

# St. Mary's School of Piscataway

## Reopening Plan

School Year 2021-2022

ST. MARY'S SCHOOL OF PISCATAWAY

\*This plan will be updated quarterly or when there is significant development in the COVID-19 pandemic.

June 2021

Dear St. Mary's School of Piscataway Families:

The past two years have thrown our worlds into a situation none of us expected nor really understood at the time. This past school year was truly a test of our resilience. I am so proud of everything that the St. Mary's family has achieved.

We have taken great care to determine how we will bring our children back to campus and to develop a reopening plan designed with their safety and academic progress in mind. We surveyed parents and teachers to determine everyone's preferences, carefully monitored local and state government recommendations, and we assembled a Reopening Task Force in order to consult individuals with specific areas of expertise who could offer the necessary perspectives. The Task Force consisted of Father Plummer, 4 teachers, 14 parents/guardians (both new and veteran), and me. We met several times to discuss possibilities and we kept coming back to the same questions of safety, community consensus and the continued viability of our school. We gathered in prayer and invited the Holy Spirit into our midst, confident the Father would guide us.

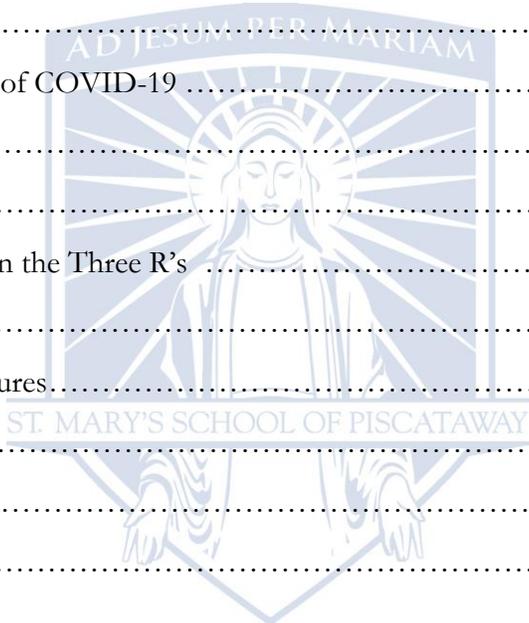
We wish to thank the members of the Reopening Task Force who dedicated their time and talents to this very important endeavor. Their unwavering support and valuable expertise in their respective fields contributed greatly to the creation of this opening plan.

The following is a detailed overview of our reopening plan which will be carried out in 4 stages. I am proud to announce that St. Mary's School of Piscataway will be opening in Stage 4 for the beginning of the 2021-2022 School Year.

Thank you for your continued support and faith in our mission. You remain in our prayers always.

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### STAGE 1 – VIRTUAL LEARNING

- Grades PK through 8 students begin online for at-home distance learning
- Midday break for lunch
- Engaging lessons designed to foster student participation
- Virtual Extracurricular activities

### STAGE 2 – TWO-DAY HYBRID LEARNING

- Pre-K children will attend school from 8 am to 12 pm
  - Group A (Monday and Tuesday); Group B (Thursday and Friday)
- Grades K -8 will begin classes on a hybrid model
- Children will conduct learning in school via a device 2 days per week and live virtual classes 3 days at home.
- Class sizes will be limited to 6 students per class with the exception of PK and 8<sup>th</sup> grade
- In person instruction will take place on Tuesdays & Thursdays
  - Students will still conduct class via a device as they would at home
- Virtual learning will occur on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

### STAGE 3 – FOUR-DAY HYBRID LEARNING

- All grades present 4 days per week
- Will receive in-person direct instruction Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday
- At-home distance learning on Wednesdays
- Teachers remain available and will have regular office hours

### STAGE 4 – IN-SCHOOL DIRECT INSTRUCTION

- All grades present in school 5 days
- At this point, the majority of restrictions will have been lifted and in-person instruction will be provided to all students Monday – Friday

### SAFETY FIRST

*What are we doing to ensure a safe, healthy campus environment?*

Our priority is to provide a campus environment that is healthy and safe for all members of the St. Mary's School of Piscataway community. To that end, we will implement the following:

- Screening program developed in collaboration with our delegating school nurse and other health experts in our community.
- Signage encouraging physical distancing and proper hand hygiene practices displayed prominently throughout the building

- Designated space for isolation of students, faculty or staff with possible symptoms of COVID-19 until they can safely leave campus.
- School-wide policy on expected behaviors related to COVID-19 for all members of the SMSP community.
- Face covering and physical distancing requirements
- Regular cleaning and disinfection of high touch surfaces
- Enhanced cleaning protocols, aligning with current CDC guidance
- Health screening and self-monitoring
- Virtual COVID-19 awareness and safety training programs for all members of the SMSP community
- Students will be reminded to wash hands often and thoroughly
- Breaks will be implemented so students will have dedicated times for hand washing and hygiene practices
- Daily screenings will be submitted via Google Forms daily by 7:30 am.
- Employees will be encouraged to check their temperatures before leaving home and will be checked again upon arrival. They will be encouraged to self-monitor throughout the day.
- Suspected cases will be isolated in a designated area. Parents will be notified to pick up immediately through a separate entrance. We will follow the suggested guidelines given by the CSO in the Reopening Guidelines document.
- Appropriately fitting facial coverings (masks) will be required of all faculty and staff and all children.
  - Mask guidance from the CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/effective-masks.html>
- Teachers will be responsible for constant cleaning of all touched surfaces. Classrooms will be disinfected whenever children are not present.
- Teachers will wipe down surfaces often to maintain cleanliness throughout the day.
- Children will have the opportunity to go out and get fresh air during the school day. They will play independently and will be distanced from other students.
- All water dispensers will not be available for use.
- Children must bring their own water bottles daily
- Lunches and snacks will be eaten in the Parish Hall. When weather permits, students will eat outside. Lunches and snacks will be schedules as usual within student daily schedules.
- There will be hot lunch served.

- Desks and all frequently used classroom surfaces (tables, chairs, doorknobs, shelving units, cubbies, etc.) will be wiped/sanitized when the teachers arrive in the morning and again at the end of the day.
- Toys and other frequently touched items will be cleaned with soap and water and then disinfected with a diluted bleach solution.
- Disinfectant wipes may be used if available by adults only.
- Students must have individual supplies to use throughout the day and will remain with the students in their designated area. Supplies may not be shared with other students.
- Toys/manipulatives that cannot be sanitized such as machine washable toys, Play-Doh, sand, etc. will be removed.
- All deliveries will come to the main entrance and packages will be left at the door. Heavy packages will be brought inside and left in the foyer.
- Essential visitors will be previously scheduled and screened upon arrival. An education and training program for children and families will be given during the week prior to school opening. This will include website content, social media posts, and videos, and other methods as they are appropriate. These are designed to educate the community on best practices in relation to social distancing recommendations and all precautionary measures needed to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Training will be available to children and families through online learning platforms and email.

#### CAMPUS PREPARATION

*What are we doing to prepare the building for our children?*

We are taking several steps to deep clean and disinfect the building before the children return. The following steps are being taken to prepare the building.

- We have hired a reputable cleaning company to completely clean and sanitize the entire building.
- Alternating stalls will be used to promote distancing. Bathrooms will be sanitized each evening after school ends.
- Each classroom will have at least two open windows to promote ventilation. Each classroom with ceiling fans will have them switched to pull air up instead of pushing air down.
- Furniture will be minimized and strategically placed to accommodate appropriate distancing of children within each classroom.

#### IN THE BUILDING

*What happens once children are in the building during Phase 4?*

The following procedures will be in place to ensure safe and proper use of our building and allow for social distancing guidelines to be enforced.

- Drop off and pick up will occur at staggered entrances around the school building:

- Students in grades 4-8 will enter via the side door by the Parish Hall
- Students in grades K-3 will enter via the main entrance
- Students in PK will enter via the PK door
- Families with multiple children will be dismissed together.
- Signs will be displayed in order to promote health and hygiene practices as well as serve to remind students to maintain safe distances.

#### IN CASE OF A SUSPECTED CASE OF COVID-19

*What happens if a case is suspected or if someone tests positive for COVID-19?*

In the event there is a suspected case of COVID-19 in the building, the following steps will be taken immediately:

- The individual will be isolated immediately to the established isolation space, and arrangements made for them to leave the premises with the recommendation to contact their healthcare provider.
- Surfaces in their workspace/classroom will be cleaned and disinfected.
- The faculty & staff will wear PPE, for care of ill staff or students.
- If not masked, the ill individual will be masked immediately
- A family member will be contacted for immediate pick up, the time of call will be noted so the length of school nurse/designee exposure is captured.
  - When contacted, parents/guardians have 60 minutes from the time of notification to either pick up or have their student picked up. If the parent/guardian cannot pick the child up within 60 minutes, individuals listed on the emergency contacts should be contacted.
  - School staff will call the parent/guardian/emergency contact 30 minutes after the initial notification to obtain an updated arrival time. If the child has not been picked up after 45 minutes, a second call will be placed to the parent/guardian/emergency contact.
- The family member will be encouraged to contact a physician or other healthcare provider for more thorough COVID-19 screening and possible COVID-19 testing.
  - o Per NASN, schools and ELCs are not expected to screen students or staff to identify cases of COVID-19. If a school has cases of COVID-19, local health officials will help identify those individuals and will follow up on next steps.
- We will begin preliminary tracing and additional documentation for that child/staff member, ensuring that additional signs and symptoms are discussed and captured.
  - o Documentation will be necessary and vital in this stage in order to begin contact tracing that will assist local health departments in their efforts to understand the spread of COVID-19.

- Those at the facility with close contact (within 6 feet) of the child or adult during this time would be considered exposed and should leave the premises and follow the exposure protocols established by the health department.
- Once the child has been picked up from the health room, the area will be disinfected according to CDC and NASN recommendations.
- We will follow up with family or staff members to ask about pending tests.
- Local health officials will be notified.
  - o These officials will help us determine a course of action for our school.
- Per the CDC, we will dismiss students and most staff for 2-5 days. This initial short-term dismissal allows time for the local health officials to gain a better understanding of the COVID-19 situation impacting the school/program and for custodial staff to clean and disinfect the affected facilities.
- We will work with the local health officials to determine appropriate next steps, including whether extended dismissal duration is needed to stop or slow further spread of COVID-19.
- If necessary, the class/teacher(s) most in contact with the infected individual will be quarantined and more extensive measures will be taken such as closure of the school building for thorough cleaning and disinfecting.
- Please use this link to visit the CDC travel advisory site: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html> for information on travel.

### CATHOLIC IDENTITY

As a community of faith, Christ is at the heart of all that we do. It is our mission to continue celebrating the sacraments regularly and fostering a vivid and robust prayer life for all of our students. To that end, the following will take place:

- Children will attend Mass weekly as usual.
- Students will attend Mass in person each Friday. Classes will be spaced apart.
- Morning Prayer will be said together over the PA system each morning.
- All children and faculty are expected to join in during prayer times.
- Each teacher is encouraged to pray with the children at the beginning of each class in order to align with normal operating procedures.

### OUR DAILY SCHEDULE

*What will the day look like?*

We will be going back to a full day schedule that will be distributed at the beginning of the school year. Schedules will be located on the school website by the first day of school.

## BECAUSE SCHOOL IS MORE THAN THE THREE R's

*How are the social and emotional needs of students supported?*

We at St. Mary's School of Piscataway are very concerned with the well-being of our students, both physically and emotionally. We understand it is important they still have time to play and be children. This includes being able to visit with each other in a non-academic setting that just allows them to be themselves and see their friends.

In order to facilitate these moments, we will begin offering clubs and extra-curricular activities again this year. This could be in the form of: lunch bunch, game time, free play, club, etc. This is time for the children to gather with their friends and play games, share thoughts, pray, watch movies and just be children.

## DRESS CODE

Our dress code is founded on the belief that uniforms decrease distractions, simplify the morning routine, increase respect for each student, and prepare students for success by teaching professional dress expectations.

All children will be required to wear either their full school uniform, outlined in the Parent and Student Handbook, when returning to in person learning. All uniform pieces are available at Carousel in Waldorf, Maryland.

Face coverings are to be worn as part of the uniform. Gaiters (stretchy material worn around the neck), fleece masks and bandanas are prohibited. Acceptable masks should be N-95, standard surgical, or layered cotton.

## SCHOOL ENTRY AND EXIT PROCEDURES (STAGE 2)

- All children entering the building will be screened at the entrance. The following procedures will take place before children are permitted to enter the building.
- Temperatures will be taken at the entrance of the building.
- Parents will sign complete a screening form each morning before 7:30 am via Google Form. PK parents will have an additional verbal questionnaire to complete.
- Masks are required for all children entering the building. Face shields are required for PK students.
- Students in grades K-3 will enter through the main entrance and go directly to their classroom. Students in grades 4-8 will enter through the side entrance by the Parish Hall. Students in PK will enter through their classroom door.
- Late arrivals must be escorted to the front entrance, ring the doorbell and go through the screening process before being permitted to enter.
- Parents must remain with their children until they are admitted into the building.
- Children exhibiting a fever of 100.3 or higher will not be permitted to leave the vehicle and parents will be asked to return home.

- Children may not return to school unless free of fever for 72 hours without the aid of fever reducing medication.
- Parents are asked to closely monitor children for any symptoms and make the decision to keep the child home should signs of illness present.

The following are exit procedures which will be in place at dismissal.

- Parents will pull up to their assigned pick-up zone and wait in their vehicle.
- The children will be called from the classroom in the order by which the cars are present.
- This is a single file operation. Only cars located in the pick-up lane will have students dismissed out to their cars. The right lane will be used as a through lane. Please be aware while driving around campus. Please be sure to follow all guidance from the attendants.

### COMMUNICATION

We continue to use Gmail and Plus Portals as a school-wide communication platform.

Children and parents have received training on new technology prior to the start of classes.

Our main form of communication will continue to be email. Please check the email you provided daily for updates and announcements.

The weekly newsletter will continue to be distributed via email every Friday.

### ACADEMICS

St. Mary's School of Piscataway remains dedicated to providing the superior standard of education which has characterized our school for almost 60 years. We are certainly going to continue that tradition.

In addition to our very talented and educated faculty, we have a Resource teacher who is dedicated to working with each child with an ICEP or CAP plan to ensure their needs are being met. She will also meet with all teachers to ensure best practices for differentiated learning and assessment are in place. We are committed to meeting all children where they are and working to bring them to their highest potential.

- Teachers will include information related to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) as it relates to social justice, current events, core subjects, and health and safety practices.
- Teachers will continue to hold students to the highest standard of excellence expected at St. Mary's School of Piscataway while maintaining fair and equitable methodologies for teaching and grading.

### ASSESSMENT

- Scantron testing will take place in person in September, January, and May for students in grades 2-8.