

ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL REOPENING PLAN 2020-2021



Updated October - 2020

Diocese of Boise Press Release from Dr. Sarah Quilici, Superintendent of Catholic Schools

After a long closure and summer vacation, students will be returning to schools where procedures and protocols are vastly different from what they left. This school year is unlike any other because of the ongoing pandemic, and in most cases, teachers and students have been out of school buildings for over five months.

In order to ease the transition and educate our students for a successful school year, Idaho Catholic Schools in red zones (the areas of the state deemed to have substantial community spread) will use a phased approach to reduce risk to teachers and students returning to school. The Diocese of Boise is committed to providing in-person educational opportunities for the 2020-2021 school year that are as safe as possible during these unprecedented times; a careful and loving reintegration to the school community will facilitate this goal.

Teams from each Idaho Catholic school worked throughout the summer to create reopening plans that meet the specific needs of their facilities and communities. These plans, which were developed with guidance from public health officials, include social distancing measures, increased sanitization, and in areas with mask ordinances: mask requirements.

As of Monday, August 3, 9 of the 16 Idaho Catholic schools are in areas identified by local health departments as category “red,” or having substantial community spread. The schools **not** in red zones include: St. Edward’s, St. Nicholas, Holy Spirit, All Saints, St. Mary’s (Moscow), St. John Bosco, and Sts. Peter and Paul. Health departments are evaluating these categories on a weekly basis.

Staff from the Chancery, including: Bishop Peter Christensen; Sarah Quilici, Superintendent of Catholic Schools; Chuck Lawrence, Human Resources; and other Chancery staff; are advising schools in red zones to open for students in a phased in format with the goal of fully serving students in an in-person capacity on September 8.

The goal of the phased in approach is to help mitigate risk and not contribute to the spread of COVID-19 in the community. All schools have written re-opening plans, but the plans have not yet been tested. By returning to the schools in phases, each school has an opportunity to test their re-opening plans and make adjustments as needed to increase safety. It is important to test plans so that schools are successful and able to remain open.

Idaho Catholic schools have written reopening plans that significantly mitigate risk to students, faculty and staff, and the community. Our schools in red zones are confident that these plans will allow us to serve students in-person as safely as possible. Idaho Catholic Schools want to do what is best for students and meet their physical, mental, and spiritual needs. The American Academy of Pediatrics “strongly advocates that all policy considerations for the coming school year should start with a goal of having students physically present in school.” The AAP has several recommendations for how to do this safely, which our schools have addressed in their phased reopening plans. Our goal is to be able to keep our doors open for in-person instruction.

Throughout the summer, sports and small groups of students have been working together on school campuses throughout the state. Childcare facilities have been open. Catholic parishes

have been open for in-person Mass. In-person instruction is important to the spiritual, physical, and mental health of students. We want to serve the needs of our students and families.

Our goals:

- The health and safety of students and staff.
- Keeping students engaged in learning
- Building relationships with families to keep them engaged with our community
- Clear and proactive communication with families about their health, safety and education when returning to school.

Matthew 11:28-30 “Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened,* and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.”

Table of Contents

Overview		5
Coordination with State and County Agencies	Central District Health School Guidance	5
Instructional Plan		6
Student Attendance Protocols		7
Modified Medical Policy	7	
Social Distancing and Mitigation Strategies		9
School Hours/Drop-off and Pick-up	9	
Entrance and Exit	9	
Hallways & Classroom Seating	9	
Lunchroom	9	
School Mass	9	
Library	9	
Physical Education Classes	9	
Art Classes	9	
Recess Procedures	9	
Holding Room for Sick Students	9	
Visitors and Volunteers	9	
Additional Daily Protocols	10	
Daily Sanitation Protocols		11
School-Wide Disinfections	11	
Hand Sanitizer Stations	11	
Hygienic Practices	11	
Absence Procedures		11
Homebound Teachers		11
Procedure for Positive or Suspected COVID-19 Case		12
Illness Decision Tree		13

OVERVIEW

For the foreseeable future, the COVID-19 pandemic will affect our daily school routines. Prudence calls for prayerful, thoughtful, and coordinated planning as we learn how to best respond to this short-to-medium-term challenge.

Please understand this is a fluid situation and things are subject to change as we progress through the school year. This document will be updated throughout the school year as needed.

Generally speaking, there are three possible learning models:

1. **Normal In-person Learning:** *All students in the school building*
 - a. Minimal community spread; normal school routine
 - b. Newly adopted safety and sanitizing protocols approved by health department
 - c. Regular attendance policies with strict stay at home if sick requirement
 - d. Grading and academic policies are normal

2. **Hybrid Learning:** *Most or many students in the school building*
 - a. Moderate/substantial community transmission.
 - b. Modified attendance and minimal change to academic policies.
 - c. School-wide social distancing and mitigation strategies in place.
 - d. Special safety and sanitizing protocols approved by the health department.
 - e. Concentrates on students in school and provides some distance learning and flexibility in learning for homebound students.

3. **Distance Learning:** *No students permitted in the school building.*
 - a. Substantial community transmission
 - b. Attendance policies highly modified/Academic policies adjusted as needed
 - c. All schooling via Distance Learning Model

Our mission to foster academic excellence rooted in our Catholic Faith and Christian values is best fulfilled when teachers and students come together on campus and in classrooms. However, until the COVID-19 pandemic has abated, an open school building requires special precautions and protocols in order to safeguard the health and well-being of our students, faculty, and staff. We have developed these protocols in close coordination with local, regional, and state officials.

It is our intention to begin school on Monday, August 17, 2020. For the safety of our students and staff, we are phasing in the reopening of school. Thank you for your patience and your prayers as we persevere through this unprecedented challenge.

Coordination with State and County Agencies

The agency primarily responsible for overseeing the opening of schools is the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare's health districts. We fall under the Central District Health (CDH) district. At this time, Central District Health has issued recommendations for opening with each district having local control and local decision making. The Diocese of Boise has the

goal of fully serving students in an in-person capacity beginning on September 8.

Central District Health (CDH) School Guidance

St. Joseph’s Catholic School protocols consider the school guidance document issued and updated by CDH. St. Joseph’s will consider CDH guidance and focus on spread within our own school community. Please see the following diagram:

CDH Categories	Community Transmission	St. Joe’s School Transmission	St. Joseph’s Learning Model
I Green	None	None	Normal Learning - All students in the building
II Yellow	Minimal/moderate	None to Minimal	Full in person Learning <i>Most or many students in the school building</i>
III Red	Substantial	If Minimal to Moderate If Substantial	Then full in person learning Then -Distance Learning

If, after reopening, St. Joseph’s Catholic School has moderate/substantial confirmed cases of COVID-19, we may implement a short-term closure for 2-5 days. If 20% or more of faculty/staff are out, distance learning will be implemented.

2020-2021 Instructional Plan

Goals

1. Continue to live our mission to foster academic excellence rooted in our Catholic faith and Christian values
2. Take necessary measures to keep our students, faculty and staff, and our community healthy and safe
3. Create a plan that is flexible and adaptable
4. Keep students and families engaged in the learning experience

Assumptions

- There will be no cure or vaccine for COVID-19 for the upcoming school year
- We don’t know what Gov. Little’s regulations/guidelines will be throughout the year
- Uncertain of what the community spread will be throughout the year
- We need to be prepared to transition to distance learning quickly
- There will be child care concerns

Key Strategies

- Create a comprehensive plan that meets the needs of our St. Joseph’s Families
- Implement safe distancing protocols to the best of our ability in all areas of the school

- Maximize space available on campus
- Rethink schedules to best meet the needs of our students, faculty and staff

Student Attendance Protocols

Modified Medical Policy

An interim modification will be made to our Parent/Student Handbook Medical Policy section. Students who are ill will NOT be allowed to return to school if any other family member exhibits any COVID19 related symptoms until adequate 14 day quarantine has been met.

If the student has been ill (non-COVID related), they will NOT be allowed to return to school until 24 hours have passed with no medicine and no symptoms.

Reporting illness- Please email the front office (granvalla@stjoes.com) if your student is going to be absent for any reason (with a copy to your student's homeroom teacher).

Additionally, you are required to inform the front office by email (granvalla@stjoes.com) of the following:

- your student is experiencing COVID symptoms;
- your student has a known exposure to COVID; and/or
- anyone in your household is awaiting COVID test results or has tested positive for COVID.

Required absence- Students are required to stay home when..

- Household member or student is awaiting results of a COVID-19 test
- Household member or student has a confirmed or probable COVID diagnosis
- If fever of 100 degrees or higher within the past 24 hours
- If displaying symptoms of fever, cough, sore throat, diarrhea, vomiting, nausea/abdominal pain, new onset of severe headache, new loss of taste and/or smell. symptoms associated with COVID-19

COVID -19 School Practices

We want to be able to continue our in person learning throughout the year and we need your help. We all need to practice the 3 W's both in and out of school:

- Wear a Mask – all people on our school campus must wear a mask
- Wash your hands
- Watch your distance when with others

Current COVID tracking information for St. Joseph's [HERE](#).

- If your family has been exposed to someone with COVID-19, please keep all children home. If anyone in your family is being tested for COVID-19 keep all children home.
- If anyone in your immediate family is sick, please keep all children home from school
- See [Illness Decision Tree for Schools](#)

If your family travels (this means your school-age children are traveling with the family) out of state through January, **we ask that you self-quarantine for three days following your return.** I recognize that this is inconvenient, but we are trying to implement precautions to mitigate exposure to COVID-19. We will reevaluate this requirement in January.

Re-Opening Plan

August 17th - 21st:

Our students in K-8th grades will have an opportunity to come on-site to meet the teachers and learn about the safety protocols at school. It is so important to us that our students feel safe! This will happen one-on-one for our kindergarten students and in small groups for 1st - 8th grade students. We will coordinate by alphabet based on student last name for those families with multiple children here at St. Joe's. During this visit, students will receive training in new protocols in the school (masks, social distancing, recess, classroom expectations, learning platforms for remote learning, picking up materials, etc.)

For our 1st - 8th grade students, this will take place from 8:30 - 11:00 throughout the week - this is for students only. Our kindergarten teachers will be scheduling one-on-one visits with each family. Masks will be required.

- Monday - Last names A-C
- Tuesday - Last names D-H
- Wednesday - Last names I-L
- Thursday - Last names M-R
- Friday - Last names S-Z

August 24th - September 4th:

Students will come to the school in the same small groups by last name (See above - same day as previous week) from 8:30-11:00. Some distance learning/remote learning will happen during this two week period. This will give our students a chance to work in small groups with their teachers and fully understand classroom expectations. This format will also be getting students familiar with distance learning in the event that we have to use this format for the entire school. The goal is to set our students up for a successful return to school on Tuesday, September 8th.

Tuesday, September 8th:

In the St. Joseph's family survey sent out several weeks ago, 70% of our families indicated they would send their children back to school for in person learning, 30% stated they would prefer distance learning. We have taken this feedback into consideration when developing this plan. Fr. Mariusz wants St. Joseph's Catholic School to provide in-person learning as fully as possible for those families who want this option.

Monday, October 26th:

St. Joseph's Catholic School returned to fully on-site learning on Monday, October 26th. The decision to return to fully on-site learning is based on the following:

- Bishop Peter Christensen and Chancery direction to bring students back to school
- Fr. Mariusz - bring all students back to school
- School Advisory Board - consultation and parent input
- Parent Survey -
- Faculty and staff consultation
- Collaboration with Dr. Quilici and other Treasure Valley Catholic school principals
 - All other Catholic Schools have returned in full capacity
- No COVID outbreak at St. Joseph's or any Idaho Catholic school
- What is best for student learning

We returned fully on-site learning (all students from 8:00-2:00 every day-staggered start and end times) on Monday, October 26th. We respect the right of families to keep students at home and we will continue to offer distance learning in 2nd -8th grades.

- We will continue to follow the Ada county mask mandate.
- We will continue social distancing in classrooms
- We will utilize all spaces on campus to maintain smaller class sizes

Distance Learning Plan

- Students will have 24/7 access to their Google Classroom
- Core subject lessons will be live streamed - some classes may be recorded and uploaded to Google Classroom.
- Teachers will post daily lessons/assignments as appropriate. All students will be expected to complete and submit classwork distributed to them by their teachers.
- Teachers or instructional aide will offer virtual sessions (via GoogleMeet) as appropriate.
- Attendance policies will take into account the special circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- School materials will be made available to students the week of August 17th- 21st.

Kindergarten and 1st grade families considering distance learning: Learning to read is a deliberate teaching of skills which requires in person attendance. We will not be able to provide the necessary attention needed to support these grade levels through distance learning.

Update 9/18/20: Provide distance learning through September 18th, ask distance families to return with little to no spread in the building. St. Joseph's Catholic School will not offer distance learning for kindergarten and 1st grade after September 21st.

Social Distancing and Mitigation Strategies

School Hours -Drop-off and Pick-up

If the entire student body is in the building , we will have staggered start and end times to avoid large gathering of students.

Kindergarten - 2nd grade

- K-2nd grade window for drop off is 7:40 -7:50 - class begins at 7:55
- K-2nd grade school day will end at 2:45

3rd grade - 5th grade

- 3rd-5th grade window for drop off is 7:55 -8:05 - class begins at 8:10
- 3rd-5th grade school day will end at 3:00

6th grade - 8th grade

- 6th-8th grade window for drop off is 8:10-8:20 - class begins at 8:20
- 6th-8th grade school day will end at 3:15

A modified schedule will be used during the **full on site learning** model. Live classroom instruction will take place Monday-Friday. Our kindergarten - 8th grades will operate a shortened day from 8:00 AM until 2:00 PM.

The shortened day for live instruction will allow teachers prep time at the end of the day to lesson plan, prepare materials and post content to their Google Classroom(s).

Entrance and Exit

Starting September 8th, students will meet on the playground area or in front of the building. Multiple doors will be used to control crowding with entering and exiting the building. Social distancing must be practiced.

These alternatives may be used by teachers.

- K-1st grade - students will enter and exit through either the front door or the doors off of 9th street
- 2nd-5th grade students will enter and exit through either the front door or the doors off of Fort street
- 6th-8th grade - students will enter and exit through either the front door or the doors off of 8th street

Hallways

Teachers will ensure that students maintain increased spacing in lines as they move through hallways. Blue tape on the floor will mark direction for travel through the hallways. Masks will be worn while moving through the hallways.

Classroom Seating

Spacing between students will be maximized as possible (6 ft.) in the classroom while still maintaining a positive educational environment.

School Mass

Maintaining our Catholic Identity is vital to our Catholic School. We will hold our regularly scheduled school Mass on Tuesday morning or afternoon. The Cathedral will be closed to the public during our school Mass. In order to maintain social distancing and avoid large gatherings, we will have two grades attend Mass while the other grades will be able to view the Mass in the classroom as it is live streamed.

Lunchroom

The lunchroom will be closed for seating. Students will eat lunch outside if weather permits. Students may need to eat in the gym during inclement weather. Grab and Go lunch will be available to order through the cafeteria. We will evaluate our ability to offer hot lunch at the end of each quarter.

SPECIALS -

Library

The library is being used as an alternate learning space.

Physical Education Classes

Person-to-person contact sports or activities will be avoided or modified to promote safe distancing. All equipment will be sanitized with a solution of bleach or CDH approved disinfectant prior to re-use. If weather permits, classes will be held outside. Middle school students will not change clothing for PE.

Art Classes

If weather permits, art class may be held outside. The art teacher will travel to the homeroom classroom to deliver art lessons.

Recess Procedures

Staggered recess schedules by grade level will be used to limit the number of students outside. The parking lot across the street will be used as an alternative play area.

Sanitizing/cleaning of hands before and after recess will be required.

Holding Room for Sick Students

St. Joseph's has a separate, designated room as a holding area for sick students who are exhibiting any COVID-19 symptoms and are waiting to be picked up.

Visitors and Volunteers

We will suspend nearly all of our volunteer programs during the school year to limit the number of people inside our building. The exception is volunteers during lunch recess. We will also be limiting visitors who enter our lobby to help maintain social distancing.

Additional Daily Protocols

CDH mandated face masks for public and private school students. As long as we have a mask mandate in Ada County, we will adhere to this. Staff duties and student activities requiring close contact will be modified as necessary.

Daily Sanitation Protocols

School-Wide Disinfections

We utilize CDC-approved disinfecting and sanitizing products to clean desks, common tables, countertops, doorknobs and handles, hands-on learning items, bathroom fixtures, phones, and customer service areas every day.

Hand Sanitizer Stations

Teachers, staff, and students will keep their hands sanitized using the dispensers of hand sanitizer that are installed at every building entrance and outside of every classroom.

Hygienic Practices

Parents are required to keep sick students and their siblings home for 24 hours after a fever subsides without the use of fever-reducing medicines. We rely on parents to promote the same hygienic practices we will direct students to practice at school, including:

- covering coughs or sneezes with a bent arm or tissue and washing hands or using hand sanitizer afterward
- washing hands with soap and water for 20 seconds, dry hands with a paper towel, and using the paper towel to turn off the faucet
- keeping hands away from nose, mouth, and eyes
- avoiding the sharing of food, drinks, and personal care items (e.g. lip balm, drinks)

Absence Procedures

We respect the right of families to keep students at home in the interest of their health and safety during this pandemic. We also expect to require some students to stay at home, if only for a short period of time, as a precautionary measure—for example, if their family indicates exposure to COVID-19 or if their screenings indicate a temperature of 100° F or higher.

In addition to the St. Joseph's Handbook, the following attendance categories are in effect:

- Absent (due to COVID-19 illness): no attendance penalty or academic restrictions
- Absent (due to parent/sibling COVID-19 health concerns): no attendance penalty or academic restrictions

We will offer the following flexibilities to accommodate students who are absent:

- Students will have 24/7 access to their Google Classroom
- Teachers or instructional aid will offer “live” tutoring sessions (via GoogleMeet) as appropriate. While these sessions will not cover all the in-class material, they will provide homebound students with the help to stay up on their core academic work. All students will be expected to complete and submit classwork distributed to them by their teachers.
- Teachers will post daily lessons/assignments as appropriate. All students will be expected to complete and submit classwork distributed to them by their teachers. Lessons may be recorded and uploaded to Google Classroom.
- Attendance policies will take into account the special circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. Homebound students will not be penalized for their absences.
- School materials will be made available to homebound students. Details will be coordinated with each student's family

Homebound Teachers

We respect the right of teachers to stay at home in the interest of their health and safety during this pandemic if they have been exposed to COVID-19. Teachers will be allowed to Distance Teach from home and use GoogleMeet and Google Classroom to deliver content to students.

Procedure for Positive or Suspected COVID-19 Case

The following procedure is to be used if a student or employee is identified as COVID-19 positive or suspected positive.

Action Item: Student or employee is respectfully asked to isolate in the holding room.

- For students, the front office will call parents or legal guardians for pickup. Students should be picked up within ½ hour of phone call
- For employees, the front office will coordinate with school leadership to manage follow-up
- Student or employee will be provided appropriate personal protective equipment and any employee interacting with the confirmed or suspected case will be provided with a mask and gloves.

Action Item: Front office traces list of potential exposures (employees and students).

- The front office will coordinate (as appropriate) with parents/legal guardians of the

student or directly with the employee to build a list of potential exposures.

Action Item: School leadership decides on the length of the short-term closure.

- School leadership will provide CDH with appropriate details and exposure information.
- School leadership will coordinate the closure decision with CDH.
- School leadership will coordinate the closure decision with Pastor
- Points of Contact:
 - CDH: - Monday - Friday 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM at 208-321-2222
 - St. Joseph's Catholic School: Tammy Emerich (Principal) 208-342-4909

Action Item: School leadership communicates appropriate details to the school community.

- School leadership will update the school community (parents/guardians) as necessary via the PlusPortals mass communications system (email/text/voice) with appropriate incident details.

We are following the Illness Decision Tree for Schools published by Central District Health with cooperation by the Center for Disease Control. Please [click on this link](#).

Illness Decision Tree for Students

