will maintain a 6' distance with each other.
- ✓ All stable groups will maintain a 14' distance between each other.
- ✓ Because the maintenance of stable groups is not possible for after-school activities, the following are suspended:
 1. Band (although the possibility exists that instrument lessons might be conducted online; this is to be determined by Mr. Desrosiers.)
 2. All athletic teams
 3. All clubs and other extracurricular activities.
- ✓ Students will have lunch in their classrooms with the following exceptions:
 1. On scheduled days, one stable pod will occupy the cafeteria per lunch period.

| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|--------------------------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|
| 1 st Lunch | K, 1 | 2,3 | | K, 1 | 2, 3 |
| 2 nd Lunch | 4, 5 | 6,7,8 | | 4, 5 | 6,7,8 |

2. On Wednesdays, there will be a rotation schedule for each pod to be able to have lunch in the cafeteria every other week.
 3. Students will sit at tables strictly with their own pods and will maintain a 6' distance among each other. (Distancing at tables will be assured by marking empty spaces with X's in blue tape.)
 4. Students will use the bathrooms one grade/pod at a time. Each stall will be assigned to a grade/pod for their individual use. The Kindergarten class will use the bathroom near the office.
- ✓ Markers will be placed in high traffic areas such as hallways and playgrounds to maintain 6' distancing.
 - ✓ Social distancing instructions will be provided to students and staff, and students will be provided opportunities to familiarize themselves with new safety protocols.
 - ✓ Social distancing instructions and signage will be prominently posted for visitors.
 - ✓ Classroom layouts will be modified to allow for 6' distancing. Desks will all be facing forward and will be measured to assure proper distancing.
 - ✓ There will be no small group work with students sitting in close proximity to each other.
 - ✓ Tables and rugs where they currently exist will be replaced by desks in the same configurations noted above.
 - ✓ When a grade has reached capacity for necessary distancing, no new students will be admitted to the school in such a grade.
 - ✓ The art room and computer lab do not provide adequate room for required social distancing. Therefore, those teachers will move from classroom to classroom as is the established practice for teaching music.
 - ✓ Those students taking the bus will also maintain social distancing by having assigned seats staggered throughout the bus. The bus will be sanitized daily after morning and afternoon runs.
 - ✓ For recess:
 - Students will attend recess by floor: Grades K-3 and Grades 4-8.

Each of the stable groups during each recess will maintain a 14' physical distance from each other.

Students will wash their hands before leaving for recess and when returning into the building. (Large containers of hand sanitizer will be placed on a table for use by students and monitoring staff.)

No school play equipment will be available, and students may not bring their own equipment (i.e. basketballs, soccer balls, etc.) from home to school.

- ✓ Currently the school is working on various scenarios to provide classroom coverage for any teacher who may be absent due to personal time or illness. As this becomes firmer, information will be sent out to all parties.

Responding to a Positive Case or Outbreak

- ✓ Two staff members, Ms. Luiz and Mrs. DaSilva, will be working with RIDOH on screening staff and students, contact tracing, case investigation, isolation and quarantine, and any other follow-up related to outbreak containment. Their names and contact information will be supplied to RIDOH.
- ✓ In the event of a positive case or outbreak, RIDOH will be contacted immediately and their specific recommendations followed.
- ✓ If testing positive for the virus, the infected person(s) will be quarantined for fourteen (14) days.
- ✓ Staff members who develop one or more symptoms of infection will be sent home immediately and will be required to be tested.
- ✓ Any student who develops one or more symptoms of infection will be quarantined within the building immediately, and parents will be called to bring the student home within one hour. That student will be required to be seen by a physician who will determine whether a COVID-19 test should be administered. At this time, the school is asking that parents please provide medical documentation for any student who suffers from seasonal allergies, coughs or other non-covid illnesses that would mirror covid symptoms.
- ✓ No school employee or student testing positive will be allowed to return to school without a doctor's note specifying that they are no longer infected.

Minimizing Access by COVID-19 Positive or Symptomatic Individuals

- ✓ Non-parent visitation to the school is highly discouraged. You must call the office to make an appointment if it is necessary to visit in person.
- ✓ If an in person visit is necessary, visitors will be limited to the main entrance to the building. They will be required to wear masks, respond to screening questions, and use hand sanitizer if touching hard surfaces, handrails, etc.

- ✓ Students and staff who test positive for, or have been exposed to, or have one or more symptoms of COVID-19 will be instructed to remain at home.
- ✓ Parents are required to monitor their children for any symptoms of the virus on a daily basis before sending them to school. In addition, they are to take the child's temperature and if it registers above 100 degrees, the child must not come to school.
- ✓ Each student when arriving at school will social distance with their pods and have their temperatures taken by their teachers. Any who register above 100 degrees will not be admitted into the building.
- ✓ If students and/or school staff test positive for, or have been exposed to, or have one or more symptoms of the virus, the school will adhere to the policies RIDOH's Community Mitigation Team.

Communication with Staff and Students

- ✓ Staff and students will be reminded primarily by signage located in the entryway, exits, and classrooms, that they are required to stay home if they are ill.
- ✓ Multiple signs will be posted prominently at various locations within the building specifying the policy regarding wearing of masks, social distancing, and circumstances in which individuals should stay home.
- ✓ The school will collaborate with RIDOH to identify which staff or students need to be quarantined. Teachers will be informed of such developments by using a code over the intercom that includes the grade number but no names to adhere to health privacy laws.
- ✓ Information will be communicated to staff via e-mail memos and families will be informed through both phone and email blasts.
- ✓ Staff, student, and/or family concerns will be addressed through phone or email contact.

Cleaning and Decontamination

- ✓ Students and staff will wash their hands before they enter and after they exit a classroom, prior to and after eating snacks and lunch, and after using the restroom.
- ✓ Hand sanitizer will be readily available in every room of the building.
- ✓ Installing desk shields for staff in the Main Office
- ✓ Teachers and other personnel will report to the office when their PPE supplies are at half capacity so that they can be replenished.
- ✓ A maintenance person and two assistants will thoroughly clean the building daily.
- ✓ Bathrooms will be cleaned throughout the day.

- ✓ Teachers will disinfect touch points and hard surfaces in their classrooms daily and as needed during the course of the school day.
- ✓ Maintenance staff will disinfect the entire building daily with a spray/vaporizer pack.

Industry Specific Guidance and Updates

- ✓ Administration will review guidance specific to education on www.reopening.ri.com/weekly.
- ✓ Administration will also consult the RIDOH website and the Governor's Executive Orders weekly and whenever new guidance is provided.
- ✓ Administration will notify staff of any new guidance issued by the sources listed above.
- ✓ Administration will be in contact with key community partners regarding educational issues.

II. Instruction

In all three models, the *all-in-school model*, *all-at-home model* and the *hybrid model*, (where some students are in school while others are at home), the following educational structure, policies and practices will apply:

- ✓ The planning committee will serve as the Return to Instruction Workgroup in addition to any other volunteers.
- ✓ Teachers will continually monitor student academic progress through a variety of assessments including, but not limited to, diagnostic testing, formative and summative assessments, and student work.
- ✓ Enrichment courses such as music, physical education, art, and computers will continue to be embedded in the curriculum but with modifications when necessary.
- ✓ The structure of the daily schedule will remain as is but with greater flexibility for accommodating the safety requirements contained in this plan.
- ✓ If students have their own laptop or Chromebook, they should bring it to school on a daily basis fully charged for their educational use.
- ✓ Students may be provided with a school Chromebook if they do not have one from home. At the beginning of the year this procedure will be done on a first-come first-serve basis
- ✓ Students having technical issues with their Chromebook or laptop during school hours need to contact Mrs. LaPietra.

- ✓ All students and faculty will use the Google Classroom platform and other Google tools and services for class assignments, communications, one-to-one teleconferencing, and email.
- ✓ Students at home (except for students who are home due to illness) will adhere to the same schedule as students in the building. During homeroom teachers will take attendance (students in the building and at home); monitor social distance and mask-wearing.
- ✓ Morning Prayer, recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance, the school's Mission Statement, and announcements, will be delivered over the intercom during homeroom by office staff only.
- ✓ Classrooms will have technology that will allow for students at home to observe and interact with their classes throughout the day. This will provide comparable levels of rigor for both student groups within each grade.

Remediation and Intervention

- ✓ Teachers will monitor learning loss and utilize a variety of methodologies to remediate learning gaps. That might include any or all of the following: use of a resource teacher, reteaching/reviewing, differentiated instruction, pacing adjustment, etc.
- ✓ The library will be used only for pull out students.
- ✓ All school policies, criteria, expectations and requirements, as included in the *Parent-Student Handbook*, where applicable, will be in force throughout the school year for students in the school building or at home.

In the *all-at-home model*, where all students are learning from home:

- ✓ Attendance will be taken during homeroom.
- ✓ Students will use **Google Classroom** and its applications to receive teacher instructions, get assigned work, take assessments (i.e., quizzes, tests), hand in assigned work on time, and communicate with teachers when there is a delay or problem.
- ✓ Teachers will contact parents/guardians and administrators at the first sign that a student is not attending classes, adhering to Distance Learning regulations or completing and handing in assigned work.
- ✓ Communications between teachers and students will be primarily via **Google Classroom**, while communications between teachers, parents/guardians and administrators will be primarily by phone or email.

Special Education Services

- ✓ When possible and desirable the resource teacher will engage in co-teaching.

Reopening School Guidelines & Requirements

Chorus, Athletics, Clubs

All these activities suspended.

Distance Learning

Parents not wishing their children to return to school in person can participate in classes remotely from home. A Google form will be sent via email to indicate whether your child will participate in virtual classes.

Materials

Students must use only their own materials in lieu of sharing

If students have personal laptop or Chromebook, they can bring it in to school with waiver

Eliminate playground equipment and gym equipment

Coat closets will not be used for students' items. All bookbags and coats will stay with the students. Individual teachers will be in contact with the parents as to any specific request for storage bins for the children's belongings.

Classroom Procedures

Avoid using items with porous surfaces such as soft or plush materials
Frequently touched surfaces, classroom objects, desks, etc. need to be cleaned daily

Disinfect doorknobs after daily drop-off, when students transition to classrooms or recess and after daily dismissal

Student desks will be organized in rows, facing front

Phys Ed to develop alternative curriculum

Art and computers will be taught in classrooms

Arrival and Dismissal

School hours are from 8:15 a.m. to 2:35 p.m. Morning drop-off should not be done before 8 a.m.

Parents are to assess their child each morning using a health screening form provided by the school as a guideline and to keep them home if they exhibit any of the covid related symptoms listed. Allergies and asthma related symptoms should have a doctor's note to put in the child's file.

Parents are asked to remain outside of the schoolyard fence. This will help to keep the children in their stable pods while lined up.

Students will be temperature checked by school staff before they enter the school. If symptoms are present before school starts, parents will be asked to take students home. For your convenience, please wait until your student has been cleared to enter the building.

In the event of inclement weather (rain or freezing temperatures), the students will be screened at door number 2 by the support staff and principal. The students will then be sent directly to their classrooms where the teachers will be awaiting them.

Students being picked up by parent/guardian will be dismissed using the following schedule. Grade 1, at 2:20pm, Grades 2 and 3, at 2:25pm, Grades 4 and 5, at 2:30pm and the middle school, at 2:35pm. These students will be dismissed at door number 2 as previously before.

The Kindergarteners will arrive and be dismissed by door number 5 located on Grove Avenue. All kindergarten parents are asked to make a line to the left of the door using proper social distance when picking up their children. Both Ms. Scanlon and Mrs. Camelo will be stationed at that entrance to do the screening and escort the children directly into the classroom.

Students remaining in the building after dismissal will remain masked and social distancing will continue.

For the safety of all students, all parents are reminded to pick up their children at their assigned dismissal time.

Once students leave the building, they will **not** be allowed to come back in.

Recess

More than one stable group may participate simultaneously, but must maintain 14' physical distance

Group size cannot exceed state maximum

Hand Washing takes place before and after recess

Have large containers of sanitizers on table for recess

Students will not be allowed to bring own equipment

Reporting Procedures

A student in school has symptoms/tests positive:

Students developing symptoms while at school will be taken to isolation room immediately by designated staff member

Parents will be notified to pick up students within an hour

Parents must seek medical advice and schedule test as needed

If test result is positive, students must complete isolation period as directed by RIDOH.

Symptomatic students are not permitted to return to school until:

Medical documentation indicates negative testing

There are no other restrictions

There is no evidence of illness restricting attendance

A staff member has symptoms/tests positive:

Anyone feeling ill should stay home

If symptoms develop while in school, go home immediately

Seek medical advice

Get tested as needed and immediately notify school of results

Symptomatic individuals are not permitted to return to school until:

Medical documentation indicates negative testing

There are no other restrictions

There is no evidence of illness restricting attendance

If positive result, complete isolation period as directed by RIDOH

Subs and all staff to have temps taken before school.

Closing Thoughts

Let us keep the members of our Sacred Heart School family in our prayers for a safe and successful academic year.