

Goals for the Fall of 2020 - Returning to School

The administration and faculty of Saint Matthew School have a singular commitment as we approach the fall semester of 2020 - we will continue to advance the mission of the school.

Regardless of the circumstances, Saint Matthew School is dedicated to educating the whole person: academically, socially, physically, and spiritually. We will strive to maintain a sense of community. Whether on campus or through remote learning, the school will foster, nurture, and love these students by partnering with parents in the development of their children.

Therefore, after consultation with local health departments, the American Association of Pediatrics - which advocates for students to be physically present in school - and following the CDC guidelines, Saint Matthew School is confident it will be able to execute the necessary physical modifications, as well as adhere to health and welfare procedures, to support our students' safe return to campus for the 2020-2021 academic school year.

The following document outlines modifications and academic procedures for the health and safety of students, teachers, and staff in preparation for that return.

If the school is unable to make the proper arrangements for safe operations for the community, or if local, state, or federal regulations do not permit on-campus learning, the school will continue to operate remotely.

Terms used throughout this update

Direct Contact- An individual who has had close contact (less than 6 feet) for longer than 15 minutes with another individual who is positive with the coronavirus. [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

Indirect Contact- Someone who has had contact with an individual who has had close contact (less than 6 feet) for longer than 15 minutes with an individual who is positive with the coronavirus. [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

Isolation- Separates sick people with coronavirus who are contagious from people who are not. [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

Quarantine- Separates and restricts the movements of those exposed to the virus to see if they become symptomatic or sick. [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

Education Plan for Students in the Academic Year of 2020-2021

The school will employ three different methods of educating students during the academic year.

- **In person learning-** In person learning means the majority of students and faculty will be on campus for the school day. There are modifications to the day, but students will be in the classroom receiving direct instruction from the teacher.
- **Home Learning Plans-** Due to underlying conditions with the student or a member of the immediate household, a student may need to learn remotely. The student will be learning via zoom and will have all of the expectations of a student present in the classroom. Typically, two to three students will be on zoom per grade. Families must provide a doctor's note describing the need for remote learning. Remote learners point of contact will be the remote learning coordinator, Mr. Jim Finnegan . Students who are isolating or quarantining will transition to a home learning plan after 48 hours of informing the school.
- **Remote Classrooms-** If a significant portion of a class has come in direct contact with a person positive with the coronavirus or contact tracing is unable to be performed, an entire class may move to remote learning for a period of ten calendar days. Students will follow the same daily schedule and will have the same behavioral and academic expectations as if they were in the classroom.

Isolation and Quarantine Guidelines (Updated on 1-7-21)

- I. Positive Case of Covid-19
 - A. If a student is positive with the coronavirus, they are to isolate for a total of ten days before returning to school.
 - B. If a student is positive with symptoms, the ten day isolation begins on the day symptoms appeared.
 - C. If a student is positive and asymptomatic, the ten day isolation begins the day the coronavirus test was administered.
 - D. If a student is sent home for COVID symptoms, they can return with a negative test result or when the 10 day isolation period ends.
- II. **Direct Contact with an individual positive with the coronavirus**
 - A. A student, faculty, or staff member who has been in direct contact with an individual positive for the coronavirus must quarantine for 10 days.
 - B. If a member of a household is symptomatic and being tested for the coronavirus, the student must stay home until a negative test result or the 10 day period ends.
 - C. If a student has contracted COVID and recovered and come into direct contact with an individual positive for coronavirus, they are required to quarantine.

On Campus Learning

I. General Policies and Procedures

Section A: Class Size, Spacing Requirements, and Movement Operations

- Desks will be facing the same direction toward the front of the classroom with as much space between them as possible. In grades 4th-8th, teachers have access to desk barriers. Each teacher will have the option to use them while class is in session.
- Students in grades 2-8 will wear masks in the hallway and during times of transitions. Each student will be responsible for bringing his/her own mask from home. Mask must have the student's name written on it. Teachers will have access to face shields.
- Students need to use hand sanitizer as they enter the classroom.
- If a student removes their facemask while in the classroom, they need to keep it on their person.
- In grades Pre-K through 5, when possible, the teachers will be moving from classroom to classroom while the students will remain in the classroom. In this way, the school will cohort classes to minimize crossover.
- Faculty who teach specials or the enrichment curriculum will visit the homeroom classes.
- In the classroom, teachers and students will not be required to wear masks. However, if a student or faculty member has underlying health conditions, masks may be required for everyone in the classroom.
- Teachers will be required to wear masks or face shields in the hallway and in meetings.
- Students in grades Pre-K to 1st are not required to wear masks.
- Floor tape and/or stickers will be applied to ensure students stand 6 feet apart in the hallways.
- Assemblies, pep rallies, prayer and Mass buddies and other large gatherings of more than one grade will not be permitted.
- Three tables will be set up in the hallways with hand sanitizers.
- Students and teachers need to wash hands/use hand sanitizer as they exit or enter a classroom.
- Students will not change for PE classes as locker rooms will remain closed. On days in which a student has PE, tennis shoes may be worn.
- If school is dismissed for a two-week period all extra-curricular activities will be cancelled during that time.
- Water fountains will not be accessible during the school day. Students will be responsible for bringing their own water bottles. Bottles must have a screw top.

Section B: Screening of Students and Volunteers

- Parents are responsible for making sure their children are free of coronavirus symptoms before dropping them off for the school day.
- Parents will not be permitted to visit the lunchroom or participate in holiday parties.
- All adults entering the building will need to have their temperature checked.

Section C: Cleaning of Desks, Classrooms, and Bathrooms

- In the evening, each classroom will be cleaned and disinfected. Saint Matthew School utilizes the services of School Facility Management. A copy of SFM's evening cleaning protocols can be found on their web site.

- In grades 6-8, students will be dismissed, which minimizes the number of students in the hallways. When they leave, the teacher will spray each desk with the anti-viral product, H2Orange2. As students enter the classroom, they will be responsible for using hand sanitizer and picking up a paper towel. The students will then wipe down their chairs and desks.
- In grades K-5, teachers will use H2Orange2 to spray the desks when students are not present. Using a microfiberless towel, the teacher will wipe down the desks and chairs.
- Bathrooms will be disinfected twice a day. When this occurs, students will need to use one of the other bathrooms in the building.
- Handwashing will be a part of the daily routine. Not including lunch times and after restroom breaks, students will be expected to **wash their hands two to three times a day**.

II. Protocols for Positive Cases

Section A: Protocols for Positive Cases (Students)

- The school will contact local health officials and follow recommended guidelines.
- Students will be sent home if they exhibit a major symptom of COVID-19 or two minor symptoms of COVID-19. These symptoms can be found on the Tennessee Health Department's Return to School Decision Support Algorithm. The algorithm can be found online at https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/health/documents/cedep/novel-coronavirus/TDH_Return_to_School_Algorithm.pdf
- While waiting to be picked up from school, a student will be quarantined in a designated area. While in the isolated area
 - The student will remove their cloth mask and the school will provide a surgical mask.
 - The student will be supervised at all times.
- Per the Tennessee Health Department and the CDC guidelines, students who have been in direct contact with the coronavirus will be expected to follow current quarantine guidelines.
- If a student tests positive for COVID-19, the course of action will depend upon the positive student's direct contact with members of the school. Saint Matthew School may choose one of the following options:
 - Class may continue with the ill student transitioning to remote learning.
 - Close that specific classroom and the class moves to remote learning until it is determined it is safe to reopen. Saint Matthew School will partner with the TN Department of Health to determine when the classroom will be back open.
 - The school may move all instruction to remote learning for a period as short as two days or as long as 21 days to create a safe environment for students.
 - Students will be moved to a specific location while the classroom is disinfected and then brought back to the classroom when ready.

- Saint Matthew School parents, the Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Nashville, and local health officials will be notified if a student tests positive for the coronavirus. In all cases, a student's anonymity will be maintained.
- If a sibling tests positive for COVID-19, assuming there is direct contact, family members will not be permitted to return to Saint Matthew School for a period of 10 days.
(Updated 1-7-21)

Section B: Protocols for Positive Cases (Faculty, Staff, Administrators)

- Teachers exhibiting symptoms of coronavirus should stay home.
- Teachers exhibiting symptoms of coronavirus during the school day will be sent home.
- If a teacher tests positive for the coronavirus, he/she must follow CDC quarantine guidelines. Saint Matthew School will partner with the TN Dept of Health and follow the appropriate protocol.
- If an employee is positive for coronavirus, a determination will be made if the school needs to move to remote instruction for 2 to 10 days.
- Parents whose children were instructed by a teacher who tests positive for coronavirus will be notified.
- If employees or students are in direct contact with a teacher who tests positive for the coronavirus, they will be expected to follow the CDC quarantine guidelines.
- Learning will continue via a substitute teacher. If a substitute teacher is needed for more than two continuous days, a specials/enrichment teacher will be responsible for delivery of instruction.

III. Protocols for Lunchroom, Liturgies and Specials/Enrichment

Section A: Protocols for Lunch

- Following CDC guidelines and guidelines from the Diocese of Nashville, the school will not be able to utilize the cafeteria. Students will eat lunch in the classroom or outside.
- Students will be required to bring lunch to school every day.
- Lion Lunch will be offered for students who do not have a lunch.
- Milk and bottled water will be offered for sale.
- Classrooms will have plasticware, napkins, and straws in the classroom.
- School Facility Management is helping to devise a plan to remove trash safely from the classrooms.
- Middle school students will be divided by gender. One sex will be in the classroom, the other will be in the cafeteria.

Section B: Protocols for Liturgies

- During liturgies, one class will attend. Mass will be offered to Saint Matthew School students daily. The community will participate in the liturgies every Tuesday and Thursday via zoom.
- Traveling from the classrooms to the church, all attendants must wear a mask. Students in K-1st will not be required to wear a mask.

- Mass buddies will not be utilized during this time.

Section C: Protocols for Library

- With the exception of 3rd grade, the librarian will visit the classrooms.
- Before handling books, students need to wash/sanitize their hands.
- Third grade will have the opportunity to visit the library once per week.

Protocols for Band

- Students will be social distancing in the Cohan-Hansom building while participating in band.
- All instruments must be wiped down at the end of class.
- Students may not share instruments, including drum sticks.
- Students must wash hands before and after band class.

IV. Protocols for Extra and Co-curricular Activities and Athletics

Section A: Extracurricular and Co-curricular Activities

- Co-curricular activities will still be offered. However, social distancing must be practiced while participating in co-curricular or extracurricular activities.
- Field trips will not be permitted during this time.
- Gatherings cannot exceed 50 people.

Section B: Extended Care

- Extended care will continue to be provided.
- Students will stay in pods, based on grade level, while in extended care.
- If a student tests positive and is participating in extended care, the school may discontinue extended care for a period of time or may close school for a period of time.

Section C: Athletic Activities

- Only sports that can be modified to allow physical distancing for conditioning are allowed to continue. Off-site, inter-school competitions may be held, provided that face masks are worn during transportation.
- Students, teachers, and staff must wash their hands before and after every practice, event, or other gatherings.

V. Protocols for Drop-Off and Dismissal

It is at the parent's discretion to carpool with another family.

Section A: Drop-Off

- Students will have their temperature checked when entering the school building in the morning.
- Students will need to wear masks as they exit the car, enter the school building, and walk to class. The mask may not be removed until a student enters his/her homeroom.

- Students may not stop and “visit” other classes during the 7:20-7:50 drop off time. Once in homeroom, students need to stay in their classroom.
- As students enter the building, they will be expected to use the hand sanitizing station at the entrance of the building.
- Teachers and staff will enter the building in two areas: the main entrance and the Cohan Hansom building. They will need to have their temperature checked.

Section B:Pick-Up

Parents are to remain in the car during dismissal.

Dismissal may stagger by ten to fifteen minutes.

Cars will not be permitted to leave until all students are dismissed.

Students must wear a mask as they leave the classroom.

VI. Procedures applicable only to Pre K

- Communication with families will include not only class dojo, but also the monthly newsletter, Cubs’ Corner. Finally, the Pre K will send out weekly emails with health and safety updates.
- Parents should talk to children about covering their face when coughing/sneezing.
- While at home, children should practice washing their hands for at least 20 seconds.
- Adults need to wear masks during arrival and dismissal.
- Parents of children in the 3-year-old program may walk their child to the front door. Parents must wear a mask when walking them to the door.

Spacing

- During rest time, mats will be spaced 6 feet apart and placed head to toe.
- Per the TN Department of Education, children have the required 50 feet of space per student of outdoor space. While inside, the students have over 30 feet of space per child, exceeding the department's guidelines.
- Classes will go on the playground separately.
- School Facilities Management will be responsible for cleaning the Pre K classrooms.
- During storytime and morning meetings, students will be divided into pods to promote social distancing.
- Classes will have separate pathways to the classrooms. The school will utilize directional cones for transitions.

Arrival

- At orientation, the Pre K director will share the drop-off and pick-up traffic pattern.
- The Pre K 4 classes will drop off between 7:45 a.m. and 7:55 a.m.
- The Pre K 3 classes will drop off between 7:55 a.m. and 8:05 a.m.
- Children should wash their hands prior to arrival.
- Parents should not send their children to school if they are exhibiting any signs of illness.
- Staff will greet children at carpool/drop-off/pick-up.
- Multiple entrances will be used for the different age groups.
- As with all spaces at Saint Matthew School, if an adult needs to enter the building, their temperature must be taken.
- Students will not be required to wear a mask, but teachers may wear a mask or face shield, if necessary.

VII. Investments for the Safety of Students

- The school is adding an additional water bottle dispenser near the library.
- Saint Matthew School has increased the number of hours for School Facility Management. Classrooms will be cleaned and disinfected daily.
- Saint Matthew School has updated the digital infrastructure to include fiber, in order to increase download and upload time.
- Saint Matthew School has procured cleaning and sanitation supplies to continue to operate, if supply shortages occur. The school also has a healthy supply of disinfectant and hand sanitizer.
- The school has a dedicated space where a student who presents COVID-19 symptoms can rest, be isolated, and be monitored.
- The school will also participate in a nationally normed test in the first weeks of school. Teachers will use the data to determine gaps in learning from the spring of 2020.

Students with Underlying Conditions

When we return to campus, the school recognizes that due to certain circumstances, not all students will be able to participate in campus life. These circumstances include but are not limited to: an underlying health concern for the student, an underlying health concern for a person living in the house with a student, or a student who needs to isolate because of direct contact with a person who tested positive for COVID-19. If circumstances prevent a student from being on campus, the school will make reasonable accommodations to meet the academic needs of the student.

With the exception of isolation or recovery from COVID-19, once a family has made the decision not to send their child to campus, that decision will stand for the quarter. Students may not move from remote learning to classroom instruction until the end of the quarter. At the conclusion of Fall Break, Christmas Break, and possibly Spring Break, families may reevaluate their decision and send their student to campus.

If school opens on August 6 and a student cannot participate, the accommodations the school can provide include:

1. Participating in class lessons including lectures and direct instruction via teleconferencing.
2. Students who are participating in remote learning, may receive a pass/fail grade for the quarter.
3. Students participating in remote learning are excused from specials/enrichment classes.

A letter of intention not to participate in campus activities, including on-site classroom learning, must be submitted to the school prior to August 1. The school has the right to ask for a physician's note or clarification from the family.

Remote Learning

For the safety of the students, staff, faculty, and the community, a determination may be made to move all learning to remote instruction. This determination could be school-initiated or determined by the Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Nashville or local or state health officials. The period of remote learning may be as short as two days, but may last an entire semester.

If learning moves to a remote platform, there are several ways in which the school will communicate with families and students.

- The administration will be responsible for daily announcements on the PlusPortal.
- For policy changes and announcements, the administration will use the PlusPortal and email.
- Teachers will have the ability to communicate with students via email, the PlusPortal, and Google Classroom.

Expectations of our Faculty during Remote Learning

First, faculty are expected to pray for their students, the school, and their families. During times of uncertainty and anxiety, prayer has the power to nurture and sustain the community.

Teachers are no longer distributors of knowledge; rather, they create content, design experiences, and coach and facilitate learning with thoughtful and clear feedback. In the spring of 2020, teachers continued to become designers of experience and facilitated learning. If the school moves to remote learning, teachers at Saint Matthew School will continue to utilize these best practices.

Depending upon the health of the faculty and the facility, the school will move to synchronous and asynchronous learning. If the school moves to remote learning, teachers will be expected to use their classroom for remote instruction. If synchronous learning can occur, the teacher will be responsible for videoing the lesson. Therefore, students who cannot participate in a video call can watch the video later in the day. To miss a synchronous lesson, a student must be sick or request an excused absence.

While on video calls, the expectation is the teacher will be introducing or covering the content and curriculum of their class. However, maintaining relationships and community while remote learning is critical as well. Teachers may spend part of the lesson checking on the health of their students.

If synchronous learning cannot occur, teachers will be expected to video asynchronous lessons. These asynchronous video lessons should not be longer than 20 minutes.

Teachers will be expected to use the following digital platforms:

- The PlusPortal, for student information including grades and assignments.
- Google Classroom, for assignment details, videos, and discussion.
- YouTube, where teachers may embed videos into their lessons via. If a teacher uploads video to YouTube, it should be done on the Saint Matthew School channel.
- Class Dojo application, for Pre Kindergarten.

Expectations of our students during remote learning

The school recognizes the challenges to families and students if the decision is made to go to remote learning. Below are the expectations the school has for students:

1. Along with the teachers, students will be expected to participate in praying for the community. Every morning before 7 a.m., announcements and prayer will be posted on the PlusPortal login page.
2. Students will be expected to participate in the video classes. The same expectations that exist in the classroom also exist during remote learning.
3. Before 8 a.m., students will be expected to check their online platforms: PlusPortal and GoogleClassroom.

Thank you to all the administration and faculty, as well as the Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Nashville, for you ideas, your help and your prayers in preparing these plans for the opening of Saint Matthew School during this pandemic. We all remain committed to providing the distinctive educational experience and environment that characterize Saint Matthew School. We look forward to seeing everyone to start another memorable school year.

Resources Used:

Center for Disease Control: cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019

School Facility Management: sfmservice.com/covid-19

American Association of Pediatrics: aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus

Tennessee Department of Health: tn.gov/health/cedep/ncov.html

Williamson County Health Department: williamsoncounty-tn.gov/120/health-department

Diocese of Nashville: dioceseofnashville.com/catholic-schools

Diocese of Knoxville: dioknox.org/diocese-of-knoxville-catholic-schools/

