

Dear Families,

July 31, 2020

**With the understanding** that things could change – possibly even by this afternoon - and these guidelines could be amended, here is the plan for now!

**St. Mary School will open on August 18** for in person learning for all students every day. On August 18 all students will dismiss at 11:30. There will be Before Care and a.m. bus service that day, but there will not be After Care or bus service at dismissal.

**Beginning August 19**, St. Mary's will dismiss at 1:30 along with the Taylorville public schools every day until further notice. There will be bus service and Before and After Care. After Care will be available until 5:00. This is a change from past years.

**Each shortened school day** will be considered a full day of attendance. The hours of instruction here at school combined with time on school related tasks at home fulfill the state and diocesan requirements. Students will be expected to do all homework assignments. These will range from traditional homework to online tasks to projects and artwork. All will be grade level appropriate.

**St. Mary Preschool** will open after Labor Day for in person learning with 3 year-olds attending Tuesday and Thursday from 8:30 to 11:00 and 4 year-olds attending daily, either half day from 8:30 to 11:00 or full day from 8:30 to 2:45. Parents of 4 year-olds will be given the option of picking their preschooler up when the big school dismisses at 1:30 if they prefer. 4's will spread out in both classrooms, and 3's will move to a classroom across from the gym until it is safe to have all preschoolers back together. 4 year-olds staying for the afternoon will eat lunch in their classroom.

**All students, PreK – 6<sup>th</sup>, and staff will wear masks** during the school day. Masks will be removed for outdoor recess, PE and Band with appropriate distance maintained, and during lunch while students are seated.

**Students will need to bring a reusable water bottle** each day as they will not have access to the drinking fountains. Water bottles will go home each afternoon to be cleaned and refilled for the next day. Students will be able to refill the bottles as needed at school.

**By bringing your child to school**, you are giving us your assurance that, to the best of your knowledge, your child is healthy. Because we are responsible for the health and wellbeing of many children, all students and staff will have their temperature checked with a contactless thermometer when entering school. Preschoolers will be checked before they leave their vehicles at morning drop off. Before Care students will be checked at the door, and the person dropping them off is asked to wait for the A-OK from the supervisor before leaving. Bus students will be checked as they enter Before Care. All other students being dropped off before 8:20 will enter through either of the front doors of the school. I will check temps at one door while Mrs. Chance will check at the other. A child arriving after temperature checks are completed must go directly to the office to have their temp taken before going to their classroom. Any child with a temperature of 100 degrees or greater will be held in the office and sent home. If a child has a temperature of 99 or greater, but less than 100, they will go to class, but their temperature will be checked periodically to make sure it isn't increasing. If it reaches 100 degrees, they will be held in the office and sent home.

**All extra furnishings** have been removed from classrooms so that desks can be as far apart as possible. Desks are all turned in the same direction so that students are not facing one another. Kindergarten will use their regular room and the Art room. The Art room will be set up with individual desks for seat work. The regular Kindergarten room will have open space for activities and games on the floor.

**We will have outdoor recess** as frequently as possible. Students will be able to remove their masks once outside. They will be encouraged to stay at least an arm's length apart as they play. For indoor recess, students will stay in their own classrooms with masks on.

**Handwashing will be frequent.** Students will wash when they arrive at school and before and after leaving the classroom for special classes, lunch, or any activity. They will use hand sanitizer when leaving at dismissal time.

**Lunch will be served in 4 shifts** so that we are able to keep the number of people in the cafeteria under 50. The lunch ladies will give out milk and silverware so that everything the child needs will come from the kitchen. After going through the line, children will be seated 2 at a table. Once seated, they may remove their masks. Masks go back in place when they take their trays back, throw away trash, and line up for recess. To reduce the risk of exposure, we will not allow guests to join the students for lunch at this time.

**Special Classes:**

- PE on Monday and Wednesday
- Computer on Tuesday and Friday
- Religion with Mrs. Harrison on Wednesday
- Library on Thursday

**St. Mary's will not offer Art or Music** for the time being. Because of the shortened school day, the loss of teaching time last year, and the possibility of having to return to remote learning if necessary, we will focus on the regular academic subjects, but will strive for a balanced curriculum that will educate the whole child. I believe the special classes we offer this year will help us achieve this balance.

**We will still celebrate Mass** on Thursdays at 9:00, but only the class leading the Mass will attend. Parents, grandparents, and parishioners are welcome to join us, but must observe social distancing guidelines.

**We will not** have field trips or large gatherings. This means that, unless the situation changes, our Fiesta, Mission Carnival, and Catholic Schools Weeks events are canceled.

**Visitors, including parents, will not be allowed in the buildings** until further notice. Please take "first day of school" pictures outside. You may walk students in to class on the first day, but please don't linger, and you must wear a mask. After Day 1, parents will not be allowed past the office unless they are a scheduled volunteer.

**Parents needing to drop off items** for the office or for a child should enter the main vestibule and buzz the office. Tell us what you are leaving, and we'll take care of it from there. If you have business to conduct in the office, we'll buzz you right in. Please wear a mask.

**The school and preschool will be cleaned** daily according to health department guidelines using products approved for the school environment. Teachers will sanitize frequently touched items like pencil sharpeners and door handles several times during the day. Recess and PE equipment will be

sanitized with a spray disinfectant between groups. Tables and chairs in shared spaces like the library, computer lab, and cafeteria will be wiped down between classes. Toys and items handled by more than one student will be sanitized with spray disinfectant after use, and anything that can be submerged will be washed with soap and water weekly.

**If a classroom teacher tests positive** for Covid-19, the teacher and her class will be quarantined for 2 weeks per health department protocol. The teacher or a substitute will provide remote instruction so that the class can continue to learn. These remote instruction days will count as school attendance days.

**Other staff members and special class teachers** have limited contact with students; if one of these adults tests positive, it is unlikely that we would have to quarantine the entire school. The local health department will be contacted and their recommendations will be followed.

**If a student tests positive** for Covid-19, the student, their classmates, their siblings who attend St. Mary's, and the classroom teacher will be quarantined for two weeks. Remote learning will be provided for the quarantined class and for the siblings. The remote learning days will count as attendance days.

**I will keep you informed** of any changes to this reopening and will continue to email a weekly newsletter to share the info you need.

**Stay safe and healthy** so that we can come back to school!

Cathy Robertson