

Saint Augustine Catholic School

COVID -19 Pandemic

2020-2021

Handbook Addendum

These uncertain times have changed how businesses, churches, and schools function, leaving communities and organizations to shift how they operate in the pandemic's new reality. We strive to ensure quality and safe, educational opportunities at Saint Augustine Catholic School. Our Pastor, Principal, and Staff have created this supplement to our handbook to provide some guidance.

As a school community, we are committed to following all the guidance given by The Archdiocese of Washington, the District of Columbia Department of Health, the Centers for Disease Control, and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

What Will Returning to School Look Like for Students and Staff?

At a Glance

The following protocols are designed to give the broader Saint Augustine community an overview of the protocols to ensure the safety of all children, staff, teachers, and the overall population. There will be increased safety and health measures to help protect against the effects of the novel coronavirus.

Expectation

All of our Saint Augustine families are expected to be responsible and attentive to all school and community health guidelines. Educate yourself on the symptoms associated with COVID-19. If you have been exposed to or show any signs of illness, you will seek medical attention and not attempt to enter the school. Our continued intention is to hold the safety of our students, staff, and stakeholders in the highest regard.

Masks

All persons entering the building must wear masks. Teachers may take off their face coverings for specialized lessons, particularly those that require children to see their mouths, i. e. phonics or vocabulary building. To that end, all staff will be provided face shields to be worn over their faces.

Students are mandated by the Centers for Disease Control and the Archdiocese of Washington to wear face coverings unless they are eating lunch or during social distance recess. Student desks will be outfitted with a sneeze guard shield to help diminish the spreading of germs. Students will be provided with replacement masks throughout the day as necessary.

Social Distancing

Students are expected to practice social distancing when they arrive on campus until dismissal and final departure from campus. Students will have limited exposure to other groups. There will be controlled and little movement of students to minimize the spread of contagions. Classroom desks are spaced six feet apart. As per the Centers for Disease Control guidelines, as cohorts move through the building (restroom break, recess, dismissal), groups will still adhere to social distancing practices. Specials (teachers) will come to each classroom at a dedicated time to provide instruction. That is: there will be no children changing; instead, teachers will change classes.

Arrival Procedures

All students will have their temperature taken in the morning at the entrance of the building. Parents must stay with their child(ren) until their temperature has been verified as safe to enter the school building. If students have a temperature at or above 100.4, they will be asked not to enter the building.

Parents are not allowed to enter the building unless they have a specific reason. Students will enter the building and be dismissed from three different locations to expedite and promote social distancing guidelines outlined by the Centers for Disease Control.

Entrance

Pre-Kindergarten 3, and Pre-Kindergarten 4, Grades Two and Three will enter the building through the main entrance.

Kindergarten, First, Fourth, and Fifth Grades will enter the building through the parking lot entrance furthest from V Street.

Middle School students in Grades Six, Seven, and Eight will enter the building through the parking lot entrance closest to V Street. Staff members will be placed in the hallway on each floor to ensure that students are moving directly to class. Children will receive constant reminders that they are to maintain six feet of social distance at all times.

Attendance

The school day is from 8:00 am – 3:10 pm. Despite the pandemic, students must arrive at school on time. Students who come late will still have their temperature taken. Upon arriving late, parents should take their child(ren) to the main entrance. Upon being buzzed in late, families must wait in the school vestibule area to have the child's temperature taken. Once the child's temperature is taken, the student may proceed to class. Having students come late is disruptive, and multiple occurrences will be subject to disciplinary consequences.

Limited Access to Visitors/Volunteers

Visitors and other stakeholders will have limited access to the building as we work to keep children and staff safe during the pandemic. Non-virtual guest speakers, assemblies, and field trips have been suspended until the pandemic lifts. Parents who visit will be allowed to do so by appointment only. Appointments are to be set up with the Administrative Assistant in the front office.

Any guests will have their temperature taken upon entering the building and before they enter the Main office. If parents pick up children early from school, they should call the school at least an hour in advance so the school/classroom teacher can prepare the child for dismissal.

Hand Sanitizing Stations

In addition to the daily cleaning of classrooms by the maintenance staff, Classrooms will maintain a hand sanitizing station. This station will have additional hand sanitizer, masks, cleaning solutions, and gloves. Families must send children to school wearing a mask; however, face coverings will be provided to students if needed. Sanitizing stations are also provided in classrooms so children can clean their personal belongings and desks. The sanitizing station allows teachers and students to maintain ownership over the safety and cleanliness of the classrooms. Furthermore, each hallway is outfitted with two additional motion sensor sanitizer dispensers. Classrooms will also be aired out and cleaned while empty during recess and breaks.

Academic Learning Models During Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Saint Augustine parents have choices on how their child(ren) will learn during the pandemic. The school day starts at 8:00 am and ends with staggered dismissal starting at 3:10 pm – 3:25 pm.¹ Generally, on Friday instruction on Friday is 8:00 -12:30 pm. Instruction ends at 12:30 pm on Fridays to enable teachers to prepare lessons and professional development for staff. All staff will be at the school teaching Monday through Friday.

Saint Augustine has created the following learning models to accommodate families.

Pre Kindergarten 3 - Second Grade

These students are offered two options: in-person full time learning is complete classroom instruction in the building, Monday through Thursday. The second option is full time virtual instruction.

Third-Eighth Grades

Students are offered three choices: a Blended model full-time, virtual instruction full time or in school learning full time. In the Blended model, students are divided into one of two Cohorts. Cohort A meets for instruction on Mondays and Wednesdays. Cohort B meets for instruction on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Fridays are virtual instruction.

Expectations during virtual instruction:

- Students will wear their school uniforms and be groomed appropriately.
- Students are reminded when logging in, and at all times of teaching, that their face must be visible.
- Students will not utilize the chat room unless answering questions from their teacher.
- Student assignments are posted, and due dates will be enforced.
- Students will log in on time, be prepared for class, and actively participate.
- When entering class, the student's microphone should be muted and he or she should quietly begin the initial assignment.

1 For individual class dismissal times please see your child's class schedule.

- Students will have their attendance taken at the beginning and throughout the class.
- Students will treat all classmates and staff with respect.
- If there is proof of cyberbullying, students, if found guilty, will be required to complete Consequences Tiers 1-3.

Consequences Tiers

1. Verbal Warning
2. Completion of Refocus Form to include a 500-word essay.
3. Conference with the Principal Sister Emmanuella Ladipo, HH CJ, student, and parents.
4. Students must return to the building for instruction.

Grading

Following the guidance of The Archdiocese of Washington, letter grades will again be utilized this academic year. Students are encouraged to turn in work promptly. Please refer to the full handbook for detailed grading per cluster.

Restroom Procedures

Restroom procedures are significant to the safety and well-being of the school community. Restrooms will be cleaned throughout the day to minimize the opportunity for a viral spread. Bathrooms will also be disinfected and deep cleaned at the end of each school day to promote the cleanest environment. Teachers will create a schedule designating when their classes will have restroom breaks. This schedule will allow for cleaning before another group of students utilize the facilities. Teachers will reiterate to students the need to wash their hands each time they use the bathroom.

When to Wash Your Hands

The Centers for Disease Control guidelines state staff and students should wash hands:

- Before eating food
- After touching garbage
- Before or after treating a cut or wound
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing

In general, children should use hand sanitizer when soap is not available. Hand sanitizer will be available in all rooms. There are also motion sensor sanitizer stations at the end of each hallway in the building.

Common Areas

Saint Augustine is a Christ-centered school that thrives on human interaction and socialization. However, during the novel coronavirus pandemic, the goal is to limit student interaction and reduce joint area surfaces and equipment touching. Door handles will be retrofitted with a copper film that absorbs germs from hands to minimize the risk of spread.

Recess

Research shows that recess is an essential part of students' school day. It supports students emotionally, socially, and physically allowing students to burn off extra energy, recharge their proverbial batteries, and reset themselves for continuous academic instruction.

Students will receive more than one recess/break per day. Students are encouraged to wear their masks during recess if social distancing is not maintained. Cohorts will attend recess/breaks separately.

Students will generally have recess outside on the blacktop and playground on a rotational basis. In the event of rain, the Saint Augustine Room will be used. Cohorts will arrive/leave their designated areas at staggered times to ensure social distancing and avoid congestion. The classrooms will be aired while the students are at recess.

- Teachers will facilitate games with no physical contact.
- Physical contact sports and other physical contact activities are discouraged until further notice.
- Recess materials will be disinfected periodically throughout the day.
- Student temperatures will be taken as they re-enter the building.

Lunch

To minimize student movement within the building, children will eat lunch in their classrooms. Students who purchase lunch will have their box lunch delivered to the classroom at lunchtime. The students eating in their class will reduce the opportunity for the spread of germs or contagions. Students must use hand sanitizer or wash their hands before eating to minimize the spread of germs.

Bottled Water and Canteens

Saint Augustine has discontinued water fountains; there are water coolers in every classroom. We encourage children to bring their canteen, thermos, or bottled water to stay hydrated throughout the school day. Children will be allowed access to the water coolers with paper cups students may use throughout the school day.

It is the responsibility of the teacher to monitor and clean the classroom water dispenser.

Staggered Dismissal

A detailed dismissal list must be maintained and updated as needed.

After the final prayer, our staff will take their positions to monitor dismissal. Dismissal will begin at 3:10 pm to have students exit in a safe and orderly fashion.

Walkers 3:10 pm

The first group to be dismissed will be our walkers who get home on their own. Once our walkers have cleared the area, the following will occur with the use of school walkie-talkies:

Vehicle Pick Up 3:10 pm.

Staff members will monitor the parking lot. Parents who pick up their children by vehicle will be directed to the parking lot. As the parent enters the lot via 15th Street, they will display a placard with the student's name and grade for pick up. While using a walkie talkie, the staff member will announce who is to be picked up. The child is then escorted to the parking lot exit and vehicle.

Parent Pick Up 3:15 pm.

The Pre-Kindergarten Students will enter the Saint Augustine Room to await parent pick up. The students will be called for via our walkie-talkies.

Students in grades Kindergarten-Eight will be called from their classrooms to exit.

Awaiting pick Up 3:30 pm

Any student not picked up by 3:30 pm will be brought to the Saint Augustine Room, where teachers will attempt to contact parents for pickup.

Health

If a child is not feeling well, they will be sent to the Health Room for our school nurse's evaluation. Upon evaluation, if the school nurse and administration deem it necessary for the student to be picked up, it is expected that it will occur as soon as possible.

To protect the entire Saint Augustine community's health and physical wellness, all students, teachers, and staff will have their temperature checked upon arrival.

If an adult has an elevated temperature, she/he will be evaluated by the school nurse and sent home and urged to follow recommendations from The Archdiocese of Washington and the District of Columbia Department of Health.

While supervising a sick student or staff member in the isolation room, staff must always wear:

- Surgical mask
- Eye protection (face shield or goggles)
- Coverall (e.g., long-sleeve button-down shirt)
- Gloves

- Note: While in the isolation room, students must also wear a non-medical (cloth) face or surgical mask.

Confirmed COVID-19 Case(s) Response Protocol:

The principal contacts the Catholic Schools Office immediately informing them that a child, teacher or staff person has tested positive for COVID 19.

2. The Catholic Schools Office immediately informs the DC Health Department whose rapid response team immediately assesses the circumstances and initiates contact tracing.
3. Upon completing their assessment, DC Health Department personnel make a determination regarding what level of exposure to the school population has taken place.
4. Then the Health Department determines what level of quarantine is required: (1) The individual who tested positive; (2) the entire class (grade) of the exposed child or teacher or (3) the entire school.
5. In cases in which it is determined that exposure to an infected child or teacher is limited to the individual's classroom then the parents of the class are immediately notified and instructed to quarantine at home. All parents and staff and the general school population are to be informed of this development.
6. In the case that it is determined that exposure to COVID is believed to be schoolwide then all parents will be notified immediately, and classes will be conducted off-campus virtually until further notice. **So far there have been no cases reported that have required an entire school shutdown.**

Note: As more guidance is developed this addendum will be updated. Please stay safe and vigilant.