



ST. MATTHEW

THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

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Dear Saint Matthew the Apostle Catholic School Families,

July 31, 2020

Thank you for your prayers, patience, and trust in our school. I know that this has been a summer filled with anxiety, anticipation, and uncertainty. I believe it is safe to say that we can all share in those feelings. Every summer has a great deal of work and preparation for the upcoming school year. This summer, with Covid-19, a whole new set of preparations, sense of urgency, and tasks never seen before in education have been presented. Our goal is to offer a strong spiritual, emotional, academic, and social component for each student that attends Saint Matthew the Apostle Catholic School. We will not be deterred by obstacles, we have faith that God never gives us more than we can handle. Together, we can handle each obstacle that comes our way.

Our School Mission is to Worship, Serve, and Evangelize. In order to complete this mission, we must work together for the good of all in order to operate at the highest level. It is in this vein that our plan attempts to meet the needs of each family by offering options. Of course, our prayers are offered up to the Lord that we all return to school together in the most normal, traditional setting as soon as possible. Unfortunately, this will not be an option for the start of the school year. Hence; the Saint Matthew Community has been blessed with truly wonderful, selfless individuals that have volunteered their time and talents in order to come up with a plan to educate all of our students, while still placing our Catholic identity at the forefront of everything we do.

Saint Matthew The Apostle Catholic School will have a three tier approach for school this coming year.

- Tier one- Normal operations fully opened with in person instruction and safety protocols (this option is not possible at this time)
- Tier two- On Campus 5 Days Learning Model
- Tier three - Full remote learning, online instruction with building closed, Connected Classroom at Home (CCaH)

We surveyed parents and teachers, we spoke with health officials, other schools; private and public, in order to gather as much information as possible. Through all of the fact finding it

became clear that it was in the best interest of the student body to have them back at school while utilizing all safety and health protocols. Additionally, we also found that some families needed the option for remote learning. We are fortunate to have the opportunity to offer both of those options to our families.

It is clear that we are not able to make everyone happy. At the same time, we have done our very best to meet the needs of as many families as possible. We understand that this is difficult and we respect whatever decision each family needs to make. There is nothing more important in our lives than our children.

After reviewing the safety guidelines by the CDC, the State of Ohio, and including the Ohio Department of Education, the Department of Health, and following guidance from the Office of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Columbus, our task force has determined that a tier two approach to the school year is in the best interest of our school community. Of course, as stated earlier, families may choose a remote option. This remote option will be made with a commitment for one quarter. After the first quarter, if you choose, you may send your child to school and follow the On Campus 5 Day Learning Model. On the other hand, you may also choose to continue remote learning.

Parents will be asked to submit their choice, On Campus 5 Day Learning Model or the Connected Classroom at Home (Distance Learning) Model by 9:00 a.m. Monday, August 10. Selection will be made through an online survey. (Survey will be sent this weekend). As previously stated, decisions will be made on a quarterly basis. Parents may change from On Campus 5 Day Learning Model or the Connected Classroom at Home (Distance Learning) Model at the start of quarter two.

Our “On Campus 5 Days Learning Model will look like the following: (More detailed plans will be shared later in August)

- This model is a five day a week, all students on campus, all day
- Students will be placed in smaller cohorts and the entire campus will be utilized
- An example of how this will work; if there are 32 students in each class in grade five for instance, 16 students will report on Monday to Mrs. Kirkland’s room and 16 students will report to Mrs. Cummins room. Direct instruction will take place. Students will be socially distanced and will sit at the same desk each time they are in the Direct Instruction room. (pictures and more details are included on the slides provided)
- The other half of each teacher’s class will report to what we are calling the “Connected Classroom.” In the case of the fifth grade this will be the PAC. While in the “Connected Classroom students will have adult supervision, receive assistance academically, complete assignments/projects from the previous day, take assessments, participate in service learning, participate in "specials" and attend mass once a week,(students will attend mass in small groups socially distanced) etc... (More details of their scheduled day in this setting are included on the slide provided)
- Lessons will be recorded daily and students can reference them while in the “connected classroom” for additional support.
- Pre - K and Kindergarten will remain in self contained classrooms. It was determined that

rooms were large enough for this population to be socially distanced according to guidelines given by the above mentioned agencies. Additionally, during these very important formative years these age groups need structure and daily routines in order to prepare them for future academic, spiritual, social, emotional success.

Morning and Afternoon arrival/dismissal

- You will find detailed slides regarding this process. We will increase entry points in order to social distance. We will have a daily staggered start and will respect the issue that some parents have to drop off a little earlier based on work responsibilities. You will find more details in the slides provided. Additionally, more information will be forthcoming in August prior to the first day of school.

Classroom/Learning Spaces:

- All desks and tables will be spaced 6 ft. apart and facing the same direction. (Most classrooms hold about 16 desks with appropriate spacing.)
- Students will not be permitted to share supplies.
- Students will keep personal belongings/supplies at their desks. Parents will be asked to label each individual supply and all personal belongings.
- Hand sanitizing stations will be provided for all classrooms.

Facilities

- Our nightly cleaning company will have increased sanitation requirements added to their responsibilities.
- Commonly touched surfaces, such as doorknobs, will be cleaned throughout the day
- Increased cleaning for all restrooms.
- Grade levels will be assigned specific restrooms.
- Each student should bring one or two filled (and labeled) water bottles from home each day to decrease the number of students traveling through the hallways and touching water dispensers. Students may refill bottles in the water bottle dispenser units. We have added several stations throughout the building.
- Hand sanitizer stations will be available at each entryway and in all classrooms.
- Signage will be added inside and outside to provide visual reminders for appropriate hand washing and maintaining social distancing.

Face Coverings:

- Face coverings will be required for all staff and all K-8 students
- Students will be asked to bring an extra face covering to school in their backpack each day
- Disposable masks will be available in each classroom, school office and nurse's office, should a child forget his/her face covering or if it becomes damaged or soiled during the day.
- Masks may be any color or pattern; however, masks must be appropriate in nature and may not contain anything political, or distracting. Students will be asked to change their face mask if it is considered distracting.

Lunch:

- Since our lunchroom(Hutta gym) is being used as classroom space, lunches may be eaten in classrooms, or outside when possible, socially distanced, of course.
- Students will be required to follow hand washing/sanitizing procedures before lunch.
- Our current lunch menu will still be available for purchase with some modifications
- Lunches will be delivered to each student. Milk or water will still be available with lunch.
- Desks will be wiped down by students (when age appropriate) or staffuly each day before and after lunch.

(More details regarding menus, lunch opportunities will be provided prior to the start of school)

Recess:

- Zones will be designed for recess times in order to allow students to remain in cohorts.
- Students will be permitted to take mask breaks during recess when the activity allows them to be socially distant from others.
- Playground equipment will be sanitized throughout the day.

Field Trips:

- No field trips are permitted at this time.

Visitors:

- Parents picking up students during the school day will be asked to use the intercom outside the main door, students will be brought to parents by the nurse or office personnel
- Meetings with parents, vendors, etc. will be held virtually when possible.
- If a face-to-face meeting is necessary, all visitors will be required to identify themselves through the intercom, report to the office through the main entrance to the school and wear face coverings.

Open House/ Meet the Teacher /Parent-Teacher Conferences:

- More information regarding these events will be forthcoming prior to the event.
- Open House and Meet the Teacher information will be shared prior to the start of school

Phase-In Week:

- During our Phase-In Week Monday, August 31 - Friday, September 4th, small groups will be assigned to a particular day based on last names. (Information will be released at least one week in advance)
- Students will be assigned alphabetically to allow families with more than one student to send all children on the same day.
- Teachers will spend time easing students back into the classroom learning experience. These small groups will allow teachers to develop a rapport with the students, learn where they are emotionally, assess where they are academically, introduce our new digital learning platform and other online resources, and teach new procedures and protocols regarding sanitation, masks, etc...
- CCaH (Connected Classrooms at Home) students will also have an orientation. This in all likelihood will be conducted virtually and a date/time for this event will be forthcoming to

those families choosing this option

Social/Emotional Support:

- Our school counselor will facilitate a healthy mindset and provide support for our students. Staffulty, along with administration will also offer Social/Emotional support to students.
- Our staffulty will take part in Professional Development prior to the start of school which focuses on the Social/Emotional aspect in regards to taking care of themselves and in assisting students in need.
- The Social/Emotional piece will also be a part of our CCaH instruction.

Special EducationSupport Services:

- Our students receiving the Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship will continue to receive support from a licensed Intervention Specialist and/or Speech-Language Therapist.
- Remedial reading services will continue to be provided by our reading specialist.
- Services may be provided at school or remotely.
- In addition, we have hired an additional Intervention Specialist that will focus on supporting students, working with students on ASP plans, etc... This teacher will divide her time between the upper hall and our younger students.

“Specials”

- Our “Special” classes are very important to the education of the whole child. Specials such as Physical Education, Art, Music, Technology, Library, and Science Lab will all rotate through both the direct instruction classrooms and the Connected Classrooms on a regular basis. (a schedule for these classes will be given prior to the start of school)
- To reduce hallway traffic, “specials teachers” will travel to classrooms. CCaH students will also have all specials available to them
- Since students will not be permitted to select books from the library, we will be using e-books and possibly one other online library resource.

Staff Wellness:

- Staffulty members will be asked to complete a temperature check and a COVID-19 Self Monitoring Checklist before their arrival to school.
- Staff members with fevers 100.0 F or higher or having any symptoms associated with Covid-19 will be asked to stay at home.

Student Wellness:

- Parents will be asked to monitor students daily for symptoms including a fever of 100.0 F or higher, cough, headache, sore throat, shortness of breath, nasal congestion, runny nose, fatigue, chill or body shakes, loss of taste or smell, unexplained body aches, or diarrhea/nausea/vomiting.
- Students with symptoms will be expected to remain home for 10 days after first symptoms appear or three days after recovery. (No fever, no cough, and no shortness of breath.) If tested, proof of a negative test must be submitted.
- Siblings will be expected to quarantine if they display symptoms or if the sibling has a

positive test result.

- Parents must report any suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 to the school nurse.
- Students who have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 will be expected to quarantine for 14 days.
- Exposure is defined as being closer than 6 ft to someone continuously for at least 15 minutes.

Improvements in Nursing:

- The Health Clinic has been expanded to accommodate regular student health concerns, as well as providing an isolation area for any student exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19. The following protocols and procedures will be followed by Nursing staff:
- The clinic and all equipment will be sanitized after each use.
- There will be a limited supply of masks available to students should they forget, lose or damage their mask while on campus.
- If a student is not feeling well and/or exhibits symptoms of COVID-19, the teacher will notify the clinic and the student will be evaluated in an isolated area of the health clinic.
- If the student is evaluated and does display COVID-19 symptoms while on campus, a parent/guardian will be contacted immediately and asked to promptly pick up their child. We will bring your child outside to you when you arrive.
- The student will be asked to wait for their parent/guardian in a supervised, isolated area of the health clinic.
- The nurse will follow infection control guidance from the CDC, the Ohio Department of Health, and local public health department.
- Students and staff members who are showing signs of COVID-19 will report to an "isolation space" it is a ventilated space separate from areas used by staff and students. The space will be located near the nurse's office and near an exit which will allow students to be easily escorted to their parents.
- Students who are not sick, but may need simple first aid, or medication will report to the main office instead of the nurse's station. Medications will be kept in the Principal's Office and distributed by office staff in order to cut down traffic in the Nurse's office.

Latchkey

- Students will be grouped and spaced by grade levels to allow for social distancing.
- Students and staff will be required to wear masks.
- Parents will be asked to wait outside when picking up their children.
- More detailed information will be provided to registered Latchkey families.

Digital Academy:

- Diocesan elementary schools are moving to Digital Academy, "a learning management system that seamlessly integrates classroom learning and distance learning." Learn more at www.digitalacademy.org.
- Teachers will use the "phase-in" week to teach students how to access class pages, live classrooms, lessons, assignments, and assessments through Digital Academy.
- Digital Academy is also our new Student Information System. (replacing SchoolSpeak)
- Parents will be onboarded before the start of school

- All communication will be sent through Digital Academy.

Our Faith and Catholic Identity

- Students that participate in the On Campus Five Days option will attend Mass once a week while in the connected classroom.
- Students who participate in the CCaH option will be strongly encouraged to participate in the 8:30 mass once a week which will be live streamed.
- In addition to religion classes students will have opportunities to: be involved in virtual service learning projects, create their own service learning projects at home, write letters to our needy in the community, keep prayer journals, weekly rosary time, share praise and worship songs/videos, after attending mass virtually share and discuss the homilies/readings

Dear Parents,

We have shared a great deal of information with you. We understand if it seems overwhelming. Saint Matthew The Apostle Catholic School understands the wide range of emotion that is undoubtedly taking place regarding the return to school. These are unprecedented times in our community, and our world. Please be patient, please be understanding, please pray daily for our school community. Accept what you are feeling, and have compassion for yourself, then extend that compassion toward others.

Please be reassured that we have spent countless hours developing plans that prioritizes the health and safety of our students and staffuly.

There are many changes to accept, there will be an adjustment period for everyone. More changes may present themselves during this pandemic, we all need to be flexible, thoughtful, prayerful, and trust in the Lord.

We are in this together, and TOGETHER WE WILL GET THROUGH THIS SITUATION.

May God Bless you, your family, our entire school community, and all Catholic schools throughout the Diocese of Columbus Ohio.

John R. Rathburn, Principal
Stephanie Paul-Tiberio, Assistant Principal
Father Theodore Sill, Pastor
The Saint Matthew The Apostle Catholic School Task Force

