



DIOCESE OF CHARLOTTE
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

**SAFER
STRONGER
TOGETHER**



PREPARING FOR 2020 - 2021



SUPERINTENDENT'S STATEMENT

We are excited to welcome you and your children back to our 19 campuses for the 2020-2021 school year. We at the CSO have been working closely with your school's leaders to ensure a safe return and reopening of your school, and are pleased to release this first annual CSO Fall preview report as we prepare to launch the upcoming school year.

We believe the faith growth, social interaction and synchronous learning that happens when our students are together is essential. As Pope Pius XI wrote in his 1929 encyclical, *On Christian Education*, "Christian education takes in the whole aggregate of human life, physical and spiritual, intellectual and moral, individual, domestic and social, not with a view of reducing it in any way, but in order to elevate, regulate and perfect it, in accordance with the example and teachings of Christ."

Because of this holistic view of education that we espouse as Catholic schools, we prioritize the reopening our schools and return to normal order in a quick and safe manner. The guidelines we've crafted through input of clergy, health officials, state and local officials, and school leaders allow us to safely open our school to all students, while continuing to build ways of keeping those who choose or need to be home connected in a real and meaningful way.

You are the primary educators of your children, and we value your collaboration and the trust you place in us. We will continue to deliver an unmatched education where our priority is placed on the interactions between students, their faculty, and each other, and the continued spiritual and academic growth of every member of our school family.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr. Gregory Monroe". The signature is stylized and cursive.

DR. GREGORY MONROE

Superintendent - Diocese of Charlotte

WHAT IS THE DIOCESE'S OVERALL GOAL IN RETURNING TO SCHOOL FOR THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR?

Our optimal learning environment in the faith-filled classroom has proven to be effective in reaching our mission of educating the whole child. We have a responsibility to meet the spiritual, academic, social, emotional and physical needs of every student. During these challenging times, we have seen the importance of social and emotional support. Ensuring safety for all stakeholders is a top priority and equipping our schools with necessary resources for students to return to campus is our goal. The ability to meet individual student needs to fulfill our mission is achieved through our teachers' instructional approach. We are committed to providing a high caliber of education with a focus on faith and rigor. We will respond to the need for change in instructional delivery without sacrificing quality. Our focus will remain on meeting our mission of building intentional disciples of Christ.

WHAT CONDITIONS WOULD ALLOW THE SCHOOLS WITHIN THE DIOCESE TO RETURN SAFELY TO CAMPUS?

It is the intention of the Catholic Schools Office to open our schools in such a way that is safe, maximizes in-person instruction to all students, and guarantees to our families the excellence they desire. The needs of our schools differ from those in the surrounding public sectors. Guidelines have been formulated for school leaders to effectively implement measures and protocols that will increase safety and reduce health-related risk on our campuses. Each school will provide a detailed plan that clearly outlines the safety protocols in place for your child to return to campus.



HOW WILL THE CURRICULUM BE PRESENTED TO MY CHILD DURING WHAT IS EXPECTED TO BE AN UNPREDICTABLE SCHOOL YEAR?

Any decision to shift instruction throughout the year is made after consultation with the Chancery and in light of the mandates by the governor of North Carolina. The variability of the school year ahead requires all schools to be effectively prepared for changes to the instructional environment. The models of instruction include our preference for face-to-face instruction. This level will incorporate reasonable social distancing measures to reduce health risk. The hybrid model pairs face-to-face and remote learning instruction to increase social distancing measures. The third model of instruction through remote learning provides safety from home. The continuum of instructional models allows for flexibility as we enter an unpredictable school year and ensures continuous improvement in education for all students.



WHAT MEASURES ARE BEING PUT INTO PLACE TO REDUCE HEALTH-RELATED RISK AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL?



Cleaning & Disinfecting

Each aspect of the school day has been taken into consideration when determining cleaning/disinfecting measures. Classrooms and support services will be provided the necessary resources to **increase cleaning procedures** for high-touch surfaces, common areas (i.e., gym, cafeteria, hallways and bathrooms), individual rooms and recess equipment. Schools will be following CDC and DHHS guidelines to ensure that all areas are safe from the first arrival of a student to the last departure.

Health & Safety Training



Before and during the school year, **training will be provided** to administration, teachers, staff and students. Training will include how to effectively implement new safety protocols within the school. There will be an emphasis on good hygiene for students to reduce health risk. Health and safety training will facilitate changes needed to keep all stakeholders safe.

Screenings



All students, teachers and staff members **will be screened** upon arrival to school. Screenings include CDC checklist and external thermometer temperature check. Should any individual display signs of a possible symptom, they will be asked to return home.

Social Distancing



As recommended by the CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics, all schools will **increase social distancing** among students and staff to the best of their ability. When social distancing is not feasible or possible, other safety measures will be taken into consideration.



Staff Requirements

Face Coverings & Classroom Cleaning:

Teachers and support staff will be required to wear face coverings throughout the school day when social distancing cannot be maintained. Individual classroom teachers will be responsible for wiping down high-touch surfaces throughout the day. Should it be required due to a transition of classes, a thorough cleaning of the classroom will be completed before a new group of students arrives.

Face Coverings



Knowing the sensitivity and importance of face coverings, requirements for various grade levels are detailed below. At this time, students in grades 1st-12th will be required to wear a face covering upon arrival to school for screening to help reduce the risk of spread should someone be asymptomatic. Following screening and once inside the school building, during the course of the school day when social distancing cannot be maintained according to CDC and AAP, and following the June 24th mandate requirements from the Governor, face coverings are required for grades 6 and above. It is not required that students wear a face covering during class or throughout the school day when social distancing measures have been established. Staff/faculty members are required to wear a face covering when social distancing measures cannot be maintained. The requirements regarding face coverings - may be revised, up to the beginning and through the end of the school year.

AS A PARENT, WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF MY CHILD AND OTHERS?

Screenings: Completing the CDC checklist and temperature check on your child prior to leaving for school will help prevent the possibility of immediate return home. Also, please take into consideration that if another member of your family is sick, and your child is feeling under the weather, staying at home can prevent others from becoming sick.

Face Coverings: Knowing the sensitivity and importance of face coverings, requirements for various grade levels are detailed below. At this time, students in grades 1st-12th will be required to wear a face covering upon arrival to school for screening to help reduce the risk of spread should someone be asymptomatic. Following screening and once inside the school building, during the course of the school day when social distancing cannot be maintained according to CDC and AAP, and following the June 24th mandate requirements from the Governor, face coverings are required for grades 6 and above. It is not required that students wear a face covering during class or throughout the school day when social distancing measures have been established. Staff/faculty members are required to wear a face covering when social distancing measures cannot be maintained. The requirements regarding face coverings - may be revised, up to the beginning and through the end of the school year.

Handwashing: Routine and proper handwashing can significantly reduce the transmission of germs. The school will be reviewing proper handwashing procedures with students. Please reinforce the practice of handwashing at home. Your child washing their hands as part of their morning routine before leaving for school can help reduce the risk of spread.

Family Decision: We all yearn for a sense of normalcy that allows your child to be with friends while learning and playing together. Protecting your child is your first priority. We understand, and we want you to know we are doing all we can to provide a safe, engaging learning environment that meets your child's emotional, educational and physical needs. Making the decision to return to school or remain within the safety of the home while attending school is very important. The Diocese of Charlotte Catholic Schools fully supports your decision. We recommend having individual conversations with your school administration about any general health concerns, including anxiety and/or a compromised immune system within your family.



HOW WILL WE CONTINUE TO ENGAGE OUR STUDENTS IN THEIR SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT?

Our Catholic identity is woven within the lessons that are delivered by our mission-driven teachers. No matter what model of instruction we may find ourselves operating within, we will continue to practice our faith daily. We will gather when feasible with social distancing measures enforced. If virtual learning is required, spiritual development will be at the core of our instruction. Knowing the importance of Holy Mass, sacramental preparation, daily prayer and living our faith, together we will continue to walk as disciples of Jesus.



FOR SCHOOLS THAT OFFER TRANSPORTATION, WILL THE OPPORTUNITY STILL BE AVAILABLE FOR MY CHILD?

To maintain the safety of our students under adult supervision, parents will be required to complete the CDC checklist at home with their child prior to arriving at the bus stop. Students in grades 1st-12th must have a face covering in order to board the bus. Should a student arrive to the bus without a face covering, the bus driver will provide one prior to the child boarding the bus. Upon arrival to school, students will be screened with a temperature check and the CDC checklist prior to entering the building. Should a student display any symptoms, the symptomatic protocols will be followed.

Buses will be thoroughly disinfected after dropping students off and before the next group of students board. Efforts to increase social distancing between students will be employed and when not feasible, students will be required to wear a face covering. Siblings will be required to sit together on the bus to help reduce the risk of spread and increase social distancing measures. The number of occupants on the bus will be determined by the transportation department and the CSO and the model of instruction that schools are operating under, in conjunction with state and local health protocols, will be taken into consideration. If additional bus routes are required, a new schedule for pick-up and drop-off will be provided for families.



ARE VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERS ALLOWED ON CAMPUS?

At this time, visitors will have limited access to the school campus during the day, as well as outside of school hours. This is to reduce the risk of exposure to our students and staff. Essential volunteers must be approved by the school administration. Schools may provide alternative means of serving our communities. Any visitor or volunteer will be screened prior to entering the building. Face coverings must be worn at all times inside the building.

WHAT WILL THE RESPONSE BE IF THERE IS A CONFIRMED CASE OF COVID-19 IN THE SCHOOL?

If a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19 or has been in close contact with someone who has tested positive, the school nurse or designee will contact the local health authority. The designee will be involved with contact tracing in conjunction with the local health department to prevent the spread of infection. Contact tracing involves identifying people who have an infectious disease and those they may have exposed. A COVID-19 close contact is defined as anyone who was within 3-6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes, starting within 48 hours of symptoms onset, up until the time the patient was isolated.

Parents will be informed of any positive tests while respecting the privacy rights of the individual. The school will follow all guidelines in place by the local health authority, including the possibility of closing the school until the health threat is resolved.



“Do not be afraid. Do not be satisfied with mediocrity. Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.”

Saint John Paul II

Safer · Stronger · Together



Professing one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, we move forward together into the upcoming school year and pray for continued charity, courage and confidence. Charity will drive all of our efforts to continue helping the most vulnerable and affected members of our community. Courage, guided by hope, will imbue our expectations for high achievement and formation of our students in Christ’s image. Confidence will be expressed in the plans we create, using the latest forecasting and recommendations available from public health officials. Thank you for your steadfast support of our Catholic schools and journeying with us in this mission to form saints who will excel in every aspect of their lives both now and in the future.