



# Creating A Path Forward:

## Catholic School's Consideration for Learning and Safe Schools

COVID-19 Health and Safety Re-entry Guidance



Issued: June 22, 2020

## COVID-19: A PRAYER OF SOLIDARITY



For all who have contracted coronavirus,  
We pray for care and healing.

For those who are particularly vulnerable,  
We pray for safety and protection.

For all who experience fear or anxiety,  
We pray for peace of mind and spirit.

For affected families who are facing difficult decisions between food on the table or public safety,  
We pray for policies that recognize their plight.

For those who do not have adequate health insurance,  
We pray that no family will face financial burdens alone.

For those who are afraid to access care due to immigration status,  
We pray for recognition of the God-given dignity of all.

For our brothers and sisters around the world,  
We pray for shared solidarity.

For public officials and decision makers,  
We pray for wisdom and guidance.

Father, during this time may your Church be a sign of hope, comfort and love to all.

Grant peace.

Grant comfort.

Grant healing.

Be with us, Lord.

Amen.

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## Catholic Diocese of Evansville

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Dear Catholic School Communities,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ!

*Creating a Path Forward: Catholic School's Considerations for Learning and Safe Schools* was written with the intention to provide all Catholic schools guidance for preparing school operations under the current pandemic environment. The conditions, current medical landscape, and growing body of knowledge surrounding COVID-19 continue to evolve. This reality presents challenges to planning, preparing, and guiding school operations.

Catholic schools are encouraged to communicate with local authorities and review recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In light of this new pandemic environment, schools must understand two key factors: 1) the school's ability to maintain a safe and healthy school environment, and 2) the prevalence of COVID-19 in their community. Schools will need to constantly evaluate these two key factors as schools and communities will most likely fluctuate between the various phases of disease transmission over the coming months. (IN-CLASS, 2020) Preparations and directives will not be a one-size-fits all approach for schools. We understand the unique needs that vary from early learning students to high school students.

Catholic schools will respond to this challenge and employ every measure available to ensure the safety of students, faculty and staff members. The Office of Catholic Schools, as well as other diocesan offices, will provide guidance and assistance as needed. Please be assured of our prayers for all who will be returning to the classrooms this August.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Joseph M. Siegel, DD, STL.  
Bishop of Evansville

Dr. Daryl Hagan  
Superintendent of Catholic Schools

## Planning for June/July

- I. Overarching Themes
  - a. The [CDC](#) guidelines, [IN-CLASS](#) and this document are the main points of references
  - b. While documents utilize language consisting of considerations, strategies, recommendations, should, could, etc., all schools should take implementation seriously
  - c. Implementations should be practical, feasible and reasonable
  - d. “Am I minimizing the risk of infection?”
    - i. We cannot eliminate (today) but we can minimize
  - e. All decisions should consider AGE appropriateness
  - f. Remember IN-CLASS document updates will be noted at the end of the document
  - g. School buildings and all school associated extracurricular activities will open – **July 6, 2020**
    - i. Parish ministries may begin on July 1
    - ii. Catholic Center reopens to public on July 6
  - h. Schools start with the most appropriate (tightest) restrictions then review and see where/if restrictions can be relaxed as school year progresses
  - i. All guidance is FLUID and will change!
  - j. Current plans does not include all areas for consideration
- II. Where to Start
  - a. Create a local school committee that may include the school’s maintenance staff, administrative assistant, administrator(s), pastor/priest-delegate, etc.
    - i. Consider an informed parent (e.g., nurse, doctor)
    - ii. Consider an active school advisory council member
    - iii. Consider involving local health department (during and/or after plan creation)
  - b. Begin making plans based on the areas outlined below
  - c. Continue PAL meetings and consider like strategies appropriate for your area
- III. Handbook Language
  - a. Consider updating your Parent/Student and Faculty Handbooks (see sample)
  - b. Review all handbooks for conflicting statements
- IV. Communication
  - a. Priority item will be the ability to communicate with all families and staff utilizing School Messenger. Confirm your data is current
  - b. Plan to communicate often in July – even repeating your communications
  - c. Involve school advisory council, parent/teacher organization, athletic council, parish council, etc.
- V. School Calendar
  - a. Review your school calendar
  - b. Consider revising to maximize instructional days
- VI. Review Chain of Command
  - a. Especially critical where we have one administrator
  - b. Who would lead should administrators become unavailable
- VII. Visitor Restrictions
  - a. Restrict all traffic in/out of the schools

- b. Consider a drop off bin (credit – St. Philip)
  - c. Be creative in using virtual platforms instead of visitors
  - d. Volunteers should be reduced if not eliminated
  - e. Volunteers, if used, must have COVID-19 training and be aware of and follow all school protocols and practices
  - f. Parent/Teacher Meetings – if necessary in person; consider virtual or phone conferences
- VIII. Employee Screening
- a. Follow the guidance published by the Diocese (refer to document)
  - b. Self-screening and quarantining where necessary will be required and is key to keeping all safe
- IX. Employee Travel
- a. Considering limiting or eliminating all conferences and workshops that are not virtual during the months of August and September
  - b. Teachers that travel to various schools should take extra-precautions and utilize PPE
- X. Administrative Assistant
- a. Provide a physical barrier (e.g., plexiglass) between the administrative assistant and everyone else
  - b. Consider restricting (even eliminating) the flow in and out of the school office
- XI. Signage
- a. Creating signage will be necessary to communicate with all
    - i. Refer to the CDC (Schools) for actual printable signage [Link](#) [Link](#)
      - 1. Handwashing sign reminders
      - 2. Please practice social distancing
      - 3. Symptoms
      - 4. Floor markers for heavy traffic areas
- XII. Water
- a. Ensure access to water throughout the entire school day
  - b. Fountains - should not be used
  - c. Water bottle filling stations may be used
- XIII. General Disinfection Measures
- a. Maintenance should clean frequently touched areas
  - b. Teachers should clean frequently touched areas in the classroom
  - c. Make a plan to purchase necessary amounts/items
- XIV. Commonly Shared Spaces
- a. Reduce or eliminate these areas (e.g., faculty rooms, work spaces)
  - b. Provide a disinfectant near the copier to be used after each job
- XV. Teacher Share Opportunities in late July
- a. The CSO will provide virtual meetings for sharing best practices
- XVI. Transportation – School Owned Buses
- a. Refer to Appendix E [IN-CLASS](#)
  - b. No modifications to the school bus are allowed (Updated!)
  - c. Keep Andrea informed of your added protocols and cleaning
- XVII. Transportation – Public School Buses

- a. Follow procedures established by local public schools for your students who utilize buses
- XVIII. Usage of School Facility Other than School
- a. We recommend that the school facility be used only for school and parish operations; however we understand this is a parish decision
  - b. Dialogue now with your parish to ensure proper cleaning and protocols (in this document) are strictly followed
  - c. Specifically, be collaborative with Religious Education Classes to ensure all children in the parish have access to on-going catechesis

### Planning for Events Leading Up to the First Instructional Day

- I. Back to School Faculty Meeting
  - a. Practice all safety precautions
  - b. Include COVID-19 Training – IDOE currently developing training module
  - c. Food should be limited to self-contained snacks, box lunches, etc.
  - d. Consider locations: auditoriums, gyms, even outside, etc.
- II. Parent Information Nights
  - a. More important than ever
  - b. Consider spreading them out to smaller groups
  - c. Practice all safety precautions
  - d. Include COVID-19 Training – IDOE currently developing training module
  - e. Consider no food/drinks (exception bottled water)
  - f. Consider locations: auditorium, gyms, even outside, etc.
- III. New Student Orientation
  - a. Consider smaller numbers
  - b. Practice all safety precautions
  - c. Reimagine the schedule for the event
  - d. Keep it fun...just be safe!
  - e. Same food considerations as above
- IV. New Teacher Meeting
  - a. July 23, 2020
  - b. Location/Time: TBA
  - c. Pathways for new teachers, yes! Date/Time: TBA
- V. July Administrators' Meeting
  - a. July 21, 2020
  - b. Holy Rosary Catholic Parish

- c. Atrium
- d. Time: TBD
- e. COVID-19 training for administrators
- VI. Athletics
  - a. High schools will follow all directions from [IHSAA](#) and [IN-CLASS](#)
  - b. Schedule a mandatory meeting with high school principals and AD's to ensure readiness by July 6
  - c. Elementary schools will be provided guidance from athletic committee – TBA
- VII. Teacher Professional Development
  - a. Discussion on future e-learning and possible remote learning
    - i. How did we do?
    - ii. Feedback from parents, teachers, students
    - iii. Utilizing one platform
    - iv. Additional live instruction, scheduled
- VIII. School Council Update
  - a. CSO will hold an informative session for council members (one from each council) in July
- IX. Families Communicate Concerns and Seek Alternative Plan
  - a. Listen and be understanding to families who voice concerns
  - b. Share what the school is doing to keep everyone safe
  - c. IF the school can create a reasonable approach then proceed

## Planning for Instructional Days

- I. Arrivals
  - a. Where will students go upon arrival
  - b. New maximum limits for those holding areas
  - c. Consider teachers opening classrooms earlier
  - d. Discourage early drop off if possible
  - e. Consider new traffic patterns (e.g., entrances) when appropriate
- II. Student Screening and Protocols
  - a. Self-assess each day...parents are key in this assessment
  - b. Repeat often, if you have symptoms – STAY HOME
  - c. Consider spot checking temperatures as feasible
  - d. Make sure signage regarding symptoms are on the door and in the hallways
  - e. Hand washing stations and/or hand sanitizer is available upon entry and encouraged
  - f. Schedule frequent handwashing for all throughout the school day
- III. Classrooms
  - a. Largest classes in the largest spaces
  - b. Reduce items in room to maximize social distancing of students
  - c. Space seating/desk at least 6 feet apart when FEASIBLE (CDC)

- d. If necessary, rows (not facing each other) are encouraged (every other row with students)
- e. Large classes, consider auditoriums and small gyms
- f. Hand sanitizer should be available
- g. Devices/Manipulatives assigned to specific students and/or cleaned between student use
- h. Regular cleaning of the frequently touched areas should occur within reason
- IV. Teacher/Student Movement Through the School Day
  - a. Reduce where it makes sense and is age appropriate
  - b. Eliminate when possible more than one class in a hallway
  - c. Practice social distancing when traveling within the school
  - d. Teachers move instead of students when appropriate
- V. Wearing Mask and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) - Students
  - a. Some students may be required to wear additional PPE (i.e. health-related, special conditions, etc.) when directed to do so by student health plan
  - b. IN-CLASS does not specifically state a clear direction (page 12)
  - c. [CDC](#) states that face coverings may be challenging for students...the source states they should be worn by students AS FEASIBLE!
  - d. Consider masks when physical distancing is a challenge (Example: changing classes at Memorial and Mater Dei) - [CDC](#)
  - e. If students and employees are able to bring masks from outside, create guidelines regarding wording, symbols, etc.
- VI. Wearing Mask and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – Teachers
  - a. Ensure the health and safety of teachers and staff
  - b. [CDC](#) states coverings should be worn by staff AS FEASIBLE!
  - c. Assist teachers (as feasible) with request for PPE
- VII. Cafeteria
  - a. The CDC recommends the closing of communal share spaces such as dining halls
  - b. If (a) can be achieved then proceed
  - c. If (a) cannot be done, create strict protocols around cleaning and seating
  - d. See Food Service for additional ideas on the CDC website
- VIII. Quarantine Space
  - a. Create a plan should a student(s)/employee(s) begin showing signs of the virus
  - b. Create signage to ensure no one enters the room once a student/employee has been placed in the room
  - c. Notify parents, pastor, Office of Catholic Schools and the health department
- IX. Safety Drills
  - a. Follow guidance in the IN-CLASS document
- X. Mass
  - a. Follow diocesan directives and local practices
  - b. Consider adding Masses to reduce student count
- XI. Recess
  - a. Will be needed!
  - b. Create plan to reduce students in one place

- c. Create plan for what students can and cannot play
  - d. Create cleaning protocols that are reasonable
- XII. Fine Art Classes
  - a. Important to continue fine arts
  - b. Can classes be held outside, in the church for music, smaller numbers in a class
  - c. Create protocols that are reasonable
  - d. For marching band, view [ISSMA](#) guidance
- XIII. After School Care
  - a. All in-school protocols should be applied reasonably to after school care (and morning care, if offered)
- XIV. Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten
  - a. Apply all protocols appropriately and with consideration of age
- XV. Student and Employees Mental Health
  - a. Work with your social worker to create a plan to address [Youth First](#)
  - b. Be mindful of what is occurring with students especially the first weeks of school
- XVI. Mitigation Plans
  - a. Create tentative response to COVID-19 cases

## School Assurances

- I. Complete the Assurance worksheet as your committee addresses the outlined areas.
- II. The week of July 27-31, 2020, the Office of Catholic Schools will host individual school meetings (virtually) to allow school committees to communicate their plan.
- III. The school's Assurance worksheet needs to be submitted to the Office of Catholic Schools the day before the meeting.

## Assurances

School: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>AREAS ADDRESSED</b>	Y = Yes N= No	<b>ACTION STEPS TAKEN</b>
Create Local Planning Committee		
Update Handbooks		
Create Communication Plan		
Consider Changes to School Calendar		
Review Chain of Command		
Create Restrictions for Visitors		
Communicate Employee Screening		
Employee Travel		
Office Area/Adm. Assistant		
Signage		
Water Accessibility		
General Disinfection Measures		
Commonly Shared Spaces		
Encourage Teacher Share Meeting		
Transportation Addressed		
Use of Facility Other than Parish		
Back to School Faculty Meeting		
Parent Information Night		
New Student Orientation		
Extracurricular – Non Athletic		
Extracurricular - Athletic		
Student Arrival		
Student Screening Protocols		
Classrooms		
Student Movement in Buildings		
Teacher Movement in Buildings		
Masks and PPE - Students		
Masks and PPE - Employees		
Cafeteria Considerations		
Designated Quarantine Area		
Safety Drills		
Mass Considerations		
Recess (Elementary)		
Fine Art Classes/Courses		
After School Care		
Preschool/Pre-K Programs		
Mental Health Plan		
Mitigation Plan		
<b><u>School Committee Names</u></b>	<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>School Committee Signatures</u></b>