



Archdiocese of Louisville Catholic Schools
“Healthy at School” System Re-Entry Plan for 2020-21
September 4, 2020

***The Catechism of the Catholic Church* says, “The human body shares in the dignity of ‘the image of God’” (364). “Life and physical health are precious gifts entrusted to us by God. We must take reasonable care of them, taking into account the needs of others and the common good” (2288).**

To this end, we have created the following plan to ensure the safety of our staff, students, and families as we welcome them back to in-person instruction for the 2020-21 school year. The plan is based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Kentucky Department of Public Health (KDPH), Louisville Metro Public Health and Wellness (LMPHW), Archdiocese of Louisville staff, Catholic school leaders, and the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE).

“Healthy at School” requires careful planning that begins with identifying key principles that act as the framework for the implementation strategies at each local school community. The following plan is offered as guidance to our pastors and Catholic school leaders as they take the steps to bring staff back to work and students back to school. The plan is based on the following principles:

1. **Develop systems of welcoming and support** for teachers, staff, students, and families in our Catholic school communities.
2. **Promote healthy behaviors**, articulated in state and national guidance, which provide layers of protection to reduce the spread of COVID-19.
3. **Create and maintain safe work and school environments** focused on staff and student safety and well-being.
4. **Maintain healthy operations** by implementing practices guided by what is feasible, practical, acceptable, and tailored to the needs of each community (i.e. a school of 700 vs. a school of 200).

It is also important to note that we will continue to monitor the ever-evolving conditions associated with COVID-19, and we will review and update guidance as needed based on those conditions and consultation with our pastors, Catholic school leaders, healthcare partners, and civic officials.

Welcoming and Supporting Students and Teachers

Our Catholic faith reminds us that we are never alone in our struggles. It roots us in relationship – with God and with neighbor, who is made in God’s image; it is expressed in prayer and worship and in love. Anchored in this relational way of being, we can respond to life’s stresses with great peace and inner security. As we come back together after months of being apart, we recognize that both teachers and students will need support necessary to reenter their school environments. We will focus on the following strategies:

- Provide a Catholic community where people feel safe, cared for, and respected.
- Identify individual needs and provide personalized supports for teachers, students, and their families to make this transition as smooth as possible.
- Partner with teachers, families, and school communities to ensure that our students are “met where they are” by identifying ways we can work together.

To ensure the safety of our staff, students, and families, schools should implement the strategies outlined below in each of three areas: healthy behaviors, create and maintain safe work and school environments, and maintain healthy operations to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Promote Healthy Behaviors

Staying Home when Appropriate

- Actively encourage employees and students who are sick to stay at home.
- [Staff and students should stay home](#) if they have tested positive for or are showing COVID-19 [symptoms](#).
- Implement policies that encourage employees and students to stay at home when they are sick, have been exposed to COVID-19, or are caring for someone who is sick, and ensure employees, students, and students’ families are aware of these policies.
- CDC’s criteria can help inform when employees should return to work.

Recognize Signs and Symptoms

- Schools should conduct daily health checks (e.g., temperature screening with touchless thermometer and/or [symptom checking](#)) of staff, students, and visitors before they enter the building each day.
- Health checks should be conducted safely and respectfully and in accordance with any applicable privacy laws and regulations.
- Persons who have a fever of 100.4⁰ (38.0⁰C) or above or other signs of illness (chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, new rash) should not be admitted to the facility.
- Post signage instructing anyone entering the school property to NOT ENTER if they meet any of the above Exclusion Criteria.
- Temperatures should not be logged.
- Identify an isolation room or area to separate anyone who has COVID-19 symptoms or tests positive but does not have symptoms.

Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

- Teach and reinforce [handwashing](#) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and increase monitoring to ensure adherence among students and staff.
- If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol can be used (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer).
- Encourage staff and students to cover coughs and sneezes by coughing into their elbow or covering with a tissue. Used tissues should be thrown in the trash and hands washed immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol can be used (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer).

Cloth Face Coverings

- Students who are enrolled in first grade and above and staff should be required to wear a cloth face covering, unless medically waived.
- Schools may work with students and families to identify alternative face coverings based on individual student needs and circumstances.
- Schools should develop a standard for masks to assure messaging or images on masks align with school dress code.
- Schools should maintain extra masks for those individuals who may need them.
- Teach and reinforce use of [cloth face coverings](#). Face coverings may be challenging for students (especially younger students) to wear in all-day settings such as school and are **most** essential in times when physical distancing is difficult.
- Masks should be worn throughout the school day, even if all students and staff are seated 6 feet apart.
- Schools may choose to have kindergarten students wear a mask.
- When students are outside and 6 feet from others, masks are not required.
- Masks should be up when students are moving from place to place in classrooms, school buildings, and other school facilities.
- Information should be provided to staff, students, and students' families on [proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings](#).
- Visitors should also wear cloth face coverings.
- Note: [Cloth face coverings](#) should **not** be placed on:
 - Children younger than 2 years old.
 - Anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious.
 - Anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance.

[Cloth face coverings](#) are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected but does not have symptoms. [Cloth face coverings](#) are not surgical masks, respirators, or other medical personal protective equipment.

Social Distancing

Social distancing may require schools to develop unique plans that address the space, workforce, and resources at each school. Plans may be guided by what is feasible, practical, acceptable, and tailored to the needs of each community.

- **Modified Layouts**
 - Space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible. If the physical space in a school does not allow for spacing desks 6 feet apart, space desks as far away as possible and require masks at all times in that classroom for students and staff.
 - Turn desks to face in the same direction (rather than facing each other) or have students sit on only one side of tables, spaced apart.
 - Create seating charts for students in classes to assist with contact tracing if needed.

- **Physical Barriers and Guides**
 - Model creating space between students/staff and avoid unnecessary contact or movement within the personal space of 6 feet.
 - Install physical barriers, such as sneeze guards and partitions, particularly in areas where it is difficult for individuals to remain at least 6 feet apart (e.g., reception desks).
 - Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls, to ensure that staff and children remain at least 6 feet apart in lines and at other times (e.g. guides for creating “one way routes” in hallways).

- **Communal Spaces**
 - Close communal use shared spaces such as dining halls and playgrounds with shared playground equipment if possible; otherwise, stagger use and [clean and disinfect](#) between uses.
 - Add physical barriers, such as plastic flexible screens, between bathroom sinks especially when they cannot be at least 6 feet apart.
 - Modify classes/activities that normally require multiple students to engage in an activity that could cause close social contact, congestion, or movement in the school hallways such as choir, gym class, art, music, etc. These do not have to be canceled if distance and sanitation needs are met.

- **Identifying Small Groups and Keeping Them Together (Cohorting)**
 - Ensure that student and staff groupings are as static as possible by having the same group of children stay with the same staff (all day for young children and as much as possible for older children).
 - Prepare listing of student cohort groups via schedules, seating charts, etc. These documents will assist with contact tracing if needed.
 - Limit mixing between groups if possible.

- **Staggered Scheduling**
 - Stagger arrival and drop-off times or locations by cohort or put in place other protocols to limit contact between cohorts and direct contact with parents as much as possible.

Maintaining Safe and Healthy Environments

Cleaning and Disinfection

- [Clean and disinfect](#) frequently touched surfaces (e.g., playground equipment, door handles, sink handles, drinking fountains) within the school and on school buses at least daily or between uses as much as possible. Use of shared objects (e.g., gym or physical education equipment, art

supplies, toys, games) should be limited when possible or cleaned between uses.

- Develop a schedule for increased, routine cleaning and disinfection.
- Ensure [safe and correct use](#) and storage of [cleaning and disinfection products](#), including storing products securely away from children. Use products that meet [EPA disinfection criteria](#).
- Cleaning products should not be used near children, and staff should ensure that there is adequate ventilation when using these products to prevent children or themselves from inhaling toxic fumes.

Adequate Supplies

- Support [healthy hygiene](#) behaviors by providing adequate supplies, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer), and paper towels.

Shared Objects

- Discourage sharing of items that are difficult to clean or disinfect.
- Keep each child's belongings separated from others' and in individually labeled containers, cubbies, or areas.
- Ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high touch materials to the extent possible (e.g., assigning each student his or her own art supplies, equipment) or limit use of supplies and equipment by one group of children at a time and clean and disinfect between use.
- Avoid sharing electronic devices, toys, books, and other games or learning aids.

Sharing Facilities

- Encourage any organizations that share or use the school facilities to also follow these considerations.

Ventilation

- Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, for example by opening windows and doors. Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk (e.g. risk of falling, triggering asthma symptoms) to children using the facility.

Water Systems and Fountains

- [Take steps](#) to ensure that all water systems and features (e.g., sink faucets, drinking fountains, decorative fountains) are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown.
- Drinking fountains should be cleaned and sanitized frequently throughout the school day.
- Encourage staff and students to bring their own reusable water bottles to be refilled throughout the day. This will reduce the number of students drinking directly from the water fountain.

Signs and Messages

- Post [signs](#) in highly visible locations (e.g., school entrances, restrooms) that [promote everyday protective measure](#) and describe how to [stop the spread](#) of germs (such as by [properly washing hands](#) and [properly wearing a cloth face covering](#)).
- Broadcast regular [announcements](#) on reducing the spread of COVID-19 on PA systems.
- Include messages (for example, [videos](#)) about behaviors that prevent the spread of COVID-19 when communicating with staff and families (such as on school websites, in emails, and on school [social media accounts](#)).
- Find free CDC print and digital resources on CDC's [communications resources](#) main page.

Back-Up Staffing Plan

- Monitor absenteeism of students and employees, cross-train staff, and create a roster of trained back-up staff.

Staff Training

- Train staff on all safety protocols.
- Conduct training virtually or ensure that [social distancing](#) is maintained during training.

Maintaining Healthy Operations within Your School Community

Food Service

- Develop a plan for food service in each school given the number of students and building layout, including that of the kitchen and cafeteria.
- Identify meal service methods--serve meals in classrooms, serve meals in other areas of the building (gym, etc.), provide “Grab and Go” meals in the cafeteria or hallways, have students bring their own lunches, etc.--that will comply with social distancing guidelines and enable contact tracing to occur if needed.
- Ensure the [safety of children with food allergies](#).
- If the cafeteria is utilized, limit how many classes are in the cafeteria by staggering schedules and provide assigned seating to provide social distancing of at least six feet between students. Seating charts will assist with contact tracing if needed.
- Masks should only be lowered when individuals are actively eating or drinking.
- Consider outdoor lunches whenever possible.
- Use disposable food service items (e.g., utensils, dishes). If disposable items are not feasible or desirable, ensure that all non-disposable food service items are handled with gloves and washed with dish soap and hot water or in a dishwasher. Individuals should [wash their hands](#) after removing their gloves or after directly handling used food service items.
- If your school is a member of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), please follow the guidance provided by the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) “[COVID-19 Considerations for Reopening Schools: Food Service Operations—USDA School Meal Programs](#)” and other guidance specific to the NSLP program.
- If your school works with a third-party vendor to provide food service, please work with that company to ensure implementation of appropriate mitigation measures. The KDE “[Food Service Operations—USDA School Meal Programs](#)” provides good guidance.
- Remove or shut down all self-service areas.
- If food is offered at any event, have pre-packaged boxes or bags for each attendee instead of a buffet or family-style meal. Avoid sharing food and utensils and ensure the [safety of children with food allergies](#).

Playgrounds

- Students must practice good hand hygiene by washing their hands before going out to play and immediately upon returning inside the school building.
- Assign a recess schedule that limits how many classes are on the playground at one time. If multiple playgrounds are available, utilize them to minimize how many students are mixing.

Gatherings and Field Trips

- Pursue virtual group events, gatherings, or meetings, if possible, and promote social distancing of at least 6 feet between people if events are held. Limit group size to the extent possible.
- Adhere to the Governor’s current guidance regarding group gatherings.
- Pursue virtual activities and events in lieu of field trips, student assemblies, special performances, school-wide parent meetings, and spirit nights, as possible.
- Pursue options to convene sporting events and participation in sports activities in ways that minimizes the risk of transmission of COVID-19 to players, families, coaches, and communities.

Visitors

- Limit any nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations as possible – especially with individuals who are not from the local geographic area (e.g., community, town, city, county).
- Maintain sign-in lists of visitors and others and their destinations in the building on a daily basis. These lists will assist with contact tracing if needed.

Student Health and Special Student Services

- Immunizations and kindergarten/6th grade exams should be expected per requirements
- School-based annual health screenings should be delayed until planning can be completed on how to reduce exposure during screening for all parties.
- Consideration of health services that can be moved to virtual intervention such as speech therapy.
- Treatments for asthma require special precautions. Please consult the “Guidance on Safety and Expectations and Best Practices for Kentucky Schools (K-12)” for more information and consult with families to determine what individual students may need.
- Offer options for students at [higher risk of severe illness](#) that limit their exposure risk (e.g., virtual learning opportunities).

Bus Transportation

- Work with your contract and/or public school bus transportation providers to ensure they are implementing appropriate health and hygiene, social distancing, masking, and cleaning and disinfecting protocols through the Kentucky Department of Public Health (KDPH) “[Guidance on Safety Expectations and Best Practices for Kentucky Schools \(K-12\)](#)” and/or the KDE document “[Considerations for Opening Schools: Pupil Transportation.](#)”
- If your school uses its own buses or vans to transport students, please be aware of current CDC, KDPH, and KDE guidance on appropriate health and hygiene, social distancing, and cleaning and disinfecting protocols and implement them appropriately to reduce spread.
- Use assigned seats for students on buses and maintain seating charts to assist with contact tracing if needed.
- General guidance includes:
 - Leave first seat empty behind driver.
 - Wearing a mask while riding the bus is a safety expectation unless medically waived.
 - Load from back to front of the bus. Offload should occur from front to back of the bus.
 - Stagger seating if bus is not at full capacity.
 - Seat passengers from the same household together.
 - Students with medical concerns, allergies, asthma, should be assigned seating at front of bus with windows up.

Regulatory Awareness

Be aware of local or state regulatory agency policies related to group gatherings to determine if events can be held by checking <https://govstatus.egov.com/kycovid19>, the Kentucky COVID-19 web site.

Preparing for When Someone Gets Sick

Isolation Policy

- Isolate the student exhibiting symptoms of infectious disease in designated space supervised by an adult.
- Provide face covering for student to wear if there is not a medical reason to prevent this.
- Contact parent to pick up the student from school.
- If parent not responding to calls for pick-up, follow protocols for such situations.
- Students cannot be sent home sick on school bus.
- Clean and disinfect isolation area.

Return to School Policy

- The student may return to school when the local health department or the student's physician provides clearance document to school.

Monitor School Attendance for Trends/Patterns of Absences

- Develop monitoring system for identification of absences for COVID-19/Influenza with an ability to compare to usual rates/patterns.
- Develop a plan for school closure and move to remote learning when absence rates or rates of infectious disease rise to allow containment and sanitation of the school site. These plans should have specific guidelines for closure and re-opening.

Kentucky Contact Tracing of Positive Cases

- Schools must be prepared to notify local health departments of any positive cases of COVID-19.
- Schools must be prepared to assist public health officials if an employee or student tests positive or becomes exposed to COVID-19. This assistance includes, but is not limited to, providing employee work schedules, hours or shifts worked, when the employee was potentially exposed, and the names and contact information of any other employee, student, or person exposed to this virus.
- Employee and student schedules, student seating assignments in classrooms, cafeteria, and other school spaces, and daily school visitor logs will assist with the contact tracing process if needed.
- Contact tracing protocols will continue to evolve. Updated information will be communicated to schools as guidance is received.