

RETURN TO RICE

A PLAN FOR
SAFELY
ADVANCING
LEARNING IN
2020-21

RICE
Memorial High School

OF

Welcome Back!

We are eager to open our doors to students for the 2020-21 school year starting on **September 8**. After nearly six months away from Rice, we hope our students are looking forward to returning to school. In addition to the excitement that precedes any new school year, there is the reality that this school year will undoubtedly look *very* different. As we said earlier this month, we all need to be prepared that nothing will be the same as it was in the past. However, it is our goal, that when you look beyond the safety measures in place, that the essence of Rice will be ever-present. In addition to ensuring the safety and well-being of everyone in our building, we also must keep our core values and mission at the heart of all we do.

How was this plan created?

Earlier this month, Bishop Coyne approved a framework of general guidelines for the re-opening of Catholic schools this fall with in-person education: [“United in Faith Returning with C.A.R.E.: Communities and Academics Reimagined Effectively.”](#) These guidelines were recommended to him by all of the Catholic school principals and the Superintendent of Catholic Schools who developed them with information provided from various recognized public health and/or educational authorities including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Academy of Pediatrics: COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-entry, and the [Vermont Agency of Education](#) and Department of Health.

We recognize the irreplaceable value of returning to in-person instruction this fall, academically, socially and emotionally. However, to accomplish this goal safely, we must make adjustments to how we do things. Thank you to the members of our Re-Opening Task Force, as well as the students, parents and faculty members who helped guide this process.

Re-Opening Task Force

Lisa Lorenz, Principal
Jeff Maher, Assistant Principal
Jerry Tarrant '84, Board Chair-Elect
Jason Barron '98, Board Vice Chair-Elect
Neil Brodeur '85, Athletic Director
Rachel Rabbin, Guidance Director
Christy Bahrenburg '88, Director of Advancement and Communications
Stacy Bessette, Admissions
Heatherly Allard, Admissions
Carol Hauke, School Nurse
Jane Ann Kantor, School Nurse
Sharon Boardman, Science Teacher
Mollie Bachner, History Teacher
Lisa Barron '83, Front Office

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School Schedule

In order to best meet social distancing guidelines, minimize the amount of movement in our building and accommodate our entire student body on any given day, we will temporarily adopt a four 80-minute period school day with Wednesdays as a remote work day.

Mondays and Thursdays: Periods 1, 3, 5, and 7

Tuesdays and Fridays: Periods 2, 4, 6 and 8

Wednesdays: Remote work day

Arrival

Staff and faculty will be available at our gym lobby doors starting at **7am** to pre-screen students arriving for the school day. Between 7:45am and 8:10am, students may also enter the building through our main lobby doors. Students with a first period science class will enter the building at the north end of the science wing.

In early August, a Health Question and Agreement Form will be sent to every family that must be signed and returned through the myRice portal before the start of school.



At the health check-point, students will have their temperature taken with a non-contact thermometer and be asked the following questions:

1. Have you been in close contact with a person who has COVID-19?
2. Have you been out of state in the last 14 days?
3. Do you feel unwell with any symptoms consistent with COVID-19 (cough, fever of 100.4 or higher, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell)?

If an individual does not pass the screening, they will need to return home.

Students must wear a facial covering at all times and will be asked to sanitize their hands at arrival and throughout the day.

Lunch

The Abbey Group in collaboration with Rice Memorial High School's will provide meals in the following manner:

- Only students who want a cafeteria meal will be permitted to go down to the cafeteria to pick up their meals then return to assigned classrooms to eat. The cafeteria will have one-way entry and exit points.
- The cafeteria will offer a limited menu in compliance with the lunch program guidelines from the Agency of Education, Vermont Department of Health, and the Abbey Group. In addition, all meals will be placed in take-out containers.

Dismissal

Classrooms will be dismissed by the administration to ensure everyone is maintaining social distancing and exiting the building or moving to their next designated area, i.e. parking lot, gym lobby, band room, campus ministry, etc. as directed.

All after school faculty advisors or coaches are responsible for attendance and compliance with safety protocols.

If your student is NOT participating in an afterschool activity, they must be picked up and/or off campus no later than **3pm**.

After School Activities

All sports practices, games, and travel will follow the guidelines set out by the Vermont Principals Association (VPA). The use of the locker rooms will be assigned by the coaches to enter at their designated time and location of their assigned lockers that will be spaced apart during this transition. Entry and exit will follow a similar procedure as the school day hallway passing.

Club activities will resume as long as they can meet health and safety guidelines. Some clubs may choose to use our remote Wednesday for their meetings.

Visitors

Visitors to Rice will be significantly restricted. Only those necessary for the continuity of instruction will be allowed in the building. All visitors must proceed to the Front Office to have their temperature checked and answer the health questionnaire. We ask that parents picking up students for appointments, etc. wait

outside and call the front desk if they need help tracking down their student.

Guidance

School Counselors will be available throughout the school year continuing to provide students the necessary academic, emotional and social support. During this time, it is more important than ever to use mental health support systems. Our counselors are eager to help, however possible, to ease the burden on students and parents.

To set up an appointment with your Guidance Counselor, please contact them via email or phone at any time.

Rachel Rabbin, Director of Guidance -
rabbin@rmhsvt.org or ext. 211
Kim Pushee Hill, Guidance Counselor -
khill@rmhsvt.org or ext. 210
Drew Farrell, Guidance Counselor -
farrell@rmhsvt.org or ext. 212
LoisAnne Cefarello, Registrar -
cefarello@rmhsvt.org or ext. 209



Safety Protocols

Hand Hygiene

Rice will build routines of hand hygiene into the daily school schedule for all students and staff, including handwashing and sanitation breaks during or between classroom activities. Sinks and/or hand sanitizing stations are located throughout the building and are readily accessible to students, faculty, and staff.

Face Coverings

All students and staff are required to wear facial coverings at school. Facial coverings should be worn by all staff and students while in the building and outside when physical distancing cannot be maintained. Exceptions for health-related or behavioral-related circumstances will be accommodated.

Physical Distancing and Group Sizes

Several measures have been taken to follow social distancing guidelines and reduce cross directional movement:

- All classroom desks will face forward and be spaced 6 feet apart when feasible and in compliance with guidelines.
- Seats will be assigned.
- All Rice faculty, staff and students will follow pre-established traffic patterns when moving in the building.
- Recommended signage from Health Officials will be placed around the building
- Group sizes will adhere to the Governor's orders as they are published.

In addition, movement will be limited throughout the day. Students must sign out of their classrooms to use the restroom. Outside of restroom use, students will be permitted to leave the classroom for prior arranged meetings, guidance appointments, and emergencies only.

Finally, students will be asked to keep their belongings on them at all times. Lockers in the academic halls will not be assigned or accessible.

Cleaning

Our Facilities team has developed a comprehensive cleaning schedule and checklist. In addition, faculty will be responsible for wiping down desks and high touch surfaces in their classrooms at the beginning and end of each day. Students will be responsible for wiping down their desk areas every time they enter a classroom and may be assigned other duties to augment our Facilities crew's efforts.

Finally, on Wednesdays, the entire building will be deep cleaned and sanitized.

Ventilation

Air ventilation and HVAC systems are updated according to the new regulations per the Vermont Guidelines.

Keeping our Rice Family Healthy

What if my student gets sick?

If symptoms identified in our health screening begin while at school, your student will be kept in our ventilated isolation room located in the front office and monitored by the school nurse until he/she can be picked up. We ask that parents pick up their sick child no more than 1 hour after they have been notified.

Students will be excluded from school until they are no longer considered contagious and should remain at home until they have had no fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications (e.g., Advil, Tylenol).

What happens if a case of COVID is confirmed at Rice?

The entire school will be notified via email if a student, faculty or staff member is officially diagnosed with COVID. The privacy of the individual(s) will be honored. If your student has been potentially exposed to the sick individual, you will be contacted by the Vermont Department of Health directly. Please follow their instructions carefully.

Anyone diagnosed with COVID-19 should self-isolate according to guidelines set forth by the Vermont Department of Health.

Decisions about school closure will be made based on guidance from the Agency of Education, the Department of Health and the Superintendent of Catholic Schools.



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Distance Learning

There is much we have learned since mid-March, but one of the biggest takeaways is that we must remain *flexible*. The COVID rollercoaster has taken us all for a ride and we must continue to roll with it. Our Return to Rice plan will likely evolve based on how effectively it is serving our students and faculty and shifting health guidelines. Any decision to change our mode of instruction will be made in consultation with school leadership, the Superintendent of Catholic Schools and local health officials.

Should circumstances warrant a reduction in the number of students in our building, we will move to a **hybrid learning model**. Half of our students will attend school at any given time, while the other half Zooms from home.

Monday/Tuesday:

Group A at Rice; Group B Zooms synchronously

Wednesday:

Students work from home; enrichment opportunities; individual support from teachers, guidance support, etc.

Thursday/Friday:

Group B attends in person; Group A Zooms synchronously

Should we need to close our building entirely, we will move to a completely remote learning plan.

Technology

Steffen Parker, the administration, and the Rice School Board have systematically evaluated our technology resources and developed a comprehensive plan for remote instruction. Equipment upgrades have been made so that teachers can efficiently provide remote instruction from the classroom and from home (if needed).

To the extent possible, work will be assigned and submitted through the myRice portal. Digital content will be used as much as possible to reduce surface contact with books, papers, and other resources.



In Closing

It is only by all of us working together, that we can truly provide our students the safest environment as possible while continuing their Rice education. We all need to be in this together, with the same vision and goals. In doing so, we hope to keep all of our families as healthy as possible. After having read this, I ask that each of you sign and return the Collaboration Agreement Form through myRice Portal prior to September 8, 2020.

United in Prayer and in His Service,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lisa Lorenz".

Lisa Lorenz,
Principal/President