

Catholic Schools Onward
Best Practices and New Opportunities
as We Move Forward

Guidance and Procedures



July 2020

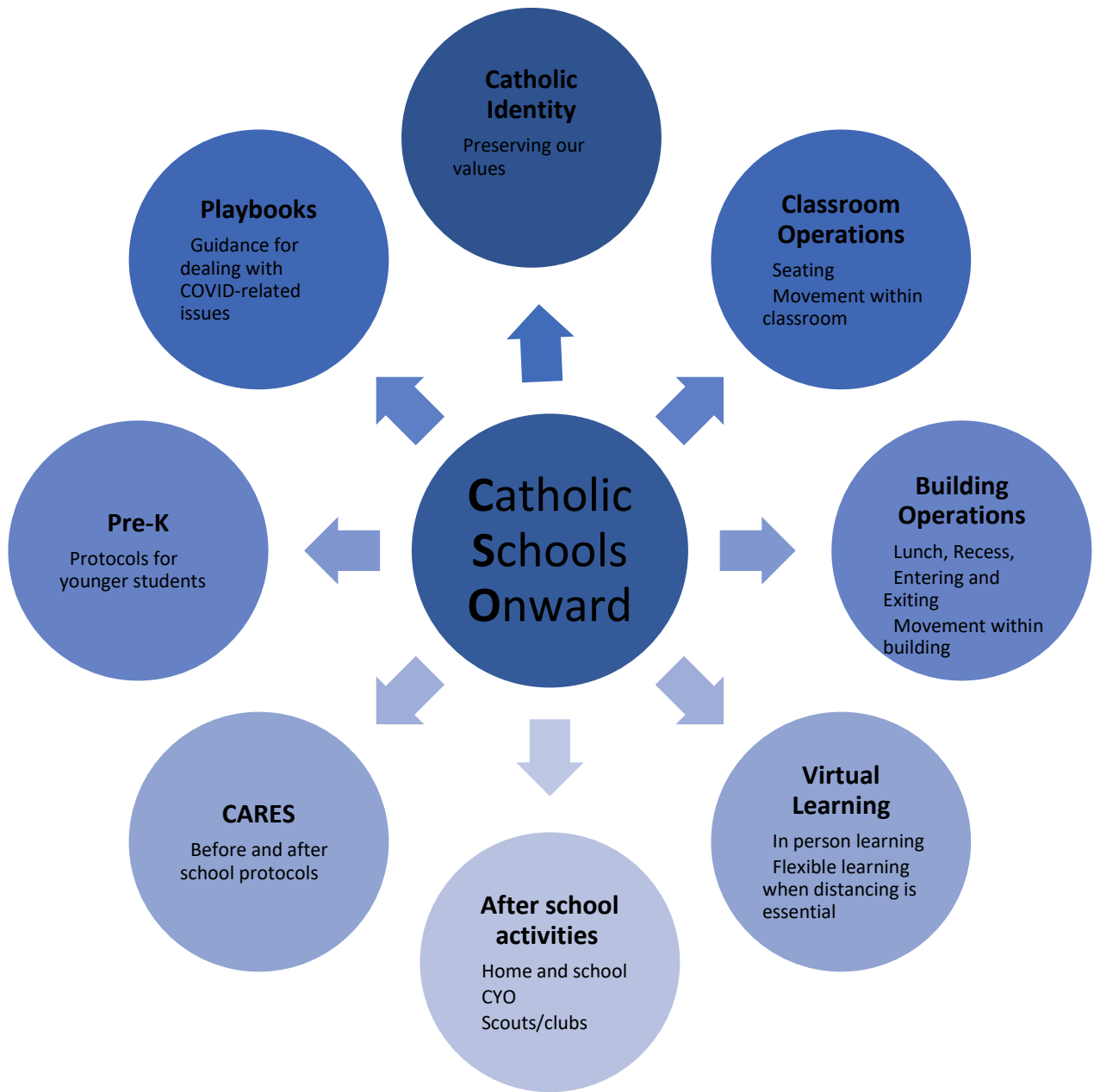
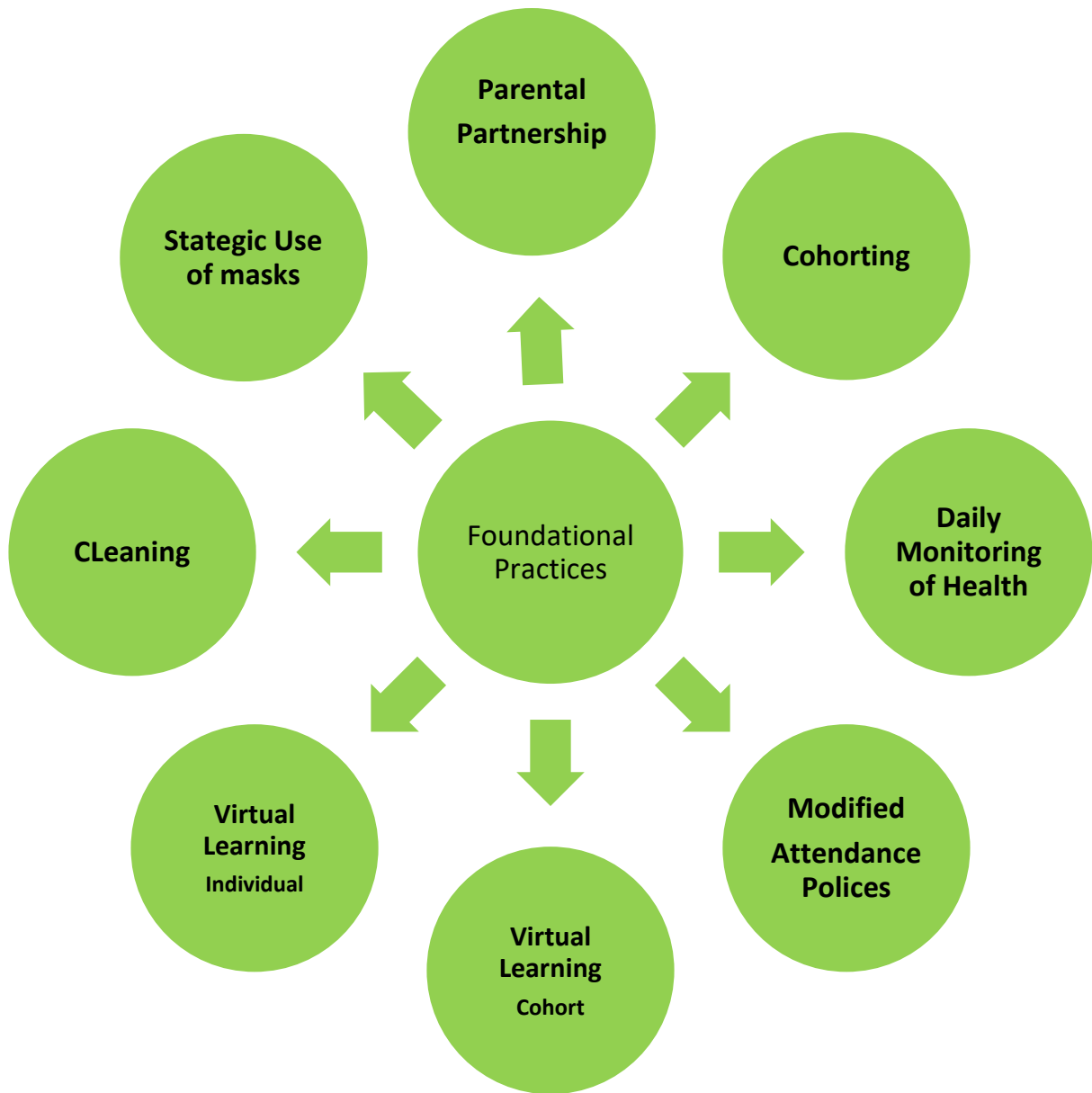


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Introduction and Philosophy

Introduction

This document will provide information regarding the plan to return to Brick-and-Mortar learning for the 2020-2021 school year. Before we discuss the specific aspects of the plan, let us start with an introduction to several of the key foundational premises that the plan is built upon. The principles listed below, will allow us to remain open and only use virtual learning for those who have been identified with COVID-19 or in a situation in which a parent feels working from home is beneficial.

Partnership – Catholic elementary schools are inherently a partnership between the parent and the school. This is never more important than at this time and an even greater partnership is now needed. It is our goal to open this school year and to remain open. This cannot be possible unless the school and the parents agree to the importance of monitoring your child’s health daily. Most importantly, this means that children who are experiencing symptoms – such as fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, parents need to keep their child home until medically cleared to return to school. With parental cooperation in this matter, we will be able to keep the schools open and safe.

Cohorting

A cohort is a group of students in the same grade, most cases, this is a single homeroom but, in some situations, it could be a larger group.

Cohorting is recommended by many health organizations as an environmental measure to prevent the spread of disease. Some large school systems are using it as the only method of prevention to control the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Although our schools will be using other precautionary measures, cohorting will be a major part of the plan. With this, we will keep groups of children together for the entire day. They will attend lunch, recess and classes as a cohort. If a case of COVID-19 were to surface with a cohort, we would then move to virtual learning at home with just the identified cohort. The rest of the school would continue to operate with in-class instruction.

Social distancing – Social distancing is also a fundamental practice in all our procedures of operations. Social distancing is deliberately increasing the physical space between people to avoid spreading illness. Keeping your distance from others lessens the chances of catching and spreading COVID-19. Travel in the hallway, lunch periods, and classroom instruction have all been planned to maximize social distancing.

Strategic Use of Masks – Masks will be mandatory in certain situations, such as travel in the hallway, on the bus, classroom situations with non-cohort members, or when travel about the classroom is necessary without effective social distancing. When a child is at his desk with his cohort in a socially distant situation, the student may remove his mask. Using these principles, a student then can remain mask free for much of the day, unless a parent indicates they would like their child to keep their mask on the entire day.

Enhanced Cleaning – The school will increase the cleaning of common areas and highly used features such as door knobs, handrails, and counters. Children are encouraged to bring their own water bottles to school, as common water fountains will not be in use. With this enhanced cleaning, a safer environment can be established.

Monitoring Health – Every day, parents are primarily responsible for monitoring the health of their children. Teachers will be reminded to check the health of their students during a common activity. Additionally, the school will implement random temperature monitoring.

Virtual Learning – Use of both distance learning and virtual learning. We will make two types of non-traditional learning available.

- If a child is sick, or a parent suspects the child may be sick, we will have an option where the child can join the class via a telecommuting practice. The major subjects will be available through this method. Materials will be exchanged through the Learning Management System (LMS).
- In the case where a cohort has been dismissed from school and COVID-19 has been identified, the entire cohort will utilize distance learning for the isolation period. Lessons will be delivered through a telecommuting platform, with heavy reliance on the LMS.

Modified Attendance – Since we are encouraging parents to monitor health closely, and we also encourage keeping children home if they display symptoms, the grading of attendance has changed. Children will be marked as attending in person or attending virtually. Only when children cannot or do not participate in any of the virtual lessons, will they be marked absent.

General Principles for the Building

Introduction

There are several key practices that should be implemented in each building to help maintain a safe learning environment

Philosophy

Foundational premises when designing a safe learning environment are the concepts of maintaining cohorts, social distancing and frequent cleaning. The use of these practices is recommended by the CDC and other health agencies to help control the spread of any viruses and manage any possible outbreaks.

Process

1. Limit the admission of visitors to the school
2. High touch surfaces should be cleaned frequently such as door knobs, remotes, and light switches.
3. Signage should be in each classroom and throughout the building reminding students to practice good hygiene.
4. Hand sanitizers should be available in the hallways near entrances and in other strategic areas.
5. It is recommended that each school make part of its group prayer time a reminder to social distance and to wash hands.
6. Each student is encouraged to provide their own supplies to reduce the need to share supplies.
7. Group singing should be discouraged unless increased social distancing is possible. Refrain from singing.
8. Computer class - use own devices when possible. Investigate price of infrared wands
9. When possible, special teachers and departmental teachers should go into the students' classroom.
10. No outside food for sharing should be available
11. Ventilation is important - windows should be opened if possible.
12. Field trips are experiences that break cohorting and expose students and staff to risk of exposure to Covid-19.



Catholic Identity

Catholic Identity

Introduction

Excellence in education is characterized by having a strong curriculum, student engagement, utilizing quality instructional methods, making good use of data and regular communication with parents and stakeholders. What is at the heart of learning in a Catholic school is the inclusion of faith and Catholic identity in all we do.

Philosophy

Catholic schools have a two-fold charge: providing an education that is academically excellent and one that is deeply rooted in Catholic identity. The challenge, then, is to ensure that the education that is delivered (no matter what the mode of delivery) meets this standard.

Process

1. There must be a level of intentionality across all grade levels and all subject matter that course content is intentionally Catholic.
2. When face-to-face instruction is possible, school Masses will require their own protocol that will maintain the appropriate social distancing.
 - o Attendance of parents and general community at the school liturgies may have to be suspended depending on local guidelines. If the Mass is live-streamed, parents and families should be invited to attend.
 - o Because of social distance, part of the school may attend the Mass and the rest of the school live streaming the Mass should make a spiritual Communion.
3. When it is necessary to deliver remote instruction to all students, maintain the emphasis on school liturgy by streaming all-school Masses.
4. Provide opportunities for daily prayer in a community.
5. All schools across the diocesan community should include the prayer of Pope Francis daily.
6. Support and make modifications to other faith-based activities that are important in the life of the school (i.e., retreats, prayer services).
7. Increase opportunities for cross-grade faith sharing using virtual means (i.e., prayer buddies meeting virtually).
8. Begin all synchronous video sessions with prayer, including soliciting prayer intentions from students.
9. Support the faith life of faculty and staff through community prayer and scripture study.
10. Invite parents and families to join in virtual prayer and faith life.

11. Connect the current events with a Catholic perspective (using the tenets of Catholic Social Teaching, the Virtues, etc.) as a framework to support understanding.
12. Ensure the presence of the pastor in new school configurations.
13. Reinforce the role of the principal in the faith life of the school.
14. Create approaches to minister to families who experience food insecurity, financial issues, and other crises.
15. Promote service learning experiences in virtual spaces.
16. Find opportunities in the current situation that would lend themselves to a community response (acknowledgements and prayers for police, first responders, holding food drives, etc.) .
17. Maintain Catholic Identity in the school environment:
 - Make sure that every classroom has a prayer corner, crucifix, statues, bulletin boards reflecting faith values.
 - Laminate the prayer of Pope Francis during the COVID and Prayer of St. Michael and display a prominent place in the school and classrooms.
 - Restore practices of having a class patron
 - Keep in focus the Standards for Ministerial Behavior

The Prayer of Pope Francis during the Coronavirus

Lord, may you bless the world, give health to our bodies and comfort our hearts. You ask us not to be afraid. Yet our faith is weak and we are fearful. But you, Lord, will not leave us at the mercy of the storm. Tell us again: “Do not be afraid” (Mt 28:5). And we, together with Peter, “cast all our anxieties onto you, for you care about us” (1 Pet 5:7). Amen.



Building Operations

Entering the Building

Introduction

Entering the building every morning is the activity which unofficially begins the day. It is important that this is smooth, stress free, efficient and conducted in a manner that keeps the child safe.

Philosophy

A foundational premise when designing a safe entry throughout the day and controlling transmission of any virus, is to help keep it from the building. During the entry into the building social distancing and hand sterilization will be implemented. The use of hand sanitation and social distancing is recommended by the CDC and other health agencies to help control the spread of any viruses and manage any possible outbreaks.

Process

1. Mandate parents take temperatures of children before they leave home.
2. Students should immediately sanitize their hands by using sanitizers or washing hands.
3. Empty buses one at time per entrance, so social distancing can be maintained and each child's hands can be sanitized.
4. Have each entrance monitored by staff to help insure students maintain a social distance.
5. Use of a mask is mandatory as students ride the bus, enter the building and travel to the classroom.
6. Students should store their mask in a storage bag if they are going to remove it once they reach their desk.
7. Once students enter the building, teachers should review the daily monitoring health check list.
8. Encourage school signage which asks — “Did you answer your daily health questions at home?” Put this perhaps after # 1 in process.

Daily Monitoring of Health

Introduction

The guidance provided by the State of Pennsylvania suggests that each school monitor health daily. To provide the healthiest environment possible for Staff and Students, schools should choose to implement a Daily Health monitoring system similar to one recommended below that meets the specific and unique circumstance of the school.

Philosophy

Health monitoring should be done in conjunction with efforts taken at home with the parents of children attending the school. Parents have the greatest information regarding the health of their children and are an integral part of this process.

Process

- Schools should develop a system to engage parents in monitoring daily the identified possible symptoms of COVID-19 listed below. As we learn about the disease, we may need to alter the list by adding or subtracting symptoms. Fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, or throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea.

This daily monitoring can take place in a number of methods. The schools should decide what method best meets their specific and unique needs and infrastructure. Parents could indicate that their child(ren)'s health has been monitored by:

1. Signing into a learning management system daily and checking off that this was completed.
 2. Sending in with their child an entrance ticket (a small piece of paper that the parent has initialed) that can be monitored in the child's home room as they take attendance
 3. Signing off weekly that their child has not contracted covid-19 and will monitor health on a daily basis. This can be done using a letter or a Google doc.
 4. Agreeing at the start of the year to monitor the health of their children daily, if this method is selected, it is important that the classroom monitoring described below takes place.
- In the classroom, the school should establish a common time, after morning prayer or before Grace at lunch, when the teacher does a daily scan of the students to monitor if there are any concerns related to health. This could be an overt process, where the teacher asks the children if they have experienced any of the symptoms, if grade/age appropriate. The teacher could make a deliberate effort to monitor health without running through the list of symptoms and then refer children with concerns to the office or nurse for further monitoring.
 - Schools should also monitor the health of staff and students by tracking students' and staff's absenteeism.

Lunch

Introduction

Lunch in school serves multiple purposes, it is a time to replenish and nourish as well as a time to socialize and get a brain break. It is important to provide all these goals and keep children safe.

Philosophy

A foundational premise when designing a safe lunch environment are the concepts of maintaining cohort and social distancing. The use of cohorts is recommended by the CDC and other health agencies to help control the spread of any viruses and manage any possible outbreaks.

Process

1. Students should wash hands before lunch.
2. Students should stay in their cohort as they eat lunch, separate from other cohorts.
3. It is recommended that students eat lunch in their classroom, unless cohorting and social distancing can be implemented.
4. Students should remain socially distant during lunch.
5. The table and desks should be wiped down before and after each meal.
6. There should not be any shared meals.
7. Meals and utensils should be served directly to the student and prepackaged if possible.
8. Students should wash hands after lunch.

Recess

Introduction

Recess is an important part of a child's school day. A safe and healthy recess promotes time to develop socially, emotionally, physically, and academically.

During recess, students learn and practice important social and emotional skills, such as conflict resolution, decision-making, compromise, and self-regulation. Additionally, recess provides a needed brain break and facilitates the learning process. With this in mind, the following procedures will be put in place to insure our students have a safe recess.

Philosophy

To the best extent possible, recess will continue applying safe physical contact of equipment and social distancing. The term "social distancing" refers to measures being taken to restrict where and when people can gather to stop or slow the spread of infectious disease. In general, six feet of separation is the distance that should be kept between people interacting within their peers. Games that utilize physical and social activities, yet limit physical contact will be played.

Process

1. Students will go to recess using the procedures established in school operations regarding movement between the building and the outdoors.
 2. Students will wash/sanitize their hands before going to recess and before returning to class.
 3. Students will not need to wear masks while at recess with their cohort and are playing socially distant activities. If they are unable to be with their cohort, students should wear masks during recess.
 4. Equipment will be wiped down before each recess.
 5. Games and activities used during recess will be pre-approved as part of the safe list for limiting the spread of infectious disease.
 6. Students will wash/sanitize their hands before returning to class.
 7. Practice social distancing while walking to recess.
 8. Use pre-approved activities.
-

Other considerations regarding the type of activities.

1. Minimize contact sport engagement during recess to ensure social distancing. Games that have natural social distancing, such as kick ball or jump rope are good choices. Games that require close physical contact and grabbing are not suggested (such as football and basketball). Other sources for socially distant games can be found at <https://www.asphaltgreen.org/blog/rep-it-out-games-for-social-distancing>.
2. Allocate separate bins of equipment for each class, to be used only during recess; clean equipment between recess periods.
3. Do not allow children to bring equipment from home unless it can be cleaned appropriately before use.
4. Offer a variety of outside spaces where free choice of different activities can take place, including quiet, creative, and solo activity spaces.
5. Mark out 'zones' to reduce the number of children who are in contact with each other and shared equipment.
6. Weather permitting, PE class held in outside space. Weather non-permitting, PE in the gymnasium is preferred, PE class in classroom if needed.
7. It is preferred that students are carrying personal water bottles for hydration before, during and after activity.
8. Class equipment should be sanitized frequently (arrange class times to allow for buffer between classes to allow teacher to facilitate moving, washing and sanitizing).
9. When equipment sanitizing is not feasible, consider quarantining used equipment for 3 days or more before being used again.
10. Limit shared items or keep same groupings throughout lessons.
11. Consider tracking the use of equipment.
12. Whenever possible, use social distancing activities and face coverings when social distancing is not possible.
13. Considerations should be discussed between physical educators and school health officials for students with respiratory disorders or any other pertinent disorders (immunodeficiency, etc.).

Traveling Within the Building

Introduction

Movement about the building is essential and cannot be eliminated. Schools need to devise a plan to allow for travel throughout the building while keeping the students and staff safe.

Philosophy

Students need to travel from the bus, to their classroom, to the lavatory and other essential areas. The specifics will differ from school to school, because each school's physical layout is different. As this plan or movement is developed, please keep in mind the strategic use of masks, social distancing and maintaining cohorts.

Process

1. As people travel about the building, masks should always be worn.
2. Directionality should be established in each school using some of the following principles:
 - Each school needs to determine if the hall will be split so students will travel in one direction through the hallway keeping travel restricted on each side of the hall to one direction.
 - Schools can dedicate a hallway to only travel in one direction if a loop is possible and students can get to point A and back following the loop.
3. A schedule should be developed that takes into consideration the movement of cohorts around the building.
4. Planned travel, such as to recess, should be organized so several cohorts are not in the hallway simultaneously.
5. If students need to travel to classes at other discipline areas, such as science or social studies class, at the same time a dedicated plan needs to be established to minimize students being in the same area at the same time.
 - This could mean rehearsal of the movement.
 - Create a staging area where students wait while other children move past them.
6. Routines and processes such as keeping materials and books as students travel to other rooms need to be established.
 - This may include keeping book pouches on the back of a chair or in an additional cubby.
7. Increased cleaning of all commonly touched items, like railings, door knobs should take place throughout the day.
8. Keep doors held open during the change of classes to avoid unnecessary touching by students.

Library

Introduction

The use of the library has evolved over the last several years and has moved from a place where children borrowed books to a research center. With the need for cohorting and social distancing. There are many safe alternatives to delivering the same academic support provided by a traditional library class.

Philosophy

Library resources continue to be an integral part of the academic program.

Process

1. Hold library in the homeroom when appropriate--lessons about research, the different types of literature and much of the curriculum can be delivered in the classroom.
2. Activities such as the introduction of authors, genres and the read aloud of books can be conducted in the classroom.
3. There are many possibilities to exchange books, but a media specialist, could make a number of selections for students and deliver them to the room so children can “take out” a book for the week.
 - a. Returned books can be isolated for 72 hours before being returned to circulation.
 - b. The selection of books can be made based on a child’s interest, based on themes in the curriculum, or based on a recommendation from the teacher or the librarian.
4. If a class must visit the library, it should be done one cohort at a time. Areas used should be cleaned between cohort visits.
5. Much of the research that students do can be done electronically without entering the library.

Physical Education

Introduction

These guidelines are written with the goal of keeping the integrity of quality physical education programs while navigating through a “new normal.” Physical educators should work with their administrators to formulate protocols that fall in line with the following guidelines:

Philosophy

Physical education is an integral part of the curriculum in an elementary school and essential that it continue safely.

Process

1. Weather permitting, PE class held in outside space. Weather non-permitting, PE in the gymnasium is preferred, PE class in the classroom if needed.
 2. Hand washing before and after activity.
 3. It is preferred that students are carrying personal water bottles for hydration before, during and after activity.
 4. PE teachers should be trained thoroughly in sanitizing protocols set out by local schools.
 5. Class equipment sanitized frequently (arrange class times to allow for buffer between classes to allow the teacher to facilitate moving, washing and sanitizing).
 6. When equipment sanitizing is not feasible, consider quarantining used equipment for 3 days or more before being used again.
 7. Limit shared items or keep the same groupings throughout lessons.
 8. Consider tracking the use of equipment so it is having a break period between uses to prevent the spread of bacteria.
 9. Consider designating resources to each class that only they use.
 10. Considerations for lesson planning:
 - Emphasize teaching personal health and safety and being responsible for equipment use.
 - Emphasize teaching personal skill development and personal fitness concepts to promote physical distancing.
 11. Whenever possible, use social distancing activities and face coverings when social distancing is not possible.
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St. Raphael Room

Introduction

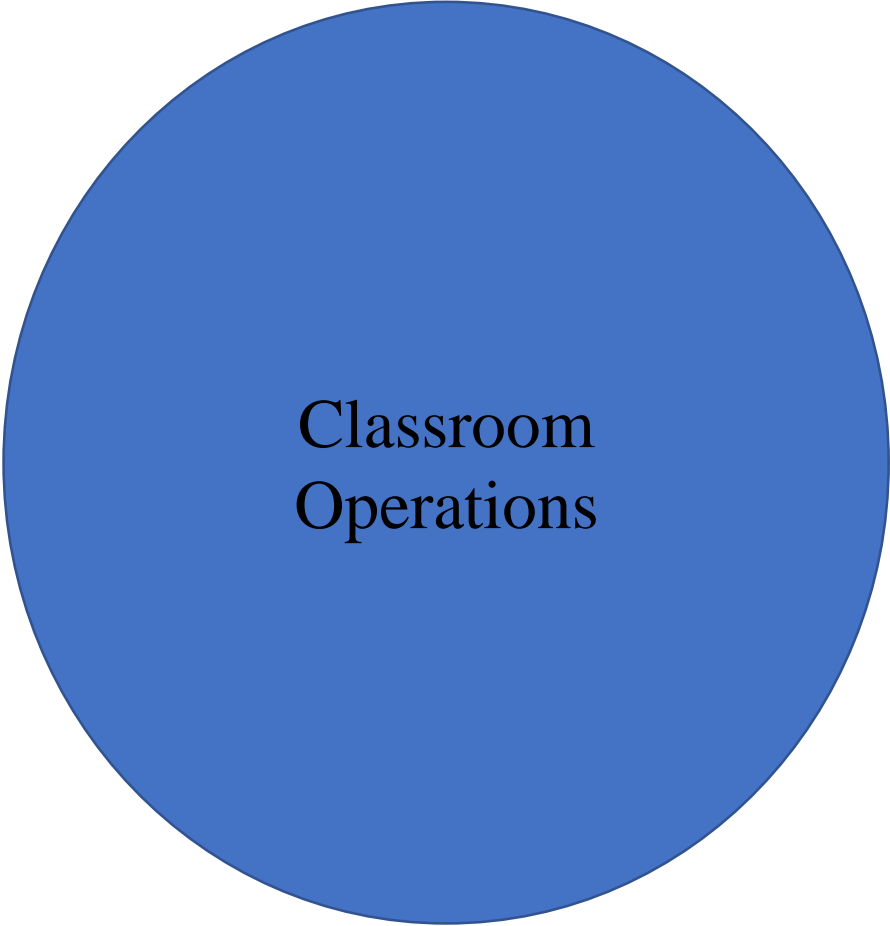
When students are experiencing discomfort or potential symptoms of COVID, there needs to be a place where they are isolated from others with enough room that several students could sit in the room and be six feet apart.

Philosophy

The concept is to provide a safe supervised staging area where students can wait until they could get transportation from school.

Process

1. Establish an area that is supervised and can fit multiple students that can be socially distant.
2. Provide masks to all who enter the room.
3. Sanitize after each use.
4. Provide the room monitor disposable gloves.
5. Keep in the room:
 - a. Disposable paper towels
 - b. Tissues
 - c. Waste container with plastic liner
 - d. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol
 - e. Hard-surface disinfectant



Classroom
Operations

Classroom Set-Up

Introduction

The organization of the classroom is important in supporting the academic progress of students. Classroom space should provide an environment that allows teachers and students to interact comfortably and safely. Careful consideration has been given to the strategic placement of furniture, learning centers, and materials to optimize student learning, reduce distractions and keep children safe.

Philosophy

Fundamental premises when designing a safe classroom environment are the concepts of maintaining cohort and social distancing. The use of Cohorts is recommended by the CDC and other health agencies to help control the spread of any viruses and manage any possible outbreaks.

Process

1. Schools should move any non-essential furniture, materials or equipment that is not needed and store them in a place outside of the room.
2. Schools should measure the width and length of the room to begin planning for maximum distancing of desks.
3. Desks should all face in the same direction.
4. Desks should be placed 3 to 6 feet from the center of each desk to the center of the next desk.
5. All throw rugs and roll-up carpets should be removed from the room. Rugs that are a part of the learning experience in early childhood classrooms should be sanitized on a daily basis.
6. Rooms should be planned around 25 students per room. The number of students that can be accommodated depends on the size of the room.
7. It is recommended that teachers use face shields, so students can see their lips as they are providing direction and instruction.

Materials Within the Classroom

Introduction

The organization of the classroom is important in supporting the academic progress of students. The use of a variety of materials is essential for learning. This includes books, writing instruments and materials for special area subjects.

Philosophy

Foundational premises when designing a safe classroom environment are the concepts of maintaining cohorts, social distancing and frequent cleaning. The use of these practices is recommended by the CDC and other health agencies to help control the spread of any viruses and also manage any possible outbreaks.

Process

1. Classrooms should eliminate, when possible, the use of shared materials.
2. Classrooms should set up areas where students can store personal items that keep them isolated from use by others.
3. When materials must be shared, cleaning in between use is essential.
4. Establish procedures to wipe down before and after every use.
5. Remind children to wash their hands after using a shared item.
6. If students travel to a room, an area and place should be established for the traveling student to store items away from being used by others.



Virtual Learning

Virtual Learning Cohort Instruction

Introduction

While we realize that in-person instruction has greater impact at the elementary level, the need for virtual learning has become a reality in a variety of circumstances including the pandemic-related quarantines (including individual or small group situations), weather-related situations, and building maintenance issues. Physical presence in the classroom allows time for students to develop spiritually, socially, emotionally, physically, and academically. When this is not possible, it is important to provide a means for student learning without interruption.

Philosophy

As much as possible, instruction will continue to apply best practices incorporating our Catholic identity and based on educational research and sound pedagogy. The term “virtual learning” refers to adapted instructional practices being utilized by means of online instruction and interaction with students using various technology and asynchronous methods. Virtual learning can take place in situations where students are unable to be physically present in the school building.

Process

1. Provide the use of a Learning Management System (LMS) to centralize materials, lessons, instruction, assessments, feedback and communications.
2. Direct instruction will take place as teachers:
 - Provide a continued focus on our Catholic identity throughout instruction and in all content areas.
 - Live-stream direct instruction by teacher.
 - Incorporate recorded instruction via YouTube video with follow up.
 - Provide materials that are age and grade appropriate.
 - Use textbook online components with timely follow-up.
3. Use assessments with timely feedback.
4. Goal is mastery of the curriculum for the year.
5. Use small group and large group instruction to meet the needs of students.
6. Have regular communication with parents/guardians.
7. Set up a process for students to view class from home.
8. Teachers encourage age-appropriate physical movement to avoid sitting too long. Include the principle of movement within lessons when possible.
9. Keep focused on the Standards for Ministerial Behavior.

Virtual Learning for Individual Instruction

Introduction

While we realize that in-person instruction has greater impact at the elementary level, the need for virtual learning has become a reality in a variety of circumstances including the pandemic-related quarantines. Physical presence in the classroom allows time for students to develop spiritually, socially, emotionally, physically, and academically. When this is not possible, it is important to provide a means for student learning without interruption.

This guidance is for situations in which a child cannot attend class. This may be because a parent is not comfortable sending their child to school or because the child must do a limited time of quarantine.

Philosophy

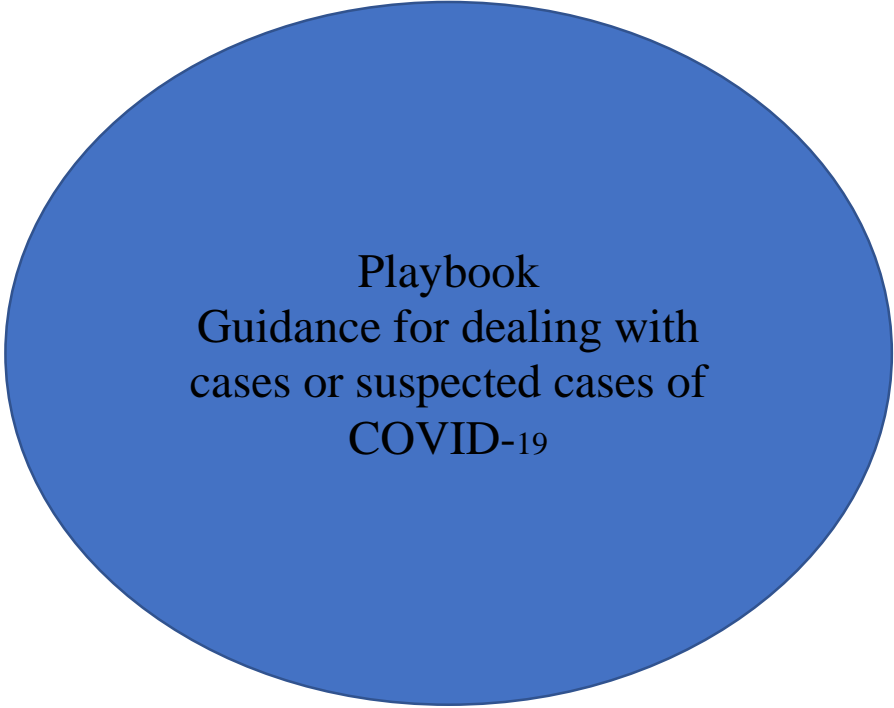
The term “virtual learning” refers to instructional practices being utilized so a child can access what is taking place with his/her class by means of connecting virtually to the classroom in real-time.

Process

1. Provide the use of a Learning Management System to centralize materials, lessons, instruction, assessments, feedback and communications.
2. Provide a direct video connection to the classroom during the period the child is unable to attend class.
 - Child is able to receive direct instruction by teacher.
 - Use textbook online components with timely follow-up.
3. Use of assessments with timely feedback.
4. Goal is mastery of the curriculum so the child stays current and can return prepared to rejoin the class.
5. Regular communication with parents/guardians.

Other Considerations

- Keep in focus the Standards for Ministerial Behavior.



Playbook
Guidance for dealing with
cases or suspected cases of
COVID-19

Playbooks
Guidance for Dealing with COVID Cases

Schools will make efforts to monitor the health of their students and staff, although it is not required or suggested by the CDC. Specifically, they suggest schools and child care programs are **not expected** to screen children, students, or staff to identify cases of COVID-19. If a community, or specifically school, has cases of COVID-19, local health officials will help identify those individuals and follow up on next steps.

Below is some specific guidance related to situations involving the school, community and COVID-19.

If a staff member or volunteer has a confirmed case of COVID-19

1. Notify the local health officials – ask for guidance.
2. Dismiss the staff or volunteer for 2 to 5 days until health officials can determine the next step.
3. Consider dismissal of cohort, related to the suspected case of COVID-19, according to health official guidance.
4. Discourage the cohort from gathering during the initial period.
5. Communicate to staff and families that there was a confirmed case – without using a name or identifying information of the person(s) involved.
6. Close off the potentially infected area for 24 hours and clean the areas that may have been infected by the identified case of COVID-19.
7. During the initial 2 to 5 day period, evaluate if any other cases related to the case were identified and decide to extend or end the cohort dismissal.
8. The staff/volunteer can return after the following conditions have been met:
 - o 3 days with no fever **and**
 - o Symptoms improved **and**
 - o 10 days since symptoms first appeared


If a student has a confirmed case of COVID-19

1. Notify local health officials to ask for guidance.
2. Dismiss the student(s) for 2 to 5 days until health officials can determine next steps.
3. Consider a dismissal of a cohort related to the suspected case of COVID-19 using health official guidance for this.
4. Discourage the cohort from gathering during the initial period and the situation has been evaluated.
5. Communicate to staff and families that there was a confirmed case. Name or identifying information of the student with COVID-19 is not permitted.

6. Close off the area the person was in and wait 24 hours. Clean areas related to the identified case of COVID-19.
7. During the initial 2 to 5 day period, evaluate if any other cases related to the case were identified and decide to extend or end the cohort dismissal.
8. The student can return after the following conditions have been met:
 - 3 days with no fever **and**
 - Symptoms improved **and**
 - 10 days since symptoms first appeared

If a student or staff has a suspected case of COVID-19 or is demonstrating symptoms.

1. Immediately separate staff and children with COVID-19 symptoms (such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath) at school. Individuals who are sick should go home or to a healthcare facility depending on how severe their symptoms are. CDC guidance for caring for oneself and others who are sick should be followed.
 2. Provide an isolation room.
 3. Call for home transportation, if necessary.
 4. Can return when:
 1. 3 days with no fever **and**
 2. Symptoms improved **and**
 3. 10 days since symptoms first appeared **or**
 4. If cleared by a medical professional.
2. If case is confirmed, please see aforementioned section (**confirmed case of COVID-19**).



CARES
Early Childhood
Pre-K

Introduction

It is integral for our schools to provide a CARES program especially during the current circumstances. For many of our students, this will be their first re-entry into the school setting. CARES is an offshoot of the regular school day; thus, all procedures in place for the school should be adhered to during the CARES program.

Philosophy

It is paramount that we provide a safe, healthy and sanitized environment for those students entrusted to our care before and after regular school hours. It is important to engage these students in a social setting which they have not experienced in months and to provide a pleasant atmosphere for them. We are the protectors and providers for these students during the hours they are entrusted to us.

Process

1. Social and safe-distancing practices are to be observed as much as possible. When able, the cohort model should be kept within the CARES program. Students should be kept with the same adult monitor in the program.
2. Outside visitors should not be allowed to enter the area where the CARES program is being held. Children should be met at the school door both entering and leaving the building.
3. Students are responsible for providing their own snack and beverage during their time in CARES. There will be no snack sharing.
4. All employees and volunteers (including teens) should follow the same health checklist practices as school employees.
5. All operational guidelines put into place in the school (e.g. movement through the building, recess, etc.) are to be practiced during CARES sessions.
6. Establish a procedure for dismissal at the end of the school day that limits CARES students to vulnerability. For example, call CARES students to the CARES room after all other lines are dismissed.
7. If the CARES room is a room used during the school day, it must be sanitized prior to student entry for the CARES program.
8. Materials used by CARES students on a regular basis need to be sanitized daily.
9. Monitored hand washing and sanitizing will be done on a regular basis.
10. Follow the Playbook recommendations for any suspected illness.
11. The CARES program will comply with any emergency actions and resulting decisions that occur during the school day.
12. A mobile phone needs to be available to CARES personnel for communications purposes in the event a situation arises during the CARES session.
13. Communicate exactly what your plan is so that parents know what to expect. Be sure to include in the school handbook the obligation of the parent to take daily health checks.

Checklist

- Maintain accurate records for CARES students with easy access to the program director.
This would include attendance records.
- Establish a schedule and routine limiting the crossover of cohorts during CARES sessions.
- In keeping with Catholic identity practices, every CARES session should begin with a prayer.
- Establish a safe place for the students' materials and personal belongings such as school bags, hats, gloves, lunch boxes and jackets that provides safe distancing from other student belongings.
- Ensure that students are not sharing materials. (e.g. crayons, pencils, markers).
- Provide opportunities for planned activities for student engagement.
- All employees need to be apprised of the Standards for CARES and identified in the CARES Handbook as well as the Standards put in place by the CSO Task Force and the Standards for Ministerial Behavior.
- Any person serving as a substitute for a CARES employee needs to be apprised of the standards identified above and agree to adhering to them.
- Proper notification to a CARES designee of students who will be missing (e.g. left school early) or who have a special circumstance (e.g. crutches) during a CARES session would be beneficial.
- All CARES programs should have a designated person acting as director, liaison or guide for the program.
- Keep in focus the Standards for Ministerial Behavior.

EARLY CHILDHOOD / PRE-K

Introduction

The need for careful strategic planning has become a reality in the “new-normal” circumstances including the pandemic-related quarantines. Physical presence in the classroom allows time for students to develop spiritually, socially, emotionally, physically, and academically. Care needs to be taken so that they are safe and learning in a healthy environment. This guidance is for situations in which students below the first grade are enrolled.

Philosophy

Students and their families should be provided with safe, quality, Catholic childcare in our schools and early learning centers. Educators need to nurture a sense of community, curiosity and a love of learning at these beginning levels. Freedom from anxiety and a sense of happiness should permeate the students’ learning experience.

Process

1. Set as a goal social, physical and emotional well-being.
2. Create a well-defined plan and communicate it to parents/guardians so they know what to expect.
 - Wearing of masks by employees and children—when they are needed and when they are optional.
 - Entrance and exit processes.
 - Process for when a child becomes ill during school.
3. Establish a regular routine for cleaning and sanitizing beyond the usual procedures.
4. Regular communication with parents/guardians. Emphasize to the parents that much of what will be done, we already do on a regular basis (cleaning, sanitizing children’s toys, etc.) However, we will be taking extra precautions.
5. Safe-distancing with young children becomes very difficult; therefore, the students will be kept in cohorts as much as possible.
6. Health checks should be done at home and the staff will follow protocols established at school regarding daily health monitoring.
7. If virtual learning takes place, be sure it is being used consistently throughout the school.
8. Follow the directives established by the CSO task force in all other areas—building management, Catholic identity, trauma, CARES, etc.
9. Keep in focus the Standards for Ministerial Behavior

Checklist

- Obtain the necessary supplies—hand sanitizers, paper towels, tissues.
- Spray carpets with a sanitizer at the end of the day (e.g. Woolite carpet sanitizer kills 99% of germs) During the day, spraying with vinegar will sanitize. Vacuum in the morning.
- Foam 3 x 3 puzzle blocks can also be used and cleaned with a bleach solution.

- Frequently used toys should be cleaned daily. Communicate exactly what your plan is so that parents know what to expect. Be sure to include in the school handbook the obligation of the parent to take daily health checks.



Student Mental Health/Whole Health

Mental Health/Whole Health

Introduction

- It is important to educate and support teachers, staff and families on how to help students successfully and effectively transition back into school in a healthy manner.
- Students need to be in school to support whole health development. Let us briefly say a bit more.

While school closures might have been reasonable as part of the early pandemic response, current evidence and experience support the concept that children can return to school in a manner that maximizes children's health and minimizes risks from a public health perspective.

Consequently, whole health, including mental health, is our focus. Supporting views include those expressed by the HHS Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use (Dr. Elinor F McCance-Katz) and Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) - Policy Lab. (Dr. David Rubin at policylab.chop.edu).

Philosophy

It is our philosophy, that through a holistic approach of mind, body and spirit, we provide necessary mental and whole health support along with interventions as needed for students to have a safe and effective transition to a new school year, as well as provide additional support as needed.

General Process

- Establish a safe environment to learn.
- Recognize the signs and symptoms when a student is at risk.
- Continue to emphasize the importance of mandated reporting.
- Start communicating with the parents/guardians during the summer months to prepare the student to return to school from a social-emotional standpoint.
- Working with the Intermediate Units to provide intervention.
- Survey parents and provide resources during the summer and continue to check-in during the school year.
- Help students work on coping skills and resiliency.
- Helping teachers with anxiety that they might be facing and that administration will support them with training so they are reassured.
- Support teachers collaborating with each other prior to the beginning of the school year.
- Provide an opportunity for a type of move-up day.
- Share resources from
 - CORA
 - Suicide prevention
 - CHOP

Student Awareness

Introduction

COVID-19 and the resulting shut down of activities that students were accustomed to has created greater anxiety in many students. It is important to take steps to educate students in a manner that does not heighten fear and anxiety.

Goal – To develop activities that will help students learn about COVID-19 in a rational and non-threatening manner.

Process –

- Provide lessons on COVID-19, the precautions, and steps to take to prevent the spread of the disease.
 - These include
 - Frequent hand washing, social distancing
 - Staying within the cohort
 - No exposing others to sickness
 - Coughing in a safe manner
- Create activities in which students can use their creativity to display their knowledge of preventative techniques and the need to treat each other as normal.
- Some of these can include a school and Archdiocesan level competition to develop materials that spread the news about COVID-19.
 - Poster contest
 - Video performed by students



Afterschool Activities

Afterschool Activities

Introduction

Catholic School buildings are regularly used by various groups and activities after school hours. During the Coronavirus, these activities may need to be curtailed or modified. The Afterschool Activities subcommittee of the Catholic Schools Onward, CSO, will make recommendations.

Philosophy

Our students have experienced significant challenges since the shutdown on March 13, 2020. Where possible, keeping as many after school activities running as possible, would help our students.

Process

1. Each principal is asked to examine the after-school activities in the school, ex: chorus, drama club, Science Explorers, Young Rembrandts, Kitchen Kapers, Future City. This does not include parish activities, such as PREP/CCD, which is up to the decision of the Pastor.
2. If there is a room available, where students may be socially distant and possibly stay close to their cohorts, after school activities may continue. Due to the nature of chorus and singing, that activity may need to be suspended until further notice. All rooms must be disinfected after use by the activity/club.
3. Only students enrolled in the school during the day may attend the after-school activities. If children come from outside the school, investigate the possibility of these children attending virtually.
4. Any activities that may take place virtually, such as Home and School meetings and back to school nights, should take place virtually.
5. Outside groups--restrict outside visitors from the school. If groups such as senior citizens have space not utilized by students, the pastor makes the decision if their club may continue. Space would need to be disinfected. If no space is available, groups should be suspended until further notice. The pastor makes the decision for men's basketball and other such groups. If permitted, proper sanitation procedures must be in place.
6. If and when a decision is made regarding CYO Sports, recommendations will then be made regarding use of the buildings.

Other Considerations

- The same guidelines that apply to CARES would be used with After School Activities.