



August 7, 2020

Dear parents, students and faculty,

Since our draft re-entry plan was published on July 17, we have received many comments and questions, such as “How will we do our weekly Masses?,” “What happens if a child comes early, or his or her ride is late on picking the child up?” “How will we conduct band or music classes, given the closed spaces?” And perhaps the most important questions of all, deliberately left unanswered in our draft plan as we waited for consensus from the health professionals: “What happens if a student contracts Covid19?” “How will we handle close contacts to those with the virus? We appreciate these questions, and hope that this revised plan will answer them.

Even so, we expect our plan will undergo constant revision as we move through this year together. There’s no “playbook” on how to run a school in the middle of a global pandemic! Rest assured, safety will be the priority. Our goal is to protect every member of our community by minimizing virus transmission from student to student. We are adopting precautions that are known to reduce the potential for transmission, and we are asking for everyone’s support and good cheer in abiding by these protocols.

At the same time, we recognize that students and families are anxious about returning, and some students may have physical or emotional reasons to be more cautious. Our plan respects that, giving families a home option through “concurrent classrooms.” Our intent is to serve all of our families to the best of our ability.

I think we all understand that our best efforts will reduce risk but not eliminate it. Further, all of these efforts are meaningless if we all don’t continue to follow these pre-cautions at home, in our cars, and with our friends. This must be a united effort, or it’s just a waste of time! Parents, please lead by example on this front!

I am particularly grateful to a team of doctors and nurses who spent time with us to review our draft plan and offer professional guidance and suggestions. Much of what they’ve told us informs how we will handle Covid cases within our community. And we remain grateful for the guidance of the Alabama Department of Public Health, the Center for Disease Control, and the Archdiocese of Mobile, all of which informed this plan.

We’ll face many challenges this year. Generations from now, as people reflect on the history of St. Michael, may they say about us this year (quoting Winston Churchill), “This was our finest hour!”

Principal

# **St. Michael Catholic High School's Re-Entry Plan 2020-21 Academic Year (draft)**

## **I. Five Principles Underlying our Plan:**

- 1) That we prioritize the health and safety of our students, faculty and staff;
- 2) That we continue to provide a first tier college preparatory education for our students;
- 3) That we meet the needs of individual students, each affected differently by the virus;
- 4) That we are nimble, able to quickly pivot from one mode to the other, with a minimum of lost learning time;
- 5) That we continue to be a vibrant, dynamic Catholic school—a place where students learn the faith, pray and worship—all the while enjoying each other's company and having fun together.

**II. Modes for Learning in 2020-2021**—It is possible that we'll use each of these modes at different times during the year.

- 1) Traditional Learning (all students in school, under normal conditions)
- 2) Full Distance Learning, (all students stay home, teachers deliver lessons and assignments on line, such as the Spring of 2020 )
- 3) "Concurrent Classrooms" (see below)

## **III. Concurrent Classrooms: How We'll Begin the Year**

- 1) School will begin for all students on August 12, with stringent safety protocols in place. We expect that most of our students will choose to be in school with their classmates.
- 2) However, if parents prefer it, students will have the option to stay at home, log on, and "attend" each of their actual classes via "live streaming."
- 3) The academic expectations and due dates for assignments will be the same for both groups.

## **A. The Advantages of a Concurrent Classroom:**

- 1) It provides a choice for parents, empowering them to make the right decision for their child. If for a variety of reasons, parents are not ready to place their child back in school, they have that option.
- 2) It's simple. No need for dual curriculums, separate assignments, special arrangements, students keeping up with unique responsibilities. The students at home are getting the same lesson as students in school.
- 3) It's flexible. If, for example, a student was initially anxious about coming to school physically, but later felt more comfortable about returning, he or she could do so. Or if a child was quarantined because of contracting the virus or being exposed to the virus, he or she could keep up with his or her studies.

## **B. The Caveats to a Concurrent Classroom:**

- 1) Nothing, of course, is better than “being there” to get the full experience of school. Students at home will not be able to participate in assemblies, attend Mass, socialize with other students or “experience” high school life in the same way.
- 2) St. Michael has doubled its internet speeds and is purchasing technology to give kids at home the best, most immersive experience for virtual classes possible. But undoubtedly there will be occasional technical mistakes or glitches, board work that will be difficult to see, or muffled audio. We will do our best to lessen these things but will not be able to avoid them completely.
- 3) Teachers will not be able to “monitor” students’ behavior if they are logging in classes from home. Though roll will be taken for each class, and certain at-home protocols developed for being part of a virtual classroom, it will depend on students’ discipline and diligence to stay tuned in and current in their work.

## **C. School Health and Safety Protocols @ St. Michael**

### ***a. Morning Protocols***

- 1) Doors to the school will be locked until 7:20 a.m. Parents are asked not to drop off their children any earlier than that. Students who drive should not come to campus before that time. If a child arrives unexpectedly early, he or she should stay in the tent outside the gym.
- 2) Students must enter the school through specified entrances:
  - Seniors, through back door to gym facing courtyard
  - Juniors, through gym lobby, facing courtyard
  - Sophomores, through cafeteria lobby doors

- Freshmen, through front entrance doors
- 3) Temperature checks for all students and faculty are required for entrance into the school building. Anyone with a fever of over 100.4 will be rechecked a few moments later, and if still over 100.4, sent home. Parents are asked to monitor health at home before sending students to school.
  - 4) Students and all adults must correctly wear face masks inside the building at all times, covering both mouth and nose. No exceptions, except for eating lunch in our large, open space, which will be monitored under strict social distancing standards. Students must bring their own masks—but there will be extras available in the office (students who frequently misplace their mask will be charged a nominal fee).
  - 5) Face shields may not be used as a substitute for masks. Though once thought adequate, Covid is now understood to reside within gas molecules and “float” in space. Shields do not protect the user adequately.
  - 6) Upon entering the school, students should go immediately to their first period class. They may not congregate in the hallways. Teachers will open their classrooms at 7:20 a.m.

#### ***b. School Day Protocols***

1. As part of the standard procedure to begin each class, students will be asked to wipe down desks with disinfectant and then wash their hands with sanitizer. All classrooms will have this in bountiful supply.
2. Desks for classrooms will be separated for maximum distance away from each other. We are blessed with relatively large classrooms, and we’ll use all of that space. Students and teachers must remain masked during class.
3. Commonly touched areas, such as doorknobs, stair rails, etc. will be cleaned through-out the day. St. Michael has hired an additional full time custodian to assist in this endeavor. Classroom doors will remain open to minimize contact.
4. The plan is for Locker rooms and classrooms to be fully disinfected each day with electrostatic mist machines—the same machines used by hospitals. These are on order; as of 4/7/2020 they have not arrived.
5. The front office now includes a “sick room” with bathroom access. This room will be used to isolate a sick student. Temperatures will be taken. We will ask parents to pick up their child immediately.
- 7) When outside, during designated times, *if stationary and if socially distanced by six feet or more*, students may remove masks. If walking or moving around, students must wear masks.

6. We have installed a 4,000 square foot tent alongside the gym in the back of the school. This tent will have a wood floor, and will be outfitted with tables and chairs, to be used as an auxiliary classroom, lunch room, or meeting area. Because it will be open on all 4 sides, students who are 6 feet apart may take off their masks when using this space, if stationary.
7. Purchased lunches will be delivered to classrooms to avoid bunching up in line to receive meals, and then students will be dismissed in staggered fashion so as to use the gym, cafeteria, tent or outside courtyard to eat lunch and relax, provided they are six feet apart.
8. Students will be asked to go immediately to the next class to minimize congestion during period changes. Signs will remind students to stay to the right as they walk down the hallways. No congregating in hallways.
9. Students will be encouraged when feasible to use the outdoor walkway behind the school to get some fresh air and minimize hallway traffic when changing classrooms.
10. No congregating or visiting in the hallways. Hallways are used strictly to get from one classroom to the next. Signs have been installed to remind students to stay to the right to minimize congestion.
11. Bathroom access will be limited. We will ask students to hold to a maximum of four at a time in the center and gym foyer bathrooms, and two at a time for the smaller bathrooms in the cafeteria foyer.
12. Wednesday morning school Mass is central to the life of our school and the practice of our faith, but there is no space on campus to conduct a whole school Mass. With the support of local pastors, we will do our best to offer simultaneous Masses—one in the gym and the other in our tent. Regrettably, we cannot allow visitors to our school Masses this year. When weather conditions are conducive to prayer and adoration (!), we may do whole school Masses outside in the courtyard on occasion.
13. There will be no whole school assemblies, unless outside. On a normal Monday assembly, students will go to advisories and the assembly will be “live streamed” to each classroom and student who is distance learning.
14. Band and Chorale classes, which currently use half the space in the music room for their respective programs, will use the entire space for each class so as to create greater social distancing. They may also use the tent, or courtyard area, as auxiliary classrooms.
15. Coaches will establish protocols for dressing out in P.E. classes, minimizing the number of students in locker-rooms at the same time.

16. All water fountains in the school are being converted to fill stations. The fountains are disconnected until the virus is no longer with us. Students are encouraged to bring a water bottle to school for the purpose of hydration and may take it from class to class.
17. Unlike previous years, food and snacks cannot be consumed in classrooms during assembly time. If there is a medical reason, such as diabetes, a student must eat in the mid-morning, please contact the office and we'll arrange a place he or she can do so.
18. We anticipate Thursday "club" time will remain in effect, but the number of simultaneous meetings will be curtailed. Distancing rules remain in effect. All students will begin Thursday club meetings in their advisory periods, then be released for club meetings in a staggered fashion.
19. Pep rallies will be held outside, on occasion.
20. All other school rules remain fully in effect.

### ***c. After School Protocols***

1. The school day ends at 3:10 p.m. Students will go immediately to one of three places: practice, after school tutorials, or home. The hallways will be cleared at 3:15 of all students. Tutorials end at 3:45, no sooner, as we cannot allow students in the hallways in the interim. The hallways will be cleared again at 3:45. Once tutorials are over, the student must leave for home immediately.
2. In-season coaches who are also teachers will need to make alternative tutorial plans with their students, by appointment. Student athletes will need to inform their coaches beforehand if they need to go to a tutorial immediately after school.
3. In the event that it's raining outside after school, students may seek shelter in the tent alongside the gym. They must maintain social distancing while waiting for their ride to pick them up.
4. We ask that parents arrange transportation to pick up the student immediately at dismissal or after tutorial if the child is attending tutorial. Students will not be allowed to "hang out" at the school unsupervised, waiting for their parents to pick them up.
5. Student athletes who have practice after school should go immediately to the gym. Coaches will develop protocols that limit the number of students dressing out in locker-rooms at any one time. Coaches have been asked to end practices at the same time each day, and parents are asked to pick their children up at this time.

6. As for athletic competitions, we are members of the Alabama High School Athletic Association, and will abide by their recommendations and decisions for the upcoming year. All parents and students will be expected to socially distance in stands during school athletic events.
7. All classrooms and locker rooms will be disinfected prior to school the following day.

**d. Protocols for Distance Learning in Concurrent Classrooms:**

1. Families who wish their child to stay at home and to log into “live-streamed” classes must complete a “request for distance learning” form to do so, subject to approval by the school. Early on, this request form will be a weekly matter, as families experiment with what works better for their child. However, for the sake of planning and good order, by mid-quarter, we will ask families to decide for the remainder of the quarter and each quarter thereafter. (This rule does not apply to students who must be quarantined or at home due to illness. We encourage sick students, if they are able, to log into classes.)
2. If no student has requested distance learning for the week in a particular class, that class will not be live-streamed.
3. Students will use their school-issued Chromebooks to access assignments and turn in work. In the event the students do not yet have their school Chromebooks, they may log in with their @stmichaelchs.org account on other computers. We will use “Google Meets” as our video-conferencing software.
4. Teachers will post “log in” directions on their Blackbaud bulletin boards for each class. Students may not share these instructions with others, as access to live classrooms is restricted to current students and families.
5. All distance learning will use Blackbaud as the conduit for posting and accepting assignments.
6. Students logging into their classes virtually must be in school uniform shirts, on time for each class, at a desk or table, and with video cameras “on” the entirety of the class. Roll will be taken; teachers will have the discretion to call on the student from time to time. Students who are still in pajamas or laying in bed, or whose video is not on, or who step away from class for large blocks of time, will be considered absent for that class.
7. School attendance policies remain in place for both on campus and virtual learning. Anything over 7 absences per period are automatically “unexcused” and work cannot be made up. There is a “long term medical exception ” to the 7 day maximum if quarantined or if a student has contracted the virus.

8. Teachers will not be able to “monitor” student behavior at home. Though roll will be taken for each class, it will depend on student discipline and diligence to stay tuned in and current in his or her work.
9. Teachers will ask a student in each of their classes to serve as “proxy” for students on line. If a student has a question, he or she sends that question to the proxy, who then asks the question on the home student’s behalf.
10. Continued agreement to stay in “distance mode” on subsequent request form to remain at home will depend on whether students are meeting class requirements while at home.
11. Students who opt for distance mode are eligible for all extra-curricular offerings by the school, including sports—it’s the parent’s call as primary educators.

#### **IV. Full Distance Learning Mode:**

If required, we will move to “full distance” mode. In such an event, we anticipate the following:

- 1) If this looks to be a short term period—a few weeks—we will keep the schedule as similar as possible to the “regular” schedule, albeit on line. Classes will continue to meet according to the published schedule, with each student logging into his or her class virtually, from 7:45 until 3:10.
- 2) If this appears to be a longer term period, the faculty will re-assess the structure of our distance learning and modify class times and schedules.
- 3) All posting and turning in of assignments will be through black baud exclusively.
- 4) A minimum of two graded assignments per class per week will be posted on a student’s grade book. As always, parents and students will have complete access to grade books to monitor progress.
- 5) It is likely that if we are required to go to distance mode, that all other extracurricular activities will cease as well.

#### **V. Students With Covid, or Covid Symptoms, or in Close Contact with a Someone with Covid**

*(Note: These procedures may undergo additional clarifications and corrections. They reflects our understanding of protocols recently developed by the ADPH, dated August 4, 2020)*



### **A. Students with COVID-19 must stay home.**

Parents must immediately inform the principal via email if their child tests positive for the virus. (The school will need to assess the level of exposure of this student to other students.)

Once notified, the school will send parents a form to complete, which will be reviewed by the school upon receipt. The school will then notify the parent about the date of return to St. Michael and any other protocols it must put in place.

In general, a student with a confirmed Covid test may return to school under the following conditions:

- At least 10 days have passed since symptom onset **and**
- At least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and**
- Other symptoms have improved (CDC guidance, updated August, 2020)

If able, students are encouraged to keep up with their studies via distance learning.

**B. Students with Covid-19 Symptoms.** Must stay home and get tested immediately. (Though it is quite possible these symptoms are NOT Covid-related, out of an abundance of caution, we will ask parents to behave as if their child has Covid until test results prove otherwise. Please keep child isolated in the interim.)

- Symptoms consist of cough or shortness of breath, fever, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, vomiting, diarrhea, sore throat, and new loss of taste or smell.
- Parents should inform principal via email when they are testing their child and inform the principal immediately once they receive results. Please understand the school has obligations to other students in the event of a positive test, so time is of the essence.
- Once notified, the principal will send parents a form to complete, which will be reviewed by the school upon receipt. If the test is positive, then the school will communicate with the parent about the time frame for a return.
- If siblings are students in school, they should stay home also until the test results indicate a negative result.
- If the test is negative, the student can return to school the next day.
- If able, students are encouraged to keep up with their studies via distance learning.

### **C. For Students in Close Contact of a Student with a Confirmed Covid case:**

- The ADPH defines “close contact” as proximity of less than 6 feet AND cumulative exposure time of 15 minutes or longer (these minutes need not be consecutive minutes). It does NOT include “passers-by” in the hallway, or “drive-by” discussions, provided both parties are wearing masks.
- Parents should immediately inform the principal via email if their child is exposed to the virus from a friend, family member or other close contact.
- Once notified, the school will send parents a form to complete, which will be reviewed by the school upon receipt. The school will then notify the parent about the date of return to St. Michael and any other protocols it must put in place.
- In the case of a student with a confirmed Covid case, the school will work with the archdiocese and ADPH to determine the level of risk to other students. Those with close contact will likely be asked to quarantine for 14 days from the date of last exposure to the Covid student.
- If the person who exposed the student to Covid is an immediate family member, unless that family member is completely isolated from the rest of the family (private bedroom and bath, no common time together such as dinner, TV, family conversations, etc), the 14 day quarantine “clock” for the St. Michael student will not begin until the 10 day “clock” for the Covid patient has expired, 24 days later.
- If a child is exposed to the virus and told to stay home, health professionals ask that parents NOT test the child for the virus because the results wouldn’t matter. Symptoms of Covid may not appear until 2-14 days after exposure, A negative test “now” does not guarantee that Covid will not appear within the next two weeks.
- Please understand that for reasons of confidentiality, the school cannot disclose the name of the student with Covid.
- If able, students are encouraged to keep up with their studies via distance learning.

### **V. Questions and Answers:**

- 1) What if a student tests positive? *Parents should inform the principal immediately, in writing. The student will be quarantined, and must log on to “concurrent classes” for*

*two weeks if able. The school will ask the parent to complete a form so as to communicate policies, verify protocols, and establish dates of return.*

- 2) *What if a teacher must be quarantined because of exposure to someone with the virus? We have hired a full time substitute teacher with experience and credentials for this purpose. The quarantined teacher would stay at home for two weeks, but if able to do so, he or she would be asked to continue to teach by broadcasting lessons from his or her home to smart screens in our classrooms. The full time substitute would be in those classes to supervise students.*
- 3) *What if the teacher himself or herself contracts the virus? We would follow the guidance of ADPH and the Archdiocese of Mobile. The teacher would be quarantined for ten days from the date of symptom onset, and if able, asked to continue to lead lessons from home for students in school. Depending on the circumstances and exposure, we may need to ask the students of that teacher to stay home for 14 days, or require the entire school to go into distance learning.*
- 4) *What happens to the rest of the student body if a student tests positive? We will work with ADPH and the Archdiocese to make appropriate decisions about quarantining based on proximity, exposure and the resulting risk. Parents of those at risk will be notified quickly (see section V.c)*
- 5) *What if a student frequently disregards safety protocols? We would regard this as a very serious matter. Students would be sent home for distance learning for a period of time as a first step, with more serious consequences to follow if the behavior continues. Unlike other disciplinary issues, failure to abide by social distancing and face mask protocols puts other students' health and safety at risk.*
- 6) *What if something in the plan doesn't work or needs amending? Then we will amend it! We will establish consistent "feedback loops" with students, parents and teachers via surveys or meetings to assess how we're doing, and make adjustments along the way. We must be nimble and flexible enough in our planning to pivot to best practices!*