

# Our Graceful Return Take 2

## Our Lady of Grace Catholic School

### Reopening School Plans Fall 2021

July 21, 2021

In light of the need for continuous safety precautions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Office of Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana, the Carmel Deanery, the CDC, Indiana State Department of Health have provided these guidelines for the start of the 2021-22 school year.

While there is much for which to be thankful, COVID-19 still presents a viable risk to our communities. Precautions should be taken to maintain the health and safety of our students and staff. OLGCS will work with a task force to provide direction for teachers and parents as we begin a new year. OLGCS and families partner in the spiritual, emotional, physical, mental and social formation of students. It is for this reason that quality assurances must be in place to continue to provide safe in-person formation and academic instruction in OLGCS..

#### **Vaccinations**

- Vaccinations are not mandated for students or staff in the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana.
- Verification of vaccinations will not be requested of any student or staff member.

#### **Masks and Social Distancing**

- Masks are optional for all grade levels and for staff who have been fully vaccinated.
- Masks are highly recommended for students and staff who have not been vaccinated.
- Schools will return to full capacity in the classroom and lunchroom; however, if social distancing is not more than 6 feet, then quarantining will be necessary.
- The use of cohorts/assigned seats is advisable; with continuing to use outdoor spaces and alternate spaces in the building when appropriate.
- Students and staff must have their own masks available at school at all times in backpacks.
- Mask design must not be a distraction and must be appropriate for the Catholic school setting.

#### **Mitigation**

- Students should be screened at home by parents/guardians prior to coming to school; Staff should self-screen prior to coming to work/school.
- Students or staff who exhibit the following symptoms should remain home from school: Temperature of 100.4 or higher; loss of taste or smell; sore throat; diarrhea, nausea, or vomiting; headache; congestion or runny nose; and cough or difficulty breathing.
- We will no longer be taking temperature checks as students enter the school building.
- All parents and staff should utilize the Dept. of Health Screening [symptoms flyer](#) for screening at home.

#### **Quarantine and Contact Tracing**

- A designated quarantine area and procedures for working with sick students/staff will continue.

- Any student or staff displaying symptoms of COVID-19 should be sent home immediately. COVID-19 testing will be encouraged.
- Students who are not fully vaccinated will need to quarantine if they are identified as a close contact with a positive case.
- Individuals should stay home for 10 days following the onset of symptoms or a positive test result. Individuals may return after 10 days as long as symptoms are improving, and they are fever free for at least 24 hours without use of fever reducing medications.
- Vaccinated close contacts do not have to quarantine, but should monitor for symptoms and isolate if symptoms develop.
- Unvaccinated individuals who are identified by the local health department as a close contact must quarantine.

### **All School Masses, Athletics**

- School Masses will follow the protocols set by the parish.
- At this time, we will return to All School Masses on Thursday and seats will be assigned.
- Class Masses will return as well, but will rotate on Wednesdays.
- Athletics should follow local guidelines as well as protocols set by the IHSAA and CYO.

### **Hygiene and Cleaning**

- Sanitizing hands, desks, surfaces, common supplies, etc. We will promote hand hygiene throughout the school by placing visual cues and/or appropriate signage such as handwashing posters, stickers, and other materials in highly visible areas.
- Washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds whenever hands are visibly soiled and in the following situations: before and after meals and snack; before and after recess; before and after sharing supplies or equipment; after going to the restroom.

### **Academics and Virtual Learning**

- While the hope is to remain in person for the entire school year, there will still be students out for quarantine and illness. Our teachers will continue with the at-home learning offerings while students are out of the building.
- Students are accepted where they are, academically and emotionally, and seek help if needed, to make the student feel safe and connected.

A homeroom group is one class. (example 1B or 5A) A cluster group is a group of homerooms. (Preschool Cluster, PK-2 Cluster, 3-5 Cluster, 6-8 Cluster)

- Students will remain within their homeroom groups at Mass.. Students will go to lunch, and recess with cluster groups.

### **School Supplies/ Classroom Environment**

- Students will head to classrooms beginning at 7:30am. We will not start the year using the gym for a holding zone.
- The cafe will be available for breakfast from 7:30-7:50.

- Reduce the amount of non-consumable shared supplies in the classroom.
- Students use personal school supplies as much as possible. This may require parents to provide their children with additional school supplies and pencil box/pouch.
- Chromebooks will be assigned to better control the number of student touches.
- Desks may be placed in rows or clusters. If done by clusters, this group must be the same in specials classes, in Mass seating, and in the lunchroom.
- All students have assigned seats and charts should be readily available. .
- Hallway traffic and restroom breaks are organized to avoid overcrowding.
- Hold outdoor classes when feasible.
- Specials schedule is restructured in order to reduce the number of students that Specialist Teachers see on a weekly basis while maintaining daily specials classes for students.
- Specials classes may be held in specials classrooms, homeroom classrooms, or outdoors.
- Students in grades 5-8 may not change clothes for PE class.
- Chromebooks and iPads may be wiped down..
- Toys, games, and PE equipment- sanitize each afternoon.
- Non-wind instruments should be cleaned between uses.
- Teachers (1-8) will schedule bathroom breaks with their colleagues on their floor.
- Students must use the bathroom during their scheduled break time and not during passing periods.
- Time may be used at the end of class to make time for desk cleaning before another class comes in.
- Reduce the number of children sent to the nurse who are not actually ill.
  - Have a “calming corner/ chill out area” in the room for students who are anxious and showing physical symptoms because of it. (tummy ache, headache)
  - Keep supply of bandages replenished.
  - Keep a supply of ice packs handy. (if you have a freezer or use neighbor’s)
  - Use the thermometer in the room.
- School buddies are postponed until further notice.

### **Lunch, Recess, and Morning Care**

- Continue our normal practice of serving food. This year we will be offering lunch as well as breakfast.
- Seats will be assigned for the cafeteria by homeroom teachers. This should match your classroom cluster and communicate to special area teachers as well..
- There will be extra cleaning of the cafeteria between uses.
- Students will wash/disinfect hands before and after eating.
- Rotate which grade levels use parts of the playground, field, or blacktop each week.
- Lunch volunteers must wear masks when serving students.
- We will have additional tables or spread tables out.
- Staff and cafe volunteers will be responsible for cleaning after students eat.
- Switching times are lengthened to allow more time for cleaning tables and hands.
- If teachers take their students out for 2nd recess, it must be scheduled in coordination with other teachers.
- Morning Care will be in the classrooms at the start of the year beginning at 7:30. Students will be allowed to gather at tables in the gym for breakfast between 7:30-7:50.

- Teachers should be in their classrooms beginning at 7:25am to prepare for the students' arrival. Teachers will greet them in the hallways, but then enter in the classrooms when several students are present.

### **Guidance on School Closure**

- The local Health Department will be notified immediately if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 within our school building.
- The Hamilton County Health Department will assess factors such as likelihood of exposure to employees and students in the building, the number of cases in the community, and other factors that will determine building closure.
- The health department determines if a school should be closed or if a group of students is sent home to isolate and for how long.
- School closure may affect the status of extracurricular activities and afterschool programs.
- Custodial staff is informed immediately and takes appropriate action.
- Families will be notified as soon as the Health Department provides guidance.
- Staff and students should be prepared for E-Learning in case of school closure.
- Recommendations about prolonged closure will depend on the level of cohorting the school has been adhering to, the community level of disease and the current burden of infection impacting your hospital systems.
- CDC guidance suggests 2-5 days school closure if there is an outbreak.

### **Absences of Students (not due to school building closure)**

- While in-person school is in session, *optional or AT-Home* E-Learning is not available at this time.
- Students who are absent for reasons *other than COVID-19 (other illness, vacation, etc)*:
  - follow Family Handbook and classroom rules regarding make-up work.
- Students with extended absence *due to COVID-19* diagnosis or stay-at-home rules:
  - will work directly with the homeroom teacher to establish learning procedures. These will be considered on a case by case basis and may vary depending on the grade level of the student.
- Parents of medically fragile students who are concerned about school attendance should contact the OLGCS administration.

### **Medical Inquiries**

- If a parent informs the school that a student is ill, the school may ask the parent whether the student is exhibiting any symptoms of COVID-19.
- If an employee calls in sick or appears ill, the school may inquire as to whether the employee is experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms.
- If a person is obviously ill, the school may make additional inquiries and may exclude the person from school property.

### **Symptoms of COVID-19**

- 100.4° or greater

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Muscle pain and fatigue
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell
- Congestion or runny nose
- Diarrhea
- Nausea

Students and employees should be excluded from school if they test positive for COVID-19, and may be excluded if they exhibit symptoms associated with COVID-19 that are not otherwise explained.

### **Staff Sick Days**

- If no substitute teacher can be secured, classroom aides may be required to act as sub.
- If no subs can be secured, classrooms may have to be combined allowing for direct supervision.

Alternate Command Structure is in place in case both administrators are not able to lead the school in case of illness. See Faculty Handbook.

**Staff will use this [COVID-19 Screening Decision Tree](#) when a student or staff member complains of COVID-19 symptoms.**

**When can a student return to school?**

**See attached Indiana State Department of Health [Guidance for Return to School](#).**

Go to [Novel Coronavirus: Public Resources](#) for the most up-to-date resources.

### **Duration of Plan**

This plan is subject to change at any time.

Father of mercy....help us all to respond to our baptismal grace to make disciples of all people. Help us, O Lord, to learn, love and live Christ's mission so we can hand on your gifts to future generations. Send out your Spirit and renew your Church. (Uniting in Heart)