



***Notre Dame Academy:
Family Handbook Addendum
COVID 19 Policies 21-22***

NOTRE DAME ACADEMY

REOPENING SCHOOL POLICIES

Forward

This plan was created to aid in navigating the reopening of our school to full in-person instruction during a pandemic phase of COVID-19. In all stages and phases of pandemic response and recovery, Notre Dame will always keep the safety of our students and staff at the forefront and comply with Center for Disease Control (CDC), American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), state, and local guidelines. Please note that the Frequently Asked Questions document serves as a companion to these plans. The two documents are intended to work together to ensure all our families are provided with the most updated and thorough information regarding our plans to reopen.

The following guidelines are:

- Based on current information from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), state, and local officials.
- Flexible and alterable to accommodate for any newly communicated information from health or state officials.
- Amendable to specific school guidelines that may need to be addressed/changed.
- Practical and age appropriate.
- Intended to mitigate not eliminate the risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19.

Our goal for the fall is to safely bring back students to an in-person school setting, to maximize learning and address our students' holistic needs.

There is a clear consensus from both education and medical groups that school plays an important role in supporting students' social-emotional needs, including their mental and physical health, and in mitigating the impacts of trauma. More importantly, we know that our faith also plays an integral part in our physical and emotional well-being. Our faith enhances coping skills and promotes connectedness.

With appropriate health and safety guardrails in place and with adherence to a comprehensive set of critical health and safety requirements, we hope to bring our students, staff, and families safely back to school.

Most of us are now quite familiar with the **critical health and safety practices** that reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. These include rigorous hygiene and handwashing, use of masks/face coverings, physical distancing, reducing interaction between groups, staying home when sick, protecting those most vulnerable to the disease, and expanding testing and tracing capabilities, among others.

It is important to keep in mind that it is not one mitigation practice, but a **combination** of all the above mentioned practices taken together that will substantially reduce the risk of transmission.

Therefore it is critical that we all work together to establish a culture of health and safety in our school that focuses on regularly enforcing the above mentioned important practices.

All guidance in this document is based on the best information we have as of mid-August 2021. We will carefully monitor the data in the coming weeks and months.

Planning for reopening will not be easy. To have a successful school year, we will all have to work together, be flexible and responsive to data, and willing to course-correct as necessary. We all play a critical role in supporting the new culture of health and safety that our school must establish. Most importantly, families can help mitigate the transmission of COVID-19 by checking their children daily for any COVID-19 symptoms and keeping them home from school if they are sick or have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19. Families can also contribute by supporting the use of masks in school, communicating with teachers, and continuing to follow state guidance on health and safety outside of school.

We believe the actions brought forth in this plan are in the best interests of our students, families, staff and community.

RESOURCES

American Association of Pediatrics (AAP):

<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/>

Center for Disease Control (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html>

World Health Organization (WHO):

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>

New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE):

<https://www.nj.gov/education/reopening/NJDOETheRoadBack>.

Notre Dame Academy
STRATEGIES & POLICIES FOR REOPENING SCHOOL

VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERS

- Visitors and volunteers **will not** be allowed into the building until further notice.
- If picking up a sick child, parents will announce themselves at the front door and students will be escorted out by a staff member.
- Any items dropped off should be placed on the table in the front vestibule. Same applies for the picking up of any items.

SCHOOL-HOME COMMUNICATION:

We will continue to communicate using various platforms. It is crucial at this time that all families complete the information update link located on our website in order to ensure all School Messenger communications are received.

- Parents and students should check:
 - email often
 - school website and social media
 - Google Classroom for daily assignments
 - School Messenger for email blasts

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL WELL BEING:

We recognize that the social emotional well-being of our students and staff during these challenging times is critically important. Our guidance counselor Ms. Gerardi will be in the building three days a week and is prepared to assist with resources and guidance to address the needs of our students, staff, and parents.

HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS

PROTOCOL FOR SYMPTOMATIC STAFF AND STUDENTS

If during the course of a school day an individual becomes ill, that individual will be immediately seen by the nurse.

- The school nurse will follow current State of New Jersey Communicable Disease Service guidance for illness reporting: <https://www.nj.gov/health/>
- Students and staff who exhibit symptoms related to COVID-19 will be safely and respectfully isolated from others until student or staff member can be picked up.
 - The individual will remain in isolation until he/she leaves the building.
 - The nurse and others attending the suspected infected person, will also wear a protective mask and gloves while working with the suspected infected person
 - The nurse will continuously monitor the individual's symptoms.
 - The nurse will direct the ill employee to leave work or call the parent of the student to be picked up and sent home.
- The nurse and principal may be required to identify persons who may have come in contact with the suspected infected person. The name of the infected individual will only be provided to the local health department if requested.

- The isolation area and suspected employee's or student's work area/classroom will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected, in addition to all other common surfaces recently touched by the employee or student.

PROTOCOL FOR READMITTANCE FROM NON-COVID ILLNESS

___ Any student or staff member who goes home during the school day due to illness, will be required to submit a medical clearance before returning.

PROTOCOL FOR A STAFF MEMBER OR STUDENT TESTING POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

When an individual **tests positive** for COVID-19, the school nurse will:

- Follow current State of New Jersey Communicable Disease Service guidance for illness reporting: <https://www.nj.gov/health/>.
- Immediately notify the Local Public Health Department.
 - Notre Dame Academy may provide the following information when consulting with the Local Public Health Department:
 - The identity of the person with COVID-19 or probable COVID-19 as well as their address, phone number and e-mail.
 - The date the person with COVID-19 or probable COVID-19 was last in the building.
 - The date the person developed symptoms.
 - Types of interactions the person may have had with other persons in the building or in other locations.
 - How long their interactions were with other persons in the building.
 - If other persons in the class or building have developed any symptoms.
 - Any other information to assist with the determination of next steps.
- Individuals who may have been in **close contact** with suspected COVID-19 person will be contacted and may be advised to closely screen for symptoms or may need to quarantine. Parents should contact their child's pediatrician/general practitioner.
- Unvaccinated close contacts: Will be required to quarantine based on most recent CDC guidelines.
- Vaccinated close contacts: Will be required to get tested to return to the building. Tests should be taken within 3-5 days of exposure. If no symptoms are present and PCR test returns negative, the individual may return to the building. Any vaccinated close contacts with symptoms will be required to quarantine based on the most recent CDC guidelines.

o Please visit the CDC website for the most up to date definition of **Close Contact** - [CDC Definition of Close Contact](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/definition-of-close-contact.html)

REMITTANCE PROCEDURES AFTER RECOVERY FROM COVID-19:

School remittance procedures for students and employees after recovering from COVID-19 will be established in conjunction with the school nurse under guidance from local health officials. Currently (as of August, 2021) CDC is recommending that schools immediately notify local health officials once learning of a COVID-19 case in someone who has been in the school. The local health officials will help administrators determine a course of action. Decisions will be made based on the most up to date CDC recommendations and on a case by case based on the local health department recommendations.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-in-home-patients.html>

NOTE: Staff members and students returning to school after recovering from COVID-19 MUST call the nurse a day prior to returning to school.

The following remittance guidelines are:

- o subject to change depending on the most current CDC guidelines.
- o not all inclusive.

o Dependent on the individual's exposure to COVID-19, remittance **requires at least one of the following:**

- A medical clearance note.
- A negative COVID-19 test result.

o Independent of the requirements above, remittance may also require:

- 10 days after testing positive to COVID-19, fever free for 48 hours and no other symptoms.
- For persons who never develop symptoms, isolation and other precautions can be discontinued 10 days after the date of their first positive RT-PCR test for SARS-CoV-2 RNA
- For patients with severe illness, duration of isolation for up to 20 days after symptom onset may be warranted. A note from a physician is required.

TRAVEL

- Families traveling internationally will be required to quarantine based on the most recent CDC guidance at the time of their trip.
- No remote instruction is provided due to travel quarantines during the school year.

FACE COVERINGS

Face masks/coverings MUST be school appropriate and shall not interfere with the school's dress code policy.

STAFF

- School staff is **required** to wear a face mask at all times and maintain social distancing when teaching.
- School staff may instruct using a face shield while practicing social distancing.

STUDENTS

- Students are required to wear face coverings at all times in the school building unless eating, or during outside recess or physical education class with appropriate social distancing.

ENTRANCE PROCEDURES

Academy Hours:

School hours will return to 7:50 am until 3:00 pm

Arrival Procedure

We are transitioning back to regular arrival procedures we utilized before last year. Students can enter the building through the main entrance or the stop and drop door between 7:50 and 8:10 am. The school will not be conducting temperature checks at arrival. Therefore, it is the responsibility of parents to take their child's temperature daily as part of the Cleared4School daily symptom screening. No student will be allowed to enter the building without completing Cleared4School before their arrival.

HALLWAYS AND COMMON SPACES:

- Maintenance staff will throughout the day clean highly touch surfaces (e.g. handrails, door handles).
- To reduce the number of students walking in hallways, students will exit classrooms for recess at staggered times.
- Students and staff **MUST** wear face coverings when walking in hallways and common spaces.

RESTROOMS:

- Students must wear a face covering while using the restrooms.
- Teachers will monitor use of restrooms to maintain social distancing.

CLASSROOMS:

- **The school will allow for social distancing within the classroom to the maximum extent practicable. In addition:**
 - Desks will be turned to face the same direction.
 - When possible windows will be open and classroom doors will be left open
- When possible teachers will take students for a walk outside with weather permitting.
- Teachers' desks will be at least three feet from the nearest student desk.
- Teachers may use the outside space to conduct classes when seasonally appropriate.
- There will be minimal mixing between groups/cohorts
- Hand sanitizer will be available in every classrooms.

SNACK/LUNCH:

- Students may **NOT** share food.
- Students will wash/sanitize their hands before eating.
- Students will eat lunch in their classrooms.
- A portable plexi-shield will be provided to students during snack and lunch periods

RECESS:

- We will return to having outdoor recess when possible. Students must wear masks during outdoor recess as they will be mixing with other grade level students.

DISMISSAL:

- We will return to our standard dismissal procedures through the following exits:
 - 5th-8th Grade: 3 pm outside side rectory door
 - 1st, 3rd, and 4th grades: 3 pm out main entrance/exit
 - Kindergarten and 2nd grades: 3 pm out after care door under gym steps
 - PreK3 & 4: 2:50 pm out stop and drop door

EARLY PICK-UP

- Parents will announce themselves at the door and student will be escorted out by a staff member.
- We strongly discourage early pick-up as it is disruptive to your child's learning.

BEFORE AND AFTERCARE PROGRAM

- NDA will adhere to all applicable social distancing requirements and hygiene protocol.

HSA

All meetings will be held virtually until further notice.

REMOTE LEARNING

- Remote learning will **only** be available to any students who are quarantined due to COVID-19 infection or close contact exposure.