



• ARCHDIOCESE OF DETROIT •
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

School Reopening Plan FAQ

HEALTH AND SAFETY FAQ



Q: WHAT DOES “REOPENING OUR SCHOOLS” REALLY MEAN?

A: Gathering as a school community is an integral part of Catholic education. Our plan is to reopen our school buildings to students this fall. This means that all students are welcome to return to classes for face-to-face instruction. We have developed an in-depth plan that addresses numerous aspects of the reopening process, and how schools will function once reopened.

Q: WILL STUDENTS BE SAFE WHEN SCHOOL IS REOPENED?

A: Safety is always our top priority in Catholic schools. In constructing our reopening plan, we have closely studied and are implementing guidance from medical professionals as well as federal and state authorities.

Q: WHO DECIDES WHEN A SCHOOL HAS MET THE REQUIREMENTS TO REOPEN? WHEN WILL THIS HAPPEN?

A: Our plan includes specific requirements that schools must meet in order to reopen. The AOD has formed two “Reopening Teams,” one for Health and Safety and a second for Academics. The plans developed by these two teams follow the requirements established by the MI Safe Schools: Michigan’s 2020-21 Return to School Roadmap and have been approved by the AOD and will serve as guidelines for schools in their reopening plan.

Q: WHY DO FAITH-BASED SCHOOLS HAVE TO FOLLOW THE REQUIREMENTS FROM THE STATE OF MICHIGAN?

A: Faith based schools must follow State issued Executive Orders unless they interfere with religious beliefs.

Q: WILL ALL STUDENTS BE ALLOWED TO RETURN TO SCHOOL AT THE SAME TIME?

A: Yes. Our plan provides for the return of all Catholic school students for full-day instruction.

Q: WILL STUDENTS AND STAFF NEED TO WEAR MASKS AT SCHOOL?

A: Yes. As per directives of the state, all students in grades 6-12 will need to wear masks while at school, unless face coverings cannot be medically tolerated as documented through written and signed verification by a physician. Masks may be removed for brief periods of time under certain circumstances (such as outdoor play or lunch). However, when masks are removed, students must remain physically distant from one another.

All students in grades kindergarten through 5 will not be required to wear facial coverings in their classrooms, unless (1) students do not remain with their cohort class throughout the school day and (2) come into close contact with students in another class.

All staff will wear facial coverings when in classrooms, except (1) during meals and (2) unless face coverings cannot be medically tolerated as documented through written and signed verification by a physician.

Q: WHY ARE STUDENTS IN GRADES 6-12 REQUIRED TO WEAR FACIAL COVERINGS WHILE STUDENTS IN GRADES K-5 DON'T HAVE THIS SAME REQUIREMENT?

A: Both the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization recommend cloth masks for the general public. Health experts say the evidence is clear that masks can help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and that the more people wearing masks, the better.

Health experts have also determined that students in grades K-5 face a greater health risk while wearing a face mask. Students in this grade range have a low risk of serious complications from COVID-19 infection and aren't expected to reliably wear face masks to be an effective barrier for an extended period of time.

Q: DO I NEED TO PURCHASE MASKS FOR MY CHILD?

A: Yes. We are asking all parents to purchase masks for their child. Parents may opt to buy disposable or reusable masks. For disposable masks, each mask must be thrown away at the end of every school day. Reusable masks must be cleaned after every use and students should bring at least one extra reusable mask to school. Please refer to your individual school's policy regarding the purchasing of masks. The information for each school may be found on their website or in their uniform policy.

Q: CAN FACE SHIELDS BE USED INSTEAD OF MASKS?

A: At this time we do not have clear guidance from the State agencies. We will continue to monitor this issue and share news as it becomes available.

Q: WILL TEACHERS TEACH CHILDREN HOW TO USE MASKS?

A: Yes. We know that students will need training to learn how to properly wear and remove masks. We will spend time at the beginning of the year helping children learn how to safely keep masks in place. You can help with this at home by practicing with your child.

Q: WILL STUDENTS BE REQUIRED TO PHYSICALLY DISTANCE AT SCHOOL?

A: When students are with their class or cohort, they are to remain as far apart as feasible.

Q: SHOULD I TAKE MY CHILD'S TEMPERATURE EVERY DAY BEFORE SCHOOL?

A: Yes. A high fever is a key symptom of COVID-19. Parents should take their child's temperature every day before their child is taken to school. If your child has a fever of 100.4°F or higher, your child is to be kept home from school. You are to contact your child's doctor and the school's main office. Similarly, you should ask your child if he/she has any of the other [symptoms](#) of COVID-19, such as a sore throat, coughing, or nausea. If your child complains of these symptoms, you must keep him/her home and contact your doctor and the school office. If a child presents with these symptoms at school a parent will be contacted to come pick them up immediately

Q: HOW WILL DROP OFF AND PICK-UP BE HANDLED?

A: We are asking each school to carefully evaluate drop off and pick up procedures. Schools will use various entrances and exits to minimize contact between student cohorts. Parents will be asked not to congregate near school doors. School administration will communicate specific drop off and pick up procedures to you ahead of the start of school.

In addition, when students enter school every day, they will be asked to participate in two tasks. Specifically:

1. Students will immediately wash their hands with soap or use hand sanitizer.
2. Students will be asked if they are feeling well.

Q: WHAT DOES THE PLAN SAY ABOUT SAFETY AND CLEANLINESS REQUIREMENTS FOR SCHOOL BUILDINGS?

A: Our plan includes very specific requirements for the ongoing cleaning and disinfection of our school buildings. Generally speaking, buildings will be cleaned and disinfected regularly and frequently, with a particular focus on high-traffic areas and common surfaces. Windows and/or vents should be opened to maximize air flow.

Q: HOW WILL LUNCH TAKE PLACE WHEN SCHOOL REOPENS?

A: If cafeterias are used and six feet of distance between students is not possible, meal times will be staggered and/or physical barriers will be used. Serving and cafeteria staff will use barrier protection

including gloves, face shields, and surgical masks. Classrooms or outdoor areas can be used for students to eat meals at school.

Q: WHAT ABOUT RECESS?

A: Schools may still conduct recess, but schools must fulfill defined safety requirements.

Q: CAN I STILL VOLUNTEER AT SCHOOL?

A: Schools will minimize the number of volunteers this year in an effort to mitigate risk.

Q: WILL EXTENDED CARE (BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL) BE AVAILABLE THIS YEAR?

A: Schools may continue to offer extended care and will follow LARA Regulations.

Q: MY CHILD AND/OR ANOTHER MEMBER OF MY HOUSEHOLD IS IN AN AT-RISK GROUP FOR COVID-19. SHOULD I SEND MY CHILD TO SCHOOL?

A: Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has [defined conditions in which certain people may be more at risk for severe illness through COVID-19](#). If your child or another member of your household is in an at-risk group, we encourage you to speak to your doctor. Ultimately you should decide whether it is safe for your child to attend school.

Q: IS IT OKAY FOR MY FAMILY TO TRAVEL OUT OF STATE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC?

A: We recommend that you not travel out of Michigan during the current pandemic. However, if travel is necessary, we encourage you to become familiar with the CDC's Travel Guidelines. If you or a member of your household travels to another country or to a state identified by the CDC as having a surge in COVID-19 cases, your school may ask you to wait for 14 days until returning your child to school.

Q: WHAT HAPPENS IF THERE IS A COVID-19 SURGE IN SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN AND THE STATE IMPOSES MORE RESTRICTIONS ON SCHOOLS?

A: If a COVID-19 surge occurs, we will work closely with state officials to determine whether we can continue face-to-face instruction. If necessary, we will return to at-home virtual instruction.

Infection Protocols FAQ

Q: WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19?

A: The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has identified several [symptoms](#) of COVID-19, including high fever (above 100.4°F), **new or unusual** sore throat, coughing, nausea, headache, muscle aches, loss of taste or smell, runny nose, fatigue, diarrhea and difficulty breathing.

Q: WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY CHILD HAS SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19?

A: If your child shows **new or unusual** [symptoms](#) of COVID-19, keep your child home and contact your physician immediately. Your doctor may ask that your child participate in a COVID-19 test. You also must alert your school's main office. If the symptoms occur during the school day, your child will be immediately sent to a quarantine area and you will be contacted to pick up your child from school.

Q: MY CHILD HAD COVID-19-LIKE SYMPTOMS, BUT TESTED NEGATIVE FOR COVID-19. WHEN CAN HE/SHE RETURN TO SCHOOL?

A: If your child does not have COVID-19, but has another illness, please keep your child home until they are symptom free for at least 24 hours.

Q: WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY CHILD TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19?

A: Immediately contact your doctor for additional instructions. You must also contact your school's main office and they will contact the local health department. Do not send your child to school.

Q: WHEN CAN A STUDENT RETURN TO SCHOOL AFTER RECEIVING A POSITIVE COVID-19 TEST?

A: If a student tests positive for COVID-19, the student must isolate and not return to school until they have met [CDC's criteria to discontinue home isolation](#). This includes:

1. Three or more days without a high fever;
2. A reduction of other COVID symptoms by at least 75 percent; and
3. At least 14 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

Q: WHAT SHOULD I DO IF A MEMBER OF MY HOUSEHOLD (WHO IS NOT MY CHILD) TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19?

A: Immediately contact your school's main office. Your school will contact the local health department and they will provide you specific instructions on how long your child should be kept home.

Q: WHAT HAPPENS IF MY CHILD’S TEACHER TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19?

A: Should any employee have COVID-19 symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19, we will follow the same protocols used for students (see section on “child tested positive”) and make all parents aware that a teacher has tested positive. All students taught by that teacher will be closely monitored for COVID-19 symptoms and schools will follow local health department guidance.

Q: WHAT HAPPENS IF ANOTHER STUDENT IN MY CHILD’S CLASS TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19?

A: Schools will follow the same protocols used for teachers (see above) and make all parents aware of positive test(s). Schools will follow local health department guidance.

Q: COULD MY CHILD’S SCHOOL BUILDING BE CLOSED DOWN DUE TO COVID-19 THIS YEAR?

A: Schools are implementing protocols and procedures to create a safe and healthy environment in the coming year. However, if numerous cases appear in a single school, resulting in the isolation of multiple classes/cohorts, we may need to close the school building and transition all students to virtual learning for a time. Parents will be updated regularly should that need arise. Schools will follow local health department guidance.

Academics and Programming FAQ

Q: WILL MY CHILD’S CURRICULUM BE CHANGED THIS YEAR?

A: Schools will still deliver high-quality instruction in core subjects (religion, language arts, math, science and social studies). Special requirements will be in place for departmentalized classes and special area subjects (see sections below). The implementation of safety and health requirements (outlined earlier in this FAQ) will create new complexities in instruction, but our commitment remains to provide your child the best possible faith-based education.

Q: WILL MY CHILD’S CLASSROOM LOOK DIFFERENT?

A: We have instructed schools to spread out desks and tables in classrooms as much as possible. In order to maximize floor space, we’ve asked teachers to remove non-essential furniture and other items. We have also asked that desks and tables be arranged so that they face the front of the room. These steps were taken to minimize risk of any infection in the classroom.

Q: WILL STUDENTS SHARE SCHOOL SUPPLIES?

A: No. We are asking schools to ensure that students do not share school supplies (e.g., books, crayons, technology, etc.), including for such subjects as art and music. Exceptions may be made for activities outdoors (such as outdoor physical education classes). If it is impossible to avoid sharing supplies, such as computers in a computer lab, such supplies will be cleaned after every use.

Q: WILL STUDENTS STILL CHANGE CLASSES?

A: Many schools offer departmentalization, in which students change classes for core subjects (religion, language arts, math, science and social studies). If students change classrooms, desks and shared equipment will be cleaned and disinfected after every cohort.

Q: WILL SCHOOLS STILL OFFER CLASSES IN SPECIAL SUBJECT AREAS (E.G., ART, MUSIC, PE, ETC.)?

A: Yes. As with departmentalization (see previous question), we will ask special subject area teachers to travel to each class' homeroom for instruction whenever possible. This will be particularly likely for such subjects as art, music, health and foreign language. If students visit spaces such as the gymnasium, computer/STEM lab or library, the room will be cleaned and disinfected after every cohort.

Q: WILL STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN FIELD TRIPS?

A: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, schools will not participate in in-person field trips while the District is in Phase 4. After Phase 4, the schools will follow the guidance of health professionals on the feasibility of future field trips.

Q: I NEED TO MEET WITH A TEACHER OR MY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL. CAN THESE MEETINGS OCCUR?

A: Yes. These meetings can take place virtually via phone or video chat.

Q: WILL SCHOOL MASSES STILL TAKE PLACE?

A: The archdiocese has defined a specific plan for parishes that allows for the celebration of Mass under very specific conditions. Schools will be asked to follow this plan, in close coordination with the local pastor and parish, in determining how/whether Masses may be celebrated.

Q: HOW WILL EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES BE IMPACTED THIS YEAR?

A: Our plan provides guidance on specific extracurricular activities. Highlights of this guidance include (by activity):

- Athletics: We are awaiting further information from the state regarding athletics. More information will be provided to parents as it is known.
- Band: Rehearsals for small groups may take place for non-wind instruments (e.g., percussion, strings, etc.). Students must be physically distant. Rehearsals must occur virtually or outdoors for wind instruments (woodwinds and brass).
- Choir, Drama/School Play, Christmas Program: Due to ongoing health concerns, we are asking schools to conduct such programs virtually or cancel them for the coming school year.
- Other Activities: For other activities (e.g., robotics, debate, etc.), schools must meet specific health and safety requirements. If such requirements cannot be met, these activities are to be conducted virtually or canceled.

Tuition and Fees

Q: WILL SCHOOLS STILL COLLECT TUITION THIS YEAR?

A: Yes. While this school year may look different, our schools will continue to provide a rigorous academic experience while supporting the moral and spiritual development of each student. Our Catholic schools depend upon tuition revenue to pay our employees who do this work and support other school-related expenses.

Q: I AM HAVING DIFFICULTY PAYING TUITION, AS MY OWN WORKPLACE HAS BEEN IMPACTED BY COVID-19. WHAT DO I DO?

A: We know that some families may have difficulties paying tuition due to the loss of pay during workplace closures and our schools are ready to support those in need of assistance. If this is happening to you, please contact your school's principal. We understand your situation and will do our very best to work with you.

Q: WILL FEES BE CHANGED THIS YEAR?

A: Each school develops their own fees based upon their own local needs. Fees may be adjusted if a program or activity has been directly impacted by COVID-19. For example, if a fee is collected for a particular field trip, it is likely that the fee will not be collected this year (as field trips will not occur).

Distance Learning Recommendations

Q: IS EACH SCHOOL IN THE AOD *REQUIRED* TO FOLLOW THE DISTANCE LEARNING RECOMMENDATIONS?

A: Archdiocesan schools have been instructed to review distance learning recommendations with their leadership teams to align their school-level plans as much as possible to the recommendations.

Q: WHY ISN'T THERE A HYBRID PLAN?

A: Based on feedback from the End-of-Year Parent Survey, as well as insight from both the Academic Excellence Committee and Subcommittee, the need for providing childcare was identified as the greatest obstacle, as a great number of our parents and school personnel are working parents to school-age children. Schools, however, are permitted to create a hybrid plan at the local level if it would best serve their community.

Q: IS THERE AN OPTION FOR ONLINE LEARNING IN THE EVENT A FAMILY DOES NOT WISH TO SEND THEIR CHILD TO SCHOOL?

A: At this time, this option is not available in all AOD schools. However, some schools (typically high schools) who have already had experience with offering virtual classes prior to the pandemic, may work with parents to offer such options. Regarding families or children who may be immuno-compromised, principals have been advised to work with families in developing a practical solution to accommodate such a need.