

RETURN-TO-SCHOOL PLAN

IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19



School of Saint Elizabeth

School Reopening Taskforce

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Thank you to the taskforce members for all of your input regarding the creation of this document. Their expertise and commitment to Catholic education is commendable.

INTRODUCTION

We have created this plan to aid in navigating the reestablishment of our school where employees, students, and families feel safe and to reduce the impact of COVID-19 conditions upon returning to the school. The guidelines referenced in this plan are based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO), and the State of New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) *The Road Back*. Regular updates will be made to this plan based on information provided by the CDC, WHO, and applicable federal, state and local agencies.

SOURCES

Center for Disease Control: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html#anchor_1589931942037

New Jersey Department of Education:
<https://www.nj.gov/education/reopening/NJDOETheRoadBack.pdf>

At the conclusion of the 2019-2020 school year, the teachers of School of St. Elizabeth gathered and participated in a think-tank activity to debrief on distance learning. They worked in grade-level bands to tweak our plan based on their own experience during distance learning, as well as the feedback from both parents and students. During the three days of professional development, teachers also worked in grade-level bands to accomplish the following:

- Engage in a standards walk using the NJSLs and curriculum documents to find commonality among subject-matter standards to establish interdisciplinary connections.
- Evaluate the NJSLs that were accomplished in their classes in each subject matter during the 2019 - 2020 school year.
- Perform vertical articulation with the grade above and grade below to share standards that students mastered and standards that need to be reinforced, retaught, or taught during the 2020 - 2021 school year to ensure continuity in instruction.

During the summer, School of St. Elizabeth teachers from Kindergarten – Grade 5 participated in professional development to learn enhanced pedagogical skills to incorporate Calendar Math into the mathematics curriculum to scaffold student skills in geometric patterning, decimals, and fractions.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In order to ensure the continued well-being of our employees and students the following guiding principles have been put in place:

1. EMPLOYEE AND STUDENT SAFETY MEASURES
2. HEALTH GUIDELINES

PHASES AND TIMELINES

Information and direction about the phases and timeline will be sent to all employees and parents before implementation. Please see below for a summary of the phases and timelines.

Phase	Timing	Items
Planning	July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplies, equipment • Prepare detailed work schedule for phases • Prepare building and transportation for reopen with thorough cleaning
Phase 1	August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement social distancing protocol and open facilities with limited access/use
Phase 2	August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand use of school based on recommendations and data from CDC, NJDOH, New Jersey Governor, and applicable state and local agencies
Phase 3	September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open school • Expand full operation based on recommendations and data from CDC, NJDOH, New Jersey Governor, and applicable local and state agencies • Determine what restrictions/guidelines stay in place

HEALTH PROTOCOL AND SCREENINGS (EMPLOYEE AND STUDENT)

Parents must complete a screening of their child(ren) prior to arriving at school each day. A parent waiver will be provided to each family and signed before the beginning of the school year requiring them to check their child for symptoms and temperature daily prior to going to school.

Families will perform a self-check for their children each to check for COVID-19 symptoms including (As stated in the signed parent waiver):

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea
- Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit
- Known close contact with a person who is lab confirmed to have COVID-19

Employees:

School staff are required to wear face coverings unless doing so would inhibit the individual's health.

- If an employee becomes ill at work or if another person is exhibiting symptoms of COVID19 at work, they will be asked to leave work and go home or to the nearest health center.
- Employees returning to work from an approved medical leave should contact HR and will be required to submit a healthcare provider's note before returning to work.
- If an employee has been diagnosed with COVID19, the school, Office of Schools, and local health department must be contacted. The School of St. Elizabeth will follow the steps outlined in <https://www.nj.gov/dcf/news/Final.CC.Health.and.Safety.Standards.pdf>

Students:

- Parents are required to be on the alert for signs of illness in their children and to keep them home when they are sick.
- Students are strongly encouraged to wear face coverings and are required to do so when entering the building, moving through the hallways, leaving their seats in the classroom, and when social distancing cannot be maintained, unless doing so would inhibit the student's health. It is also necessary to acknowledge that enforcing the use of face coverings may be impractical for young children or individuals with disabilities.
- Student health checks must be conducted safely and respectfully, and in accordance with any applicable privacy laws and regulations.
- Results must be documented when signs/symptoms of COVID-19 are observed.
- Any screening policy will take into account students with disabilities and accommodations that may be needed in the screening process for those students.

Protocol for Symptomatic Staff and Students

- Students and staff with symptoms related to COVID-19 will be safely and respectfully isolated from others.
- Students will remain in isolation with continued supervision and care and continued monitoring of symptoms until picked up by an authorized adult for students.
- Staff members will be asked to leave work and go home or to the nearest health center.
- SOSE will follow current State of New Jersey Communicable Disease Service guidance for illness reporting - <https://www.nj.gov/health/>
- If SOSE becomes aware that an individual who has spent time in the school tests positive for COVID-19, school officials will immediately notify local health officials, staff, and families of a confirmed case while maintaining confidentiality.
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) will be available, accessible, and provided for use if a staff member or student becomes symptomatic

If an employee or student becomes ill on campus, he/she will immediately report to the **nurse's isolation room** and the case form will be completed.

Once the employee or student arrives at the isolation room, they will immediately provide them with a mask and gloves to help protect other employees and students and prevent the spread of the potential virus.

- The nurse must call the local health authority and seek advice regarding transportation and location.
- The nurse and others attending the suspected infected person, should also wear a protective mask and gloves while working with the suspected infected person. If a mask is not tolerated by the child, staff should use a face covering and follow social distancing guidelines (6 ft. away).
- The nurse will direct the ill employee to leave work or call the parent of the student to be picked up and go home.
- The nurse and principal must identify persons who may have come in contact with the suspected infected person. *Unless required by the local health authority, the name of the employee should not be provided.*
- Employees will be advised they may have been in contact with a suspected employee and to carry out self-screening every morning, and based on the results, contact the HR department.
- The isolation area and suspected employee's or student's work area/classroom will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected, in addition to all other common surfaces recently touched by the employee or student.

When an individual tests positive for COVID-19, SOSE will immediately notify local health officials, staff and families of a possible or confirmed case while maintaining confidentiality. SOSE will follow guidelines set forth in the following link:

<https://www.nj.gov/dcf/news/Final.CC.Health.and.Safety.Standards.pdf>

SOSE will provide the following information when consulting public health:

- The identity of the person with COVID-19 or probable COVID-19 (i.e. staff, child in care, household contact).
- The date the person with COVID-19 or probable COVID-19 was last in the building
- The date the person developed symptoms.
- Types of interactions the person may have had with other persons in the building or in other locations.
- How long their interactions were with other persons in the building.
- If other persons in the childcare program have developed any symptoms; and
- Any other information to assist with the determination of next steps.

Re-admittance Procedures After Recovery From COVID:

Staff members or students will only be re-admitted to SOSE with medical documentation which states they have recovered from COVID-19. The SOSE will follow all procedures that in place with the local Board of Health.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

Social distancing is an effective way to prevent potential infection. SOSE employees, students, and parents should practice staying approximately 6 feet away from others and eliminating contact with others.

- SOSE will allow for social distancing within the classroom to the maximum extent practicable. This can be achieved by ensuring students are seated at least 6 feet apart and considering the flow of student traffic around the room. Social distancing guidance will support a 3-foot radius around each student desk (from the center), resulting in a 6 foot total distance between any two students.
- In classrooms where we are not able to maintain this physical distance, additional modifications will be in place. These include using physical barriers between desks and turning desks to face the same direction (rather than facing each other) or having students sit on only one side of the table, spaced apart.
- Traffic Flow – Taped lines on the floor will mark the walking direction throughout the halls in order to maintain the social distancing requirement of 6 feet.
- When weather allows, windows will be opened to allow for greater air circulation.
- Ad-hoc Interactions/Gatherings – Non-essential/informal meetings and visiting will be avoided.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

In order to minimize exposure to COVID-19, PPE may be needed to prevent certain exposures. PPE can include:

Masks: Face masks are an important part of employee protection, as well as personal hygiene, social distancing, and frequent cleaning efforts.

School staff are required to wear face coverings unless doing so would inhibit the individual's health. Students are required to do so when social distancing cannot be maintained, unless doing so would inhibit the student's health. It is necessary to acknowledge that enforcing the use of face coverings may be impractical for young children or individuals with disabilities.

Gloves: Touching your face with contaminated hands, whether gloved or not, poses a significant risk of infection. Wearing gloves does not diminish the need to wash your hands. Please remember to wash your hands properly as it is the number-one defense against any virus. Additionally, the proper removal of gloves reduces the risk of being exposed to contamination.

Please note that social distancing should still be practiced even with the use of gloves and masks.

In addition to using PPE, please remember to:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow.

CLASSROOM AND COMMON SPACES

School of St. Elizabeth staff will use signage to indicate a room for sanitizing and disinfecting. All teachers and students are asked not to visit another classroom outside of their team or grade level. Employees are encouraged to disinfect their own personal workspace (teacher desk, phone, etc) throughout the day, giving special attention to commonly touched surfaces.

Classrooms:

- There will be a 6 foot separation of desks and children. If the 6 foot separation is not feasible (considering the size of the room and number of students per class), separation guards will be installed at desks, desks will face in the same direction (rather than facing each other) or students will sit on only one side of tables, spaced apart.
- In order to provide students with movement and a change of scenery, elementary and middle school students will change classes for art, music, and physical education. Students will be directed, under the supervision of the teacher, to clean their personal space (including desks, cubby and/or lockers). This includes students using approved cleaning products to wipe down desks when leaving the classroom and arriving in the classroom.
- Where applicable for the middle school, teachers will change classrooms, with students staying in the same classroom.

- Larger rooms (i.e. auditorium, cafeteria, gym) will be used as classrooms when necessary to allow for social distancing.
- Outdoor classrooms will be utilized where possible and when seasonally appropriate.
- Hand sanitizer will be available in every classroom, in accordance with CDC guidelines.

School Entrances, hallways, and common spaces:

- Students are required to wear face coverings when entering the building and moving throughout the hallways.
- Physical guides, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls, will be utilized to help ensure that staff and students remain at least 6 feet apart in lines and at other times.
- Students will enter the building through various doors by grade-level bands to minimize congestion at the entrances to school facilities. Students in Pre K3 – Grade 2 will enter the building through the entry way located across from the Monsignor Torney entrance. Students in Grades 3 – 8 will enter the building through the Cafeteria entrance. Staff members will monitor the two entrances and the hallways to guide students in their travels.
- Students will report directly to their classrooms upon entering the building.
- Morning prayer will be conducted in individual classrooms through a Google Meet to continue a common spiritual message to all students.
- Signage will be posted around school buildings to provide hygiene advice and reminders (CDC offers printable resources and handwashing posters).
- Release time from classrooms will be staggered to limit the number of students in the hallway at the same time.
- A locker schedule will be created for middle school students to keep traffic in the hallways within social distancing protocols.

Other Considerations:

- The use of supplies and equipment will be limited to one group of children at a time and clean and disinfect between use.
- Students will utilize their own supplies for the classroom, as well as Music and Art to minimize sharing of high touch materials to the extent possible.
- The sharing of electronic devices, toys, books, and other games or learning aids will be avoided whenever possible. When it is not possible items will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected between use.
- Student belongings will be separated from others and in individually labeled containers, bags, cubbies, or areas.

FACILITIES CLEANING

The safety of our employees and students are our first priority. Upon reopening, our school has been completely cleaned and disinfected and we will continue to adhere to all necessary safety precautions. In addition to the deep clean of the office and school before employees and students return, the cleaning steps outlined below will be taken to disinfect workplace

surfaces, chairs, tables, etc. to protect employees and reduce the risk of spread of infection. We will require employees to maintain this safety standard by continuously cleaning and disinfecting based on the frequency stated below. Deep cleaning is triggered when an active employee or student is identified as positive for COVID 19 based on testing.

GENERAL DISINFECTION MEASURES

Category	Area	Frequency
Workspaces	Classrooms, Offices	At the end of each use/day
Appliances	Refrigerators, Microwaves, Coffee Machines	Daily
Electronic Equipment	Copier machines, Shared computer monitors, TV's, Telephones, keyboards	At the end of each use/day and/or between use
General Used Objects	Handles, light switches, sinks, restrooms	Several times a day
Common Areas	Cafeteria, Library, Conference rooms, Gyms, Common Areas	At the end of each use/day; between groups

Hand sanitizing stations with alcohol-based hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol):

- In each classroom (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer).
- At entrances and exits of buildings.
- Near lunchrooms and toilets.
- Children ages 5 and younger will be supervised when using hand sanitizer.
- Students will be instructed to wash hands for at least 20 seconds at regular intervals, including before eating, after using the bathroom, and after blowing their nose/coughing/sneezing.
- Students will be instructed to use alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) when washing with soap and water is not possible.

For Early Childhood programs, when possible:

- Children will be kept six feet apart during instruction, snack time, lunch, as well as learning activities.
- Close group learning activities like reading circles will be avoided.

- A schedule will be created to help students wash hands with soap and water, including, at a minimum:
 - at the start of the day when children enter the classroom
 - before snacks and lunch
 - after using the toilet or helping a child use a toilet
 - after sneezing, wiping, and blowing noses
 - after snacks and lunch, particularly if hands are sticky, greasy or soiled
 - when students come in from outdoor play or recess

In limited cases, hand hygiene with an alcohol-based sanitizer or alcohol-based wipes, when there is no visible soiling of hands, are alternatives to hand washing with soap and water by children over 24 months of age, under the supervision of the teacher. The CDC recommends an alcohol-based sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol and to rub the product over all surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry, about 20 seconds, then wash hands with soap and water as soon as possible.

RESTROOM USAGE DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

The school will establish maximum capacity for the facility that allows for social distancing. The school will post the maximum capacity sign on the door. There will be limited shared use of restrooms.

UNIFORMS, RECESS, PHYSICAL EDUCATION, LOCKERS AND LOCKER ROOMS

- Parents are strongly encouraged to launder student uniforms daily. To assist parents with this task, students will be permitted to wear their spring uniforms throughout the year for ease in laundering.
- A staggered recess schedule will be implemented. If two or more groups are participating in recess at the same time, they should have at least 6 feet of open space between them.
- Cones, flags, tape, or other signs to create boundaries between groups.
- Students will be directed to wash hands or use hand-sanitizing stations immediately after outdoor playtime.
- The use of playground equipment will be staggered and frequent disinfecting protocols will be implemented. An inventory of outdoor spaces (athletic fields, track, green spaces, open space, and local parks) will be conducted. SOSE will designate zones, use stations, mark off areas, floor markers, floor tape, poly spots, etc., to ensure separation among students (six feet for social distancing).

VISITORS ON CAMPUS

Until further notice there will be no visitors allowed on campus or in the school building. Unfortunately this included parents and all volunteers. The fewer people entering the school building allows for greater implementation of safety measures. A drop off box outside of the school will be used to accept packages or forgotten items by students.

CAFETERIA AND MEAL PERIODS

Students are encouraged to bring their lunch with them to school each day. If you prefer to order lunch for your child, SOSE continues to partner with BOONLI to provide a secure, fast, and easy to use online ordering system for Anthony's Catering that allows you to view our lunch menu, order, prepay and manage student lunches from a smartphone, tablet or computer.

Students will eat lunch in the cafeteria in grade-level cohorts with social distancing that exceeds six feet. The cafeteria will be disinfected before and after each cohort eats lunch. As always, students are not permitted to share food and must bring their own utensils and napkins if bringing their own lunch. The grade-level cohorts are established for both lunch and recess as follows:

- Kindergarten – Grade 2
- Grade 3 – Grade 5
- Grade 6 – Grade 8

SNACKS AND FOOD DELIVERY

Bringing refreshments to share during school is prohibited in order to limit the risk of contamination. Snack time is permitted, but students should bring their own snack items and drinks to school. SOSE cannot provide snacks to students who may have forgotten them. While Anthony's Catering is available for students and staff for lunch, no other food delivery is permissible to minimize contact. Personal deliveries such as packages should not be delivered to the school for students or staff.

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

SOSE will continue to communicate with families in a timely fashion. To stay updated on the most current information:

1. Teachers, students, and parents need to check their email often.
2. Visit the school website
3. Follow our social media platforms
4. PowerSchool Student Information System
5. Honeywell Alert System

ACADEMICS AND HOME-BASED LEARNING

There are three considerations (Traditional, Hybrid, and Remote) for returning to school, depending upon state and local health guidelines. Presently, the State of New Jersey is returning to a traditional face to face classroom instruction in September 2020. While SOSE has an plan in place for full-time, all-day instruction for students, we must be prepared to provide other models of instruction, as deemed necessary.

Some families may not feel comfortable having their child return to school for instruction. In addition, some students may be medically fragile and their physician does not recommend returning to school. In either case, SOSE will provide instruction to these students via closed-circuit, live-streamed of classes. Students will be expected to attend their regularly scheduled classes via live streaming through Google Meet.

SOSE's goal is to design flexible instructional plans that work best in both traditional face to face and remote environments. During the 2020 – 2021 school year, teachers will work collaboratively and engage in the following topics with their colleagues to enhance in-school instructions for students, as well as bolster distance learning if the need arises:

- Use the elements of Understanding by Design by Jay McTighe and Grant Wiggins to maximize the benefits of unit planning.
- Engage in a standard walks using the NJSLs and curriculum documents to find commonality among subject-matter standards to establish interdisciplinary connections.
- Emphasize the balanced-literacy approach to learning, I Do, We Do, You Do. This approach will allow teachers to model with a mini lesson, engage the class in guided practice and collaborative work before moving on to independent practice.
- Implement appropriate pedagogical approaches that would be used in the classroom like making learning goals visible to students, checking for understanding through formative assessments, and implementing effective classroom management strategies to enhance distance learning.
- Create a compendium of best pedagogical practices to maximize student learning for specific skill sets.
- Share best practices with one another to serve as resources for colleagues to model best practices.
- Use essential questions in instruction to establish the big picture of learning goals for students.

- Implement differentiated instruction with an emphasis on choice boards and the modality of student output.
- Use student checklists for understanding during formative assessments to guide student learning so students and parents will understand why they are doing specific assignments to learn and implement specific skills.
- Use tools in Google classroom and other applications to create authentic experiences for students such as Google Meets, Break-Out Rooms, Whiteboard features, Jam Board features. Other applications that encourage authentic assessments include Flip Grid, See Saw, Ed Puzzle, and Pear Deck.
- Implement project-based learning modules for specific units.
- Incorporate the empathy advantage into learning activities whenever possible to enhance the social, emotional, and spiritual growth of each student.

CATHOLIC IDENTITY

Catholic schools have a two-fold charge: to provide an education that is academically excellent and one that is deeply rooted in Catholic identity. Catholic values will be infused intentionally across all grade levels and all subject matter. Participation in liturgy and prayer will continue to be encouraged for both traditional face to face and remote settings. Service learning opportunities will remain a priority in our schools.

GRADING AND ATTENDANCE POLICY

To receive credit for the courses for this school year students are expected to complete the assignments. The grading policy is located in the school handbook.

REMOTE LEARNING

In the event that the school has to close in 2020-2021, we will follow the guidelines established in our distance learning plan explained below.

DISTANCE LEARNING PLAN



THE VIRTUAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE _____

As New Jersey schools faced an overnight transformation to distance learning, School of St. Elizabeth was well prepared for success utilizing the benefits of robust technology and innovative teaching methods already in place for all grade levels. As a certified Future Ready School, our integration of state-of-the-art technology enabled us to offer uninterrupted learning for all students, using applications like Google Classroom, Google Meets, Seesaw, PearDeck, FlipGrid, and many more. Amidst statewide shutdowns, our expert faculty delivered a rigorous, interactive and highly successful distance learning program.

In addition to attending live classes every day, students participated in STREAM projects, science labs, and even remote school assemblies. Children from Pre-K – 8th grade enjoyed daily interactions with teachers and abundant personalized one-on-one learning sessions. Our 2019 AdvancED STEM certification presented a wide range of opportunities for elementary and middle school students continued to achieve ahead of their peers.

Our expert faculty remained dedicated to our strong commitment to academic excellence and were steadfast in evolving and innovating effectively throughout the crisis. They ensured the mastery of key educational concepts while supporting each student and family with clear communication and objectives.

School of St. Elizabeth has become a benchmark for interactive distance learning, establishing proven best practices for effective results at all grade levels. We continued to stimulate intellectual curiosity and creativity, while strengthening character and self-respect. Our successful program was impeccably planned to support the core fundamentals vital to the academic success of all students.

Distance Learning Procedures _____

Students will participate in Distance Learning Days when it is deemed necessary by school administration. For the most part, this will be during extended school closures due to such matters as inclement weather and emergency situations. Students and parents will be notified if a Virtual Learning Day through Parent Connection as well as through our automated telephone system.

Teachers and students are to follow the school's policy regarding communication which is as follows: *The school-sanctioned email address is the only authorized means of private communication between a student and a teacher.* Teachers and students may communicate in public forums such as discussion boards/blogs through Google Classroom and G Suite for Education.

Attendance will be taken through student participation in scheduled Google Meets, as well as through the submission of assignments. *In the event of an absence, a student is still responsible for completing the day's assignments within three (3) days.*

Each teacher will post information about their virtual lessons within Google Classroom for students in Grades K – 8 no later than 8 am each day. For students in Pre-K through Grade 2, teachers will also communicate with parents through an email.

The distance learning day will begin at 8 am and end at 3 pm. During this time students are expected to actively participate in Google Meets that are scheduled by the teacher. When not engaged in a Google Meet, students are expected to complete learning activities designed by the teacher. All work that is assigned must be submitted within three (3) days. Each teacher will provide office hours for extra help within this time frame as well.

Assessments/assignments may take many forms such as electronic tests, quizzes, surveys and polls, essays, application-based assignments, contributions to discussion boards, and other modalities as assigned by the teacher. Each teacher will provide information regarding the grading for each assessment. For example, will the assignment count as classwork, a quiz, or a test. When appropriate, teachers will provide a rubric to accompany a specific assignment.

Teachers will also provide a due date for each assignment. Many assignments will be due on the same day it is assigned. Some assignments will have a special identified due date. *It is the responsibility of each student to meet coursework deadlines as established by the teacher.* Technology support will be available through the SOSE website for both parents and students.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES/BEFORE AND AFTERCARE PROGRAMS

- All applicable social distancing requirements and hygiene protocol will be followed during any extracurricular activities.
- The use of technology and online resources will be utilized to continue some extracurricular activities without additional person-to-person contact.
- SOSE will continue to offer before and aftercare programs for our families.