



SAINT JAMES PRESCHOOL

RETURN-TO-SCHOOL PLAN

IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19



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SAINT JAMES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

REOPENING SCHOOL PLAN

Forward

This plan was created to aid in navigating the reopening of our school during a pandemic phase of COVID-19. In all stages and phases of pandemic response and recovery, SJES will always keep the safety of our students and staff at the forefront and comply with Center for Disease Control (CDC), American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), state, and local guidelines.

The following guidelines are:

- Based on current information from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), state, and local officials.
- Flexible and alterable to accommodate for any newly communicated information from health or state officials.
- Amendable to specific school guidelines that may need to be addressed/changed.
- Practical and age appropriate.
- **Intended to mitigate not eliminate the risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19.**

Our goal for the fall is to continue to safely bring back students to an in-person school setting, to maximize learning and address our students' holistic needs.

There is a clear consensus from both education and medical groups that school plays an important role in supporting students' social-emotional needs, including their mental and physical health, and in mitigating the impacts of trauma. More importantly, we know that our faith also plays an integral part in our physical and emotional well-being. Our faith enhances coping skills and promotes connectedness.

With appropriate health and safety guardrails in place and with adherence to a comprehensive set of critical health and safety requirements, we can bring our students, staff, and families safely back to school.

Most of us are now quite familiar with the **critical health and safety practices** that reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. These include rigorous hygiene and handwashing, use of masks/face coverings, physical distancing, reducing interaction

between groups, staying home when sick, protecting those most vulnerable to the disease, and expanding testing and tracing capabilities, among others.

It is important to keep in mind that it is not one mitigation practice, but a ***combination*** of all the above mentioned practices taken together that will substantially reduce the risk of transmission. **Therefore it is critical that we all work together to establish a culture of health and safety in our school that focuses on regularly enforcing the above mentioned important practices.**

All guidance in this document is based on the best information we have as of mid-August. We will carefully monitor the data in the coming weeks and months.

To have a successful school year, we will all have to work together, be flexible and responsive to data, and willing to course-correct as necessary. We all play a critical role in supporting the new culture of health and safety that our school must establish. Most importantly, families can help mitigate the transmission of COVID-19 by checking their children daily for any COVID-19 symptoms and keeping them home from school if they are sick or have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19. Families can also contribute by supporting the use of masks in school and on the bus, arranging alternate transportation whenever possible, communicating with teachers, and continuing to follow state guidance on health and safety outside of school.

We believe the actions brought forth in this plan are in the best interests of our students, families, staff and community.

Introduction

This School Reopening Plan provides specific guidance to safely reopen our school. This document outlines a number of strategies needed to embrace the new normal in education. The strategies outlined in this plan are based on information gathered from various health sources, NJ Department of Education, and from the Diocese of Trenton Department of Education. Strategies may be changed, modified or updated as new information is provided by AAP, CDC, WHO, MCRHC, NJDOE and the Diocese of Trenton Department of Education. Please review this document carefully as it contains information that pertains to you and/or your child.

This is the first pandemic for all of us. We will all need to be patient, support one another, and pray and work together now more than ever.

RESOURCES

American Association of Pediatrics (AAP):

<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/>

Center for Disease Control (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html>

World Health Organization (WHO):

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>

New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE):

<https://www.nj.gov/education/reopening/NJDOETheRoadBack.pdf>

Monmouth County Regional Health Commission (MCRHC):

<https://www.mcrhc.org/>

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
3. Support for Families

SAINT JAMES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

STRATEGIES FOR REOPENING SCHOOL

VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERS

- Visitors and volunteers **will not** be allowed into the building until further notice and guidance from CDC or state government.
- If picking up a sick child, parents will announce themselves at the front door and student will be escorted out by a staff member.
- All items are to be left in the bin outside by the front door.

SCHOOL-HOME COMMUNICATION:

We will continue to communicate using various platforms. It is crucial at this time that all families sign up for SJES School eBlasts and ensure that the school has your most up to date contact information.

- The Administration and teachers will communicate with parents via one or more of the following platforms:
 - email often
 - school website
 - Google Classroom for daily assignments
 - teacher eBoards for information
 - for School Alert System
 - for eBlasts

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL WELL BEING:

We recognize that the social emotional well-being of our students and staff during these challenging times is critically important. Our school social worker is prepared to assist with resources and guidance to address the needs of our students, staff, and parents.

HEALTHY HABITS:

Teachers and classroom paraprofessionals will instruct, reinforce, and model healthy hygiene.

- Build in monitored handwashing for children at all necessary times throughout the day (e.g., upon arrival, before and after meals, after toileting, after coughing and sneezing, after contact with bodily fluids).
- Post visual steps of appropriate handwashing to assist children or cue them to sing the "Happy Birthday" song TWICE (approx. 20 seconds) as the length of time they need to wash their hands.
- Assist children with handwashing.

- Supervise children when they use hand sanitizer to make sure they rub their hands until completely dry, so they do not get sanitizer in their eyes or mouth.
- Explain to children why it is not healthy to share drinks or food, particularly when sick.
- Teach children to use tissue to wipe their nose and to cough inside their elbow.
- Sanitize students' hands after playing at center.

HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS

- For the school year 2021-22 we will NOT be conducting temperature checks.
- For everyone's safety and well-being, we ask that all individuals to remain home if they are exhibiting any COVID-19 symptoms.
- Students and staff with symptoms related to COVID-19 will be safely and respectfully isolated from others until student or staff member can be picked up.
- SJES will follow the quarantine for individuals traveling abroad. **Please note that remote instruction will not be offered to students who need to quarantine upon returning from a country abroad.**

PROTOCOL FOR SYMPTOMATIC STAFF AND STUDENTS

If during the course of a school day an individual becomes ill, that individual will report immediately to the nurse's office.

- The school nurse will follow current State of New Jersey Communicable Disease Service guidance for illness reporting: <https://www.nj.gov/health/> and contact Monmouth County Regional Health Commission (MCRHC).
- Students and staff who exhibit symptoms related to COVID-19 will be safely and respectfully isolated from others until student or staff member can be picked up.
 - Staff member will remain in isolation until he/she leaves the building.
 - Student will be immediately isolated from other children to minimize exposure to others.
 - The individual will be provided a mask and gloves for their protection.

- The nurse and others attending the suspected infected person, will also 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 continuously monitor the individual's symptoms.
- The nurse will direct the ill employee to leave work or call the parent of the student to be picked up and sent home.
- The nurse and principal may be required to identify persons who may have come in contact with the suspected infected person. The name of the infected individual will only be provided to the local health department if requested.
- The isolation area and suspected employee's or student's work area/classroom will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected, in addition to all other common surfaces recently touched by the employee or student.

PROTOCOL FOR A STAFF MEMBER OR STUDENT TESTING POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

When an individual **tests positive** for COVID-19, the school nurse will:

- Follow current State of New Jersey Communicable Disease Service guidance for illness reporting: <https://www.nj.gov/health/> .
- Immediately notify the Local Public Health Department.
 - SJES may provide the following information when consulting with the Local Public Health Department
 - The identity of the person with COVID-19 or probable COVID-19 as well as their address, phone number and e-mail.
 - 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 class or building have developed any symptoms.
 - Any other information to assist with the determination of next steps.
 - Individuals who may have been in **close contact** with suspected COVID-19 person will be contacted and may be advised to carry out self-screening every morning, and based on the results, employees should contact the HR department/doctor and parents should contact their child's pediatrician/general practitioner.

- Please visit the CDC website for the most up to date definition of **Close Contact**
 - [CDC Definition of Close Contact](#)
- If an individual tests positive for COVID-19 and was present in school, maintenance will conduct a 'Deep Cleaning' using approved EPA solutions and the Electrostatic Sprayer.

REMITTANCE PROCEDURES AFTER RECOVERY FROM COVID-19

School remittance procedures for students and employees after recovering from COVID-19 will be established in conjunction with the school nurse under guidance from the Department of Monmouth County Regional Health Commission. Currently (as of July 20, 2020) CDC is recommending that schools immediately notify local health officials once learning of a COVID-19 case in someone who has been in the school. The local health officials will help administrators determine a course of action. Decisions will be made based on the most up to date CDC recommendations and on a case by case based on the local health department recommendations.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-in-home-patients.html>

NOTE: Staff members and students returning to school after recovering from COVID-19 MUST call the office a day prior to returning to school.

The following remittance guidelines are:

- subject to change depending on the most current CDC guidelines.
- not all inclusive.
- dependent on the individual's exposure to COVID-19.
 - A medical clearance note.
 - A negative COVID-19 test result.
 - 10 days after testing positive to COVID-19, fever free for 24 hours and no other symptoms.
 - For persons who never develop symptoms, isolation and other precautions can be discontinued 10 days after the date of their first positive RT-PCR test for SARS-CoV-2 RNA
 - For individuals exposed to COVID-19, 14 days after exposure.
 - For patients with severe illness, duration of isolation for up to 20 days after symptom onset may be warranted. A note from a physician is required

FACE COVERINGS

Face masks/coverings **MUST** be school appropriate and shall not interfere with the school's dress code policy.

Families should provide their children with a sufficient supply of clean masks and face coverings for their child to allow replacing the covering as needed.

STAFF

- School staff is **required** to wear a face mask when social distancing cannot be maintained or unless doing so would inhibit the individual's health.
- School staff may instruct using a face shield while practicing social distancing.

STUDENTS

- Students are strongly encouraged to wear face coverings (unless doing so would inhibit the student's health) and are required to do so when:
 - social distancing cannot be maintained.
 - when entering the building.
 - when moving about the building.

ENTRANCE PROCEDUES

- All students will enter the building wearing a mask.
- Hand sanitizer will be available for use as students enter the building.

RESTROOMS:

- Students must wear a face covering while using the restrooms if social distancing cannot be maintained.
- Teachers will monitor use of restrooms to maintain social distancing.

CLASSROOMS:

- **The school will allow for social distancing within the classroom to the maximum extent practicable. In addition:**
 - **Shield guards will be placed on desks.**
 - When possible windows will be open, ceiling fans will be on and classroom doors will be left open.
- Teachers' desks will be at least six feet from the nearest student desk.
- Teachers may use the outside space to conduct classes when seasonally appropriate.

- Hand sanitizer will be available in every classroom.
- **No use of shared objects.** Students **MUST** bring in their own supplies (pens, pencils, coloring instruments, etc).
- A disinfectant spray bottle containing an approved EPA solution will be placed in each classroom for teacher use: EPA no. 1839-95
- Each classroom will have hand sanitizer.
- Teachers and classroom paraprofessionals frequently sanitized highly touched objects and surfaces, including doorknobs, bathrooms and sinks, keyboards, and bannisters.
- Toys and activity items will be cleaned and sanitized after use.
- Each child's belongings will be separated from others' and kept in individually labeled containers, cubbies, or areas. Your child's teacher may request that you provide an 'Extra Large Ziploc Bag'.

SNACK/LUNCH:

- Students may **NOT** share food.
- Students will wash/sanitize their hands before and after eating.

NAP TIME (for 3 year olds):

- Students must bring in a mat/towel. Mats/towels will be stored in large Ziploc bags.

PLAYGROUND:

- Students will remain with their class (cohort). There will be no mixing of cohorts during playground use.

DISMISSAL:

- Teachers will be forwarding parents information with respect to which doors your child will exit.

EARLY PICK-UP

- Parents will announce themselves at the door and student will be escorted out by a staff member.
- We strongly discourage early pick-up as it not only disrupts a child's learning, **but it also places undue hardship on our staff.**

BEFORE AND AFTERCARE PROGRAM (EDP)

- SJES will adhere to all applicable social distancing requirements and hygiene protocol during EDP (Extended Day Program).
 - Student must be registered.
 - No sharing of toys, materials, or food.
 - We ask that your child bring in their own pencils, pens, crayons, etc.
 - At Pick-Up, parents will announce themselves and wait for a staff member to walk student out.
 - Students will be encouraged to wear face coverings, wash their hands and practice social distancing.
 - Hand sanitizer will be made available.

PTA

All meetings will be held virtually until further notice.

DRILLS

Practice required emergency drills within the classroom setting to avoid cross grouping and communal areas

- Teachers will discuss drills with students.

CATHOLIC IDENTITY

Saint James Elementary School is committed to supporting our students' faith formation and development. We provide a learning environment that infuses our faith in all subject matter. Students learn Christian values by witness of adults and through participation in the Sacraments, feast-day celebrations, and prayer. Students also come to learn Christian values by example and word. To continue to build our faith community during online learning:

- Morning classes will begin with a prayer.
- Students will be reminded to say Grace before eating:
Bless us, O Lord! In these Thy gifts, which we are about to receive from Thy bounty, through Christ our Lord.
Amen.
- We will continue with our monthly school masses-virtually.
- Teachers will continue to highlight special liturgical events and feast-day celebrations.
- Websites for parents and students to connect to daily readings and prayers.

- Catholic Online.: www.catholic.org
USCCB website: www.usccb.org
Vatican website: www.vatican.va