

HOLY TRINITY SCHOOL



REOPENING 2020-2021 *GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES*



JULY, 2020

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I. INTRODUCTION AND PHILOSOPHY

Introduction

This document provides information regarding the plan to return to the Holy Trinity School building for the 2020-2021 school year. Before discussing 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 as having COVID-19 or are in a situation where 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 need to be kept 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 - a single homeroom. 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. Although our school will be using other precautionary measures, cohorting will be a major part of the plan. We will keep groups of children together for the entire day - attending lunch, recess, and classes as a cohort. If a case of COVID-19 surfaces within a cohort, we could then explore the option of virtual learning with just the identified cohort, and the rest of the school could 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.
- **Use of Masks** - In accordance with recommendations issued by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Pennsylvania Department of Health, masks will be mandatory at all times for all students, staff, and anyone entering the school buildings.
- **Enhanced Cleaning** - The school will increase the cleaning of common areas and highly-used features such as door knobs, handrails, and counters. Students are permitted

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** - Parents are primarily responsible for monitoring the health of their children, especially prior to school each day. Parents should take their child's temperature and check for symptoms of COVID-19 or other illnesses each morning. Teachers will monitor the health of their students throughout the school day.
- **Distance Learning** - Distance learning will be implemented when necessary. A family may opt to have their child/children begin the 2020-2021 school year via distance learning.
 - Students are expected to join classes via a live Zoom meeting. At this time, ELA, Math, Religion, Social Studies, and Science will be available through this method. Materials and links will be made available through Google Classroom.
 - In the case where a cohort has been dismissed from school because COVID-19 has been identified, the entire cohort will utilize distance learning for the isolation period. Lessons will be delivered through a video-conferencing platform (Zoom), with heavy reliance on Google Classroom.
- **Modified Attendance** - Since we are encouraging parents to monitor health closely and keep students home if they display symptoms, the recording of attendance has changed. Students will be recorded as either attending in person or attending the live Zoom lessons. When students cannot or do not participate in live virtual lessons, they will be marked absent.

General Philosophy for HTS Buildings

There are several key practices that should be implemented in each building to help maintain a safe learning environment. 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. Visitors to the school will be limited.
2. High-touch surfaces (such as door knobs, remotes, and light switches) will be cleaned frequently.
3. Signage will be throughout the building, reminding students to practice good hygiene.
4. Hand sanitizers will be available in strategic/common areas.
5. Students will be reminded during daily announcements to social distance and wash hands.
6. Each student should provide their own school supplies and masks.
7. Group singing is discouraged.
8. We will employ individually-assigned technology devices when possible.

9. Teachers will move to classrooms for instruction; students will remain in their homerooms, where deemed appropriate by school administration.
10. No outside food for sharing should be available.
11. Ventilation is important; windows should be opened if possible.
12. Field trips will not be scheduled until further notice.

II. CATHOLIC IDENTITY

Excellence in education is characterized by having a strong curriculum and student engagement, utilizing quality instructional methods, making good use of data, and communicating regularly with parents and stakeholders. Mrs. McDowell, in her role as Director of Development and Curriculum, will be providing additional academic support to the staff and students. What is at the heart of learning in a Catholic school is the inclusion of faith in all that we do. Catholic schools have a two-fold charge: providing an education that is academically-excellent and one that is deeply-rooted in Catholic identity. It is our duty to ensure that the education that is delivered - no matter the mode of delivery - meets these standards.

Process

1. Changes to School Masses will follow social-distancing and mask-wearing protocol.
2. All synchronous video sessions will begin with prayer.
3. When possible, faith-based activities will be modified so they can be held within the confines of social-distancing guidelines or, if possible, they will be held virtually.
4. Opportunities for cross-grade faith sharing using virtual means will be explored (i.e., Prayer Partner virtual meetings).

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.

III. DAILY HEALTH MONITORING

Parents have the greatest information regarding the health of their children and, thus, are an integral part of this process. The guidance provided by the State of Pennsylvania suggests that families and schools work together to monitor health on a daily basis. To provide the healthiest environment possible for students and staff, Holy Trinity School is implementing a daily health monitoring system.

Process

1. Parents will take the temperature of their child before school each day.
2. Parents will monitor their child DAILY for symptoms of COVID-19 including: fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, rash, headache, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea.
3. The school will conduct random temperature checks of students and staff.
4. If a student becomes ill during the school day, he/she will be separated from classmates and a parent/guardian will be notified to come pick the child up immediately.
5. Students and staff with fever or symptoms that may be associated with COVID-19 and no known direct exposure to a person with COVID-19 may return to school when they are asymptomatic and have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication or have confirmation of an alternative diagnosis from a health care provider that explains their COVID-19-like symptoms.
6. Students demonstrating symptoms of COVID-19 who have had possible exposure to the virus, can return when all of the following occur:
 - a. they have gone three days without a fever
 - b. all other symptoms have improved
 - c. it has been 10 days since symptoms first appeared or they are cleared by a medical professional
7. In a case where there is a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, Holy Trinity School will follow the protocol of the Bucks County Department of Health.
8. Students are expected to participate in distance learning while at home unless ill (see *Distance Learning*, page 8).

IV. ENTERING, EXITING, AND MOVING AROUND HTS BUILDINGS

When seeking to control transmission of any virus, the goal is to do whatever is possible to keep it from being introduced to the school buildings. Prior to coming to school, parents are expected to conduct a temperature check and monitor their children for symptoms of COVID-19. During entry into Holy Trinity School buildings, social distancing and hand sanitization will be implemented. Student travel throughout the buildings is necessary - from the schoolyard/bus, to classrooms, to the lavatory, back out of the school, etc. This plan for movement employs the strategic use of masks, social distancing, and maintaining cohorts.

Process for Entering

1. Students must wear a mask to enter HTS buildings.
2. Students will no longer gather/line up in the school yard. Instead, students will proceed directly to their classroom to be met at the door by their teacher.
3. Students will use hand sanitizer before entering the classroom.
4. Once students enter the building, teachers will review the daily monitoring health check list.

5. Parents will only be permitted entrance to the main school building through the school yard door.
6. Entrance to the lobby/school building will be limited. All visitors to the school are required to wear a mask to enter and for the duration of their time in the building.

Process for Exiting

1. Dismissal will be conducted over the public address (P.A.) system.
2. Students must wear a mask to exit.
3. Buses will be called one at a time at dismissal.
4. Each grade will be called to dismiss from their classroom.
5. Parents who are in the building will use the angel statue door (Stockham Avenue) as their exit.

Process for Moving Around

1. Students must wear a mask while moving around the building.
2. Cohort movement for lunch, recess, and lavatory use will follow a schedule for each floor.
3. For most subject switches, teachers will move between classrooms, not students.

V. BREAKFAST, LUNCH, AND RECESS

A foundational premise when designing safe meal and recess environments is the maintenance of cohorting and social distancing. To the best extent possible, recess will continue, applying safe physical contact of equipment and social distancing. Games that utilize physical and social activities, yet limit physical contact, will be encouraged.

Process for Breakfast

1. Breakfast will continue to be served through NDS from the cafeteria.
2. Some cohorts may participate in the "grab and go" and eat in their homerooms. Other cohorts may eat socially-distanced in the cafeteria, where possible or deemed appropriate by school personnel.
3. Students in the Children's Cottage may be grouped and spaced throughout all available rooms to insure proper distancing, where possible or deemed appropriate by school personnel.

Process for Lunch

1. Depending on cohort size, some cohorts may eat lunch in their classrooms; others may eat socially-distanced in the cafeteria, where possible or deemed appropriate by school personnel.
2. Students will wash or sanitize hands before eating lunch.

3. Students will face the same direction and sit three-to-six feet apart while eating, where possible and practical.
4. Additional long tables and folding chairs may be implemented at lunchtime to ensure proper distancing.
5. Students will dispose of trash under the direction of lunch personnel.
6. Where possible and practical, students in the Children's Cottage may be grouped and spaced throughout all available rooms to insure proper distancing.

Process for Recess

1. Cohorts will stagger recess times.
2. Playground areas will be sectioned off and games and equipment will be restricted to single cohort use.
3. Playground equipment will be disinfected routinely; students may not bring equipment from home.
4. Use of masks will be monitored by recess personnel.
5. Students will use hand sanitizer or wash hands before returning to classroom.
6. Students in the Children's Cottage will have staggered recess times.

VI. CLASSROOM SET-UP, MATERIALS, AND GENERAL POLICIES

The organization of the classroom is important to supporting the academic progress of students and should provide an environment that allows teachers and students to interact comfortably and safely, employing social distancing practices when possible and mask-wearing. The use of a variety of materials is essential for learning including books, writing instruments, and materials for special subject areas.

Process

1. Classrooms will be set up to ensure proper spacing of three-to-six feet between students.
2. Desks will face the same direction.
3. Shared spaces - tables, shelves, classroom libraries, etc. - will be closely monitored.
4. Students will have individual supplies; in the rare event that supplies must be shared, they will be sanitized between each use and students will be reminded to sanitize their hands.
5. High-traffic surfaces will be wiped-down routinely.
6. Chairs and desks will be wiped-down each day.
7. All rooms will have hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes.
8. Rugs that are part of the learning experience in Early Childhood classrooms will be sanitized daily.

VII. DISTANCE LEARNING

While in-person instruction has great impact at the elementary level, the need for distance learning has become a reality for situations in which students are unable to be physically present in the school building.

Process

1. Google Classroom will be used as Holy Trinity School's learning management system to centralize materials, lessons, assessments, feedback, and communications.
2. Direct instruction via live lessons may take place using the Zoom video-conferencing service and/or Google Meet.
3. Students utilizing distance learning are required to log in for live video lessons with their class at the designated times. Attendance at live lessons is required to be marked "present" for the school day.
4. Students utilizing distance learning will be required to complete assigned work on the same timetable as students who are present for in-school instruction.
5. Students utilizing distance learning will wear the Holy Trinity School uniform when attending live lessons.
6. Students attending live lessons will be expected to do so in a dedicated work space that is conducive to optimal learning, such as a table or a desk.
7. Students attending live lessons are expected to have their cameras on at all times with their microphones muted, unless they are talking.

VIII. CLEANING PROCEDURES

Maintaining a clean and sanitized environment is paramount to combatting the spread of any virus. As such, enhanced cleaning protocols will be implemented.

Process

1. The school will increase the cleaning of common areas and highly-used features such as door knobs, handrails, and counters.
2. Water fountains will only be used in an emergency situation. Students are permitted to bring their own water bottle to school.
3. Signage reminding students to practice good hygiene will be present throughout the school buildings.
4. Hand sanitizers will be available in strategic/common areas throughout the school buildings.
5. At the end of the day, student desks, chairs, etc. will be wiped-down.

IX. LIBRARY

With the need for cohorting and social distancing, there are safe alternatives to delivering the same academic support provided by a traditional library class.

Process

1. Library will be 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 read-aloud of books can be conducted in the classroom.
3. To enable the possibility of book exchange, at times, a librarian may select a variety of books and deliver them to the homeroom to enable students to “take out” a book for the week.
4. Returned books will be isolated for 72 hours before being returned to circulation.
5. If a class visits the library, it will be done one cohort at a time and areas used will be cleaned between cohort visits.
6. Much of the research conducted by Junior High Unit students can be done while working in their homeroom.

X. PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical Education (PE) is an integral part of the curriculum in an elementary school and it is essential that it continue safely. These guidelines are written with the goal of keeping the integrity of quality PE programs while navigating through a “new normal.”

Process

1. Weather permitting, PE class will be held in an outside space. When weather is prohibitive, PE class will be held in the multi-purpose room or, if necessary, in the homeroom.
2. Students will wash or sanitize their hands before and after activity.
3. Students are permitted to carry personal water bottles for hydration.
4. PE equipment will be sanitized frequently.
5. When equipment sanitizing is not feasible, used equipment will be quarantined for three or more days.

XI. AFTERSCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Holy Trinity School buildings are regularly used by various groups and activities after school hours. During the Coronavirus, these activities will need to be curtailed or modified. 21st Century Community Learning Center will follow the Holy Trinity reopening plan for afterschool programs. At this time, a start date for afterschool activities will be determined at a later date.

Process

1. If there is a room available where students may be socially-distant, afterschool activities may continue; all rooms must be disinfected after use.
2. Only students present in the school during the day may attend the afterschool activities.
3. If and when a decision is made regarding CYO Sports, recommendations will then be made regarding use of the buildings.
4. The same guidelines that apply to CARES would be used with afterschool activities.

XII. CARES

CARES is an offshoot of the regular school day and, thus, all procedures in place for Holy Trinity School will be adhered to in the Holy Trinity CARES Program.

Process

1. Safe-distancing practices will be observed.
2. When possible, the cohort model will be kept within the CARES program.
3. Morning CARES will continue to be held in the school multi-purpose room. PreKindergarten students will remain in the Children's Cottage for Afternoon CARES. The physical location for the remaining cohorts will be determined once we have a better idea of the number of students planning to attend.
4. CARES students will travel together to the CARES location.
5. Outside visitors will not be allowed to enter the CARES area; students will be brought to the school door when being picked up.
6. There will be no sharing snacks between students.
7. All CARES employees (including teens) will follow the same health checklist practices as school employees.
8. All operational guidelines put into place in the school (movement through the building, recess, etc.) will also be practiced during CARES sessions.
9. If the CARES area is a room used during the school day, it will be sanitized prior to student entry for the CARES program.
10. Materials used by CARES students on a regular basis will be sanitized daily.
11. Monitored hand-washing or sanitizing will be done on a regular basis.
12. The CARES program will follow the school recommendations for any suspected illness.
13. The CARES program will comply with any emergency actions and resulting decisions that occur during the school day.
14. A phone will be available to CARES personnel for communications purposes in the event a situation arises during the CARES session.

XIII. THE CHILDREN’S COTTAGE: PREKINDERGARTEN

Early Childhood educators nurture a sense of community, curiosity, and a love of learning at this primary level of education. Physical presence in the classroom allows time for students to develop spiritually, socially, emotionally, physically, and academically. Care needs to be taken so that our youngest learners are safe and learning in a healthy environment. As such, staff at the Holy Trinity School Children’s Cottage will follow general procedures outlined for the entire school, as well as Cottage-specific protocol.

Process

1. Parents will perform the required Daily Health Monitoring (see pages 4-5) for their child each day prior to coming to school.
2. Each PreKindergarten class will be split into cohorts, with whole-group activities put on hold.
3. All rooms of the Cottage and additional tables and chairs will be utilized throughout the day to implement social distancing.
4. Food setup stations will be separate for each PreKindergarten cohort.
5. Hands will be washed or sanitized before food is distributed.
6. Lunch and recess times will be staggered.
7. No visitors will be permitted entrance to the Cottage.
8. All staff will assist with entrance and exits throughout the day (beginning of day, recess, end of day, etc.).
9. Hands will be washed or sanitized before returning to the indoor learning environment.
10. Each student will have their own labeled container with all supplies they will use throughout the day.
11. Different areas of the Cottage will be used for small-group instruction; areas will be wiped-down before switching rooms and groups.
12. When supplies do need to be shared, they will be sanitized after each use.
13. For “center time,” cleaning periods will be built-in between cohort rotations to clean and sanitize toys.
14. Tables and chairs will be wiped-down after lunch and at the end of each day.

XIV. STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH/WHOLE HEALTH

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. While school closures might have been necessary as part of the early pandemic response, current evidence and experience support the concept that students 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). It is our philosophy

that - through a holistic approach of mind, body, and spirit - we provide necessary mental and whole health support for students to have a safe and effective transition to a new school year, as well as provide additional support and intervention, as needed.

Process

1. Establish a safe environment for learning.
2. Recognize the signs and symptoms when a student is at risk.
3. Continue to emphasize the importance of mandated reporting.
4. Work with the Bucks County Intermediate Unit to provide intervention.
5. Help students work on coping skills and resiliency.

XV. ENVISIONING THE SCHOOL DAY FROM A PARENT'S POINT-OF-VIEW

It is completely understandable for parents to wonder what all the new school procedures and protocols will mean for their day-to-day routines. While it is impossible to provide guidelines for all possible scenarios, below are plans for handling some of the most common.

Routine Before Leaving for School

- Parents will take the temperature of their child/children before school each day.
- Parents will monitor their child/children DAILY for symptoms of COVID-19 including: fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, rash, headache, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea.
- Parents will check that their child/children are wearing a clean mask and have one clean, spare mask in a labeled, sealed bag in their backpack.

Bringing a Student to the School Yard/Picking-Up a Student at Dismissal

- For the main school building, the school doors open for the day at 8:05 AM; families who arrive prior to that time are expected to observe social distancing protocols in the school yard and around the perimeter of the school grounds while waiting for the doors to open.
- When dropping-off a student in the Children's Cottage car line, drivers are expected to wear a mask as a precaution and courtesy to Holy Trinity School staff.
- When picking-up students at the end of the school day, family members are expected to observe social distancing protocols on the school grounds, sidewalks, and all other waiting areas.

Bringing a Student to School Late

- Parents will only be permitted entrance to the main school building through the school yard door.

- Parents will buzz the school office and be permitted to enter the lobby. In order to maintain proper social distancing, only one family at a time will be permitted in the school lobby.
- The student will head to the classroom after receiving a late slip; if necessary, students will be escorted to their classroom by a school office staff member.
- Parents will use the angel statue door (Stockham Avenue) as their exit.
- PreKindergarten students will report directly to the Children’s Cottage; parents will ring the doorbell and the student will be admitted to the building.

Picking-Up a Student Early

- Please continue to send in notes to help us plan and document early dismissals.
- Students will wait inside the school for their parent to arrive at the designated time of pick-up.
- Parents will only be permitted entrance to the main school building through the school yard door.
- Parents will buzz the school office and be permitted to enter the lobby. In order to maintain social distancing, numbers in the lobby will be monitored. If there are others waiting, the parent may be asked to wait outside after signing-out his/her student.
- Parents will use the angel statue door (Stockham Avenue) as their exit.
- PreKindergarten parents will report directly to the Children’s Cottage. Parents will ring the doorbell and the student will be dismissed directly to the parent.

Picking-Up a Sick Student from the Nurse’s Office*

- School staff will call parents immediately upon recognition of illness.
- Procedures for picking up a student early (outlined above) will be followed.
- Students who become ill will be immediately removed from their cohort and will stay in the nurse's office (or a corresponding office area) until a parent arrives.

** Please make sure Holy Trinity School has the correct and complete emergency contact information for your family, and please confirm that your emergency contacts are comfortable picking-up your sick child and can do so in 30 minutes or less.*

Paying Tuition and Purchasing MANNA

- In an effort to limit visitors to the school, we kindly ask that tuition payments and MANNA orders are sent into school through the students’ folders, dropped-off at the rectory, or sent through the mail.

What items should I be purchasing for school at this point?

- Six (6) cotton masks
 - One for each day of the week and one extra in their school bag
 - Masks should be washed at least weekly.
 - Students should have at least two masks with them at all times.
- One lanyard to attach to masks to ensure that they do not fall to the ground
- Sanitizing wipes and hand sanitizer
- Traditional school supplies, as outlined on each classroom teacher's supply list in June (also available on the school website)

XVI. FINAL NOTES

While it is our intention to remain open for the entire school year, we are implementing these strategies to ensure uninterrupted, effective, quality Catholic education in either the best case or worst case scenario. We recognize parents as primary caregivers and, therefore, parents are encouraged to choose the best options for their child's needs and their family's needs. Accommodations will be made for families who require virtual instruction during certain times or to address health and emotional well-being concerns.

This is a constantly-evolving situation, and please be assured that Holy Trinity School will continue to adapt so that we can provide the least-restrictive, safe, continuous educational program for our students, who are always our first priority.

We believe we have put a comprehensive plan in place and have a dedicated team to implement that plan. We understand that, despite countless hours of planning and many resources being put into place, this may not be ideal for everyone. The situation in which we find ourselves is unprecedented. With the help of God's Grace, we will do our best and get through this together.