

RETURN TO LEARN:

Updates, Questions and Answers, Seeking Grace

Updated on August 14 – Plans Continue to Evolve and are Subject to Change

There is a lot on your plate.

The 2020-2021 school year will begin in two weeks. Let us all take a collective breath.

I have been in regular contact with the Jones County Health Department regarding the upcoming school year. We will respect any mandates that are introduced by our country, state, or at the county level. This is nothing new as Sacred Heart did close our campus to students following Spring break last year and as we've prepared for the upcoming school year through the creation of a Return to Learn Plan.

Our promise remains that, so long as we're allowed to have classes in our buildings, we will do so. Our promise also remains that, if a family does not yet feel comfortable sending a child to school, we will bring the classroom to your home through virtual learning opportunities. With the help of our community coming together to support our school in COVID-19 relief efforts, we've already purchased cleaning supplies, upgrades to our online platforms, computer cameras with a microphone, and Bluetooth headsets. With these resources, children at home will still be able to see friends, interact with teachers, and participate in their learning.

The teachers and I have met regularly throughout the summer to ensure that PPE is purchased to meet our needs in the classroom. I take responsibility for supplying teachers with the materials that they need to be as safe as possible in the classrooms. I share this information now so that we can return to school with everyone on the same page.

There continues to be developments and our plans continue to evolve. Thank you for providing us with grace as we work tirelessly, as a strong team here, to investigate options that make sense for our school and our students and as we work to communicate with you in a clear and concise manner.

And, as I said at the beginning, *you* have a lot on your plate as parents. We're facing a school year that will be different than any year before it. You're faced with a decision regarding how your family will receive their education and I recognize that this is very difficult for many families. I am confident that our school will provide routine, instruction, normalcy, and social opportunities. I am confident that we will work with individual families as plans may change during the year based on what happens within our school and beyond our school. Know that a decision you make for the start of the school year doesn't mean that changes can't be made throughout the year either.

I don't have a crystal ball – but we do have a roadmap that our Sacred Heart School team has been creating since the school year was interrupted last spring. We do know that the best direction that we can go is forward. I do appreciate that we will be side-by-side as we go together into a new journey of education and faith in the new school year.

This week we want to share information in a question and answer format. I assure you, we have spent considerable time considering many topics and we are happy to share; I have divided questions into categories for easier reading. Let's take one more breath – remember peace – and let's dive in together:

COVID TESTING AND FACE COVERINGS:

If a student tests positive for COVID-19, what does that mean for the rest of the school?

Right now, Jones County Public Health, per CDC and IDPH guidelines, request that if an individual tests positive for COVID-19, all students that are were within six feet of the student for longer than 15 minutes will need to quarantine for 14 days, regardless of a negative test result. It is likely that Jones County Public Health would require an entire class to quarantine if one student in that classroom would test positive. *This is why we are working to separate grade levels so as to limit exposure to students from other grades.* In that way, should a student test positive for COVID-19, the entire school would not need to quarantine.

People who have NOT been close to someone who has tested positive, do not need to quarantine if they have a negative test, but they still should not be in school while ill.

The person who tests positive is required to self-isolate until: (1) It has been 10 days since symptom onset; AND (2) They are fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medicine; AND (3) All symptoms are improving.

If a teacher tests positive for COVID-19, what does that mean for the rest of the school?

If a teacher were to test positive for COVID-19, the same 'rule' regarding close contact and quarantine still applies. The teacher and any person that was exposed to that teacher within six feet for 15 minutes will need to quarantine for 14 days.

Will Sacred Heart School require that a COVID-19 test be administered before a student is able to return to school?

If a student has been exposed to an individual with COVID-19, the student must also quarantine for 14 days. Per the guidance of the Jones County Health Department, Sacred Heart School will not require a test to be administered for a student to return to school.

If a student has tested positive for COVID-19, they may not return until all of the following have occurred:

- No fever for at least 24 hours without the use of medicines that reduces fevers.
- Other symptoms have improved (no shortness of breath or coughing, for example)
- At least 10 days have passed since the symptoms first occurred (or 10 days from test date if asymptomatic)

These guidelines for returning to the classroom have been designed by the CDC as of mid-June. We also would request a doctor's note following a positive COVID-19 case stating that the child may return to school.

If a student or member of the staff or faculty tests positive, will we be informed?

We will inform parents of positive tests while respecting HIPAA privacy laws. This means that we will reach out to the family to determine what they would be comfortable with us sharing. At minimum, we will inform the school community of the positive case within our school and whether your child(ren) had a close exposure or not.

Would wearing face coverings reduce the time that individuals would need to quarantine?

No. The definition of "close contact" with a person that has tested positive for COVID-19 does not change because an individuals or individuals were or were not wearing face coverings. The individual that tests positive and all persons that were within six feet for at least 15 minutes will need to quarantine for 14 days.

So then why are face coverings being required at certain points of the day and encouraged throughout the day?

Even though face coverings will not reduce the time of a quarantine, the Center of Disease Control urges that face coverings be worn as they can help prevent respiratory droplets that may carry the virus from spreading beyond a person's face covering. If there are less respiratory droplets in the air, there is a significantly lesser chance that the virus will spread to others. In short, wearing personal PPE, such as face coverings, will not result in shortened quarantine periods but may help prevent the virus from spreading within the school.

Will the school supply face coverings for students?

If a family does not have face coverings, we will help to supply youth or adult face masks for students. Many children have preferences to what face coverings they like so Sacred Heart will not supply masks unless there is a request. We have had volunteers share their talents with us, therefore we do have a limited supply on hand. Please let the school office know if your child will need one.

Will the school supply face coverings or face shields for faculty and staff?

Yes. Sacred Heart will be supplying staff with face shields.

My child wants to wear a face shield instead of a mask, is that OK?

Yes. Face masks and face shields are both protective PPE. Please make sure that, if a face shield is preferred and purchased for a child to wear, the shield comes down past the child's chin.

Are there restrictions on the face coverings that a student may wear to school?

Sure... but nothing you wouldn't expect from our school. Face coverings should not have tobacco, drug, or alcohol related messages or designs, should be free of hate symbols or speech as defined by the ADL, and should not have words or phrases that would be inappropriate for school. Sacred Heart School reserves the right to make determinations on the appropriateness of a particular face covering, but if a student is requested to remove their face covering due to a concern, a replacement mask will be provided to the student.

Board Approved face covering guidelines:

Face coverings are highly recommended, but not required in all situations.

**Medical exceptions will be allowed with appropriate documentation.

Face coverings are required in the following situations:

Mass

Utilizing Monticello Community School District transportation

Small group work in the classroom

Passing in the hallways

Entering and exiting the building

Face coverings are not be required in the following situations:

When social distancing is possible

Seatwork time in the classroom

PE

Recess

Lunch

Please keep in mind that we are working on plans to limit these situations so that social distancing can take place as frequently as possible.

AFTER SCHOOL CARE:**How might before and after school care be affected?**

Aftercare will open for the 2020-2021 school year, and the same face covering rules apply. We will monitor developments in our area, and if there are changes, we will immediately inform our school community.

DAILY ROUTINES:**Where should students be dropped off in the morning and what will arrival look like?**

Please do not drop your child off until 7:45. Enter 3rd street from Sycamore Street to drop off your children. Parents, please remain in your vehicle. This will eliminate students needing to cross the street and improve traffic flow. There will be designated areas marked with a colored dot where students will go to line up before entering the building. They are organized by grade level. Face coverings are required at this period of time as was mentioned in the August 3 Board approved letter. Students will not enter the building until 7:55. On rainy and cold days, students will go directly to their classrooms in the designated door.

Each grade level will use the following doors to enter and exit throughout the day each day.

- Main (alley) entrance: Prek 4, kindergarten, 5th, 6th
- Street entrance: 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th

**Preschool 3 parents will walk their students to the Preschool 3 classroom door. Parents will remain outside in the alley with their child until Ms. Schmid greets the students at the outside door at 8am. We ask that you do not arrive earlier than 8am for drop off for PS3 and to have your child at school no later than 815am. Masks are required for parents at drop off and encouraged for preschool students.

How will traffic flow in the hallways?

Teachers are working together to ensure one grade level is using the hallway at a time. Times will be scheduled as a class to use the restroom and fill water bottles (as needed), however, when individual students leave the classroom face coverings are required.

Classes will use their lockers at individually scheduled times at the beginning and end of the day.

Will students have the opportunity to check out library books?

Yes. Both the school and classroom libraries will be open for students to check out books. A system will be implemented where books will be isolated for 72 hours after students return them. Students will be allowed to bring one library book home at a time. The others will stay in the classroom.

Are students allowed to bring birthday treats?

Yes. Treats must be prepackaged and stay in the classroom. Treats cannot be passed out to other teachers/staff.

Where will students eat lunch?

Students will eat lunch before going to recess. Prior to leaving the building, students will wash hands with soap and water and leave face coverings in the classroom. One class will go through the line at a time and sit at their designated table. Students will be staggered at assigned grade level lunch tables to allow a seat in between them. Staff will also stagger with a seat in between. Due to spacing students out in the lunch room, no visitors will be able to eat with us. A system has been created so that lunch cards will not be passed from person to person.

What will recess look like?

Face coverings will not be required at recess. Grade levels will play in an assigned area of the playground and rotate each day. These areas will include the playground, the grassy area near the playground, and the parking lot. Hands will be washed upon reentering the building.

Can my child bring a water bottle to school?

Yes. In fact, we are asking parents to send a water bottle to school with their child. The fountains will be turned off, but the bottle fillers will be operational to refill water bottles.

Will students have weekly Mass?

Yes. Students will attend weekly Mass. In accordance with the Archdiocese of Dubuque, Father Paul is requiring face coverings for all Masses at Sacred Heart. As we continue to keep students in their grade level cohorts, buddies will not sit together at Mass and the grade levels will be spread throughout the Church. Weekly Mass will only be for Sacred Heart School students and staff in effort to distance the grade levels from one another, therefore parents/grandparents and the community will not be able to attend our school Masses.

What will dismissal look like at the end of the day?

Teachers will release each grade level, one at a time, to retrieve items from the lockers. Students will be released by grade level. To reduce the amount of gathering, we ask that parents leave immediately after students are dismissed. The order of dismissal includes the following:

- Dismissed 1st: Bus riders (older bus buddies will wait in the hallway of their younger buddy's classroom to help walk them to the bus)
- Dismissed 2nd: kindergarten and 2nd
- Dismissed 3rd:: 1st and 3rd
- Dismissed 4th: 4th and 5th
- Dismissed 5th: 6th
- *Students will exit the same door they enter in the morning.

How are medical needs addressed at school?

If a child has a mild medical need such as bumps, bruises, has a headache, or needs a band aide, they will go to the main office.

If a child has as fever (100.3), constant coughing, etc. (possible COVID-19 symptoms), we have a separate isolated area designated where a student with these symptoms will stay. A staff member will call an emergency contact. Please have several emergency contacts on file for your student and have an emergency contact who is able to pick up your student in **30 minutes** if you are unable to.

Per CDC, IDPH, IDE and Public Health guidelines, any student who exhibits COVID-like signs/symptoms will be immediately placed in an isolation room and masked. Due to the wide range of signs and symptoms of Covid-19, and for the safety of all,

many students will be sent home. Ill students can return after following school policy and/or have met guidelines recommended by Public Health. Ill students will be encouraged to talk with their primary care provider or public health for medical advice.

MEDICATIONS:

Limitations on the amount of acetaminophen and ibuprofen administered will be in place given they can “mask” a fever and/or headache.

Students who are ill should not attend school in person. Monitor your student each morning for signs of illness. If your student has symptoms of COVID, please call to discuss prior to sending your student to school.

To ensure the health and safety of our staff and students, our office staff will be asking a few questions about your student’s illness when you call to report them absent in the morning.

We will be collaborating with Jones Co Public Health.

SCHOOL SCHEDULE AND ABSENCES:

Will classes start early for Sacred Heart School?

No. The first day of school has been planned for August 24th and it is a half day. On August 20th, parents with children in grades K-6 will organize times to drop off school materials and speak with teachers about the upcoming year.

**PreK 4 parents will have the opportunity on either August 20th or August 21st

How does the calendar affect our students?

The Sacred Heart Board of Education has decided to follow a modified Wednesday schedule. Beginning September 9th, Sacred Heart students will attend class brick and mortar and continue to attend classes every other Wednesday. Alternating Wednesdays will serve as professional development days. This schedule provides teachers time to prepare online materials while maximizing in-class learning. Our revised calendar allows Sacred Heart students 18 more days of in-class instruction versus online learning every Wednesday.

Please note that the “Brick and Mortar Wednesdays” will be days in which the district will not be running buses and parents will need to find transportation for their children to and from school.

If you are unable to find transportation for your child, please contact the school office.

Brick and Mortar Wednesdays:

September	9, 23
October	7, 21
November	4, 18
December	2, 16
January	13, 27
February	10, 24
March	10, 24
April	7, 21
May	5, 19

Professional Development Wednesdays (no school):

September	2, 16, 30
October	14, 28
November	11
December	9
January	6, 20
February	3, 17
March	3, 31
April	14, 28
May	12, 26

*Each day during the week of August 24 – 28 are noon dismissals and brick and mortar learning days.

Will Sacred Heart School consider only providing digital learning opportunities?

Sacred Heart does have a plan for digital learning, however, it is our goal to provide instruction to students in the building so long as it is possible. There may be times where a grade may need to quarantine, or students that sit at a particular lunch table. In those cases, online instruction may be used more by students and teachers, but even then, we hope that students and teachers that did not have close contact with an individual that tested positive will be able to remain on campus.

How does Sacred Heart School anticipate shared services with the public schools in the upcoming year?

We are currently working with the Monticello School District and it is anticipated students who are transported to the public schools for special services or band will continue to do so. Face coverings are required by the public schools in their buildings and on the buses, therefore face coverings are required on the public school campuses.

What will my child do if they are not in school?

The answer to this question really depends on how a child is feeling. Ultimately, students may stay home for extended periods of time for any of the following reasons (including but limited to):

- Child is sick with something other than COVID-19
- Child is sick with COVID-19 but is asymptomatic
- Child is sick with COVID-19 but is symptomatic
- Child is not sick but must quarantine for 14 days
- Parents have made the decision that a student will not be in school as a precautionary measure against COVID-19

In many of these cases, a student must be home despite the fact that the child feels well enough to be in the building that day. In these cases, a student should be encouraged to participate in live classes and/or view a personalized video that discusses the lessons of the day and extra practice that can be done at home. When a parent communicates with the teacher that a child is well enough to participate in on-line learning *and* does participate in *live classes*, the student will be considered present for the class. If a child is too ill to participate in lessons during the day, please communicate that with the teacher as well so that proper attendance can be taken. Please make these communications by 7:45 am so that plans can be adjusted accordingly as much as possible.

If a student is absent but is still able to participate, we would greatly appreciate your support in encouraging your child to participate in lessons. Students will follow their class schedule that they would have had while attending classes in person. While this may seem like a lot of screen time, teachers will be varying activities so a student's day will not need to be spent looking at the screen for the duration of their school day. Teachers will provide a daily schedule for these parents ahead of time and indicate the live instructional times. Examples of non-live instructional times include lunch, PE, recess, and individual work time.

If your child is unable to attend the live instruction, it is our plan that teachers will record the whole-group instruction and attach to the online platform.

Our goal is to educate every child regardless of circumstances. Please understand that these plans will continue to evolve as we understand limitations for screen time here too. We want to provide the resources and instruction for children – at home or at school – so that children may grow. Any whole-school revisions in plans will be communicated with parents. **REMEMBER, IF A CHILD IS SICK, PLEASE DO NOT SEND THE CHILD TO SCHOOL.**

I'm concerned about students needing to transition between digital learning and on-campus learning. How will learning be impacted?

Our plans acknowledge that this is one of the greatest concerns that families may have. We know there may be times where every grade has learning opportunities at school, there may be times when certain students must quarantine for 14 days and are unable to be in school, and there is also a chance that all schools in the state or county will need to return to a digital learning setting temporarily. Our goal will remain: have students back on campus once we get the green light to do so and teach students virtually when that is our option and when families decide that for option for their children. We will provide instruction that will be completed live with teachers, from prerecorded instruction from teachers, and through projects that may be completed at home.

Some parents are worried about their children 'falling behind' during these times. We continue to strive to provide quality education for our Sacred Heart Students. We will remain true to this mission. With that said, please remember that many schools across our state and country are experiencing the same concerns regarding the coming year that Sacred Heart is. We are more prepared than many schools given our size, ability to adapt to changes quickly, our AMAZING community, and the teachers' training in digital learning.

If my child is absent from school due to COVID-19, will it count against them?

If a student is unable to participate in lessons due to illness, they will be marked as absent from school. If a student is able to participate in digital instruction (asymptomatic, or in quarantine) the student would be required to complete the assigned work. In cases like this, communication with the teacher is very important as we do not wish to overwhelm the student when the child is healthy again.

***Please note that all learning is required (digital and/or brick and mortar)*

If somebody in our family tests positive for COVID-19, do all children in the family need to miss school?

A student must quarantine for 14 days if they have close exposure (within six feet for 15 minutes) with any individual who tests positive for COVID-19. People living under the same roof will all need to quarantine if there is a positive case within the house. A student that must stay home will not need to miss school as digital learning options are available.

If a child must quarantine because of a close exposure, what does that mean for the rest of the family or siblings?

Unless a parent or sibling has also had direct close contact (within six feet for 15 minutes) with an individual who has tested positive, there is no requirement to quarantine. Siblings may return to school if they so choose (we understand that there may be times when a family may *elect* for all children to stay home). Per guidance from Jones County Public Health, it is very important to keep the individual who is in quarantine as separate as possible from the rest of the household members, in case symptoms do develop.

What if a teacher is absent from school for a prolonged period of time? Will my child still be able to learn?

Similar to the situation that many students may face, teachers may need to quarantine if they would have close exposure with an individual that tests positive for COVID-19. We are working to identify ways in where a teacher could essentially teach in a digital format from home using the technology resources that we now have. It is likely that the teacher will be able to also help teach from home while a substitute teacher would be responsible for helping to supervise students as they continue in their learning from school.

Will a child be allowed to attend before and after school care if they are required to quarantine for 14 days?

No. "Quarantine" means that a child should not leave the house. A student that is required to quarantine may not be on campus at any point during their quarantine.

ASSISTANCE FROM HOME REQUESTED:

What can I do to support the school during these times?

Sacred Heart School anticipates a higher need for substitute teachers in the coming year. If you have ever considered doing so, now would be a great time to get involved! There is [additional flexibility](#) allowed for the coming year for those interested in helping. Remember, we may need assistance at times just helping to supervise a room while a teacher conducts virtual lessons from home. If you have interest in subbing, please contact me as soon as possible so that we can help you through the process to become an authorized substitute teacher in the coming year.

If you would like to assist by volunteering your time at school but do not feel that substitute teaching is as desired for you, we can still benefit from the help of our community. Our maintenance staff will have additional responsibilities in keeping the building sanitized and our lunch staff will have additional responsibilities as well in the lunchroom. Again, please let me know so we can complete our cleaning schedule and responsibilities.

Anything else?

Perhaps the greatest support that you can provide the school right now is to help support the school with your children at home. We all know that these are strange times and that there will likely be things in our plan that you may not agree with 100%. Please understand our approach to allow students in the school while taking measures to help slow the spread of COVID-19 between students and our staff while also maintaining some semblance to a typical school day. We also are working to provide learning opportunities and support for children that are working from home. Please talk kindly of the school as you talk to your students. Please encourage your children with optimism as we face the 2020-2021 school year. Please ask questions of the school when you have them. Please encourage your children to follow new procedures while at school (at minimum, please do not discourage children to follow procedures). Be patient. Be understanding. We are grateful to have the opportunities to teach your children in the upcoming year but to move forward most efficiently, we must work together.

One other thing that will be important is to communicate to your children the importance of socially distancing when possible, required times for wearing face coverings, and hygiene routines to help children remain healthy. We will do our part at the school by providing hand washing breaks and we will help in teaching handwashing etiquette. We will help students to socially distance in classrooms by spacing out desks and by having more traditional classroom setups (as opposed to 'pods' that are more common for community learning).

Finally, I ask of you – during this school year, do take precautions that will help prevent the spread of COVID-19 when away from school. I am asking the same for our teachers and staff during the year. Please consider limiting guests to your home, especially as outdoor gatherings become less possible due to cooler weather. Be mindful that the actions of one family can impact other families. Consider wearing a face covering when shopping or when in public and social distancing isn't possible. We've always been 'in this together' and it will take a community effort to help keep COVID-19 from significantly changing our plans as we remain committed to providing students with a quality education.

What should I communicate to the school?

- Please contact your child's teacher if a student will be absent for the day. We will inquire as to whether or not the student will be participating in online learning options.

- If you have a student that has tested positive for COVID-19, please contact the school immediately. We want to help stop the spread and early notification will help us to do so.
- You may wish to inform the school if you have a child that has symptoms of COVID-19 and has been tested and you are waiting on test results. This is not necessary and HIPAA laws would prevent us with sharing this information with others unless you provided permission for us to do so.
- Ultimately, I wish to encourage parents to inform the school of any developments regarding COVID-19. We cannot mandate contact but please, for the safety of our school, students, and staff, should there be a positive case of COVID-19 in your home, immediately inform the school.

How will the school communicate changes throughout the year?

We would be naïve to believe that there will not be changes during the year. Sacred Heart School uses Remind for essential announcements, such as snow days, late starts, and early dismissals. If there are important and immediate changes that you need to know about, we will post an announcement on Remind and send emails. Other changes that are not as immediate will be communicated via the weekly newsletter. Please do read through each newsletter each week.

What will be different from the online instruction that is being provided this year compared to what was offered from March-May of the 2019-2020 school year?

A lot will be different but a lot will stay the same. In the spring of 2020, we quickly (and without notice) moved our classrooms to a remote setting. In the process, we learned a lot about what works and what didn't work so well. The biggest changes include:

- In many of these cases, a student must be home despite the fact that the child feels well enough to be in the building that day. In these cases, a student should be encouraged to participate in live classes and/or view a personalized video that discusses the lessons of the day and extra practice that can be done at home. When a parent communicates with the teacher that a child is well enough to participate in on-line learning and does participate in live classes, the student will be considered present for the class. If a child is too ill to participate in lessons during the day, please communicate that with the teacher as well so that proper attendance can be taken. Please make these communications by 7:45 am so that plans can be adjusted accordingly as much as possible.
- If a student is absent but is still able to participate, we would greatly appreciate your support in encouraging your child to participate in lessons. Students will follow their class schedule that they would have had while attending classes in person. While this may seem like a lot of screen time, teachers will be varying activities so a student's day will not need to be spent looking at the screen for the duration of their school day. Teachers will provide a daily schedule for these parents ahead of time and indicate the live instructional times. Examples of non-live instructional times include lunch, PE, recess, and individual work time. Teachers are more prepared with technology that allows instruction to be of higher quality. Sacred Heart School has purchased Computer Cameras with a Microphone (allowing students from home to participate in distance learning and live discussions) and Bluetooth headsets (for when a teacher is providing a lecture – but when a student has a question, they can ask it and the teacher will hear it wherever they are teaching from, and to be able to hear the teacher more clearly when accessing recording of instruction).
- Parents with children in multiple elementary grades will see more similarities between classes (specifically preschool – 2nd grade and 3rd – 6th grade).
- Instruction and feedback will be provided by the teacher of the classroom. There will be daily instruction provided.
- We understand that there may be times when a child is quarantined at home but parents must still have to work. We will work with families to determine how we can best support the child in their learning.

Other Topics:

Is there a scenario where the Monticello Community School District would need to shut down but Sacred Heart School would remain open? If so, how would that affect transportation?

This scenario is possible. As long as Sacred Heart School is allowed to have students in school safely, we will provide opportunities to learn in the building. If there is a mandate to shut down a school, it will likely come from the national, state, or county level. We will learn more as the year goes on about counties closing individual schools due to an outbreak. If Sacred Heart School was required to close temporarily, students would continue their learning in a digital format and we would work with the district about sharing services with to ensure that students continue learning opportunities in those classes. If the Monticello School District were required to close but Sacred Heart School would still allow students to be on campus, we would require parents to provide transportation to school or to participate in online options during that time.

I've heard that COVID-19 isn't really that serious. This seems like a lot of work for something that has been blown out of proportion. Why is Sacred Heart School (and why are other schools) doing so much?

We would like our school year to function with as few interruptions to our ability to provide online instruction as possible. There are a few mandates that we must follow including:

- COVID-19 close exposure is defined as when an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 comes within six feet of another person for at least 15 minutes during a day.
- If there is close exposure, the individual and the person with the positive test must quarantine for 14 days (with a few exceptions to this as listed previously).
- Schools should do what they can to keep students socially distanced. We are continuously working on ways we can make this possible at Sacred Heart School.

If Sacred Heart School moves to a fully digital learning platform, how will that work with before and after school care?

This question is a bit loaded as it is impossible to guess all of the reasons that Sacred Heart School might be asked to move to a fully digital classroom setting. For example, if the county or state were to require Sacred Heart School to do so due to an outbreak in our area, it would be reasonable to believe that our aftercare program might also not remain open. We are not planning on putting a policy together as the particular circumstances for closing school while maintaining our aftercare program will require unique and unforeseen circumstances.

What about grades for the year? Will students receive grades?

Yes. Students in all grades will receive grades in the same manner they would every other year. Teachers will provide communication with families when a student might be struggling academically, emotionally, or is expressing concerns or anxiety during the school year.

***Please note that all learning is required (digital and/or brick and mortar)*

We have limited Internet access or technology. When students must learn online, how can we do this?

Sacred Heart School will help supply computers and other devices to allow students to join in classes. In the event that a student is experiencing an unstable internet connection, students may also call into live classes instead of using internet connectivity. If a student is not under quarantine, but has limited access to internet at home, we will investigate options for the student to participate in classes while remaining isolated within the school building. Please contact us whenever internet connectivity issues arise so that we may help find solutions.

How long will these plans be in effect?

We will continue to work with Jones County's Health Department to make determinations for our best steps moving forward. We will continue to monitor the situation and adapt as necessary to the realities of the world around us.

Closing Thoughts:

In just about every other situation, it is the responsibility of a school administrator to help prevent the spread of a global pandemic. Fortunately, at Sacred Heart School, we have an amazing team of teachers, parents, Sacred Heart Board of Education, community members, and staff members that have all had the opportunity to provide feedback, ideas, and thoughts as we continue to move towards the upcoming school year.

I do want to thank everyone who has taken the time to respond to the survey that was provided a couple of weeks ago. We had a great response! Thank you for recognizing the difficulties in planning for a year – but also, thank you for recognizing the efforts that have gone into creating a plan that we will use to begin the year. Thank you to the messages of *grace* that so many of you are sharing with our school and our teachers. Yes – this year will be one that we will remember forever... our goal is to make it one that we will not want to forget.

May God bless you and your family as summer comes to an end. May God bless our school and our community as we come closer to new beginning. May God bless our country and our world and may He continue to guide us.

Laura Herbers, Principal