



St. Mary's School

132 W. Butler | Manchester, Iowa | 52057 | 563.927.3689

July 2020

"The laborers in the Lord's vineyard should have one foot on the ground, and the other raised to proceed on their journey." --St. Ignatius of Loyola

Dear Families,

The year 2020 has certainly presented all of us with a unique journey! At St. Mary's Catholic School, we are excited and ready to continue our partnership with your family. I wish to update you on our preparations for the 2020-2021 school year in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. St. Mary's Catholic School staff has been working diligently to create a rigorous and safe return-to-learn plan in order to proceed with the journey of Catholic education that feeds your child and family spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually.

Living our Mission

We are committed to providing a quality Catholic education, regardless of the mode of delivery being used. The education your child receives from St. Mary's is distinct, as our Catholic beliefs, traditions, and teachings are deeply embedded in daily instruction. St. Mary's staff are prepared to continue this for next school year.

Regardless of which mode of delivery is being used, St. Mary's is committed to offering the highest level of education possible by focusing directly on the social, emotional, faith, and intellectual needs of each child.

- Religion classes and prayer opportunities will be held daily.
- Teachers will have daily communication and interaction with all students.
- Catholic beliefs, traditions, and teaching will continue to be deeply embedded in daily instruction.
- Mass will be held weekly.
- Service opportunities will be available for all students.
- Core classes will be taught daily.

Three Modes of Delivery

We have prepared three models for instruction in order to be prepared for the unknown of next school year. Each one is described below.

On-Site Learning

This model indicates services are offered at St. Mary's Catholic School. It is our goal to begin the school year on August 24, 2020 with on-site learning. To meet this goal, we have planned for additional cleaning, social distancing, training, and health/safety plans.

Hybrid Learning

This model indicates services are offered both remotely and on-site. This model may be used to address specific student health concerns and a lack of readiness to return to the onsite model, as well as state mandates for social distancing, etc. Students using remote virtual learning will utilize SeeSaw (P/K-3) and Google Classroom (4-6) for instruction.

Virtual Learning

This model indicates services will be held remotely for all students. Virtual learning will be used in emergency situations when on-site learning is not possible. When students are using remote virtual learning they will utilize SeeSaw (P/K-3) and Google Classroom (4-6) for instruction.

Health and Safety

We recognize it is not possible to eliminate all COVID-19 exposure risks. We are implementing strategies to make our school as safe as possible.

Screening

- Symptom screening should be done at home.
- Children or staff with a temperature of 100.3 or above should not attend school. If the temperature is discovered at school, the child or staff member will be kept away from others and expected to leave as soon as possible.

Face Coverings (see additional information from the St. Mary's School Board)

- Face coverings are strongly encouraged to be worn by all students and staff at some times and areas in the building. There are places, such as entering/exiting the building, school bus transportation, and hallways that face coverings are required.
- Lessons and instructions will be provided to students on the appropriate use of face coverings, as well as the prevention of stigmas associated with use or non-use of face coverings.
- **Each student will have a 3-sided sneeze guard with sides at their desk/table.**

Cleaning and Disinfecting

- Additional cleaning and disinfecting procedures will be implemented throughout St. Mary's campus.

Hand Washing and Personal Hygiene

- Hand washing will be done frequently throughout the school day.
- Hand sanitizer and Kleenex will be available in multiple places in the classrooms and school.

Limiting Exposure

- We will limit school visitors and access to the school building.
- At this time, we will not have classroom volunteers.
- Staff continues to plan how to reconfigure and utilize building space to provide for as much social distancing as possible.
- Two health office spaces will be utilized. One for illness and one for first aid/medication.
- Lunch will be provided in 3 shifts this year to allow for social distancing.
- At this time, lunch guests will not be allowed.
- **Whenever possible, we ask that students not be dropped off until 8:00 AM to limit the number of students waiting between 7:45-8:00. Students dropped off at 8:00 AM should enter school via the front doors.**

Exposure

- All positive cases of COVID-19 will be reported to Delaware County Public Health. We will follow their guidance for notification, contact tracing, cleaning, and closure.

What can you do?

Please understand that we are making the best decisions we can for everyone involved. We know that everyone will not be happy with all our decisions, but please remain positive around your children. Their attitude about school will directly correlate with yours. Below are a few other things you can do to help our school community:

- Talk to your child about what school will look like, including the mitigation steps listed above.
- Discuss your family's expectation of face coverings with your child.
- Continue to read school communications as more information becomes available.
- When available, complete e-registration accurately and make sure your contact information is up to date in case we need to communicate with you.

- **Please keep your child at home if they do not feel well. It is important to keep your child home if they have a fever. Please do not give fever-reducing medication and send your child to school.**
- **Report any exposure or positive cases to Becky Clemen-Salow (bsalow@st-marys.pvt.k12.ia.us), school secretary, immediately.**
- **Please contact Kelley Harbach (kharbach@st-marys.pvt.k12.ia.us), principal, to request to be part of our hybrid model if you would prefer that your child not attend on-site. If you choose this option, it will be on a semester basis.**
- **Please reach out with any questions or concerns. Our school staff is here to help!**

Our school team continues to receive information almost daily from the Iowa Department of Education, Iowa Department of Public Health, CDC, Archdiocese of Dubuque Office of Catholic Schools, and the Delaware County Health Department. Please know that plans and guidance may change as more information is received. Our local return-to-learn committee will continue to review this information in order to welcome your child back to St. Mary's to continue their spiritual, social, emotional, and intellectual growth as safely as possible. Thank you for entrusting us with your most precious gift.

Sincerely,

Kelley Harbach, Principal