

St. Mary's Catholic School Welcome Back Plan

2020 -2021

(Updated 8/7/20)



Dear Parents and Guardians,

Our start date of August 12th is just around the corner and we are all so excited to bring the hustle and bustle back to St. Mary's. These walls have been quiet for entirely too long. Our St. Mary's family needs to be together!

We have created a plan to bring our Falcons safely back to campus based on the latest policies and guidance provided from the Diocese of Austin Office of Catholic Schools, the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops Education Department (TCCB ED), the Texas Education Agency (TEA), the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the American Academy of Pediatrics, and local, county, and state governmental entities.

I begin with details for morning drop off and afternoon pick up. I will address this in two parts. Part 1 will be Wednesday, Thursday and Friday (August 12th-14th) of the first week. Part 2 will be each day beginning August 17th and for the remainder of this unusual time. **(We will be sending a video next week to help you navigate the new protocol)**

Our school day begins at 8:00 with drop off beginning at 7:45. Morning care in the cafeteria is open at 7:00 a.m. and is at no cost to the parents.

Drop Off and Pick Up



Morning Drop Off (Part 1: first week) Understanding the excitement of returning to school, the need to see the classroom and meet the teacher, the desire to say hi to friends and the fact that many parents are accustomed to walking their children into the building, parents will be allowed to walk children in this first three days.

If you choose to walk your child into the school, we ask that you wear a mask, social distance, do not congregate at the classroom door or in the hallways and exit the building as soon as your child is dropped off. We will have signs to guide you to the correct door for entrance into the building.

Please do not park in the bus lane.

For those families who will drop off their child, you may choose the cul de sac in the back by the cafeteria or by front gate area from 7:45-8:00 a.m.

Morning Drop Off (Part 2: August 17th and beyond) Parents are asked not to enter the building. We ask that all students are dropped off in one of two zones. Zone 1 is located by the front gate. Zone 2 is located in the cul de sac by the cafeteria. Each zone area will have staff and safety patrol helpers who will guide the students into the building.

Because of traffic there will be designated exits of school property and entrances to keep vehicle traffic flow consistent and for the safety of our students.

Students who arrive after 8:00 a.m. are tardy and must be walked to the office and signed in by the parent.

Afternoon Pickup (Part 1: first week) Again understanding the excitement of returning to school and your child's need to see you there at the end of the day (ready to share, share, share) we will allow parents to enter the school for pick up. We will ask that no parent enter the building before 3:25. There will be two doors for entrance and exit. Parents may choose the front doors or the doors around the corner to the left of the front doors (signs will be posted).

If you choose to walk into the school to pick up your child, we ask that you wear a mask, social distance, do not congregate at the classroom door or in the hallways and exit the building as soon as your child is picked up. If Middle School parents come in the building the first three days, we ask that they not travel upstairs, to lessen congestion in the Middle School hallway.

We also ask that when you have picked up your child you exit the school grounds. The front play area will be closed until further notice.

Afternoon Pickup (Part 2: August 17th and beyond) Parents are asked not to enter the building but to pick up their child in one of two locations. Zone 1 is located by the front gate. Zone 2 is located in the cul de sac by the cafeteria. When a parent has pulled up their designated zone, the teacher on duty will relay the student's name to the office.

If the student is in Pre-K through 4, the student will be picked up by a safety patrol member and escorted to zone 2. If the child is in grade 5-8 the child will be allowed to come out to zone 1 unescorted. We ask that parents whose youngest child is in grades 5-8 pick up at zone 1 by the front gate. We ask that parents whose youngest child is in Pre-K through 4th pick up at zone 2 located in the cul de sac by the cafeteria.

Safety Protocols



Daily Screenings

- Parents will self-screen their child(ren) each morning before school.
- Teachers and staff will self-screen each morning before school.
- Daily self-screening questions: In evaluating whether an individual has symptoms consistent with COVID-19, consider the following question: Have they recently begun experiencing any of the following in a way that is not normal for them? **If you answer yes to any of these questions do not send your child to school that day.**
 - Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees
 - Loss of taste or smell
 - Cough (for students with a chronic allergic/asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline);
 - Difficulty breathing
 - Shortness of breath or Fatigue
 - Headache
 - Chills
 - Sore throat
 - Congestion or runny nose
 - Shaking or exaggerated shivering
 - Significant muscle pain or ache
 - Diarrhea
 - Nausea or vomiting

Communications

- Signs will be placed at all entrances to state when you should stay home and if you are entering you consent to being healthy.
- Signs regarding current Face covering requirements will be placed at all entrances.

Staff Training

- All teachers and staff will receive training on COVID-19 protocols and specific practices for our school prior to the start of school and stay in constant communication to revise/improve when necessary.

Student Training

- Students will receive age appropriate instruction on hygiene practices (hand washing, use of sanitizer, covering sneezes, coughs, yawns) with reminders as needed.
- Each teacher will teach proper handwashing skills to students.
- Each class will have scheduled handwashing/hand sanitizing times throughout the day.
- Hand sanitizer will be available in all classrooms.
- It is recommended that students have a small bottle of hand sanitizer at their desk.

Face Masks and Shields

- Face shields or face masks are required for adults and students in Grades 1 – 8 and optional for students in PK & Kinder when entering the building, exiting the building, and during travel times (ex: class transitions, restroom use, etc. when physical distancing may not be possible). In class, masks or face shields will be used at times when physical distance cannot be maintained.
- The school will have masks on hand in the event that a student forgets to bring theirs from home or misplaces theirs during the day.
- Parents are asked to make their child's(ren's) mask/face shield individual and unique. The design should be comfortable, appropriate, and allow for the student's personal style. Please put your child's name somewhere on the mask.
- Reusable masks should be washed each day.
- When masks are taken off, students are asked to bring a plastic baggie to keep the mask clean at their desks. Students may also wear a lanyard or clip to keep the face mask with the student.

Student Cohorts (groups)

- Students will largely function throughout the school day in grade level groups. This will minimize the number of students each child comes into contact with during the course of the day.

Mass (beginning the week of August 17th)

- Students in Grades 5-8 will attend Mass each Tuesday. Social distancing will be adhered to.
- Students in Grades K–4 will attend Mass each Thursday. Social distancing will be adhered to.
- Pre-K students will attend Mass later in the Fall (day to be determined)
- Visitors are asked not to join us for Mass until our conditions are back to normal. Thank you for understanding.

Classrooms – Homeroom & Elective

- Students will wash/sanitize their hands upon entering the classroom each morning and before they leave each afternoon, in addition to other hand-washing/hand-sanitizing times.
- Social distancing will be practiced, where feasible without disrupting the educational experience. Desks will be spaced 3-6 feet apart as space allows in classrooms.

- Student's belongings will be stored separately.
- Students will use their own supplies in place of shared supplies/materials.
- Technology and Science Equipment will be sanitized between classes if being used by more than one class.
- During group activities where social distancing is at a minimum, masks will be worn.
- Frequent cleaning practices, including the opportunity for children to clean their own spaces before and after they are used, in ways that are developmentally appropriate, will occur throughout the day.
- Desks, doorknobs, and other non-porous surfaces will be cleaned frequently throughout each day.
- Students may remove masks once they are arranged in positions that allow them to maintain safe distancing.
- Middle School students will not use lockers at this time. Desks are equipped with baskets for textbooks and backpacks will be carried between classes.

Virtual Learners

- The same lessons, activities, and tests will be utilized for on campus and virtual instruction. Virtual instruction will include live streaming through Google classroom, video based lessons, virtual activities, online assignments and tests, etc.
- Students are expected to be present for direct teaching (attendance will be taken) and complete daily/weekly assignments.
- Virtual instruction will follow the same grading policies as outlined in the parent-student handbook.
- Attendance for virtual instruction is measured by daily student participation in learning activities, presence for direct instruction, interaction with the teacher and submission of assignments. Attendance will be tracked on a daily basis for each class.
- As partners in the education of our children parents are expected to assist in the following ways:
 - Ensure your student is in attendance for all direct teaching.
 - Ensure your student completes daily posted activities on Google Classroom.
 - Respond to teacher communication by phone, email or video conferencing during prescribed times.
 - Check Website daily for general and specific information.
 - Ask questions.

Extra-Curricular and Other Activities

- Sports – Fall Sports at this time will be volleyball and golf
- NJHS – meeting as usual with all safety procedures in place
- Student Council – meeting as usual with all safety procedures in place
- God Squad – meeting as usual with all safety procedures in place
- PSIA coaching to begin later in the Fall

Hallways

- Procedures are being established by Faculty/Staff at each level to ensure movement between classes and other travel times happen with all safety precautions in place.

Lunch/Snacks

- St. Mary's will continue to provide wonderful lunches each day. Prices and menu are located on our website under the cafeteria tab. Lunches will be restructured and packaged for convenience and safety. Students may also choose to bring lunch from home.
- Hands will be washed/sanitized before and after eating.
- Lunch times will be consistent each day with one grade per lunch period eating in their classroom to ensure adequate space in the cafeteria for social distancing. This may be adjusted once the school year begins.
- When a class eats in the classroom, the students who are learning online will be invited to join.
- Tables and desks will be sanitized before and after eating.
- At this time, visitors cannot join students for lunch.
- Students will not share food.
- Water fountains will be used by students to fill their own water bottles. Drinking from the water fountains will not be allowed.
- No communal sacks/treats are allowed at this time including those in celebration of student birthdays.

Recess

- Recess for all grades will be scheduled to ensure social distancing among grades.

After-school Care

- Falcon Care will operate with ALL safety procedures in place. Registration for Falcon Care is located on the school website under Campus Life.
- Students will occupy the cafeteria with physical distancing between students.
- All students will continue to be picked-up through the cafeteria doors.

Visitors to School

- SMCS will limit school visits to only those essential for school operations.
- Parents or other adults will not be permitted to come on campus during the school day for reasons other than picking up their child for an appointment, dropping off or picking up medication, or attending a pre-arranged meeting with Faculty/Staff.

Illness Protocol



- The school office is the point group for COVID-19 concerns.
- SMCS will separate any student who shows COVID-19 symptoms while at school until they can be picked up by a parent or guardian.
- Any employee or student will be sent home if they become ill at school based on the following criteria:
 - Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees
 - Loss of taste or smell
 - Cough (for students with a chronic allergic/asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline);
 - Difficulty breathing
 - Shortness of breath or Fatigue
 - Headache
 - Chills
 - Sore throat
 - Congestion or runny nose
 - Shaking or exaggerated shivering
 - Significant muscle pain or ache
 - Diarrhea
- Return to School: If a student or employee had temperature with no symptoms of COVID and no contact with anyone testing positive for COVID; they may return after temperature free for 24 hours without temperature reducing medication. This is the return policy as noted in the TCCB Health Manual.
- If a positive case for COVID-19 whether teacher, staff, or student, the school will identify any individuals who had regular or close contact with the affected participant. Close contact will be determined by an appropriate public health authority once we have a lab-confirmed case on campus. Close contact is defined as **a. being directly exposed to infectious secretions (e.g. being coughed on); or b. being within 6 feet for a cumulative duration of 15 minutes**; however, additional factors like case/contact masking (i.e., both the infectious individual and the potential close contact have been consistently and properly masked), ventilation, presence of dividers, and case symptomatology may affect this determination. Either (a) or (b) defines close contact if it occurred during the infectious period of the case, defined as two days prior to symptom onset to 10 days after

symptom onset. In the case of asymptomatic individuals who are lab-confirmed with COVID-19, the infectious period is defined as two days prior to the confirming lab test and continuing for 10 days following the confirmed lab test.

- Written notification will be sent if a positive COVID-19 case is identified among school participants (teachers, staff, or students). For students, such written notification is to be provided to the parents or guardians of the students. SMCS will also notify the local health department.
- SMCS will notify a class if a student is ill with COVID-19 symptoms and that student will self-isolate at home.
- SMCS will close off any areas used by a COVID-19 symptomatic individual (student, teacher, or staff) until they can be disinfected or 7 days has passed since the areas were used.
- Any individuals—including teachers, staff, students, or other campus visitors—who themselves either: (a) are lab-confirmed to have COVID-19; or (b) experience the symptoms of COVID-19 (listed below) must stay at home throughout the infection period, and cannot return to campus until the school system screens the individual to determine any of the below conditions for campus re-entry have been met:
 - In the case of an individual who was diagnosed with COVID-19, the individual may return to school when all three of the following criteria are met:
 1. at least 24 hours has passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever reducing medications); and
 2. the individual has improvement in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and
 3. at least ten days have passed since symptoms first appeared
 - In the case of an individual who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and who is not evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, such individual is assumed to have COVID-19, and the individual may not return to the campus until the individual has completed the same three-step set of criteria listed above.
 - If the individual has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to school before completing the above stay at home period, the individual must either (a) obtain a medical professional’s note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis or (b) receive one confirmed test stating that they are free of COVID via acute infection tests at an approved COVID-19 testing location found at <https://tdem.texas.gov/covid-19/>.

Please see the Acknowledgement Page below.

**Please sign and return a hard copy or a scanned copy by
August 12th.
Thank you.**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND REPRESENTATION RELATED TO
NEW COVID-19 PROTOCOLS**

Please sign and return a hard copy or a scanned copy by August 12th. Thank you.

At St. Mary’s Catholic School, children learn and are formed in the Catholic faith experiencing academic, spiritual, physical, and human formation in a Christian community. We support and uphold one another. The School will offer the opportunity for all students to come together and learn on campus this school year. The School is also aware there may be families with certain health concerns that would necessitate continued remote learning which is also available to all students.

The School has established protocols intended to reduce the potential for exposure to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) on campus. These protocols, as they may be updated from time to time, may be found on the school website and are based, in whole or in part, on information from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the Texas Education Agency, and the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops Education Department.

Even with these protocols, the School cannot guarantee that students, employees, or visitors will avoid contraction of COVID-19. Attendance at the School or participation in a School activity, class, instruction, sport, extra-curricular activity, internship, or event (“Activities”) may increase the risk of contraction of COVID-19 and related illnesses. The School asks you to acknowledge the following to help it ensure that these protocols are followed and that all will work to mitigate the risks.

- A. I acknowledge the contagious nature of COVID-19 and that students, employees, parents, and visitors may be exposed to or contract COVID-19 by attending, volunteering, visiting, or working at the School, or by attending or participating in School Activities. I am aware that exposure or contraction of COVID-19 may result in serious illness or personal injury. I recognize the risks related to COVID-19 and that my own actions or omissions may contribute to the risks or assist in mitigating the risks of COVID-19.
- B. **I will abide by and follow the School’s protocols related to COVID-19 for myself and for any person for whom I am responsible.**
- C. I understand that the School intends to enforce its COVID-19 protocols and may amend its protocols from time to time as it finds necessary and appropriate.
- D. I am informed that circumstances may require the School to initiate distant learning or cancel School Activities in order to mitigate the risks of COVID-19.
 - (1) As a parent, I agree that I and my children enrolled as students at the School will participate in distant learning, if necessary, and accept the cancelation of School Activities without a reduction or refund of tuition or fees.
- E. To the extent permitted by law, I release and agree to hold harmless and indemnify the School and the Catholic Diocese of Austin, as well as their employees and representatives, from any claim or injury stemming from or related to my or my children’s attendance, visitation, volunteering, or working at the School or any School Activity related exposure to COVID-19.

Parent/Guardian Signature
Printed Name: _____
Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature
Printed Name: _____
Date: _____