



# ST. MARY MAGDALENE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

FORMING THE COMPLETE CHILD THROUGH FAITH, REASON & VIRTUE

Dear SMMCS Community,

I hope this email finds you safe and well! Last Friday, we sent out an email through **SurveyMonkey** asking if you planned to have your student **In School** or **Distance Learning** for the 2020-2021 school year. (If you need the link, please contact Ms. Sam ([smckinney@smmcs.org](mailto:smckinney@smmcs.org)) and she will send it to you.) We need your response **by tonight, Thursday, July 30**, to allow us to complete our plans for situating the In School Learning students properly. If the COVID-19 situation remains the same, you will be allowed to change from In School to Distance Learning or Distance to In School Learning at the beginning of each month, provided there is room in the classroom. All In School Learning classes will be limited to no more than 20 students so we can maintain the required 6' distancing between our children.

In an effort to err on the side of caution, **our first day of school will be August 24<sup>th</sup> with everyone Distance Learning**. Our **In School Learning** will begin on **August 31<sup>st</sup>**, barring any further COVID-19 developments. Each student will receive a schedule for the first week of Distance Learning. When we return to school, Distance Learning students will follow the same daily schedule as In School Learning students. The revised calendar reflects our new start and end dates for the school year.

As a reminder, all medical forms **MUST** be turned in via scan or as an attachment to Nurse Lori **before August 24<sup>th</sup>**, whether you are In School or Distance Learning. If you are unable to scan or attach the forms, you can drop them off at the church office in an envelope addressed to Nurse Lori. All of the forms can be found on our website, [www.smmcs.org](http://www.smmcs.org), under the Nurse's Corner.

For our **Distance Learning** students, the following requirements must be met:

- We will be using Google Classroom as our platform. There is a terrific video that explains Google Classroom from a parent's perspective at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hhti35tLcAY>.
- Distance Learning students **must be online by 8 A.M.** to avoid being counted as tardy. The teacher will check with students for comprehension of the material being taught on an irregular basis.
- Written work completed from home needs to be turned in via scan or photo for the teacher to grade at school.
- When In School Learning is in place, all tests and quizzes given to In School students must be completed at the same time by Distance Learning students to avoid a reduction in grade.

For those who chose **In School Learning**, please note the changes for the school year:

- We are implementing staggered arrival and dismissal times. All families with multiple children will use the arrival/dismissal time for their youngest child. All arrivals will be from the **front** of the school so that temperatures can be checked before any students are allowed out of a vehicle. The staggered times are:

ARRIVAL ~ FRONT ONLY	DISMISSAL
7:30 – 7:40 Middle School Students (6 <sup>th</sup> , 7 <sup>th</sup> , 8 <sup>th</sup> )	3:25 – 3:35 K3, K4 & K5 dismiss from Courtyard
7:40 – 7:50 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup> 5 <sup>th</sup> grades	3:25 – 3:35 Middle School dismiss from Front
7:50 – 8:00 K3, K4, K5, 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup>	3:35 – 3:45 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup> , 5 <sup>th</sup> dismiss from Front

Students will go directly to their assigned classrooms upon arrival. If you are tardy (arriving after 8 A.M.), you must call the school from your car (281-446-8535). Nurse Lori will come out to check all temperatures before students are allowed into school.

- All employees and students will be required to wear masks and/or face shields. Masks may be any color, but may not have any inappropriate images or words on them. Students with inappropriate masks will be given a paper mask to wear for the day and are expected to return with a mask that meets our standards the following day.
- To avoid any unnecessary contaminations, students are not allowed to take anything, including books and assignments, back and forth between school and home. Any materials used at school will stay at school and anything used at home will stay at home. Work completed from home needs to be turned in via scan or photo for the teacher to grade at school. This year, our pace will be slower than normal years with emphasis on quality over quantity.
- Classes will be set up with social distancing in mind. The classroom floors will be marked for social distancing and we are also adding safety screens in the classrooms.

- The use of technology will play a much larger role in our instructions this year. Each teacher will have a webcam in their classroom, which they will be able to remove and take home in the event that we have to shut down the entire campus. The teachers' desks will be moved to the front of the classroom so that our Distance Learning students can see everything going on in the classroom, whether the teacher is using the whiteboard or not
- Each Middle School student will sign out a Chromebook for the year for daily use. They are responsible for returning the Chromebook in good condition at the end of the school year to avoid replacement charges.
- We will not have a hot lunch program nor will we allow lunches to be dropped off at school. **All students must bring their lunch in a disposable container** (paper sack or re-sealable bag) that will be thrown away at the end of lunch. We will be eating in our classrooms this year. Students will receive recess, but the playground will be closed to begin the year.
- The school water fountains are turned off. All students will need to **bring a reusable water bottle** with their name on it in permanent marker. The bottle will be refilled from bottled water and will be sanitized at least daily.
- Before School Care will still be in the Library and temperatures will be checked before the students are allowed into the building. After Care will be in the school building and will dismiss from the front of the school.

Parents will not be allowed in the building unless they are coming to pick up a sick child. The drop off table will be removed since all work will be done in the classroom or online. We will not accept any meal deliveries, again to avoid any unnecessary contamination.

All of our parent/teacher conferences will be online, so emails will be the only contact with teachers for the foreseeable future. Teachers will be able to return calls during their planning periods if you email them with the phone number where you can be reached.

We will have virtual Masses in our homeroom classes but we hope to return to in person Mass soon.

Our field trips will be taken virtually, so we plan to schedule more than one throughout the school year.

We will be focusing on online subscriptions and the use of technology throughout the year. Please contact Cathi Hughes ([chughes@smmcs.org](mailto:chughes@smmcs.org)) if you have questions on academic materials and supplies.

Our counselor, Laura Valladares ([lvalladares@smmcs.org](mailto:lvalladares@smmcs.org)), will be working to ensure our students emotional and psychological needs are met. Especially the first few weeks of school, we will focus on these aspects of their experience even above the academic aspects. We will continue LOVE AND LOGIC.

Building relationships and teaching new routines (like washing hands and wearing masks at all times) will be vital. Focusing on our Catholic faith will be even more essential for our community. Empathy is going to play a huge role in the coming school year.

#### 2020-2021 Faculty:

PK – Lisa Littel, Bridget Walker (aide)

K – Nedi Salazar

1<sup>st</sup> – Letty Garay

2<sup>nd</sup> – Rebecca Amstutz

3<sup>rd</sup> – Micha Rucka

4<sup>th</sup> – April Dandridge

5<sup>th</sup> – Lauren Chevalier

#### Middle School:

6<sup>th</sup> HR – Meris Bridger ~ Religion/Social Studies

7<sup>th</sup> HR – Mary Turner ~ English/Literature

8<sup>th</sup> HR – Steve Chambers ~ Math/Science

#### Specials:

PE/Music and Movement – Tom Walsh

Spanish/Art – Carmen Rodriguez

#### Staff:

Principal – Joshua Raab

Bookkeeper – Kelli Gonzalez

Secretary/Admissions – Laura Rocha

Nurse – Lori Eaves

Counselor – Laura Valladares

Newsletter/TBD – Sam McKinney

Academics/Aftercare – Cathi Hughes

Aftercare – Ruth Whitworth

Technology Assistance – Chris Bible

I believe it is important to be transparent and share the most up to date information with you. I always appreciate it when people come to me with their questions and concerns. Some questions I have already received include:

**1. Who decides if we shut down?**

Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston (AGH) are governed by the Catholic Schools Office (CSO) of the diocese and our governing board in Austin, the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops - Education Department (TCCBED). In times of a pandemic, these two entities seek advice from and generally follow the guidance of the Texas Education Agency (TEA), the Governor's Office, and the CDC.

**2. Will we automatically follow what Humble ISD does?**

No, the decision will be made by following guidelines set forth by the governing bodies, listed above. SMMCS is a small school. We have worked throughout the summer to organize classrooms and schedules so proper social distancing guidelines can be met. For example, each desk is 6 feet apart from the next. Students in classrooms will not switch classes; teachers will go to their classrooms. The schedule will enable SMMCS to properly distance and sanitize between classes. We have also worked on sanitization plans. The school will be cleaned and sanitized each day. Classrooms will be disinfected between uses.

**3. Will students be sitting at their desks all day?**

No, I continue to work with the teachers about the social distancing guidelines. At the beginning of the school year, students will be learning about proper social distancing, handwashing and healthy habits as part of their classroom routines. We have discussed ways that students will be able to go outside, enjoy time with friends, and participate in cooperative learning. Yes, it will look different. Students will be prompted to wash and sanitize their hands, use masks or shields, and will not switch rooms, but teachers are working on ways to get students up and moving in the classrooms, taking them outside to do work or eat lunch. Their plans include center work, cooperative work and breaks.

**4. Will my child(ren) be screened each day they come to school?**

Yes and this is where we need to work together. Parents and caregivers will be given guidelines regarding the requirements for students to stay home and when they are able to return. Staff members will be screened each day in the Nurse's office before going to their classrooms.

**5. What if we have to shut down school and move to Distance Learning? What will that look like?**

The Distance Learning day will be scheduled to mirror the student's In School Learning schedule.

- A daily schedule for your child, including live teacher lessons, direct teaching, guided practice, and online resources
- Weekly Tutorials (added tutorials will be based on student need)
- Differentiated Learning Opportunities that will offer support and enrichment for students
- Daily office hours scheduled by the teacher

We have been working on our return to school plan all summer and I am confident whatever direction we have to proceed with at the beginning of the year it will be successful. I am depending on you to work with me and our school staff to ensure the safety of all so we can support growth in mind, heart and spirit!

Enjoy your weekend and remember that ***God is good!***

Blessings,

Joshua Raab  
Principal