

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is an Executive Summary of the protocols and procedures, known as the Office of Catholic Schools (OCS) Diocesan Plan, for reopening buildings for in-school student attendance at the Catholic Diocese of Peoria elementary and secondary schools. The Diocesan Plan includes guidance on health and safety, human resources, finance, and communications.

There are three guiding principles of the OCS Diocesan Plan for the reopening of our schools:

1. Our school buildings will provide a safe and faith-filled environment for our students.
2. The course of the pandemic in Illinois remains fluid. As such, this OCS Diocesan Plan may be updated on a continual basis as pandemic data and guidelines are regularly reviewed.
3. OCS asks that our school families assist us in serving the common good and work in cooperation with not only their diocesan school but also with the Office of Catholic Schools to the best of their ability.

The OCS Diocesan Plan was created from discussions with the superintendent of the Diocese of Rockford, the Archdiocese of Chicago, the Diocese of Joliet, the Diocese of Springfield and the Diocese of Belleville. The *Transition Joint Guidance* document created by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), and the guidance from the Catholic Mutual Group were reviewed. Finally, a representative group of OCS diocesan principals and licensed medical professionals in the Peoria and Bloomington-Normal areas were consulted by the Superintendent of Schools in the design of the OCS Diocesan Plan.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

This section provides guidelines related to the safety, health and hygiene of students and include specific ideas for integrating into instruction and the school day.

### **THE COHORT MODEL**

The Catholic Diocese of Peoria's elementary schools are to operate under a "cohort" model when buildings reopen this fall. Under a cohort model, students and staff are grouped by grade level. These groupings are designed to allow the same group of students to stay with the same staff (all day for young children and as much as possible for older children) while minimizing the risk of cross contamination between cohorts. It also allows single classes to be quarantined in the event of infection, rather than closing the entire school building. Grade level teachers are considered part of the same cohort as their students, but other teachers (including specials' teachers) and staff are considered outside the cohort.

Even while utilizing the cohort model, schools should strive to physically separate students in the same cohort as much as possible. Such separation will help mitigate risk. For example, classroom furniture should be arranged to maximize social distancing between students.

Diocesan secondary school administrators whose reopening plan cannot operate under a cohort model should design plans to meet the health and safety requirements of wearing masks, practicing social distancing, and using proper hygiene and safety. Employees and students shall self-report when experiencing any of the symptoms that are associated with COVID19 during the school day.

### **MASKS AND PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)**

All individuals in school buildings (students, employees) are to wear masks.

Families are asked to supply masks for their child/children. Reusable cloth masks are allowed with the stipulation that they be washed every night in preparation for the next school day if using the same mask.

Disposable masks are preferred in the school setting with the intention of disposing at the end of every school day. Parents should send students with extra PPE in case masks are damaged during the day.

Masks should not contain messages or images that would distract from the educational environment of the school.

Schools will ensure an ongoing supply of PPE (disposable face masks, cleaning supplies) for all employees and will maintain a minimum supply of masks for students in case students forget or break their personal mask.

Masks may be removed in special circumstances, i.e., when eating or drinking or engaged in outside activities or instruction. Individuals should wash or sanitize hands before putting their face covering back on.

Schools will maintain a regular supply of gloves for cleaning surfaces and treating students with medical injuries/illnesses.

### **ARRIVAL PROCEDURES - WELLNESS CHECKS**

All students will enter from the North on Chicago Street and stay in vehicle until temperature check. This change in drop off is to avoid traffic issues on Howard Street. Parents/Guardians dropping off are asked to remain until child/children have had temperature check/s.

All students and employees shall wear a mask when entering the building at the beginning of the school day.

Employees will be checked and are responsible for taking their temperature every day. Any faculty or staff member (and in very limited instances, volunteers) with a temperature over 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit will be sent home.

Schools will perform "Wellness Checks" of all students. Employees shall temperature scan each student upon arrival, and any student with a temperature over 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit will be sent home.

Students shall wash hands or receive hand sanitizer upon entering the school each morning to assist with safety and hygiene.

Parents and guardians should not enter the building to escort students to/from classrooms at arrival and dismissal.

Student bus riders will be socially distanced as much as possible, and students will wear a mask and use hand sanitizer when traveling via bus. No more than 50 individuals should be on a bus at one time.

### **DISMISSAL**

Parents will be instructed to remain in vehicles instead of congregating outside school exits. Schools should implement procedures to screen student pickups to ensure ongoing safety.

## **GENERAL FACILITY CLEANING, HYGIENE, & SHARED SCHOOL SUPPLIES**

Schools will follow the building cleaning and disinfection procedures outlined in the guidance from the Catholic Mutual Group and in the ISBE/ IDPH's *Transition Joint Guidance*.

Sharing of school supplies such as pencils, markers and art supplies will be eliminated. Students shall maintain their school supplies in individually labeled containers, cubbies, desks, classrooms, or book bags. Shared equipment, such as one-to-one devices, will be used by as few children as possible and will be cleaned and disinfected before use by another student.

All rooms will have access to either a sink and soap in the classroom or in a bathroom for frequent hand washing and/or hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol.

Spray bottles of cleaning disinfectant will be readily available in each classroom and shared spaces for use throughout the day. Common surfaces in shared spaces (e.g. office, bathrooms, stair handrails, etc.) will be cleaned multiple times per day.

Installing physical barriers, such as sneeze guards and partitions in shared areas, where it is difficult for individuals to remain at least three to six feet apart (e.g. main office desk), may be considered.

Food and drink will not be shared. No snacks or birthday treats.

Drinking fountains will *only* be used to fill reusable water bottles. Signs will be placed on water fountains indicating their sole use is for refilling water bottles.

When practical, increase the circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and inside doors. Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk (e.g., risk of falling, triggering of asthma symptoms, etc.) to students using the facility.

For the 2020-2021 school year, schools shall discontinue the use of perfect attendance awards.

## **CORE CLASSROOMS - REMAINING WITHIN COHORT OR CLASSROOM SUBJECT**

Students and staff will continue the use of masks within cohorts and classrooms.

Declutter classrooms with the intent of maximizing floor space. Eliminate shared spaces, such as reading nooks or instructional breakout tables, until the pandemic has passed.

Arrange desks in rows facing the same direction and provide as much distance between desks as possible. If tables are used instead of desks, attempt to spread out students at tables. Consider taping off tables to separate student workspace.

Frequently clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces daily, including desks and door handles.

Shared classroom spaces, such as science labs, should be cleaned before and after usage by each cohort or classroom.

Students and employees should sanitize or wash hands with soap after returning to the classroom from any location.

### **Little Disciples Preschool**

Follow guidelines that apply to core classrooms (see section above).

Preschool drop off/pickup at Preschool entrance on North Chicago Street.

Classroom supplies may be shared, given the unique educational practices of early education, but limited to *essential use only* and cleaned frequently.

Naptime (if applicable): Do not permit sharing of cots or bedding. Spread children out as much as possible, and masks may be removed if children are at least three to six feet apart.

## **DEPARTMENTALIZED CLASSES AND MIXED INSTRUCTIONAL GROUPS**

For departmentalized schedules (e.g. junior high and high school programs), students will try to remain in their classroom for all core subjects.

Students and staff will continue to use masks in the classrooms.

Some elementary schools mix students from various grades/classes when utilizing leveled math classes or Title I reading intervention; however, schools may consider avoiding such mixing when possible and use technology to supplement instruction. At the very least, efforts will be made for students to wear masks and socially distance.

### **SPECIALS' CLASSES**

Whenever possible, specials classes (i.e., art, music, drama, foreign language, STEM and health) should be held in each cohort's grade level classroom or in the secondary school assigned classroom. Elementary school specials' teachers should try and go to the students, rather than students to the teacher.

Specials' teachers will observe distancing in the cohort and wear a face covering.

If a shared classroom is used for specials' classes, such as a computer lab or library, the area will be thoroughly cleaned before being used by another cohort.

Specials' teachers will minimize shared supplies (e.g. art supplies). In any case, supplies will be cleaned between each use particularly when used by different cohorts or different grade levels as in the high school.

Music classes will try to avoid singing or asking students to play woodwinds, brass instruments, and recorders, in order to minimize risk of cross contamination *unless* social distancing can be maintained (*more information on band below*).

Whenever possible, move classes outside, especially physical education classes.

*Please note:* offering and scheduling specials' instruction is *at the discretion* of the pastor, chaplain and principal during the pandemic.

### **BATHROOMS**

Try to restrict bathroom use to three students or fewer, if possible. Students will wear masks and try to remain socially distant while in bathrooms.

Schools will post signage on bathrooms indicating that no more than three students (*whenever possible*) may be present at a time.

If a school has multiple bathrooms, classes will be assigned to use specific bathrooms at elementary schools instead of allowing students to choose.

### **MAIN OFFICE AND STAFF WORKROOM**

Consideration should be given to install physical barriers, such as sneeze guards, in the main office counter or desk area in diocesan schools.

Spread out seating in the main office to ensure distancing. Eliminate seating when distancing is not possible.

Use tape on the office floor to direct traffic flow and manage any lines, ensuring proper distancing is followed.

Teachers, administrators and staff shall wear masks and maintain distancing when in the main office or staff workroom.

Clean common surfaces multiple times per day, such as counters, desks, doorknobs and copy machines.

Schedule parent, student and teacher meetings virtually, if possible. If face-to-face meetings are required, meet in large open areas instead of more confined spaces (such as the principal's office). Meeting participants should wear masks and maintain distancing.

### **LUNCH**

*No hot lunch this semester (or until 4/29 lets us know). Child/children who need lunch provided should contact the school principal.*

Students will wash their hands or apply hand sanitizer before and after eating.

Surfaces used for lunch should be disinfected after eating.

If using the cafeteria, the cafeteria will be cleaned and sanitized between uses. No more than 50 students can utilize the cafeteria at one time. Only cohorts may sit within the same area and maintain social distancing.

Try to use disposable food service items (e.g., utensils, dishes) and non-disposable food service items should be handled with gloves and washed with dish soap and hot water or in a dishwasher per IDPH and ISBE guidance. Hands shall be washed after removing gloves or after directly handling used food service items.

With varying elementary and secondary school sizes, the pastor/chaplain and principal will determine the most efficient way for students to eat lunch with the goal of always trying to minimize risk for hygiene and safety.

### **RECESS**

Recess in elementary schools will be scheduled with cohorts to decrease intermingling with other cohorts in order to minimize cross contamination.

Recess equipment, if not assigned to a specific cohort but used by multiple cohorts, will be cleaned between cohorts' usage. If using playground equipment (e.g., slides, swings, etc.), try to schedule for only a single cohort to use each day; thus, playground equipment will only have to be cleaned once a day versus several times a day.

When recess is outside, masks may be removed and social distancing maintained. As students re-enter the building, masks will be worn and hand sanitizer used.

### **SCHOOL MEETINGS**

In the elementary school, with the exception of the grade level classroom teacher and perhaps an instructional aide assigned to the classroom, all other teachers and staff are considered "outside" a cohort. Administrators, front office staff, specials' teachers, cafeteria, custodial and maintenance personnel, etc., will continue to practice social distancing and wear masks when around others in the school building.

Faculty meetings, professional development and other teacher/staff activities, parent conferences, etc., should be conducted virtually. If this is not possible, masks and social distancing will be practiced.

### **MEDICAL CARE FOR STUDENTS**

Schools will provide ongoing medical care as described in the school's handbook policies. This includes the authorization to administer approved medicines, prescriptions, and basic first aid (with the exception of nebulizer treatments, which should not be administered at school).

Staff should wear gloves and masks when providing medical care for students.

## **VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERS**

Visitors and volunteers will have extremely limited access to the school building during the pandemic including events such as Grandparents' Day, etc. Parents will be limited to the main office only. When volunteers are needed to assist under certain circumstances, the principal shall approve and ensure that health and safety protocols are followed.

The school office will keep accurate records of all visitors and volunteers, including the individual's reason for the visit, contact information and all locations visited, in case contact tracing is needed.

## **STUDENT TRAVEL**

Discourage families from travel out of town.

Students will self-quarantine after traveling to another country or to another state that is experiencing COVID-19 outbreaks, as determined by the Governor of Illinois, IDPH, and CDC guidance.

Parents/students should inform schools immediately if they display COVID-19 symptoms during the self-quarantine period. Schools should follow the *Infection Protocol* (outlined below) in such instances.

## **INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

International students will remain in their American residence for at least two weeks following travel to their country of origin and will be allowed to complete work remotely while at home.

Chaperone families and/or international students will inform schools immediately if anyone in the home displays COVID-19 symptoms during the two-week period. Schools will follow the *Infection Protocol*, outlined below, in such cases.

## **SPECIAL EVENTS (HOLY MASSES, ASSEMBLIES, FIELD TRIPS, ETC.)**

Large group gatherings of special events will be avoided or conducted virtually. Back-to-school events may need to be scheduled virtually if over 50 people and/or social distancing cannot be maintained. The guidelines published by the IDPH and the Governor of Illinois will be observed as dictated by the current and ever-changing course of the virus.

Field trips are prohibited during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Principals will work with their pastor or chaplain to determine the scheduling of school masses and the other sacraments. Masks will be worn and social distancing observed.

## **EMERGENCY DRILLS**

Emergency drills in all diocesan schools will be conducted per OCS and ISBE requirements.

## **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Principals will use their best judgment in determining whether extracurricular activities can be scheduled safely in the school setting. While schools are still under the pandemic, it may be best to cancel or postpone an extracurricular activity or schedule it virtually. School health and safety requirements will be followed, including social distancing, masks, PPE, and limiting the number of individuals in one space to 50 or fewer or as dictated by the Governor of Illinois' *Restore Illinois* 5 phase reopening plan.

### **Athletics**

OCS is waiting for more guidance from IESA for grade schools and from IHSA for high schools. Information will be shared with schools as it is received and reviewed.

### **Band**

Large group practices (more than 15 students) may be conducted virtually or in a large space (gym, multipurpose room, cafeteria or outside in order for social distancing to be maintained.

Small group practices (involving 15 or fewer students) may be scheduled in the band / music room with social distancing of six feet, and masks to be worn. Sharing a musical instrument (i.e., drums) is discouraged, but at the very least, will be cleaned between every student use.

Practices for wind instruments (brass and woodwinds) may be conducted virtually, but if in person, 6 feet of social distancing is required.

Band concerts may have no more than 50 individuals present (both in the band and audience), and all participants will maintain social distancing and wear masks. Alternative formats, (e.g., drive-in concerts), may be an option.

In all instances, OCS will direct schools to follow the guidance of the Governor's *Restore Illinois* plan in accord with the current phase of reopening due to the pandemic.

### **Choir, Drama/School Play, Christmas Programs**

These programs will be canceled or may be performed virtually unless OCS grants permission to schedule in-person following the *Restore Illinois* plan guidance for phased reopening. Refer to page 5.

### **Other Extracurricular Activities (e.g. academic clubs, debate, chess, etc.)**

Consider conducting activities virtually. If this is not possible and face-to-face meetings are necessary, masks and social distancing will be maintained. If the activity involves sharing a space (particularly within a grade level class or high school activity), the space will be cleaned and disinfected before and after the activity's use. If it is an IESA- or IHSA-sponsored event, principals will review and follow these organizations' guidance as well.



# INFECTION PROTOCOL-WHAT TO DO IF SOMEONE GETS SICK

## PREVENTION

As outlined in the *Health and Safety* section, temperature checks of all students and employees will be taken on arrival each morning. Any student, employee (or volunteer) who has a temperature above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit will be sent home and encouraged to contact a doctor.

Schools will provide professional development in regard to the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 as provided by OSF Healthcare, local public health departments, Catholic Mutual Group, or other medical agencies.

## RESPONSE TO COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

**Students:** If a student is exhibiting a fever or two or more other COVID-19 symptoms, they will be immediately separated from others (preferably in a separate room within clear line-of-sight of a responsible employee). Students must not be left alone and must be supervised while maintaining necessary precautions. Parents will be immediately contacted in order for the student to be taken home. Schools should utilize other emergency contacts if parents are not reached.

If it is determined that the illness is not COVID-19 either through a test or a doctor's diagnosis, the student may return to school when symptoms subside and with a doctor's note confirming the negative COVID-19 diagnosis.

If a student tests does not seek medical attention, students must isolate and *not return to school* until they have met CDC's criteria to discontinue home isolation which currently includes:

- ✓ 3 days (72 hours) with no fever and without fever-reducing medication; and
- ✓ improvement in other clinical symptoms; and
- ✓ 14 days since symptoms first appeared.

Students will be allowed to complete and submit work remotely during time away from school.

If a student is positively diagnosed for COVID-19, follow the *Isolation Protocol* outlined below.

**Employees:** If an employee is exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms, they will be immediately sent home.

Employees will be encouraged to read the CDC guidance for caring for oneself and others and contact their doctor if symptoms become worse.

Employees that test positive for COVID-19, or that do not receive a negative diagnosis, must not return until they have met CDC's criteria to discontinue home isolation, which currently includes:

- ✓ 3 days (72 hours) with no fever and without fever-reducing medication; and
- ✓ improvement in other clinical symptoms; and
- ✓ 14 days since symptoms first appeared.

If an employee is positively diagnosed for COVID-19, follow the *Isolation Protocol* outlined below.

## **Volunteers:**

If a volunteer is exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms, they will be immediately sent home.

Volunteers will be encouraged to read the CDC guidance for caring for oneself and others and contact their doctor if symptoms become worse.

Volunteers that test positive for COVID-19, or that do not receive a negative diagnosis, must not return until they have met CDC's criteria to discontinue home isolation, which currently includes:

- ✓ Three days with no fever and without fever reducing medication; and
- ✓ improvement in other clinical symptoms; and
- ✓ 14 days since symptoms first appeared.

If a volunteer is positively diagnosed for COVID-19, follow the *Isolation Protocol* outlined below.

## **ISOLATION PROTOCOL**

If any student, employee or volunteer is diagnosed with COVID-19, principals will immediately contact the Superintendent of Schools. While every situation is unique, the following steps will likely be implemented:

1. The student, employee or volunteer will be sent home and monitored for ongoing symptoms, as described above.
2. The principal will distribute the *OCS COVID-19 Exposure Letter* to all parents and employees. Note that it is essential that the privacy of the impacted student or employee be protected. Principals should not disclose the specific identity of the infected individual to parents or any employees who do not need to know. For example, it would be appropriate to inform a grade level teacher or classroom teacher if a student in the teacher's class has been diagnosed with COVID-19. However, the principal should not inform other teachers in the school (or any parent).
3. The student or employee's classroom/work area will be thoroughly cleaned. Windows in the area will be opened to maximize airflow.
4. The principal will carefully monitor the health of students and teachers who are part of the infected individual's cohort (in the high school, the entire school population will be notified). If more than three students or employee in the cohort are diagnosed with COVID-19, the entire cohort will quarantine and shift to remote learning. Principals will contact the Superintendent of Schools for further instructions *before* initiating a Cohort Quarantine.
5. For high schools, the local public health department and Superintendent of Schools will be contacted in order for a decision to be made on whether or not to close the entire school and self-quarantine.

When cohorts are quarantined, the entire cohort (students and employees) is sent home. They are asked to remain home until they have met the CDC's criteria to discontinue home isolation, which currently includes:

- ✓ Three days with no fever and without fever-reducing medication; and
- ✓ improvement in other clinical symptoms; and
- ✓ 14 days since symptoms first appeared; or
- ✓ 14 days since exposure to the infected individual(s) for asymptomatic individuals.

The principal will distribute the *OCS Quarantine Letter* to all families and employees when a cohort or entire school is placed in quarantine.

The principal will work with the Superintendent of Schools to decide if and when some or all of the cohort members will return to school.

The principal will continue to closely monitor the health of all non-quarantined students and employees.

In cases of widespread infections in a school (particularly multiple cohorts), an entire school may be quarantined. Principals will work with the Superintendent of Schools in determining if a school-wide quarantine is needed.

Students will be allowed to complete and submit academic work while quarantined.

### **EMPLOYEE QUARANTINES: SICK DAYS**

As outlined in the *Infection Protocol* section, employees may be asked to quarantine if exhibiting symptoms or if there are multiple COVID-19 cases in the employee's assigned cohort or classroom.

The Office of Catholic Schools is working with the Chancery for further direction regarding employment and COVID19 cases as current regulations are changing or being modified continually with the unpredictability of the virus.

Therefore, information regarding employees' sick days, etc. will be shared with administrators and employees as soon as it can be published.

### **COVID-19 EXPOSURE OF FAMILY MEMBERS**

In cases where students, employees, or volunteers have exposure to individuals (such as an immediate family member) who are COVID-19-positive in their home, the following steps will be followed:

- ✓ The individual will be asked to remain at home for at least 14 days from last exposure to their family member, or in the event the employee continues contact with their family member, 14 days from the time when their family member has met the CDC's criteria to discontinue home isolation which currently includes:
  - Three days with no fever and without fever reducing medication; and
  - improvement in other clinical symptoms; and
  - 14 days since symptoms first appeared.

Students will be allowed to complete and submit academic work while at home.

Schools will be particularly mindful of this approach for families that have multiple siblings in a school. For example, if a child or parent in the family is diagnosed with COVID-19, the entire family should remain at home until the conditions above have been met.

## **Remote Learning**

For families that do not want their child(ren) to receive in-person instruction while schools are re-opened during the pandemic, they can choose to enroll their child(ren) into the diocesan elementary or secondary school's full-time remote learning.

Remote learning is **not** designed to be a "hybrid" model of in-class instruction on *some* days of the week, coupled with remote learning on the *other* days of the week. The remote learning plan that each school will create is to allow parents, as the primary educators, to choose that their child(ren) attend and receive instruction in school five days a week, or they may choose to enroll their child(ren) in full-time e-learning five days a week.

Each school will determine the length of time that these options will exist. **At St Mary's this is considered one full semester.** In other words, whatever option a family chooses will be the delivery of instruction for the indicated amount of time. For example, if a family chooses in-class instruction for one semester (per the published remote learning guidelines for that school), they must stay enrolled for full-time in-class instruction until the beginning of a new semester when they would have the option to choose again.

Remote learning will take place during regular school hours. Students in remote learning will be required to stay current with all assignments. Remote learners and in person learners will be graded for the same material.

Extenuating circumstances will be considered by the school's administration and in consultation with the Superintendent of Schools on a case-by-case basis should a family need to switch options in the midst of the published length of time for in-class or remote learning enrollment. An example would be if a child or family member is stricken with a very serious illness, the family could approach the administration about an immediate change in the delivery of instruction via in-class or remote learning.

*Finally, please note:* Tuition will **not** be reduced or waived depending on the option that is chosen. Tuition rates will be applied equally no matter whether a family chooses in-class or remote learning. There will be no refunds unless a family terminates their enrollment with a school and the school's tuition refund policy, as published in the school handbook, would then apply.