



HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Safe Return to School Plan

School Year 2021-2022

Our primary focus is on the safety and welfare of our students and staff members. The COVID-19 protocols are continually changing, as the situation is very fluid. As we receive new information and guidelines, our decisions will be based on maintaining a safe environment for all of our Holy Cross family. Please continue to pray for an end to this pandemic and the effects that it has caused to our communities.

Holy Cross Catholic School COVID-19 Team of Advisors (CTA)

1. Travis Tomek, M.D –Family Medicine Physician practicing at the Medical Arts Clinic
2. Amanda Campos – Emergency Management Coordinator for Matagorda County
3. Warren Robicheaux, FACHE – CEO of Matagorda Regional Medical Center
4. Father Stephen Vacek – Pastor of Holy Cross Catholic Church
5. Dr. John Quarry – Superintendent of Catholic Schools and *Interim* Principal of Holy Cross

- ❖ The COVID-19 Team of Advisors (CTA) have met during the summer and contributed to the *Update* to the ***Safe Return to School Plan*** for the current 2021-2022 school year. The CTA will continue to be consulted, when needed, throughout the school year.

Promoting Healthy Behaviors, Environments, and Operations

TEMPERATURE CHECKS: Students, teachers, staff, and campus visitors arriving to campus before school academics, during morning car line, midday, or after the start of the school day will continue to have their temperature checked by a Holy Cross Catholic School staff member. Children and adults who have a fever (temperature equal to or greater than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit) will not be permitted to stay on campus. **Parents, guardians, or other drivers should not depart until a staff person has confirmed the student(s) does not have a fever.**

MASKS: Until further notice, our campus will be a “Mask-optional facility.” Students, teachers, staff, and campus visitors are ENCOURAGED to wear a mask that covers the nose and mouth upon arrival and while in common areas such as hallways, the church, the library, the computer room, all bathrooms, and other spaces where they may come into close contact with other people. *Masks are not required while students are inside their classroom or while outside, so long as proper distancing is maintained. NOTE: If the health situation changes within our county or school campus, the option to wear a mask may change. We will continue to monitor the situation and the updates from both our CTA, Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops-Education Department (TCCB-ED), Texas Education Agency (TEA), and the CDC.*

PHYSICAL DISTANCING: Continuing in a similar format from last school year, Father Stephen will offer the **School Mass at 8:30 a.m. on Thursdays** to allow all students to attend weekly Mass. Initially, all students will

eat in the school cafeteria with staggered seating to provide additional protection. Parents who wish to come to campus to eat with their child will need to schedule it with the front office. *We will be monitoring the campus to ensure that safety protocols are followed.* Therefore, from time to time, we may have to limit the number of people in the cafeteria, who are not staff and students, to ensure that social distancing between themselves and other students is maintained. Morning and/or lunch breaks/recesses may also need to be staggered, based on our monitoring. *Parents will be notified of any changes to the policies as soon as possible.*

ENHANCED SANITATION: The custodial staff will continue to monitor the campus throughout the fall and winter months to determine if additional protocols for frequent disinfection of high-traffic areas become necessary. Teachers and elementary students (primarily grades 4-5) will continue to monitor and follow disinfecting procedures in their classroom, including wiping down desks, tables, chairs, doorknobs, and any frequently touched surfaces. *Hand-sanitizer stations will be available at school entrances, classrooms, and key passage areas.*

WATER: Students are asked to continue to bring a filled water bottle from home. These bottles should be clearly marked with the student's name. Water stations will continue to be available for teachers and teacher aides to refill students' water bottles, if needed during the day.

Exclusion and Re-admission Criteria

Holy Cross Catholic School will adhere to the current recommendations from the CTA, CDC, TEA and Texas DSHS; *these recommendations are subject to change, which may also cause our local school policies to change.*

1. Any employee or student who has any new or worsening signs or symptoms of possible COVID-19: or close contact with a person who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19 will be immediately isolated and sent home.
2. Due to the recent addition of the "delta variant" of COVID-19, HCCS has been advised to increase its monitoring of any employees, students, or visitors who may have new or worsening signs or symptoms, and will therefore not be allowed to return to school until:
 - In the case of an employee or student who was diagnosed with COVID-19, the individual may return to work/school when **all three** of the following criteria are met.
 - (a) at least ONE day (24 hours) since last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications.
 - (b) the individual has overall improvement in symptoms, e.g., cough, shortness of breath; and
 - (c) at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
 - In the case of an employee or student who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and does not get evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, **the individual is assumed to have COVID-19**. The individual may not return to work/school until the individual has completed the same three-step criteria listed above.

- If the employee or student has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to work/school before completing the above self-isolation period, the individual:
 - must obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis (other than COVID-19), OR
 - must secure a verified lab- confirmed negative COVID-19 test result on the day preceding the return to campus.
3. An employee or student with known close contact to a person who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19 will not be allowed to return to work/school:
- until the end of the 10-day self-quarantine period from the last date of exposure
 - after 7 days, if the employee/student has had a negative test within 48 hours of the end of the 7 day quarantine.

Close contact is defined as someone who was within 3 feet of an infected person (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (for example, *three individual 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes*).

Students who are absent due to following school requirements for fever, symptoms, or quarantine do not accrue absences if they keep up with their class via remote learning/asynchronous learning while away from campus.

Emergency Response for COVID-19

If a confirmed case of COVID-19 has entered a school building, the following procedures will be observed:

1. The Office of Catholic Schools will be notified.
2. The CTA will be notified.
3. Staff members and parents will be notified; the confidentiality of the student or staff member is required in all school communications.
4. The local health department will be notified, and the school will follow the latest required action steps and guidance for the appropriate response.

Final reminder – *Please note that these guidelines and protocols are currently in place on our Holy Cross campus. However, keep in mind, that the COVID-19 protocols are continually changing, as the situation continues to evolve. As we receive new information and guidelines, we will make every effort to maintain the safety and welfare of our students and staff members to provide a safe environment for our uppermost in our decisions. Please continue to pray for an end to this pandemic and the effects that it has caused to our communities.*