



St. Monica Academy In-Person Learning Plan 2020-2021

Our school, like all organizations, has been impacted in numerous ways by the COVID-19 Pandemic. The purpose of this document is to lay out our plan to safely reopen St. Monica Academy for in-person instruction to all families for the 2020-2021 school year. It has been created with careful consideration for all students and staff as we move forward with this school year. The plan has identified key areas that St. Monica Academy will engage in to reopen our school. The plan below follows the most recent guidelines from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Office of Catholic Schools (OCS), and the Archdiocese of Chicago. The planning process included consultation with two local teams made of faculty, parish staff, and school parents. Any further modifications will follow the guidance of these agencies and the OCS. Please read through the information to help guide you during this school year.

The Plan is Built on the Following Guiding Principles:

1. The safety and well-being of all our students and faculty is and will remain the first priority.
2. Everything possible will be done to timely reopen our school buildings and provide a safe, faith-filled, high-quality education for our students.
3. The current situation in Illinois remains fragile. While much has been achieved over the past several months, there remains the potential that the gains could be lost if we are not collectively prudent and cautious with how we proceed.
4. The trust our school families place in us is sacred and as with all aspects of our ministry, our reopening efforts will move forward with complete transparency and clear, open lines of communication.
5. We call all people within our communities to exercise faithful citizenship and ask that each family take personal responsibility for the common good as well as their own safety.

School Calendar/Hours - School will begin on Monday, August 24 as per our school calendar. We will follow this calendar for the school year for in-person learning. The only modification to the calendar at this time will be August 24, 25, and 26. These dates will be half days for grades 1-8 to help our students, families, and staff gradually adjust to the many changes and procedures outlined in this plan. Full days will begin August 27 and 28 for grades 1-8.

Orientations will be held for Kindergarten on August 25. Preschool Orientations will be held on August 25 and 26. Preschool will have half days on August 27 and 28. Kindergarten will have half days on August 26, 27, and 28. There is no change to our school hours: 8:15 - 3:00 p.m. Before and after care is available from 7:00 - 8:15 a.m. and 3:00 - 6:00 p.m. with additional details below.

Key Principle (The Cohort Model) - Homerooms are cohorts and need to remain separate throughout the school day. Classroom furniture will be arranged to maximize space between students. Couches and carpets will need to be removed or areas closed so students cannot use them to properly social distance themselves.

Masks - All children, teachers, and visitors must wear facemasks in the school building, except for eating, outside recess, and outside instructional time. Social distancing of 6 feet must be maintained at outside recess or outside classroom instruction. Masks need to be placed in a paper bag during snack, lunch, recess, and outside instruction time. Masks may be moved aside for short sips of water bottles. Disposable masks cannot be reused. Students should have at least two reusable masks at school and should have them washed daily. There will be information and instructions on mask wearing, social distancing, and other safety measures sent home to all of our families in the weeks ahead.

Additional PPE/Signage - St. Monica Academy has ordered 60 one-gallon bottles of gel hand-sanitizer for student check-in, classrooms, gym, cafeteria, and restrooms, 14 non-contact thermometers, 20 face shields, 500 adult size back-up masks, 500 children size back-up masks, 2,000 gloves supply, 12 safety posters, 12 wash your hands posters, and 100 social distancing floor decals.

Additional Cleaning/Disinfecting Supplies - We will have a dispenser installed for two cases of lemon disinfectant – a spray-and-wipe disinfectant for cleaning on high-touch areas throughout the school. There will be one case of multi-surface cleaner – a spray-and-wipe glass and hard surface cleaner, and one case of degreaser – a spray-and-wipe heavy duty cleaner for school use. In addition, there will be two cases of floor cleaner and a neutral floor cleaner for use in a mop bucket. We will have 50 spray bottles for cleaning and disinfecting classrooms. Approved microfiber cloths will be used with the cleaning/disinfectant supplies. These supplies are for usage in classrooms during the day and will complement our custodial cleaning and sanitizing supplies and practices already in place.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Procedures - St. Monica Academy will have enhanced cleaning and disinfecting procedures in place for our cleaning staff especially in areas of high touch areas like door knobs, bathrooms, light switches, lunchroom, etc. There will be no sharing of classroom supplies, pencils, crayons, markers, etc. Equipment that must be shared must be used by as few students as possible and disinfected before and after each use. Common rooms and areas used by different cohorts, the religious education program, scouts, etc. will require sanitation after usage of a different group.

Infection Protocols - When a student is sick, they must stay home. It is vital for families to make the necessary sacrifices to keep students home when exhibiting symptoms for COVID-19: persistent cough, extreme fatigue, fever or chills, headache, measured temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher, nausea or vomiting, new loss of taste or smell, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, and sore throat. A 14 day quarantine for any positive COVID-19 cases will be required. Those in close contact need to be quarantined for 14 days from the last contact with a positive case and will result in the entire cohort being placed on quarantine. Siblings of anyone diagnosed with COVID-19 will need to be quarantined for a 14 day period as well. Children whose parents or family members have been diagnosed with COVID-19 will be quarantined for 14 days. Close contact means the individual was within 6 feet of the individual with symptoms for more than 15 minutes. Students may return to school only after the 14 day quarantine, 3 days with no fever, display no symptoms, and a doctor's note.

Hand Hygiene/No Sharing - Students must wash their hands and/or use hand sanitizer as often as possible throughout the day especially before and after lunch, recess, and specials classes. Signage will encourage proper hand washing. There is no sharing of supplies, snacks, or birthday treats at this time to lessen transmission. Students will need to have their own water bottles as shared drinking fountains will not be utilized. Water bottle fillers will be in operation to refill bottles as needed, but nozzles will not be available.

Uniforms - Students will be able to wear gym uniforms, spirit wear, or school colors until further notice. In addition, each Friday will be "dress down" days for the time being. We want the students to be as comfortable as possible, given the fact they will be wearing masks throughout the day. It is also important to wear clean clothes every day. There will be no re-wearing of clothes for a second day in a row if they haven't been washed.

Social and Physical Distancing - Classrooms and other spaces within the building will be configured to maximize the physical space between students. Visual reminders such as signage will be placed throughout the school to reinforce this need.

Building Traffic - One way signs will be placed on floors and signs on walls to remind everyone of social distancing and mask requirements. Teachers should use outside pathways when moving or traveling if possible. Arrival and dismissal doors will be separate for each cohort (grade) in the school. An entry and exit door for each homeroom will be assigned below by using all doors available in the school including the athletic entrance, gym doors, and doors on the east side of the building. We need 12 doors or entrances for each cohort. We ask that parents not congregate outside during arrival and dismissal and masks are to be worn when in close proximity to others or the school entrances. Multiple classes cannot enter together. Times may be staggered slightly to avoid simultaneous entry and exit through doors and hallway passage. Cohorts need to be 30 feet apart and individuals of the same cohort need to maintain 6 feet of social distancing outside. Upon entering the school, all students, teachers, and staff need to wear a facemask.

Coming In to School/Dismissal - Entrance ways for each grade have been created, which can be adjusted if needed. Students will need to have a mask on when they are outside the building by their entrance door. PreK3 will use their own outside classroom door in Room #3. PreK4, Ms. Berthold's class will use their exterior door in room #3. PreK4, Mrs. Wegloski's class will use the outside door in room #8 to stage and bring students to their Room #13 classroom. Kindergarten use the outside door their own outside classroom door in Room #1. 1st Grade uses their own outside classroom door in Room #4. 2nd Grade uses the entrance at Carmen & Mont Clare. 3rd Grade uses the Carmen Garden entrance. 4th Grade uses Beyenka Hall entrance. 5th grade uses room #6 entrance and brings students to their Room #20 (upstairs). The 5th grade's classroom is now departmentalized with the junior high grades upstairs. 6th grade uses the main entrance. 7th grade uses the former PreK/Kindergarten Entrance. 8th Grade uses Athletic Entrance by vending machines. For dismissal, times will be staggered by 1-2 minutes to lessen mixing of groups as cohorts (classrooms) leave the building in grades 5-8. We are asking families not to congregate before or after school and wear masks during pickup when they are near the doorways. It is recommended that parents stay in their cars during dismissal time for upper elementary and junior high grades.

Movement in School - Students will travel in their cohorts (homerooms) during the school day. This also applies to our students participating in preparation of the morning announcements prior to school. Cohort based groups will be created to help with morning announcements. Classroom collections and communications folders materials will be using a pick-up system to limit students having to walk down to the office. Communications will be sent home once or twice per month, instead of weekly, depending on essential materials that need to be in hard copy form. Weekly email communications will be sent home through SchoolMessenger emails with attached documents as in past years. This will lessen the amount of paper needed to be sent home in the Wednesday communications folders. Some medications, asthma inhalers, etc. may be stored in classrooms in order to lessen student movement to the office and throughout the building. Other medications will have to remain in the office.

Teacher Movement - Teachers in departmentalized classes in junior high, upper elementary grades, and special classes will travel to each homeroom classroom rather than having students move classrooms. This will prevent cohorts from moving from class to class, which would require cleaning and disinfecting of each classroom after each period. Gym class will meet outside when weather permits and computer class will meet in the computer lab after cleaning and disinfecting takes place of keyboards, tables, and chairs after each class period.

Wellness/Temperature Checks - We will need 12 non-contact thermometers, one for each Homeroom and an additional one for the Office. The school has placed an order. Wellness or temperature checks will be performed upon entry into school at each entry point by the teacher, and students will be asked the following questions every day: "Do you feel sick in any way? Do you have a cough or fever?" Any student who identifies as feeling sick should be sent home. Masks must be worn. Anyone with a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher will be sent home.

Students with a fever during the school day will be supervised in an unused classroom, (the Isolation Room) in Room #2 until they can be picked up. Anyone sent home with a fever must have a doctor's note and be fever free for 72 hours in order to return to school. Each day, hand washing or use of hand sanitizer by each student is also required upon entry into the building and throughout the school day.

Lunch - Lunch may be eaten in classrooms, but classrooms can be combined with no more than 50 students in the lunchroom at one time. After each usage in the lunchroom, the area must be cleaned and disinfected before a new cohort enters. No sharing of food is permitted at any time. Below is the schedule of our lunch periods: Kindergarten and 1st grade will eat together at 11:00 a.m., but cohorts (homerooms) must be separated by 6 feet in the lunchroom. We currently have 33 students registered in these two grades, under the 50 maximum. Grades 2nd-4th grade will eat together during the 11:35 lunch period. There are currently 43 students in these grades, so we are under the 50 maximum. Preschool will have to eat in their classrooms with PreK aides supervising. Grade 5-8 will have two sections alternating weekly in the lunchroom and classrooms during the 12:15 lunch period. Grades 5 & 6 currently have 47 students and will alternate weekly with grades 7 & 8 in the Lunchroom and in their classrooms. 7th and 8th grade have 42 total students. Food Service Professionals (FSP), our hot lunch program will be available for students who order in advance.

Recess/Outside Instruction - Cohorts will need to be 30 feet or more away from other groups. Masks can be removed and placed in a paper bag when outside. Students must maintain social distancing of 6 feet within their cohort. A schedule will need to be completed to assign location and times for recess during the school day. The play set will not be available at recess until further notice. Teachers are being encouraged to plan lessons for outdoor learning with their class as weather permits. This will give the students time to be in the fresh air and help with their social-emotional health to spend more time outside in the fresh air.

Water Bottles - Students and employees may bring refillable water bottles from home. Water bottles should be kept closed when not in use. Students and employees may take short sips of water by moving their mask aside. If masks become wet due to drinking water, they should be immediately replaced.

Large Gatherings - Assemblies or other large gatherings will not be scheduled or be cancelled. We are working on a Mass schedule that will allow some grades to attend Mass weekly on an alternating basis or smaller groups. Field Trips are not permitted or being scheduled at this time.

Before & After Care - Extended Care is permitted. Students must be spaced out and separated by cohorts (homerooms). A larger room may be needed (lunch room, gym, Beyenka Hall, or outside) for social distancing and spacing depending on the number of students in extended care. Sharing of snacks and materials is not permitted.

E-learning (Virtual Learning) - Students that miss days or are quarantined in the short-term will have the option to complete their assignments through e-learning support from their teachers. Students who are not ready to return to the classrooms at the beginning of the year will have the option of a virtual academy program that is being developed. The Archdiocese has contracted with Catapult Learning, a third party. This program will still be available to families, but we are now creating our own SMA E-Learning Plan that will be conducted by our own teachers. Students will have the option to enroll in St. Monica Academy e-learning program or register with Catapult Learning for this long-term virtual learning program. When Information is complete, it will be sent out to families. If there are COVID-19 cases within our school, there is a possibility that some or all classrooms will revert to short term e-learning. We are following the guidelines of the Office of Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Chicago. We are not offering a hybrid model that combines in-class and e-learning at this time.

Mental Health/Social Emotional Learning - St. Monica Academy is committed to all of our students in this area. Due to COVID-19, students may need support now more than ever. We will support students with in-class lessons focused on the whole child. We have added a Family Life supplement to our RCL Benziger “Blest Are We” religion series for all grades that supports the emotional well-being of each child. We will also use enrichment time to help students work through the emotional and social challenges we are facing during this pandemic. Teachers will place a large amount of their time on these supports including resources from CASEL Care Initiative and additional materials provided on the Office of Catholic Schools resource page. We also have a school counselor, available to support the social and emotional needs of our students.

Athletics and Extracurricular Activities - We are awaiting further information and clarification from the Archdiocese and state regarding athletics and extracurricular activities. We will follow IDPH and ISBE requirements for social distancing, appropriate use of PPE, limiting numbers of individuals in one space, and cleaning and disinfecting to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The latest information is saying that fall sports may be cancelled. More information will be provided to parents when it becomes available. Athletics and extracurricular activities will follow the guidelines given to us by the Office of Catholic Schools and the Illinois Elementary School Association (IESA).

Band - Rehearsals for small groups (15 or fewer) may take place for non-wind instruments such as percussion, only if students are using social distancing. Wind instruments, brass and woodwinds are not permitted on site. Rehearsals must occur virtually for wind instruments.

Playground - Playground equipment will be closed for student use depending on guidance throughout the year. If playground equipment is closed, areas will be marked off and inaccessible for students. If playground equipment is opened, it will be disinfected between usage of another cohort.

School Pictures - Picture Day - Picture Day should follow these guidelines: Cohorts should not be mingled for photos (cohorts should generally go to pictures together vs. individual students). Social distancing (more than six feet) with the photographer must be maintained. Masks may be removed by students during pictures. However, they should be placed in designated and individualized paper bags. Students must remain at least six feet distant from all others when masks are removed. Any surface that is touched by students during photos should be cleaned between every use. The photography area needs to be generally cleaned between cohorts.

Visitors - All visitors will be subject to health screening and compliance with masks, social distancing, and hygiene guidelines.