



**ROCHESTER**  
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

**ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI SCHOOL**

# Return to School Plan

## August 13, 2020

Dear Saint Francis of Assisi Parents,

Welcome to the start of the 2020-2021 School Year! What we've experienced as a school and world community these past 6 months has certainly been unprecedented. Despite the challenges, we have experienced many blessings and seen resilience, creativity, dedication, appreciation and significant commitment in our Catholic school community. We have been given many opportunities to put our faith into action. Thanks to the deep roots of our Franciscan spirituality, we have planned for a return of our students. We know this year will require us to work harder and more collaboratively than ever before. We will be required to be flexible, to persevere, to communicate clearly when things are working, and when they are not. Our school community will need grace, prayers, support and encouragement as we do everything in our power to return as safely as we can.

This plan is based on the requirements of the **COVID-19 PREPAREDNESS GUIDANCE: A PATH FOR STUDENTS' RETURN TO SCHOOL FALL 2020**, provided by the Dioceses of Crookston, Duluth, New Ulm, St. Cloud, Winona-Rochester. It meets the requirements of the **MDE 2020-2021 Planning Guide for Schools**. The American Academy of Pediatrics, the CDC, and community medical professionals all are sharing the same messages:

- Masks and social distancing mitigate the spread of disease, especially COVID-19
- Students need school for their personal, academic and social development
- We must be flexible and prepared to move in and out of the physical environment as needed throughout the year.

This document shares our plan to return and clarifies some of the details. We will be following the Hybrid requirements. Our class sizes and building capacity are such that we can bring our entire population back and meet the 50% capacity in most classrooms. We will add the additional measure of masks for all, distancing and all desks facing forward. A 'Learn at Home' model will be used to meet the needs of our students and families who need that option due to individual or family situations. We will use measures that will allow us to transition to Distance Learning quickly if the community metrics or school situation warrants that.

In order to bring all students back, we need your help. We trust you will not send your child to school if he or she is sick. We ask you not to give your child medicine to reduce a fever. We need you to be our partner in taking the necessary steps to ensure we are not putting others at risk by our actions. We understand that we cannot guarantee no COVID exposures. We can reduce risk by doing our part to bring our students back to the building everyday. Some measures may be inconvenient, but we believe they are absolutely necessary to maintain the safest environment possible!

Please note that our landscape is changing rapidly! Guidelines in this plan may change as new information is shared from the CDC, MDH and Olmsted County. We will communicate changes via our Weekly Broadcast. If something is unclear, please reach out. We are here to serve and look forward to a year of growing in faith, knowledge and service.



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Operational Practices	Training and Communication
	+RCS Task Force convened in July 2020 to begin laying out three scenarios as directed by Governor Tim Walz. Comprised of Administration, Teachers, Support Staff, Maintenance, Office, Cafeteria, Counselors and Parents.
	+School Task Force continued synthesizing data and developing plan July/August 2020
	+Plan shared with Board of Trustees (Dr. Chris Wittich and submitted to Diocese of Winona-Rochester (Marsha Stenzel) August 2020
	+Plan shared with staff electronically 8/12/2020; will be reviewed on August 19, 2020
	+Plan made available to Parents electronically and graphic shared August 13, 2020
	+Training for school employees provided at Back to School workshops August 19th, 2020
	+Teachers will provide training to students in the new protocols during the first week of school.
	+Draft plan shared with the Home and School Association at the August 3rd meeting
	+Point of Contact: RCS Lead Administrator, Matt Langsdale; St. Francis of Assisi Principal, Barb Plenge, and School Nurse, Jan Borgmeier.
	Adaptability
	+This plan will guide the Return to School opening. The plan will be revisited regularly by the point of contacts, at weekly Administrative Team meetings, and monthly staff meetings

	+Changes to the plan will be shared via the Weekly Broadcast to parents and through the Lead RCS Administrator to the Board of Trustees.
	+St. Francis of Assisi School will work with local health officials and the ever changing landscape to adapt and modify accordingly
	Entrance and Dismissal
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+NEST students will enter through the 3 ½ Street door.</li> <li>+K-6 students will enter through the main doors as they arrive.</li> <li>+Grade 7 and 8 students will enter through the JH doors at the front.</li> <li>+Students will utilize admit slips indicating health screens have been completed (no new symptoms) and temperature recorded each day upon arrival.</li> <li>+Students will proceed directly to classrooms upon arrival (no earlier than 8:20 am)</li> <li>+Students will not congregate outside the building until the bell rings.</li> <li>+Markings will be placed on the floors and outside indicating social distancing.</li> </ul>
	+Handwashing will be used whenever possible. Hand sanitizing stations have been set up in each entry location. Hand sanitizer is available in various locations when hand washing is not possible.
	+Bus dismissal will be determined by Rochester Public Schools. Walkers and cars will be dismissed by classroom and maintain social distancing as they walk down the hallways. Parents will be asked to meet their children outside of the school building. Bus students remaining at the end of the day will proceed to the gym by classroom. Social distancing will be observed in the gym.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+NEST students will exit out the East doors.</li> <li>+Grade 1, K, 4, 5 will exit out the Marian entrance.</li> <li>+Grade 2,3,6 will exit out the main doors.</li> <li>+Grades 7 &amp; 8 will exit out the Junior high doors</li> </ul>
	Health Checks
	+Flyers sharing the symptoms and Stay at Home information will be posted at entrances and provided to all families and staff. This information will be shared in the Weekly Broadcast on August 21, 2020.
	+Staff and students will be asked to use the following screening tool and take their temperature daily before entering the building . <a href="#">Health Screening (PDF)</a> The screening tool and one month's worth of admit slips were provided in Welcome Days folders. Additional slips will be sent home in Weekly Take Home folders each month.

	+Visitors to the building will be limited. Please call the school office to schedule entrance if necessary. Visitors will need to sign in and undergo a health screening before proceeding further into the building.
	+CDC and MDH guidelines for returning to school or work will be strictly adhered to.
	+When a student or employee is ill, specific questions will be asked to identify the possibility of COVID 19 (subject to ADA requirements)
	+Students or staff who fall ill during the day will be isolated if showing COVID-19 symptoms until they can be picked up.

	<b>Physical Distancing in School</b>
	+Students in grades K-6 will remain in their specific classrooms as much as possible during the day. +Interaction and mixing of Junior High students will be limited to ability based subject areas . +Staff will travel whenever possible
	+Recess will be scheduled so one grade level is on the play area at a time.
	+Rooms will be arranged in a way that allows for reasonable distance between students during instructional time. (based on consultation with Mayo Clinic regarding distancing/safety measures)
	+Schedules will be adjusted to allow for increased passing time (to avoid contact with other groups when movement is necessary)
	<b>Communication and Signage</b>
	+Directions for entering the building will be posted at all entrances, added to our handbook and shared with parents via the Weekly Broadcast.
	+Signs will be posted at entrances and throughout the building that educate students, families and guests of what common symptoms of COVID-19 look like
	+Signs will be posted at entrances restricting entrance for COVID-19 symptomatic /exposed individuals
	+Masks required signs posted and enforced at entrances and throughout the building.
	+Anyone with a fever or flu-like symptoms must stay home as directed by current MDH and CDC recommendations

	+Any changes to policies procedures, protocols will be communicated in a timely manner via Weekly Broadcasts or distribution lists.
	Attendance Practices
	+Absences for reasons other than COVID-19 will not require a doctor's note to return to school
	+Staff, students and parents/guardians are required to self report to the school if they have tested positive for COVID-19 or were exposed to someone who has tested positive to COVID-19 within the last 14 days.
	+In the event a student is quarantined, Distance Learning will be put into effect and coursework will be provided. Work may be modified for the student as necessary.
	+In the event a student or staff member suspects or knows they have had COVID-19, and had symptoms, they may return to school after: 24 hours without fever; symptoms improved; and 10 days since symptoms first appeared.(CDC Guidelines):
	+In the event a student or staff member tested positive for COVID-19 but had no symptoms and continue to have no symptoms, that student or staff member may return to school after 10 days have passed since the test. (CDC Guidelines)
	+In the event a student or staff member has come in close contact (as defined by CDC: anyone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from 48 hours before the person began feeling sick until the time the patient was isolated) with someone who has COVID-19, they may not return to school or work for 14 days after the exposure and should isolate for that length of time.
	Transportation
	+RPS will transport our students in accordance with the services they provide for their students. Planning for this service is still being developed.
	+Families eligible for transportation were required to complete an "Intent to Ride" form sent home via Broadcast July 23rd.

	Preparedness for Temporary Closure
	+We will work with local, regional or state officials to implement distance learning for the entire school in the event COVID-19 metrics worsen and a shut down is mandated.

	+Full school Distance Learning plans will be shared with parents in the event we need to implement
	+School building will be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized upon this decision so it is ready for in person learning to resume when we are able.
	Liability Waivers
	+Parents of students will be required to sign a Diocesan return to school waiver of liability. This waiver was put in all summer folders picked up during Welcome days.
	Assessment of Plan Compliance and Effectiveness
	+Policies and procedures will be regularly assessed for effectiveness.
	+COVID-19 policies and procedures may change to address changing conditions, laws/guidance, or to increase efficacy. Changes will be communicated to employees, students (where applicable) and parents in a timely manner.
	+Compliance and Enforcement of the procedures and protocols will be the responsibility of <b>all</b> stakeholders.
	How do these plans allow for promoting the Catholic Identity and Mission of the School?
	+The focus is on the safety and needs of each unique individual.
	+We are putting procedures in place that take into account the common good.
	+The use of resources is being developed with an eye to stewardship
	+Community is at the heart of what we do.



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Health and Well-Being	Cleanliness and Disinfecting Processes
	+We have contracted with IEA (Institute for Environmental Assessment) to identify high touch spaces that need to be cleaned on a regular schedule throughout the day. The Maintenance Supervisor will be responsible for monitoring this.
	+Our cleaning supply company (Arnold's Supply) has provided guidance for our maintenance and custodial staff on products and procedures. All cleaning staff have been given the <i>COVID-19 Cleaning and Disinfecting Guidance for Schools and Child Care Programs</i> handout from MDE, and reviewed prior to students and staff returning to school..
	+Appropriate PPE had been provided for all custodial and maintenance staff and they have been instructed in proper use.
	+Measures have been put in place to identify frequency of disinfecting, person responsible and products used for various facility spaces.
	+Additional supplies have been purchased to allow for individual use in our NEST classroom. K-8 students will not share common materials such as crayons, markers, scissors, glue, etc., and will only use their personal supplies. PE equipment will be placed in class bins/tubs after use and cleaned at the end of day or before another class uses it.
	+Rooms will be thoroughly aired out between cleaning/sanitizing and occupancy. All cleaning/disinfecting materials will be kept out of reach, in locked maintenance closets, used with direct adult supervision and used only following all manufacturer's directions.
	+PE classes (when not able to be scheduled outdoors) will be scheduled one classroom at a time and we will route traffic so students enter one gym door and exit another to eliminate passing other classes in transit. Recesses will be scheduled so one grade is on the play area at a time.



	Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette
	+Staff training on appropriate hand washing and respiratory etiquette will be provided as part of our Return to School in-service on August 19, 2020. Training materials will be provided for re-visiting as necessary. Students will be instructed on these procedures the first week of school either by teachers or the school nurses. Parents will be provided access to materials to assist with training at home. Signs will be posted in bathrooms and throughout the building as reminders to all staff and students.
	+Hand sanitizer will be available in the building when handwashing is not possible. Individuals who bring their own hand sanitizer will be expected to keep it in their backpack or desk, use it at appropriate times as communicated by classroom teachers and not share it with others.
	Masking/Face Coverings
	+Masks are required of all students and staff ages 5 and older. We will follow the MDE guidelines <a href="#">2020-2021 Planning Guide for Schools: Health Considerations for Navigating COVID-19</a> (p.6)
	+The Governor has communicated that the state will provide one cloth mask for every teacher and student, face shields for every teacher and gloves for staff use. These items will be sent home when received by the school.
	+Extra masks will be available for individuals who forget to bring one from home
	+Face shields have been purchased by the school and will be provided for all adults in the building
	+Requests for reasonable accommodations may be made. Please contact the building principal or school nurse.
	+Students and staff will be instructed in the proper use, removal and washing of cloth face coverings according to CDC recommendations. <a href="#">How to Safely Wear and Take Off a Cloth Face Covering</a>
	Drinking Fountains
	+All students and staff will be asked to bring individual water bottles for personal use.
	+Water systems will be evaluated for safe use after any prolonged shut down
	+Water fountains will be converted to bottle fillers or disabled for individual use.

	Facility Ventilation and Air Flow
	+Ventilation systems have been evaluated for proper operation.
	+Fans and open windows will be utilized to increase air flow when necessary
	How do these plans allow for promoting the Catholic Identity and Mission of the School?
	+We care for the common good.
	+We educate proper health and safety practices.
	+The health and well-being of our entire community is our responsibility.



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Curriculum and Instruction	Approach to Curriculum Planning
	+Teachers will begin planning by reviewing previous year's progress and standards.
	+Teachers will lay out plans for the year in broad objectives and timelines
	+Unit planning will be the focus of initial planning
	+Integration of concepts and standards across curriculum areas will be done when feasible and determined to be the best way to cover curriculum objectives.
	Assessment
	+Formative and summative assessments will be used.
	+Standardized tests and benchmarking assessments will be used to determine baseline needs.
	+Assessment formats will include frequent checks for understanding and rely more on application of skills if distance learning is occurring.
	+Paraprofessionals and specialists will be utilized to assist with re-teaching and filling in learning gaps as necessary.
	+Participation in the Community Grant and the use of ESSER and GEERs grants will assist with modifications necessary for student mastery of content.

	+Students using Distance Learning may be asked to come onsite outside of school hours for testing opportunities.
	Feedback and Reporting
	+Counselors and teachers will monitor student progress socially and emotionally as well as academically. Support will be provided as necessary and regular communication with parents will be encouraged.
	+Our current reporting system allows for assessment of personal growth as well as academic growth. Although often related, we will continue to assess so academic grading reflects academic growth.
	+Alternative grading practices may be utilized in the event of temporary closures.
	Supporting Unique Academic, Social and Emotional Needs
	+Accommodations and Modifications will be utilized as necessary according to the Student Success Plan for intervention and documented by classroom teachers.
	+Diocesan Learning Plans and Individualized Education Plans will be followed as written or modified as needed following established procedures.
	+Guidance lessons, Virtues instruction, Olweus Bullying Prevention, Second Step and other Social/Emotional curriculum will be integrated and taught regularly.
	+Teachers will use Responsive Classroom techniques to build classroom community and foster secure learning environments.
	+Classrooms will use weekly class meetings to address specific social and emotional needs and build lessons related to COVID-19 issues within the lens of our Catholic faith.

	Addressing Students/Families on Distance Learning
	+Teacher, Student and Family expectations related to Distance Learning will be communicated based on feedback from last spring.
	+Distance Learning tools and schedules will be consistent by grade levels.
	+Teachers will be expected to establish direct contact with students who are learning at home each week through open Zooms, set schedules, Hangouts, Meets or other social media tools.

	+A consistent platform will be used by teachers in grades NEST-3 and grades 4-8. (Most likely Google Sites and Google Classroom)
	+A school-wide framework will be utilized and communicated to parents in the event we have to implement Distance Learning for a classroom, grade level or the school during the year. It will be similar to last spring.
	+A Learn at Home (or Distance Learning) option will be available for individuals. If you would like to request this option, please fill out this form and return to the building principal by August 26th. <a href="#">Stay at Home Learning</a>
	+Our Learn at Home students will work one day behind the class. Instruction will be recorded and materials provided electronically or in paper packets. We will establish a schedule for the student to join the class virtually at specific times during the day/week. Schedules will be established collaboratively with families where an adult from school (teacher, para, resource teacher, support staff, counselor) will be available to check in and assist with work. Families will be requested to select this option quarter by quarter. While some details are still to be determined, we will make every effort to set up students for success, whether they are in school or at home.
	<b>Administrative Considerations</b>
	+All teaching staff have been given access to FIRST Resources Virtual conference which provides professional development in Teaching and Learning through Distance.
	+RCS Technology Department will provide tutorial videos for using technology tools required in the event of Distance Learning.
	+All staff will be assigned supervisory roles to allow for the institution of social distancing requirements
	+Preschool workshops and Professional Development Days throughout the year will be devoted to collaborative planning and learning time.
	+Our MNSAA Strategic Plan will be adjusted to focus on delivering quality, flexible instruction whether in person or via distance.
	+Teacher evaluation will be modified to assess in person and distance learning
	+Consultation has occurred with 535 regarding all services they provide.
	+In the event of staffing shortages, all efforts will be made to secure a sub. If a sub is not available, a

	support staff teacher will be reassigned to classroom duties. If we are unable to cover classes that way, the grade will be combined in a larger space with one grade level teacher and paras to assist.
	How can Curriculum and Instruction Planning allow for promoting the Catholic identity and Mission of the school?
	+The focus of our planning will be on our Catholic faith - interwoven into all we do.
	+Our mission is to develop spiritual, social, emotional and academic growth in partnership with parents. We use that as the lens to guide all decisions and planning.
	+We will work with our Catholic faith community to provide an environment that fosters excellence where children grow in wisdom, courage and character.
	+Rooted in Gospel values, our students will be challenged and supported to become critical thinkers, collaborative problem solvers and use their gifts for the common good - serving others as Christ.



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Creating and Maintaining Community	Internal Relationships
	+Summer broadcast email sent to families July 24, 2020 with broad plan communication
	+Welcome Week packet pick-up will occur as in the past
	+New families will be offered virtual or one on one orientation options from the principal vs. a New Family Parent Orientation as in years past.
	+Meet the Teacher will be conducted virtually and planned by staff upon their return on August 17, 2020.
	+If we are in session, we will use our normal communication tools. If Distance, guidelines will be published regarding opportunities for connections between staff/staff, staff/students, and students/students.
	+School liturgies will be held once per week and allow for approximately 90 people to attend in person. We will either live stream to the other classrooms or conduct classroom prayer services using the daily Gospel as the focus.
	+Resources for calming rooms, counselor intervention, and social emotional support are being assembled and will be shared.
	+Regular school celebrations and gatherings will be explored in light of current social distancing and health guidelines. (most likely with some grades attending in person and others participating virtually.
	+Lunch will be eaten in the cafeteria. We will expand into the St. Francis Room and students will sit every third chair. Traffic patterns will be in place that minimize contact with individuals outside of the grade level.
	+Recess will be staggered throughout the day. One grade level will be at recess at a time and may be split between play areas.
	+Our librarian will visit classrooms with a selection of books to be checked out.

	+Teachers will travel whenever possible vs. students changing rooms. (Junior High will be travelling in the morning due to Math sections)
	External Relationships
	+RCS Marketing and Advancement will continue our social media links
	+School events and news will be shared via Parish Bulletins, Weekly Broadcast and website.
	+Teachers will provide opportunities for sharing of projects and highlighting student achievement.
	+Olmsted County Public Health (Carrie O'Neill) the Nonpublic School Nurse Lead (Sarah Talwalkar) will work closely with the school in all planning and safety measures.
	+Field trips have been cancelled for the first semester.
	How can Creating and Maintaining Relationships all for promoting the Catholic identity and mission that guides the school?
	+Community is at the heart of who we are. This is a priority for our planning and one of the reasons people select Catholic Schools.
	+Being together is an encounter with the Divine. If we are not in person, we will build ways for encounters with Christ to occur.
	+Students and staff need to feel valued and secure. We will offer opportunities for regular feedback and check ins.





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Resources	"Leading With Hope"
	Andrew Greeley Center for Education
	<a href="https://www.luc.edu/gcce/index.shtml">https://www.luc.edu/gcce/index.shtml</a>
	"Guide to Reopening"
	Catholic Mutual Group
	<a href="http://catholicmutual.org/en-us/home/covid-19caresresources.aspx">http://catholicmutual.org/en-us/home/covid-19caresresources.aspx</a>
	Minnesota Department of Health
	<a href="https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/">https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/</a>
	Center for Disease Control
	<a href="https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/index.html">https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/index.html</a>
Additional Planning Resource	American Academy of Pediatrics
	<a href="https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/">https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/</a>



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As we begin this year these words from Saint Robert Bellarmine sum it all up:

*The school of Christ is a school of love. In the last day, when the general examination takes place....Love will be the whole syllabus.*

Let us walk forward together and make the world a better place ...one where we care for one another and delight in being in each other's company!

Respectfully,  
Barb Plenge  
Principal