St. Mary Catholic School
Reopening Plan Fall 2020:

Restore
Reimagine
Redesign
# Table of Contents

State Requirements for Reopening Schools.................................................................4

Resources Used........................................................................................................4

Safety Requirements...............................................................................................4

Reopening Guiding Principles................................................................................4

5 Task Forces for School Re-entry.........................................................................5

Logistics and Planning...........................................................................................6-12

Creating and Maintaining Community.................................................................12-13

Curriculum & Instruction.......................................................................................13-16

  Option 1 - Students Return Face to Face Instruction.......................................15

  Option 2 - Blended Hybrid Learning...............................................................15-16

  Option 3 - Continuous/Remote Learning.........................................................16

Promoting Catholic Identity................................................................................16

Technology Support..............................................................................................17-18

Focus on Partnership............................................................................................18

Frequently Asked Questions.................................................................................19-24
Considerations for Opening Schools in Washington State:

- Professional Development
- Safety Training and Orientation
- Leading with Social and Emotional Needs
- Academic Priorities
- Diagnostics/Screening
- Essential Learning Standards
- Feedback in Virtual Setting if needed
- Classroom Management
- Student transitions
- Community and Media Partnerships
- Family and Student Voice
- Facilities

Resources Used:

- OSPI outline for reopening of schools
- “Leading with Hope” by Loyola University
- 2020 Spring Surveys from Staff and Families
- Department of Health
- Catholic Diocese of Spokane
- Benchmarking with school districts across the state and country
- Input from Parish Leadership and School Advisory Council
- St. Mary Reopening Task Forces

Reopening Guiding Principles for St. Mary:

- St. Mary mission statement
- Ensuring the safety and wellness of students and staff
- Delivery of high-quality instruction to students, regardless of delivery model
- Equity and Access
- Optimizing use of resources (spaces and materials)
- Community and stakeholder engagement in plan development
- Understanding many families have multiple students in our system
- Professional development to support implementation of reopening
- Considering emotional and social wellness
Safety Requirements:

As outlined by OSPI and Spokane County Health, we will be following these requirements to reopen schools in the safest way possible:

- 6-foot spacing in classrooms, gym, church, etc.
- Class sizes and staff adjustments have been made to accommodate large class sizes
- Cloth face coverings for staff, students and volunteers (and face shields for certain staff/students and in certain situations)
- Frequent hand-washing and sanitizing
- Screening for COVID-19 symptoms before coming to school (The Diocese is working on an efficient process for this)
- Limited transitions throughout the school day

5 Planning Domains for St. Mary Catholic School Re-entry

The five domains are the school programming factors that should be addressed when planning for a return to school. It is important to note that this guide does not supplant or replace the advice and directives from governmental and medical agencies. It is only meant to serve as a supplement and to help to frame planning through an educational lens.

1. Logistics and Planning
   - This domain encompasses the basic operational aspects of the school. Included in this domain are safety procedures, arrival/dismissal, procedures for online learning and other aspects of schooling.

2. Creating and Maintaining Community
   - This domain addresses the social/emotional aspect of school. Significant concerns include how schools develop systems of welcoming and belonging for students and their families. Given the potentiality for new school structures, the process of establishment and maintenance of community norms and rituals requires attention.

3. Curriculum and Instruction
   - Teaching and learning are prominent functions of schools. This domain entails the teaching and learning aspects of the re-entry response. Responses must include the learning context, whether school will be face-to-face, virtual, or a combination of both.

4. Promoting Catholic Identity in Remote Spaces
   - Catholic schools are, by definition, academically excellent and strong in Catholic identity. This must also be true for Catholic schools in virtual spaces. Catholic schools must continue to be authentically Catholic and serve as an avenue for faith formation.

5. Technology Support
   - This domain addresses not only infrastructure issues but also the use of technology as a tool for instruction. Inherent in this domain are access and equity issues. A comprehensive approach includes both high-tech and no-tech responses.
LOGISTICS AND PLANNING

This domain encompasses the basic operational aspects of the school. Included in this domain are safety procedures, arrival/dismissal routines, sick policies, social distancing protocols and spacing, cleaning and sanitizing, procedures for online learning and other aspects of schooling, etc. Through logistics and planning, St. Mary will respond to the operational aspects of a return to school in the fall including, but not limited to, the following:

Priorities:

- Entrance protocols and health checks
- Class sizes and staff adjustments have been made to accommodate large class sizes
- Based on K-8 enrollment numbers, teachers have moved classrooms to accommodate social distancing requirements from OSPI and the Department of Health
- The facility team and teachers are in the process of removing additional furniture and equipment to meet the social distancing requirements
- Procurement of necessary equipment for additional cleaning

Schedules and Curriculum:

- Adoption of a new middle school schedule
- Jr. high students will be placed in a more “cohort” learning environment for language arts/literature to accommodate less movement for classes
- The master schedule has been adjusted so that elective class times have been shortened and additional minutes have been added to core classes like math and reading
- Flex-time has been created for electives, project-based learning and academic support
**Recess and Lunch:**

Modified recess and lunch schedules have been extended to accommodate additional cleaning breaks and social distancing. The schedule will be finalized and made available in the coming weeks.

**Face Covering Requirement:**

Students will be required to wear face coverings during the school day except at recess, lunch, and P.E.

**Entrance Protocols:**

These routines and procedures will be subject to the guidelines set by local governmental agencies. St. Mary has created systems and procedures to handle the daily routines of the school and control access to the building including a staggered start time and dismissal time, and 5 different entrances for students to access the school. More information will be provided in the coming weeks regarding logistics and timing.

**Health Checks:**

Screening: Both DOH and L&I require students and staff to receive a health screening before entering a school every day. The health screening process will include an attestation confirming the child or staff member does not have fever, shortness of breath, or cough. School personnel will be looking for visual signs of illness (flushed cheeks, rapid or difficulty breathing, fatigue, and cough) throughout the school day.

**Screening Methodology:**

Staff and students with any illness must stay home. Schools will ask the parents or guardians the following questions:

1. Does your student have any of the following symptoms:
   - A cough
   - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
   - A fever of 100.4°F or higher or a sense of having a fever
   - A sore throat
   - Chills
   - New loss of taste or smell
- Muscle or body aches
- Nausea/vomiting/diarrhea
- Congestion/running nose – not related to seasonal allergies
- Unusual fatigue

2. Does anyone in your household have any of the above symptoms?

3. Has your student been in close contact with anyone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19?

4. Has your student had any medication to reduce a fever before coming to school?

If the answer to these questions above is “yes”, the student must be excluded from school. If the answer to all of the above questions is “no,” the school will check the student for signs of being sick, such as flushed cheeks or tiredness.

**Hygiene:**

Good hygiene practices limit exposure to all viruses. These practices include:

- Washing hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Use hand sanitizer with at least 70% alcohol if soap and water are unavailable
- Avoid touching the eyes, nose, and mouth
- Cover the mouth and nose or use the inside of your elbow when you cough or sneeze
- Teaching students how to practice good hygiene practice

**Staff & Student Illness Protocol:**

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be required of all staff and students in order to minimize exposure to COVID-19. This includes masks, and/or face shields while teaching and learning and gloves while disinfecting surfaces. If an employee or student becomes ill or exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 at work, they will be instructed to go home and contact a healthcare provider. If diagnosed with COVID-19, a student or employee may return to work when criteria below are met:

- At least 3 days (72 hours) has passed since recovery (no fever without use of fever-reducing medications)
- Local Health Department or Health Care Provider confirms release to return safely to work or school.

If an employee or student has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and does not get evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, St. Mary will assume the employee or student has COVID-19 and they may not return to work or school until the criteria listed above have been met.

If a student or employee has a temperature higher than 100 degrees or note a change in one of the screening questions, they are not allowed to enter the building.
If an employee or student is not allowed in the building, the designated contact person will contact the employee or the parents for further discussion. If, based on the screening and discussion, the employee or student is not allowed to return to the building, options will be discussed with the employee or the parents of the student and any recommended actions will be documented. These actions may include but not be limited to the following:

1. Quarantining at home for 14 days
   a. If teaching faculty or students are quarantined, accommodations may be made for remote instruction and learning if they are well enough to work/learn at home.
2. Seeing a doctor or going to the hospital
3. Obtaining a COVID-19 test
4. Maintaining communication with school administration

**Social Distancing:**

*Physical Distancing in School Buildings*

Upon the return to school, it will be important to determine how social distancing will be taught and supported during the school day. According to the Department of Health (DOH), schools must arrange physical spaces to accommodate six feet of distance when all students and staff are seated. Both DOH and Labor and Industry (L&I) recognize that some tasks and movements will require proximities closer than six feet, including passing in the hallway or a teacher moving around in the classroom. Face coverings combined with physical distancing increases health and safety which are DOH requirements.

St. Mary will implement teaching protocols to develop social distancing. Protocols will be explicit and directly taught to students for wearing face masks and movement throughout the school building.

St. Mary will consider what space utilization would look like in a social distancing world. We will also use scheduling to minimize contact for hallways, restrooms, and the library. As a school, we will strive to keep students in the same groupings throughout the day to encourage minimizing mixing student groups.

*Planning for Social Distancing Outside of School Building*

School Masses will require their own protocol that will maintain the appropriate social distancing. Planning for extra-curricular activities will depend on the recommendations of the local sports organizations and the Department of Health. Social distancing protocols for use in school should be adjusted for outside of school, on sports fields, in gyms, and at recess. Extra-curricular events may not be able to allow for audiences other
than officials and school supervision. Attendance of parents and general community at school events may be suspended depending on local regulations.

**Visitor Policy:**

Until further notice, parents, guardians, and other visitors may not enter the school building during the day without an appointment. Escorting students into the school building at the start of the day and out of the school will not be allowed. With the exception of Pre-K3, Pre-K4 and TK--who will be able to accompany their children into the gymnasium where our arrival and dismissal staging will take place daily--all other visits will need to be scheduled ahead of time (school payments, uniform exchange, SCRIP pick-up, teacher and admin meetings, etc). Our plan for volunteers will be disseminated at a later date.

**Face Coverings:**

DOH requires everyone in a school building or on a school bus to wear a face covering. Students may use a face shield instead of a cloth face covering in the classroom; however, cloth face coverings have a superior ability to capture more droplets from speaking, coughing, sneezing, etc.

Staff may use a face shield instead of a cloth face covering while teaching. For all other activities (staff meetings, hallway monitoring, playground or educare supervision, etc.), staff must wear a cloth face covering unless they fit into one of the exemption categories.

According to DOH, a cloth face covering is fabric that covers the nose and mouth. It can be:

- A sewn mask secured with ties or straps around the head or behind the ears.
- Multiple layers of fabric tied around a person’s head.
- Made from a variety of materials, such as fleece, cotton, or linen.
- Factory-made or made from household items.

Cloth face covering must be securely placed over the nose and mouth and stretched from ear to ear to be effective. Cloth face coverings should not be worn when eating or drinking and should be washed after each wearing.

St. Mary will educate students on safety compliance, implement positive behavior interventions, recommend alternative face coverings, if necessary, such as a face shield instead of a mask.
Cleaning:

St. Mary Catholic School has developed effective infection-control practices while adhering to EPA approved products. Research has found that a thorough, ongoing cleaning program is the best strategy to prevent disease transmission. Sanitization and disinfection activities play an important part of keeping our students safe at school along with social distancing, preventative hygiene, and facial coverings. Among the considerations listed above, St. Mary has accomplished the following:

- Ensured that maintenance staff have the appropriate training to execute the deep cleaning protocols necessary to maintain the school
- Procurement of the necessary supplies (sanitizer, temperature check machines, replacement face masks, face shields, infrared thermometers, etc.)
- Created cleaning protocols for high touch areas throughout the day.
- Development of a new, more intensive, cleaning protocol daily
- Acquisition of a fogger for deep cleaning and disinfecting
- Contracted with a new cleaning service (doubling the hours and manpower devoted to cleaning daily)
- Installation of plexiglass barriers in school and church
- Purchase of handwashing stations
- Purchase of touchless soap and paper towel dispensers in school and church
- Purchase of sanitizing towers and dispensers for use throughout campus
- Development of a new Maintenance Assistant position to enhance and support all the work of the Maintenance Supervisor

Other Categories that have been addressed to accommodate COVID protocols on campus:

Since parents will have limited access inside the school building, we have created modified schedules to support COVID protocols.

Modified School Hours:

Grades Pre-K 3 & Pre-K4--8:15am--11:15pm; TK--8:15am--3:15pm
Grades K-8--8:15am--3:15pm

Pre-K3 & Pre-K4 and TK Drop-off Schedule: 7:45-8:15 am in south side of gymnasium
Pre-K3 & Prep-K4 Pick-up Schedule: 11:15-11:45 in gym (unless staying for Educare)
TK Pick-up Schedule: 2:45-3:15 in gym (unless staying for Educare)

K-8 Drop-off schedule: 7:45-8:15 @ 1 of 5 drop sites
K-8 Morning Drop-off window: 7:45-8:15am
K-8 Afternoon Pick-up window: 2:45-3:15 at 1 of 5 pick-up sites (unless staying for Educare)
All families will be divided alphabetically into three 10 minute groupings for staggered drop and pick-up daily; Drop sites and traffic flow map will be sent out later this summer.

**Educare:**

The success of our before and after school Educare program relies heavily on staffing and worker availability. Unfortunately, St. Mary Catholic School will not be able to offer morning Educare for the 2020-2021 school year. At this time, we are planning on offering after-school Educare. Please be mindful that we may not be able to provide this service for all grade levels. Due to worker shortage, we may have limited capacity for this upcoming school year. Another consideration influencing our after school Educare capacity is limited space due to social distancing requirements. More information will be coming in the next two weeks.

**Sports & Activities:**

St. Mary Catholic School will follow the WIAA and Diocesan guidelines for offering and playing/engaging in school sports and activities. Currently, St. Mary is exploring the possibility of adding an ESports league at the school. More information about sports/activities/clubs offerings and guidelines will be made available as more information comes to light.

**CREATING AND MAINTAINING COMMUNITY**

This domain addresses the social and emotional aspect of school. Significant concerns include how we develop systems of welcoming and belonging for students and their families. From traditional special events, sports, activities, community gatherings, and fundraising efforts and events to new community engagement opportunities, the process of establishment and maintenance of community norms and rituals requires attention.

**Priorities:**

- Continue to offer Morning Assembly via livestream every Monday morning
- Establishment of plans for maintaining rituals and traditions virtually with task force and advancement director
- Adoption of new curriculum for social and emotional learning
- Intentionality of social and emotional time during school day
Developed strategies for marketing and public relations online (virtual tour, possible media partnership with Cornerbooth Media for online fundraising and developing virtual events
Possible addition of a part-time counselor on site at St. Mary
Developing new strategies for community engagement remotely with advancement director and administration

**Mitigating Stress Responses:**

The St. Mary community (students, families, teachers) will undoubtedly have stress reactions from the last year coupled with potential anxiety about new variables this fall. Most likely for many families, there will be complicating factors related to economic obstacles and potential health concerns. There is comfort in the stability that school has to offer and that will be most likely disrupted. Moving into the fall, St. Mary plans to give strong consideration to creating methods to help dissipate these feelings of stress and anxiety before they become debilitating.

- Ensuring the explicit instruction and integration of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) as a preventative measure to aid in student coping and emotional regulation.
- Developing an “early warning system” to identify students who are struggling (in academic and/or behavioral domains)
- Marshaling existing resources and finding new ones to support families
- Creating an anonymous process for families to access financial and food support and mental health services
- Using scheduling to mitigate stress for students, parents, and faculty by staggering larger assignments, due dates and long-term projects
- Creating supports for teachers who have students who are struggling
- Creating supports for faculty and staff who are struggling personally with stress

**CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION**

Teaching and learning are prominent functions of schools. This domain entails the teaching and learning aspects of the re-entry response. Content delivery, curriculum mapping, assessments, and evaluating grading practices must be considered whether school will be face-to-face, virtual, or a combination of both.

Additionally, curriculum will be designed in such a way that it is nimble and can be shifted between in-person (synchronous) and online instruction (asynchronous). When the stay at home orders began in the Spring of 2020, teachers were forced to translate their
instructional plans and materials into online delivery even though the materials and plans were not developed with this in mind. Following the completion of the academic year, St. Mary teachers and administration immediately began designing flexible instructional plans leveraging the tools that work best in both in-person and remote environments to prepare for the next school year.

Priorities:

- Establish virtual learning guidelines
- Implement Interdisciplinary Connections
- Devise grading and assessment plan
- Strive to teach as many students on campus as possible.
- Kindergarten through 4th grade will have priority on campus instruction with scaffolding for grades 5-8, if necessary.
- Schools will consider in their approaches additional strategies to allow access for students that may not be able to attend in person due to medically fragile or immunocompromised. In this case, lessons may need to be recorded or live streamed for those who can’t be present.
- Provide an intentional use of technology as one means of methodology if remote continuous learning is the safest measure to provide instruction.
- Universal design for learning and differentiation
- ELC considerations for Remote Learning
- Adjust schedule to accommodate for importance of literacy and math
- Creation of a Academic Support Plan (assisting students for remediation and enrichment)
- Improve delivery system to incorporate more direct instruction in remote learning model
- Intentional social and emotional engagement and curriculum

Following the diocesan planning guide as well as state recommendations, there are three basic options for how school will occur:
Option 1 - Students Return for Face to Face Instruction

The 2020-2021 school year will begin on Tuesday, September 1st, 2020, for all students. School will look different, and there will be many aspects that will require flexibility. The well-being of students and staff, and the quality of the learning experience will be key factors in our planning. To meet the 6-foot social distancing requirements in classrooms, the facilities team has organized school furniture to reflect a 6 foot distance between students in all classrooms. The master school schedule has been adjusted allowing smaller groups of students to transition to their elective classes, and recess, etc. We are excited that, due to all of our operational and program planning, we are able to meet the requirements to bring all preschool and K-8 students on campus daily should everyone choose to return in person to school.

Focus for the first month of school:

Classroom teachers will intentionally focus on developing the following during the first month of school:

- Building relationships and partnerships between students, families, teachers, classmates, administrators, and support staff
- Social and Emotional Learning
- Instruction and review of safety routines
- Instruction on accessing and using online platforms
- Assessment of students’ strengths and learning needs to differentiate instruction

Option 2 - Blended Hybrid Learning

The goal of St. Mary Catholic School is to implement face to face instruction for the 2020-2021 school year. However, we recognize that a hybrid model may have to be implemented. Within this option there would be a blend of face to face instruction on campus combined with distance/continuous learning at home. The amount of time of face to face instruction and at home learning will be determined in accordance with health regulations. Priority for face to face instruction will be given to grades K-4 in the hybrid model.

What the remote learning day may look like:

- St. Mary has purchased additional Chromebooks that can be checked out during this continuous learning time if necessary to help support families and provide equal access
- Students complete manageable tasks or on-going projects from home that extend previous learning, or prepare students for new learning opportunities
- Students may access livestreamed and/or recorded instruction to review previous learning or prepare for new learning through Google Meet
● Students may have a scheduled Google Meet sessions for independent work or small group activities
● Grades K-8 will use online platforms
● Office hours for students and families will be provided

**Option 3 - Continuous/Remote Learning Model**

The goal of St. Mary Catholic School is to implement face to face instruction for the 2020-2021 school year. However, we recognize that a continuous learning model may have to be implemented for a period of time if the school is required to close.

*What the fully remote learning day may look like:*

● St. Mary has purchased additional Chromebooks that can be checked out during this continuous learning time if necessary to help support families and provide equal access
● A weekly “drop schedule” will be provided by teachers
● Students complete manageable tasks or on-going projects from home that extend previous learning, or prepare students for new learning opportunities
● Students may access live stream instruction and/or recorded instruction to review previous learning or prepare for new learning through Google Meet
● Office hours for students and families will be provided

No matter the learning option, St. Mary will not underestimate the chronic nature of this current pandemic and its impact on communities. We will continue our efforts in supporting faculty, staff, students and families. We all know that teaching in-person and teaching virtually can be very different. Relationships and the well-being of students are paramount in this model.

**PROMOTING CATHOLIC IDENTITY**

A critical and distinguishing characteristic of Catholic schools is the strength of the school faith community. As St. Mary plans for fall operations, school leaders will make intentional decisions to support and develop the community, no matter what schooling format is chosen for the school year. The support expressed by the school will extend to both spiritual and emotional. As a faith community, there will be outward expressions of spiritual support through both prayer and ritual.

Catholic education is a transformational experience, rather than a transactional arrangement; therefore, we are committed to providing faith-formation
that will strengthen our students’ own personal faith, increase knowledge of our Catholic faith and traditions, and guide them in decision making and choices.

With this in mind, St. Mary Catholic School is committed to serving the community by providing rich faith formation and academic rigor in a manner keeping with the mission of the Church and teachings of Jesus. In whatever capacity the school offers instruction to students, we must continue to be authentically Catholic and serve as an avenue for faith formation. As a community of faith, St. Mary commits to the following:

Priorities:

- Devised new mass plan to accommodate all students by offering mass on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 8:30am
- We will continue to offer prayer daily via livestream or the intercom
- Fr. Lewis Spiritual Instruction will continue
- Reimagining of school retest program at all grade levels
- Renewed emphasis on iconography and visual symbols of our faith
- Partnership with school and religious ed program to enhance religion curriculum, faith opportunities and to improve Sacramental Prep experience
- Reimagining of service opportunities in community and school
- Renewed effort to bridge parish and school relationship
- Development of virtual faith celebrations and prayer services (Catholic Schools Week activities, Christmas Program, Lent and Advent online programming)

TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT

This domain addresses not only infrastructure issues but also the use of technology as a tool for instruction. Inherent in this area are access and equity issues. From coordinating consistent apps and platforms across grade levels to ensuring school safety policies exist and digital citizenship training is provided, a comprehensive approach is necessary. St. Mary Catholic School is committed to the following:

Priorities:

- Purchase of 60 more Chromebooks to promote equity and access inside and outside the classroom
- Establishment of Tech Help Desk and professional development/training to demonstrate commitment to technology support for teachers, students and parents
- Selected **Google Classroom** as our priority
- Technological Learning Management System
• Selected **Google Meets** as our livestream and video communication
• Established clear protocols for login information and posting/submitting assignments
• Revamped Responsible Use Policy
• Upgraded security and safety measures on site and for remote users of school devices
• Installed fiber optics on campus to improve access/speed
• Purchased and installed livestream cameras, monitors, speakers, and wiring in classrooms to make remote learning option better and to allow for direct instruction daily
• Established a Top-Ten list of Technology rules and etiquette for both school and home use
• Researched and vetted list of approved apps for school use
• Adopting a Digital Citizenship Curriculum
• Providing Parent Training Sessions for Technology and Internet Safety

**Focus on Partnership for Mission Delivery**

Due to the changing landscape of COVID, we will work in partnership to implement and adjust practices so that St. Mary’s will have continual improvement and effective communication throughout the school year. Regular task force meetings, communication with the Parish and SAC, numerous surveys for families, and weekly communication in *The Bell* as well as livestream communication from the administration and teachers will help to guide adjustments to programming.
St. Mary Catholic School 2020-2021 Reopening FAQ

Will all students be able to return to the school building in the fall?

Yes, provided there is no mandate from state or local health officials to close school buildings. St. Mary believes that we learn better together, and the school has made plans to accommodate all students in grades preschool through Grade 8 in the school building every day of the week while offering a livestream remote learning experience for our students simultaneously.

Will Educare be open?

Yes. The school is planning to continue offering Educare after school. Morning Educare will not be offered for the 20-21 school year.

Will students need to be screened to enter the building?

Yes. Each day families will be asked to screen their children and attest to their health. All students and employees will have their temperature taken at school with a no-contact thermometer before being allowed to enter the building. Screening procedures will be communicated in future messages.

Will students be spaced apart to lower the risk of transmission?

Yes. Students will be seated six feet apart in their classrooms. Some grades may need to move to a different classroom for the 2020-2021 school year in order to fit in the space with the required six-foot distance. Decisions about classroom locations will be communicated later this summer.
**Will the school have to limit gatherings of large groups?**

Yes. School-wide assemblies like our Monday Morning Assembly will be suspended until it is once again safe to gather in large groups. School-wide prayer and Morning Assembly will take place via livestream and the intercom.

**Will students be able to attend Mass?**

Yes. In accordance with the latest diocesan guidelines, the entire school body cannot attend Mass together, but Fr. Lewis will celebrate two school Masses per week. Current plans are that 5-8 students will attend Mass on Tuesday mornings and K-4 students will attend Mass on Thursday mornings at 8:30 am.

**Will movement be limited throughout the school building?**

Yes. Students will for the most part remain in the same space throughout the day. Junior high teachers will move from room to room to teach their classes. Students will have PE outside, weather permitting, and they will have recess (although recess activities will be limited, and playground space will be designated for specific groups at specific times). PE will be moved into the north side of the gym when the weather turns.

**Will hot lunch be available?**

No. To reduce the risk of transmission, the hot lunch program will be suspended for the 2020-2021 school year.

**Will K-6 students have Music?**

Yes. Students in grades K-6 will have music instruction in their classrooms. However, music instruction will consist of using musical instruments or learning music history and theory. Singing will not be able to take place while the risk of transmission is still high.
**Will 5-8 students have Band?**

No. The band program will be suspended for the 2020-2021 school year, to resume again in 2021-2022. The logistical challenges of providing enough space for a safe band experience make band class impractical at this point.

**Will K-8 students have to wear face coverings?**

Yes. Students in grades Kindergarten through Grade 8 will be required to wear a cloth face covering or a clear face shield. Face coverings can be removed for eating lunch and going out to recess. Cloth face coverings are preferred to face shields because they work more effectively to prevent the transmission of COVID-19. Face shields do not offer the same protection as cloth masks; therefore the wearing of face shields may cause longer quarantine times in the event of an active case of COVID-19. If used, face shields should extend below the chin, to the ears, and have no gap at the forehead.

According to state guidelines, cloth face coverings should not be worn by:
- Children younger than age 2 years.
- Those with a disability that prevents them from comfortably wearing or removing a face covering.
- Those with certain respiratory conditions or trouble breathing.
- Those who are deaf or hard of hearing and use facial and mouth movements as part of communication.
- Those advised by a medical, legal, or behavioral health professional that wearing a face covering may pose a risk to that person.

Students who fall into any of the above categories will be able to wear face shields.

**Will preschool students have to wear face coverings?**

No. Preschool teachers are required to wear face coverings, but preschool students will not be required to wear them.
**Will the school have face coverings available if needed?**

Yes. The school will have a supply of disposable masks, non-disposable masks, and face shields. Students are encouraged to bring their own face coverings from home. The more comfortable they are with a face covering, the more likely they are to keep it on. We encourage families to help children find face coverings that are comfortable, colorful, and creative. The school will happily accept donations of child-sized cloth masks and/or disposable face masks.

**Will teachers wear face coverings?**

Yes. Teachers will wear cloth masks during the day. For certain lessons a teacher may temporarily switch to a face shield if the lesson requires students to see the teacher’s face.

**If someone at the school tests positive for COVID-19, will the whole school have to close down?**

Not necessarily. The school will be instructed by the health district regarding how to best respond, and there are many variables that will affect their recommendations. One thing is certain: the more that students wear cloth face masks rather than face shields, the less likely they will be to have to quarantine, even if someone at school tests positive for COVID-19.

**If my child is healthy but has to quarantine because of contact with others, will he or she be able to continue learning?**

Yes. The school will implement our simultaneous remote learning option for any student that has to remain at home for an extended period.

**If I do not feel comfortable sending my child to school for face-to-face learning in the fall, will he or she be able to attend classes?**

Yes. The school will implement the simultaneous remote learning option for families that do not feel comfortable sending their children to school.
What will happen if state or local health officials close school again?

We are hopeful that a full closure will not happen. It may be the case that instead of a full closure, some students will be able to come to school and some will not. If that is the case, then we will prioritize face-to-face instruction for students in grades preschool through 4 and implement a remote live-streamed learning model for students in grades 5-8. We are in the process of purchasing enough Chromebooks to go fully one-to-one for every student in the school. In the event of a full or partial closure, students will be able to take their Chromebooks home to use for learning. If you would like to help us fund the one-to-one Chromebook initiative, please contact Ben Walker, Brian Hull, or Lou Turner.

What if state or local health officials mandate a full closure of school buildings?

If a full closure happens again, we will be ready to implement our remote learning model (via livestream) for all students in grades K-8. The preschool will continue to operate in the event of a K-8 closure, and the school is making preparations to provide childcare for essential workers.

If there is a full closure, will the remote learning model be different than it was in the spring?

Yes. The spring closure was an emergency response, and while we received much positive feedback, we know that it was only a temporary solution to a short-term situation. Remote learning this fall, if needed, will include live and video instruction from St. Mary teachers, an easier sign-on process, more assessment feedback, and higher expectations for student participation and engagement.

Will the school year have to be extended if a stay-at-home order is in place?

No. As long as students are actively participating in the school’s remote learning environment, they are fulfilling attendance requirements. Whether students are engaged in face-to-face instruction or our remote learning model, school attendance policies are still in effect: “It is expected that each student will attend school at scheduled times, except for illness or family emergency.”
What other sanitizing measures will be in place?

The school has implemented increased sanitizing of the building both during the day and after school. Staff will wipe down desks, door handles, light switches, and other “high-touch” surfaces regularly throughout the school day. Handwashing stations will be brought into the school, and hand sanitizing stations will be set up around the classrooms and throughout the school.

What can we do to prepare for the new school year?

First, speak positively about the situation, regardless of how frustrating it may be. Children can pick up parents’ frustrations and take them on even if they don’t understand the source. The calmer and more positive you are, the less stressful it will be for the children when they return to school. Look for the grace in the moment and share it with your family.

Second, follow state guidelines for preventing the transmission of the virus. Wear masks in public and limit the size of gatherings. Our children and our community cannot flourish if the virus does. Have your children practice wearing a mask so that when they come to school, they are not distracted by the novelty of having to wear one.

Finally, if you are able, donate to the St. Mary COVID-19 Pandemic Relief Fund. Please contact our Advancement Director, Lou Turner if you would like to make a contribution. The school is experiencing a dramatic increase in expenses in order to create a safe and effective learning environment for the children. St. Mary is purchasing masks, face shields, contactless thermometers, hand sanitizer, Chromebooks, and subscriptions to various online learning resources. The technological scaffolding to offer a livestream educational experience is upwards of $40,000 in an effort to enhance the online learning experience for our children. The additional cleaning and sanitization expenses exceed $25,000.