**St. Clare of Assisi Covid-19 Plan**

**How Parents can Support Healthy Safety in the School Environment**

The Archdiocesan Catholic schools believe that **community and human encounter is the best way to form children** and allow them to flourish. We need to work together as a school community of parents, students, teachers and staff for the health safety of everyone in the school community so that students can benefit from continued in-person learning.

**Parents can help facilitate the health safety of our school by following the parent checklist each morning, which can be remembered by the pneumonic SCA:**

1. **Screen**: Perform symptoms check before school each day; don’t send child to school if exhibiting symptoms.
2. **Cover**: Make sure your child has a mask for school.
3. **And pack a lunch**: The lunch should not require microwaving. All utensils the child needs should be in the lunchbox. Parents should NOT drop off lunches during the morning.

Please plan to **send extra masks with your child to keep at school**.

In addition, we believe that **adults set the tone for students** to be adaptable and resilient. The messaging you send your children at home is important. Please encourage your children to cooperate with wearing their masks, sanitizing hands frequently, and following health safety protocols. You can also assure them that the adults in their lives are doing everything they can to ensure their safety. Ultimately God is in control and His ways are mysterious, but we trust that “all things work together unto good for those who love the Lord” (Rom 8:28) even if we don’t understand His ways.

**Screening**

**Parents need to screen their children for Covid-19 symptoms before bringing them to school.** You can use this [form](https://docs.google.com/document/d/19zoZ4I-HrcD6kHHOsyPPWZzy3n8nuGo_YZ3n2b2s2GM/edit?usp=sharing) as a guide for screening your children. Ideally this screening takes place at home before departure, but for parents with limited time this can also be done in the car. It’s important that it’s done each day.

**Children showing any symptoms will need to stay home**. Students who have a fever over 100.4 degrees F or exhibit other symptoms will not be allowed to come to school. Students riding the bus will not be allowed to board the bus if they exhibit any symptoms.

Upon arrival at school, a school staff member will take the child’s temperature and briefly visit with the family on the symptoms check conducted before arrival at school.

**Cohorting**

**Students will be cohorted by grade**, meaning that they will have close extended contact only with those in their cohort. Close contact is less than 20 feet and extended contact is 15 minutes or more. It is permissible for students to have close contact with others not in their cohort for less than 15 minutes. However, whenever possible we will also eliminate this from the daily routines of the life of the school.

**In the event that a member of the cohort contracts Covid-19**, we will need to follow the quarantining principles outlined by Eagle County Public Health. **It may mean that there will be a 2-week period during the year where your child will have distance learning.** In the event that this occurs, to ease the transition to distance learning for the students we will use a Google Classroom format like last spring so that students do not need to learn a new system.

**Middle school students will move between classes less this academic year than in the past.** They will have several classes in a row in the same classroom and the teachers will move to them. There still will be some occasional movement between classes and time at lockers. However, this will be less than 15 minutes at a time and the number of times a day that it will occur will be reduced.

**Morning Drop-Off Procedure**

Morning Drop-Off: 7:45-7:58am

*Please be attentive to arriving at school on time to facilitate a smooth implementation of morning health safety procedures. Students may not arrive before 7:45am.*

There will be **a different drop-off procedure for students in K-2nd grade and students in 3rd-8th grade. If you have a child in both grade bands, please drop off the student(s) in 3rd-8th grade first** and then drop off the student(s) in grades K-2.

3rd-8th Grade Drop-Off Procedure

* Parents will drop-off students at the normal location.
* A staff member will check the child’s temperature with a no-touch thermometer and ask the parents about the screening they conducted before arriving at school.
* Students with no symptoms will then be allowed to walk into the school.
* Parents may not leave the carline until their child have been approved to walk into the school. Please plan for drop-off to take a few additional minutes.
* 3rd-5th grade students go immediately to their homeroom classroom and follow teacher directions for putting belongings away and settling into the day.
* 6th-8th grade students should put their belongings in their lockers, take with them all the materials they’ll need for their morning block of classes, and then go directly to their homeroom. They need to do this as efficiently as possible; a teacher will be a hallway monitor to assist with efficiency as needed.

This flow of traffic will nearly eliminate the exposure of students in 3rd-5th grade to other students. Middle school students may be in close contact with other middle school students, but it will be for less than 15 minutes.

K-2nd Student Drop-Off Procedure

* Drop off students at the *front doors* of the school.
* A teacher will greet the student, take temperature using a no-touch thermometer, and ask the parents about the screening they conducted before arriving at school.
* Students with no symptoms will then be allowed to walk into the school.
* The teacher will direct the student in getting to the building.
* Students go directly to their classroom.

This procedure prevents K-2 students from being the same space as students in the older grades. It also allows shortens their walk to their classroom, allowing them to get to their classroom sooner.

Bus Students Drop-Off Procedure

* Parents should screen children before dropping them off.
* Screening will occur when loading the bus in the morning.
* Students with no symptoms will then be allowed to board the bus.
* Students will be allowed off the bus one at a time to enter into the building.

**Afternoon Pick-Up Procedure**

* Dismissal will continue to be from 3-3:15pm.
* It will be by the football field as in years past for all grades, K-8th.
* Indoor and outdoor staging areas will be utilized. It will be very important that cars do NOT pass other cars in the parking lot to ensure safety; note that you may need to allow a few extra minutes in the dismissal line.
* This will be a procedure we will need to continue to assess and refine as the school year begins; please be attentive to emails on the dismissal procedure.

**Lunch Procedures**

Rationale: St. Clare’s gym is a large enough space to allow us to continue to have one K-5 lunch and one 6-8 lunch in the gym while following public health guidelines. We will continue to follow this model instead of having students eat in classrooms because this will allow the teachers to preserve preparation time they have had in the past. This will be helpful to prevent teacher burnout; the reality of this school year is that teachers will be being asked to do more than in past years to help ensure student health safety during the day, e.g., cleaning routines. In addition, teachers will most likely be asked to substitute teach during their planning periods more this year than in past years due to teachers needing to stay home if they have symptoms during their self-screening, the substitute teacher shortage, and the desire to reduce outside adults coming into the building. Preparation time is essential to delivering quality instruction to students, and so it is crucial that teachers have the preparation time they need.

That being said, we aim to take as many precautions as possible for student health safety. So, we will develop both an indoor and an outdoor lunch routine; the outdoor lunch routine allows for additional air flow.

* The first two weeks of school will be the indoor lunch routine to give students the opportunity to learn this routine and to give time for the air quality outside to improve.
* After the first two weeks of school, we will have lunch outdoors when the weather and air quality allow.

Indoor lunch routine:

* Students will have picnic-style lunch: sitting on the floor by cohort. We will not use lunch tables to simplify the disinfecting between cohorts.
* Cohorts will be spread throughout the gym; at least 20 feet will be between cohorts.
* Students within a cohort will need to social distance themselves.
* Spots will be designated on the floor for separating cohorts and distancing students within the cohorts.
* Students may remove their masks to eat.

Outdoor lunch routine:

* Students will be dispersed on the football field and picnic tables for lunch.
* Students will sit by cohort with space between cohorts.
* This will be used when weather and air quality allows after the first two weeks.

Notes on Lunch

* No hot lunch, at least first quarter but probably all year
	+ Hot lunch introduces contact with more people into the school
* No microwave use
	+ This eliminates students touching the same surface and students in different cohorts from congregating
* Students need to have all of the utensils they need for eating lunch with them
* Students need to bring their lunch with them to school. Parents should not drop lunches off during the morning to reduce the number of adult contacts in the school.
* Students will need to sanitize or wash their hands before and after lunch.

**Recess Procedures**

Eagle County Public Health Guideline: Mask-wearing for children is not required when outside unless physical distance cannot be maintained over a period of 15 minutes or longer, unless they are waiting at a bus stop or entering the school.

So, with students moving around at recess, they will not need to wear masks.

Even though by Eagle County Public Health standards we could have K-5 recess all together in the normal location, for an additional layer of precaution as we begin the school year we will add a recess location to provide additional distance between students.

* K-2 Recess following lunch will be in the front lawn between the flagpole and pieta grotto.
* 3-5 Recess will be on the back playground as normal.
* 6-8 Recess will be on the back playground as normal.
* Students must sanitize or wash their hands before going out to recess and on their way in from recess.

**Physical Distancing in the Classrooms**

Eagle County Public Health encourages working towards a 6 foot distancing of students in the classroom. 3 foot distance for extended time periods is also acceptable and provides substantial benefits in the context of a comprehensive disease control strategy.

* In the event that older children need to be less than 6 feet apart, in addition to masks we will work towards having a seating arrangement where they are not facing each other.
* Seating charts will be used whenever possible.
* Middle school: When staying in the same classroom for multiple classes in a row, the same seating chart will be used.

**Sanitizing and Cleaning**

* Hand sanitizer will be available when entering each classroom and when entering common spaces (e.g., the gym, the playground).
* We are reducing the number of classes in a classroom each day. When a class leaves and a new class comes in, the class coming into the room will assist with sanitizing the area where they will be sitting during the upcoming class. Public health recommended that the incoming class participate in the sanitizing because they will have a vested interest in thoroughly cleaning the area where they will be sitting.
* Disinfecting will occur in the evenings after everyone has left the building.
* Bathrooms will be cleaned mid-day in addition to the evening.
* Students in different grades may use the same bathroom because they will not be in close contact with someone from a different cohort for more than 15 minutes. Nonetheless, as an added level of protection since we have the capacity, K-5 students will be asked to predominantly use only the lobby bathrooms. Middle school students will be asked to use predominantly the middle school bathrooms.

**Expectations of Employees**

Employees will:

* Self-screen before coming to work
* Stay home if showing any symptoms
* Handwash/sanitize frequently
* Wear a mask
* Increase circulation in the classroom as much as feasible
* Limiting equipment/objects in classrooms to those with surfaces that can easily be disinfected

Teachers with documented health issues that put them at higher risk for Covid-19 will be offered reasonable accommodations.

For art, Ms. Miz will teach online while another teacher/aid is in the classroom supervising the students. If you know of anyone that is interested in a teacher aid position for a few days a week and who would also be interested in subbing (having this person sub will reduce the number of adults in the building), please contact me.

**Miscellaneous Points Related to Covid-19 Planning**

* Mass: We will a K-5 Mass and a 6-8 Mass on Wednesdays. Cohorts will sit together with 20 feet between cohorts. We will aim for the 3 feet distance between students in the cohort.
* Field Trips: No field trips during the first weeks of school; this will be reassessed as the year goes on.
* Music Classes: Students need to refrain from singing and playing wind instruments until public health provides further guidance because these activities are high risk for transmission. Students will still be able to take music class and will have the opportunity to explore other facets of music.
* Masks: Designs should be school appropriate; please limit bright colors and distracting patterns.
* After school care: This is suspended until further notice.
* Visitors: Non-essential visitors/volunteers need to be limited.
* Visitors need to be screened.
* Maintain 6 feet of distance between students and activity-specific volunteers.
* Depending on the reason a parent/adult needs to come to the school building, they may be asked to speak to the office through the buzzer system and the school will bring out to the visitor what they need.
* Travel: If your child travels, please contact the school to notify us of where you are traveling and answer a few questions. This will determine if your child needs to quarantine after you return.
* Student work during an individual quarantine**:** If your child needs to quarantine due to exposure to a close contact with Covid-19 outside of school or due to travel, the following plan for homework will be followed:
	+ Teachers will send home the missed work from the previous week on Friday.
	+ During the days of quarantine before the first Friday your child is out of school, a general packet with general work to do will be sent home.
	+ The second Friday of quarantine your child will receive a packet of the work missed that week.
	+ If they come back mid-week the following week after the 2nd Friday of quarantine, they will receive the work missed that week when they return to school.

**Public Health Guidelines Guiding St. Clare Policy Related to Covid-19**

The Colorado Department of Education & Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment have provided the following rationale for school guidance:

* Global COVID-19 evidence suggests that *younger children play a smaller role in onward transmission of COVID-19.* **The risk of transmission between young children and from young children to adults is lower than the risk of transmission to adults between, or from, older children and adults.**
* The risk to children is likely lower than that of yearly influenza, accounting for both primary disease and Multisystem Inflammatory Disease in Children (MIS-C).  This is why **kindergarten and elementary schools should have different guidelines than secondary schools**.
* The risk of transmission between children and from children to adults is low, and **the risk of transmission to adults is greater from other adults with either symptomatic or asymptomatic infection**.  **Therefore, the most important limit to classroom size for adults is the number of adults required to be in close proximity.**
* **Given the limited role young children likely play in transmission, there likely is minimal benefit relative to the great difficulty of physical distancing young children within a class to prevent COVID-19 spread.** (American Academy of Pediatrics) Moreover, physical distancing has the potential to negatively impact appropriate child development in this age group. Therefore, focus should be placed on other risk mitigation strategies that better complement the learning and socialization goals of children up through 5th grade. In secondary schools there is likely a greater impact of physical distancing on risk reduction of COVID-19.