Diocese of Spokane School Reopening Guide 2020

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance and support for schools to promote a safe and strategic reopening plan in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The primary goal for Catholic Schools within the Diocese of Spokane is to open in such a way to allow for maximum face to face instruction for all students. The schools are dedicated to serving their communities by providing rich faith formation and academic rigor in a manner keeping with the mission of the Church.

We all want students and educators to feel comfortable and safe returning to school environments. The best way to do that is to identify solutions that make transitions to and from remote continuous learning and a return to some form of in-person instruction, as seamless as possible. With the understanding that different systems require different solutions, we have identified a number of scheduling models and instructional considerations that can be used to fit the needs of each school community. Modifying school schedules to account for lost instructional time and to ensure ongoing health and safety efforts, such as social distancing is of paramount importance. Restructuring school time supports creative scheduling that safely bring back students with social distancing.

The requirements and guidance of our Catholic schools are somewhat different than those of the public schools. While the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) has provided guidance for the public schools, the Catholic schools adhere to the requirements and mandates from the Department of Health (DOH) and State Board of Education. Requirements and guidance are included within this document.

Catholic schools within the Diocese of Spokane will focus planning for next school year in the following key areas: **Community,** promoting our faith and Catholic traditions, **Safety/Sanitation** and **Curriculum & Instruction**, synchronizing in class learning with remote continuous learning.

This document provides guidance for schools as a foundation from which they will create their individualized school plans to meet the unique needs of their communities. These plans will be updated in accordance with any changes to public health directives.

Catholic Schools
Learn. Serve. Lead. Succeed.

Community

A critical and distinguishing characteristic of Catholic schools is the strength of the school faith community. As schools plan for fall operations, Catholic 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.

The possibility exists that the new school year may begin face-to-face but quickly shift to remote continuous learning, or that the school year may begin with remote continuous learning and shift to face-to-face instruction. With this in mind, special care will be given to prioritizing and maintaining relationship as a faith community.

Safety/Sanitation

Through logistics and planning schools will respond to the operational aspects of a return to school in the fall.

Entrance Protocols

These routines and procedures will be subject to the guidelines set by local governmental agencies. Schools will need to create systems and procedures to handle the daily routines of the school and control access to the building.

Health Checks

Screening: Both DOH and L&I require students and staff to receive a health screening before entering a school. 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 [on the first day after a break or for a new student, please ask about symptoms in the past three days (72 hours)]:
   - ✓ 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
- Teach students how to practice good hygiene practices

Staff Protocol

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be required of all staff in order to minimize exposure to COVID 19. This includes masks, and/or face shields while teaching and gloves while disinfecting surfaces.

If an employee becomes ill or exhibits symptoms of COVID -19 at work, they should be instructed to go home and contact a healthcare provider.

If diagnosed with COVID-19, an employee may return to work when criteria below are met:
1. At least 3 days (24-72 hours) has passed since recovery (no fever without use of fever-reducing medications)
2. Local Health Department or Health Care Provider confirms release to return safely to work.

If an employee has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and does not get evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, schools will assume the employee has COVID-19 and may not return to work 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
4. Obtaining a COVID-19 test
5. Maintain 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.

Schools 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.

Schools will consider what space utilization would look like in a social distancing world. Schools will also use scheduling to minimize contact for lunchroom, locker areas/hallways, restrooms, locker rooms and library which can be densely populated. Guidance also suggests schools should strive for keeping 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. Any social distancing protocols for use in school should be adjusted for outside of school, on sports fields, in gyms, in locker rooms, etc. 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.

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 cafeteria monitoring, etc.), staff must wear a cloth face covering unless they fit into one of the exemption categories (refer to Human Resource).

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.

Schools 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

Schools will develop 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 are the following:

- Ensuring that maintenance staff have the appropriate training to execute the deep cleaning protocols necessary to maintain the school
- Procuring the necessary supplies (sanitizer, temperature check machines, replacement face masks, etc.)
- Creating cleaning protocols for high touch areas throughout the day.

Curriculum & Instruction

Schools are committed to serving 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.

Schools will focus planning for next school year on the following principles:

1. 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.

2. Provide an intentional use of technology as one means of methodology if remote continuous learning is the safest measure to provide instruction.

Following the diocesan planning guide as well as state recommendations, there are basic options for how school will occur:

Traditional School Setting: Based upon state mandates and safety protocol within a specific county, students will return to a "brick and mortar" school with face to face instruction (with accommodations). If this is the case, logistics and planning consideration will be addressed: entrance protocols, social distancing, scheduling.

Hybrid School Setting: Based upon state recommendations, some schools may need to do a combination of both traditional and non-traditional school settings. Schools will plan for a variety of configurations of this approach. Schools may have to plan for housing different rates of occupancy. To this end, schools will consider quality programming for the other portions of the day. In the hybrid school setting, the logistics and planning considerations will be made to include scheduling, entrance protocols, social distancing, curriculum planning, high quality instruction, and technology support.

Non-Traditional School Setting: In some locations, governmental and diocesan authorities may deem a return to school as inadvisable. In those cases, school will have to occur in some sort of virtual configuration. If this is the case, the logistics and planning considerations will be made to include technology support, developing and delivering high quality remote instruction, supporting Catholic Identity, and maintaining community.

Schools will not underestimate the chronic nature of this current pandemic and its impact on communities. Schools will continue their efforts in supporting faculty, staff, and families. We all know that teaching in person and teaching virtually can be very different. Relationships and the well-being of students are most important.

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 of the academic year, schools 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.

Primary Considerations for Returning to School

Face to Face

Entrance protocols

Cleaning protocols

Social Distancing

Supporting Catholic Identity

Scheduling

Hybrid

Scheduling

Entrance Protocols

Supporting Catholic Identity

Social Distancing

Curriculum Planning

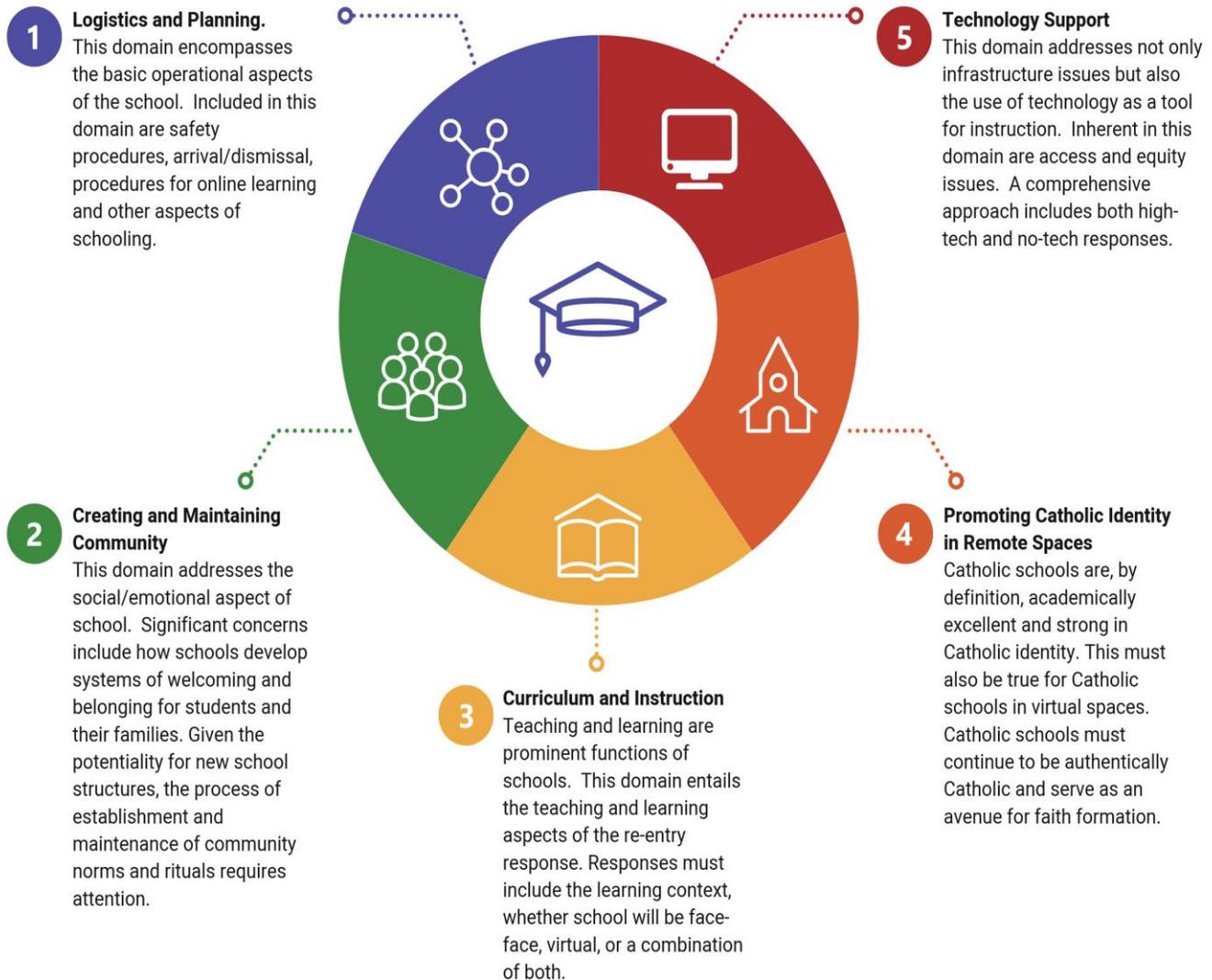High Quality Instruction

Technology Support

Remote

Technology Support

Curriculum Planning

Delivering high quality online instruction

Supporting Catholic Identity

Maintaining community

5 Planning Domains for 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.

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.

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-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.

Logistics and Planning
Creating well defined entrance protocols for students, teachers, and visitors
Developing routines for daily health checks
Developing protocols for social distancing in the classroom
Developing a plan for social distancing outside of the classroom in highly populated areas like hallway/locker areas, restrooms, locker rooms, lunchroom/cafeteria, the library, etc. This includes a plan for Mass and extra-curricular activities.
Developing scheduling options to facilitate reduced capacity at school
Creating a plan to handle confidentiality issues
Procuring the necessary supplies for hygiene like hand sanitizer, wipes with bleach, etc.
Creating a plan for deep-cleaning of facilities and high touch areas daily, between alternate schedules, in the case of evidence of positive cases, etc.
Developing any necessary protocols for wearing face masks including creating plans for students with sensory issues
Reviewing and updated the Emergency Contact Plan
Periodically surveying stakeholders to evaluate programming and support and make adjustments.

Creating and Maintaining Community
Creating community and connecting with students in new school configurations
Facilitating community and connection with faculty and staff
Onboarding students to orient to the new realities of the classroom and school
Developing a differentiated on-boarding plan for students that are new to the school (transfer students, freshmen, etc.)
Developing authentic ways for parents to connect with the school community in a virtual world
Maintaining daily rituals (i.e. daily announcements, morning prayer, etc.)
Structuring social opportunities for students and families
Creating ways to mitigate stress responses in students, teachers, and families
Enhancing approaches to support social emotional learning
Adjusting recruiting and marketing practices to attract new families and maintain contact with those newly enrolled.

Curriculum and Instruction

Creating year-long plans to facilitate more meaningful, interdisciplinary units that can be delivered face to face or remotely.

Ensuring all instructional experiences include modeling, guided instruction, collaborative work, and independent work rather than over-reliance on independent work during remote learning. This requires strategic use of synchronous and asynchronous lessons.

Varying the way content is delivered to students (reading, lecture/mini lesson, videos, visual tools, modeling) and the way students can demonstrate their understanding (writing, speaking, visual products, modeling/building).

Engaging students through setting a purpose for the work and providing choice in the process and product of the work.

Ensuring all *l*earning is respectful. Students are not given "fluff" or busy work to fill time or provide an item to grade. Videos and apps are age-appropriate.

Utilizing frequent and varied formative assessment methods in both face-to-face and remote learning.

Meeting in small groups or one-on-one as needed for connection, instruction, and assessment.

Coordinating assignments, deadlines, projects and assessments among teachers to ensure a manageable workload.

Utilizing authentic assessments rather than an over-reliance on tests.

Evaluating grading practices to ensure grades reflect progress on standards rather than dispositions such as responsibility or work ethic.

Reviewing and implementing best practices in synchronous and asynchronous instruction to meet student needs and engagement.

Making adjustments to school-based services plans for students with disabilities to account for accommodations and modifications needed in a remote learning environment.

Ensuring meaningful support is provided for English Learners and their families including that teachers, students, and parents are adept at utilizing translation tools.

Creating an "early warning system" to identify and intervene with students who may be exhibiting academic and/or behavioral concerns.

Develop a plan for benchmark screening and intervention delivery during face-to-face and remote learning.

Avoiding new initiatives and protecting professional learning time for teachers to develop flexible learning plans for next year.

Adjusting curricular and supply orders to reflect the most useful tools for both face to face and distance learning.

Maintaining our Catholic Identity in Virtual Spaces
Providing opportunities for school-wide Eucharistic celebrations and other prayer services, involving students in the planning.
Invite parents and families to join in virtual prayer and faith life activities.
Creating explicit service activities that can be completed in a virtual community.
Continue to integrate Catholic worldview and gospel values with content lessons.
Created a plan for both Pastor and Principal to be present and visible.

Technology
Creating an at-home learning schedule that incorporates best practice in both synchronous and asynchronous learning.
Coordinating consistent apps and platforms across grade levels.
Developing learning plans that offer rigorous learning for those without predictable access to online learning.
Identifying ways for school-owned devices to download new technologies (once they have left school).
Ensuring school safety policies exist including training of digital citizenship for all device users, use of student passwords, protection provided by a school firewall, etc.
Surveying school population to determine what equity and access to technology exists.
Providing a pick-up line with social distancing for families to pick up devices.