

Return to Learn
Planning for the 2020-2021 School Year
Aquin Catholic School





July 24, 2020

"The laborers in the Lord's vineyard should have one foot on the ground, and the other raised to proceed on their journey." --St. Ignatius of Loyola

Dear Aquino Families,

The year 2020 has certainly presented all of us with a unique journey! At Aquino Catholic School, we are excited and ready to continue our partnership with your family. I wish to update you on our preparations for the 2020-2021 school year in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Aquino Catholic School staff has been working diligently to create a rigorous and safe return-to-learn plan in order to proceed with the journey of Catholic education that feeds your child and family spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually.

Living our Mission

We are committed to providing a quality Catholic education, regardless of the mode of delivery being used. The education your child receives from Aquino is distinct, as our Catholic beliefs, traditions, and teachings are deeply embedded in daily instruction. The Aquino staff are prepared to continue this for next school year.

Regardless of which mode of delivery is being used, Aquino is committed to offering the highest level of education possible by focusing directly on the social, emotional, faith, and intellectual needs of each child.

- Religion classes and prayer opportunities will be held daily.
- Teachers will have daily communication and interaction with all students.
- Catholic beliefs, traditions, and teaching will continue to be deeply embedded in daily instruction.
- Mass will be held weekly. We are working with Father Osterhaus to get a Mass schedule planned. We will continue to adhere to guidelines by the Archdiocese.
- We are working with Nicole Casey (DFF) for online faith formation.
- Service opportunities will be available for all students.
- Core classes will be taught daily.

Three Modes of Delivery

We have prepared three models for instruction in order to be prepared for the unknown of next school year. Each one is described below:

1. On-Site Learning

This model indicates services are offered at Aquin Catholic School. It is our goal to begin the school year on August 20, 2020 with on-site learning. To meet this goal, we have planned for additional cleaning, social distancing, training, and health/safety plans. We will continue to work with public health officials and archdiocesan staff to receive updated guidance.

2. Hybrid Learning

This model indicates services are offered both remotely and on-site. This model may be used to address specific student health concerns and a lack of readiness to return to the onsite model, as well as state mandates for social distancing, etc. Students using remote virtual learning will utilize Google Classroom, SeeSaw, and Zoom for instruction. Chromebooks and iPads will be available for students who do not have access to at home technology. Teachers and leadership will be reaching out to families choosing the hybrid model to plan a case by case program that meets the needs of the students.

Families choosing the Hybrid option will have a variety of lesson possibilities depending on grade level and age of students. Teachers will be recording core class instruction while also making live streaming options available. Since Aquin will be following the Western Dubuque schedule of Monday-Thursday 8:00-3:00 and No School Fridays, teachers will be using Friday to plan for the following week, while also being available to work with students who are using the Hybrid learning model through Zoom and/or Google Meets and/or in person.

Teachers will be able to visit with parents to discuss additional possibilities for their children and how to best help them.

****Please note that the Hybrid goal is to work alongside parents and teachers to create a plan that works to meet the needs of your child.***

3. Remote Learning

This model indicates services will be held remotely for all students. Virtual learning will be used in emergency situations when on-site learning is not possible. When students are using remote virtual learning they will utilize Google Classroom, SeeSaw and Zoom and/or Google Meets for instruction. **Informational videos about each platform can be found on our website at www.aquin.org under Reopening Aquin.

- **Asynchronous learning** is when instruction and learning do not happen at the same time for all learners (for example a pre-recorded lesson or collaborating on the same document with a peer or teacher)

- **Synchronous learning** is an approach where teachers and students are engaged at the same time online for learning (for example, Zoom meetings or Google Meets)

Depending on grade level and age of students, grade level teachers will be working together to provide the following for your child:

1. Teachers will be expected to have Zoom meetings or Google Meets. The frequency of these meetings will vary based on grade level.
2. Recorded lessons and meetings will be made available for all students for asynchronous learning.
3. Teachers will schedule office hours to be available for questions.
4. There will be a consistency with learning tools throughout the school and among grade levels (SeeSaw Prek-2) and Google Classroom (3-8)
5. Students will be expected to:
 - a. Be prepared
 - b. Behave appropriately on live sessions
 - c. Use headsets or earbuds
 - d. Check email accounts (if applicable)
 - e. Establish a daily routine for schoolwork in partnership with an adult family member.
 - f. Check in with Google Classroom and/or SeeSaw platform daily and complete activities assigned by teachers independently or with parent support.

Preschool Virtual Learning

Students and families will be provided online learning activities and hands on manipulatives for those children utilizing distant learning. Students will also have access to connect synchronously with a dedicated teacher in the afternoon. Chromebooks will not be issued for Preschool students. However, if your child will need to borrow a device, please contact Andrea Willenborg at awillenborg@aquin.org.

Grading

Teachers will continue to employ both formative and summative assessments to provide students with feedback about their academic progress.

Elementary (K-5)

- Hybrid -Standards Based Grades will be used. Grading will occur as normal
- Remote-Standards Based Grading **may** be adapted to include N/A on standards that were not fully assessed
- On-site-Standards Based Grades will be used. Grading will occur as normal

Middle School (6-8)

- Hybrid-Traditional Letter grades: Grading will occur as normal
- Remote-Traditional Letter grades: Grading **may** be adapted to include P/F options.

- On-site-Traditional Letter grades: Grading will occur as normal

Attendance

All students are expected to attend and participate in class and submit work for feedback and grades.

Completion of assignments will count as attendance.

If families have extenuating circumstances, these circumstances need to be communicated to the student's teacher so individual accommodations can be made.

Recommendations on Allocation of Time

The following are recommendations and guidelines for as a suggested maximum amount of time of engagement by each student in distance learning activities. These time recommendations include both teacher instruction and all work for a given day.

Grade Level	Minimum	Maximum	Recommended Length of Sustained Attention
PreK	20 minutes/day	60 minutes/day	3-5 minutes
K	30 minutes/ day	90 minutes/day	3-5 minutes
1-2	45 minutes/day	90 minutes/day	5-10 minutes
3-5	60 minutes/day	120 minutes/day	10-15 minutes
6-8	Class: 15 minutes/day Total: 90 minutes/day	Class: 30 minutes/day Total: 180 minutes/day	1 subject area or class

Health and Safety

We recognize it is not possible to eliminate all COVID-19 exposure risks. We are implementing strategies to make our school as safe as possible.

Screening

- We will ask parents to screen students at home for COVID-19 symptoms prior to attending school each day. A list of symptoms can be found on our school web-page at www.aquin.org under Return to Learn Plan/Health and Safety
- In an abundance of caution, if a student exhibits a temperature of 100.3 or higher during the school day, a phone call will be made to parents/emergency contacts with the purpose of having the child leave the campus as quickly as possible. We ask that the student not return to school until all flu symptoms (headache, fever, vomiting, cough, etc.) subside for at least 48 hours.
- Please do not give fever-reducing medication and send your child to school.
- If a student or staff person is getting tested for COVID we ask that they not return to school until the test results are back and are negative. For positive results (see Exposure)
- Report any exposure or positive cases to Vicki Knepper (secretary) at school immediately.

Face Coverings

- Students in grades PK-1 are permitted to wear face masks, but will not be required.
- Students in grades 2-8 will be required to wear masks when social distancing is not possible. Aquin will have a face mask available for your child if you are unable to get one. *Please note teachers will provide opportunities throughout the day where students will NOT have to wear their masks.* (lunch, recess, mask breaks)
- Students leaving the building for band, PE or Algebra at Cascade High School will be required to have masks per WDCSD RtL policy.
- Teachers and staff will be expected to wear masks and/or face guards when social distancing is not possible. Masks and face guards will be provided for staff.
- Visitors to Aquin will be expected to wear masks.
- Lessons and instructions will be provided to students on the appropriate use of face coverings, as well as the prevention of stigmas associated with use or non-use of face coverings.
- Students riding the Western Dubuque bus will be asked to wear face masks per WDCSD RtL policy.
- Discuss your family's expectation of face coverings with your child.
 - Talk to your child about being a leader in protecting their friends and family. They can be proud of taking part in keeping their community safe.
 - Have some fun with it. Invite your children to take part in picking their masks or a fabric pattern that matches their interest.
 - Before school starts, provide opportunities for your children to practice wearing a mask for an hour or two each day and each time you leave the house.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

Additional cleaning and disinfecting procedures will be implemented.

- Entrances will have hand sanitizers for those entering the building to use
- Classrooms will have additional hand sanitizers to use in the classrooms
- Each student will have his/her own bottle of hand sanitizer. This will be provided by the school.
- Staff will provide extra disinfecting/cleaning in high traffic areas, such as restrooms and hallways throughout the day.
- Cleaning and disinfecting will be done to student work areas after use with the recommended cleaning products.

Hand Washing and Personal Hygiene

- Hand washing will be done throughout the day...including before school, before lunch, after lunch, after recess and after traveling the halls.
- Classrooms will spend the first day of school going over hand washing practices
- Hand sanitizer and kleenex will be available in multiple places in the classrooms and school.

Limiting Exposure

- We ask that all visitors wear masks in the building.
- Staff continues to plan how to reconfigure and utilize building space to provide for as much social distancing as possible. Having smaller class sizes will assist in making proper social distancing more attainable in our classroom settings and throughout the building.
- Two health office spaces will be utilized. One for illness and one for first aid and/or medication.
- We are working with our lunch program director to determine what changes will need to be made, keeping in mind the social and mental needs of our students as well. Information about this will be shared in mid-August.
- We are reviewing how students will be housed while entering and leaving the building. Information about this will be shared in mid-August.

Exposure

- All positive cases of COVID-19, Aquin will:
 - Contact the Dubuque County Public Health. We will follow their guidance contact tracing, cleaning, and closure. *****We continue to wait for guidance from our county regarding student attendance (Dubuque County Public Health). In lieu of having their direct guidance, we will follow the guidelines from the Linn County Public Health.*
 - “Students that are identified to have a positive case of COVID-19 will be asked to self-isolate at home for 14 days. Anyone that was within 6 feet of this individual for 15 minutes or longer, will also be asked to self-isolate at home for 14 days.” - Linn County Public Health
 - Contact the Office of Catholic Schools
 - Aquin will notify individuals and families as directed by the Dubuque County Public Health Department.
 - Aquin will clearly communicate our privacy plan to staff and families. The individual names of those positive COVID-19 diagnosis will not be shared unless directed by the Dubuque County Public Health Department.

Physical Distancing

- Large gatherings will be eliminated or minimized whenever possible.
- Furniture in classrooms, libraries, and in the lunchroom will be rearranged to maximize physical distancing between and among students and staff.
- Larger spaces will be used for larger class sizes wherever possible.

Social and Emotional Well-Being

- The school counselor will be available to offer additional support for students who may be struggling with virtual or remote learning or any additional anxieties.

Technology

- In addition to the established 5-8 one-to-one program, Aquin will have available enough Chromebooks for grades 3-4. Additional iPads will be available for our K-2 students. Parents should contact Andrea Willenborg at awillenborg@aquin.org if a device is needed.
- In the event of a midday (school closure) notice students will be sent home with their assigned Chromebooks.
- In the event of an evening or weekend (school closure) announcement, Chromebooks or iPads(K-2) will be distributed via curbside pickup the following business day.

Professional Development for Certified Teachers

- Faculty-developed PD on Platforms
 - Google Classroom
 - SeeSaw
- Health and Safety trainings
- Cleaning procedures and processes

Professional Development for Support Staff

- Cleaning procedures and processes
- Health and Safety trainings

English Language Learners

- Mrs. Hoeger and Mrs. Roberts will determine which supports are needed for students and families. Support plans will be communicated to all classroom teachers. Families will be contacted at least once a month to check in and evaluate needs and support.

504 students

- Teachers, leadership and resource staff will determine which supports are needed for students and family. Support plans will be communicated to all classroom teachers. Families will be contacted at least once a month to check in and evaluate needs and support.

Transportation

- Aquin will follow the guidelines that the Western Dubuque School District has in place for riding the bus. Currently all students are required to wear masks when using the bus per WDCSD RtL plan.

Lunch

- Students will dine in the lunchroom
- Students will utilize a lunch order form in their classrooms at the beginning of the school day.

- All trays will be pre-plated meeting the requirements of the National School Lunch Program.

What can you do?

Please understand that we are making the best decisions we can for everyone involved. We know that everyone will not be happy with all our decisions, but please remain positive around your children. Their attitude about school will directly correlate with yours. Below are a few other things you can do to help our school community:

- Talk to your child about what school will look like, including the mitigation steps listed above.
- Watch the video with your child to help ease their anxiousness. **This will be coming out July 31st.
- Continue to read school communications as more information becomes available.
- Reach out to your child's teacher once school begins. Communication is key! We are working together on behalf of your child so any issue that arises, we want to handle it early.
- Complete e-registration accurately and make sure your contact information is up to date in case we need to communicate with you.
- Please contact Vicki Palmer by **AUGUST 5th** if you are considering being a part of our hybrid model--you would prefer that your child **not** attend on-site during the first *trimester of the school year. *(August 20-November 19th).

Our school team continues to receive information almost daily from the Iowa Department of Education, Iowa Department of Public Health, CDC, Archdiocese of Dubuque Office of Catholic Schools, and the Dubuque County Health Department. Please know that plans and guidance may change as more information is received. Our local return-to-learn committee will continue to review this information in order to welcome your child back to Aquin to continue their spiritual, social, emotional, and intellectual growth as safely as possible. Thank you for entrusting us with your most precious gift.

Sincerely,

Vicki Palmer

Thank you

for your attention and support

This document represents our Proposed Return to Learn plan
for the 2020-2021 school year

Our understanding of the COVID-19 virus and best practices surrounding health and safety are constantly evolving. As such, all guidance in this plan is subject to change.

