



COVID PRECAUTIONS AT ST. JAMES

Thank you for your on-going patience, support, and understanding as St. James School navigates this “new normal” and strives to keep all students safe and learning both in person and remotely.

Safety is of prime concern and the continued cooperation of home and school is essential as we progress into the colder weather and flu season. Although we are keenly aware of the added burden that our precautionary measures place on parents and teachers, we will continue to err on the side of caution in order to promote the health and safety of our entire community.

The precautions and procedures that we will follow, all of which comply with the Diocese of Bridgeport, the Town of Stratford Board of Education and local health department, are outlined below:

Will St. James shutdown?

Although this is possible, it is not what we anticipate. The more likely scenario would call for short-term quarantines based on contact tracing rather than full shutdown. However, the course of the COVID-19 transmission will be the ultimate determination factor.

What will happen if St. James needs to close for an extended period - beyond a few days?

If this were to happen, there will be no in-person classes. Students would be sent home with all necessary materials. Those families who need technology for their home learning stay would be able to request it from the school. Teachers would teach remotely via Google Classroom following the regular full school day schedule of classes and specials. The weekly schedule would be a coordinated schedule and it would be made known to all families in advance. During the shutdown, the building would be thoroughly sanitized in preparation for the return to in-person learning.

In most likelihood, this would be a well planned and communicated event that would provide families with time to prepare.

How do we determine who is quarantined?

We are very fortunate to have a wonderful resource in the Stratford Health Department. We are following their guidelines, which are based on the CDC. In consultation with both the Health Department and the Office of the Superintendent, we determine which actions are needed to ensure the health and safety of our community. Obviously, if the state makes any decisions about the status of schools, we will comply with those directives.

What happens if my child is exposed to someone (a friend outside of school or family member) who has tested positive for COVID?

Anyone who is a direct contact (per CDC guidance) must quarantine for 14 days. Students would be able to participate in distance learning program during quarantine.

When can my child return to school if he/she is sent home sick or stays home with an illness?

We observe the COVID-19 CDC recommendations. If your child is experiencing any symptoms of illness at home or in school, and the symptom list is broad, your child will be asked to stay home and obtain either a doctor's note or a negative COVID test to return to school. Symptoms can include, but are not limited to:

- Fever or 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
- Each case of possible exposure or illness must be cleared through the school nurse.

My child has been tested for COVID. Can they return to school pending the results?

No. Please keep your child at home until test results are known.

If my child has to quarantine, can they get tested and return to school sooner?

While you might choose to test your child for your own knowledge and peace of mind, CDC guidance requires a 14-day quarantine regardless of test results. For your reference, PCR tests are much more reliable and should be taken after the eighth day from possible exposure.

What precautions are in place now at St. James?

We continue to follow all of the safety precautions implemented at the start of the year: masks, daily temperature checks, daily cleaning of the building, cleaning of high-touch point surfaces during the day, wipes and hand sanitizer in all classrooms. We rely on our parents to screen their children daily as recommended by the CDC and if any symptoms present, to keep the child home.

How quickly can my child transition from in-person to online learning if required to quarantine?

It is a matter of hours or less to get a student set-up for online learning. The instructions are posted on the Rediker parent portal under documents and links with all Google Classroom access codes. The Google meeting link is in the "header" of the Google Classroom so the student can click and be present with the class as it streams. Parents should reach out to the classroom teacher directly for any materials needed or questions specific to their child.

If my child is home sick (not COVID-related), can they participate in online learning for the day?

Students are welcome to join from home if their class is set up for distance learning; however, if they are not well, we encourage that instead they get some rest and focus on getting better in order to return. Please note that students out sick are still absent. Only students who are required to quarantine or are part of the Diocesan distance-learning program are present.

What are the requirements if my child has to quarantine and learn from home?

All students who are participating in distance learning classes for whatever reason, must log-in to each class on time, wear uniform or proper attire, be sitting at a desk or at a table, and their camera must be on and focused on the student. They are obviously encouraged to active participation in class. There should be, if possible, a space available in the home that provides a positive learning environment, away from distractions and interruptions.

Do absences count if I keep my child home as a precaution?

This year, student attendance falls into several categories: in-person learners, distance learners, quarantined distance learners, absent students, and absent students who are attending online classes for a short term. Students will be marked absent if they fall into the category of "absent: or "absent students who are attending online classes for a short term."

What happens if someone in the household travels to a state on Connecticut's Travel Advisory List?

Per the governor's orders, the individual(s) must quarantine for 14 days upon return to Connecticut. In addition, the Town of Stratford protocol requires that any student in the household quarantine precautionary. To view the latest list for State of CT travel Advisories, click [HERE](#).

What steps can we take as a family to help?

We need your continued patience as the realities of this pandemic affects all of us. Parents, caregivers, or guardians should monitor their children for symptoms of infectious illness every day through home-based symptom screening. Please keep your child home if any of the listed symptoms are present. Do not send them to school if in doubt. Please do not risk the spread of COVID, as this could has very wide-reaching impact to our teachers, students and families.

We completely understand that quarantines and daily screenings are not easy on families. We are grateful for your support and helping us to keep the school safe and COVID-free.

Please reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns, jack.lynch@sjsct.org or 203-375-5994.

Sincerely,
Jack E. Lynch
Principal