



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

**RETURN TO SCHOOL
COVID-19
PREPAREDNESS
PLAN**

Dated: July 31, 2020



TABLE OF CONTENTS

NOTE FROM THE OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT	iii
RETURN TO SCHOOL TASK FORCE AND ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTORS. . .	iv
GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR RE-OPENING	1
Safety Protocols	
Personal Protection	2
Hygiene.	2
Spacing, Movement and Access	2
Screening Students and Staff	3
Testing Protocols for Students and Staff	3
Food Service, Gatherings and Extra-curricular Activities	3
Athletics.	4
Cleaning	4
Transportation	5
Medically Vulnerable Students and Staff	5
Mental and Social-Emotional Health	
Student Mental Health/Well-Being	6
Teacher Mental Health/Well-Being.	6
Instructional Practices	
Remote Learning	7
Communication and Support for Families	7
A Special Note about our Catholic Curriculum	8
Operations	
School Buildings and Other Facilities	9
Budget Food Service and Technology	9
CONTINGENCY PLANS	
Phase 1 – 3	10
Phase 4	10
Phase 5 – 6	10
RESOURCES	11
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS	
Health and Safety	1 FAQs
Infection Protocols	4 FAQs
Academics and Programming	5 FAQs
Tuition and Fees	7 FAQs

NOTE FROM THE OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

Since 1971 in the Diocese of Gaylord, a Christ centered, faith-filled education has been made available to families who desire that their children be raised in the Catholic faith. In the midst of a global pandemic that has also impacted our Northern Michigan region, our teachers and administrators have been presented with unique challenges in fulfilling that mission. For our students, being out of school and separated from friends and teachers has been difficult. For teachers, not being able to instruct in person has been unsatisfying. For parents, trying to be both parent and teacher has been sometimes rewarding, sometimes frustrating. However, these challenges also provide an opportunity to once again embrace Catholic Schools as an attractive educational option for families in Northern Michigan.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops stated, *"We must provide young people with an academically rigorous and doctrinally sound program of education and faith formation designed to strengthen their union with Christ and his Church. Catholic schools collaborate with parents and guardians in raising and forming their children as families struggle with the changing and challenging cultural and moral contexts in which they find themselves. Catholic schools provide young people with sound Church teaching through a broad-based curriculum, where faith and culture are intertwined in all areas of a school's life."* – USCCB website (Catholic Schools on the Threshold, No.9). Even with the challenges of these shifting cultural norms, as well as what the Coronavirus pandemic has brought upon us, our parents can be assured that their Catholic schools will continue to provide a safe and welcoming environment for their children that also continues to be academically sound, Christ centered, and service oriented.

In mid-June the Governor announced that schools in Michigan would be allowed to open again in the fall to in-person learning. Then on June 30th, the Governor introduced the Michigan Return-to-School Roadmap, a document put together by educators, health care providers, and leaders from around the state of Michigan to provide guidance to schools in these re-opening efforts. The recommendations are based on the area of the state we are located in related to the community spread of Coronavirus. Most schools in the Diocese are currently in Phase 5, which means all suggested protocols from the state are either recommended or strongly recommended. Phase 4 schools are required to follow the State's recommendations. Regional schools in our area that fall into that phase are Holy Family School in East Tawas and St. Joseph in West Branch.

In planning for our return to school, the Diocesan Office of Schools is referencing the Michigan Safe Start recommendations from the Governor's office and are continually reviewing any updated information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This document presents some of the overarching principles under which we will be re-opening our schools and precautions to be taken to maintain this safe environment for our students and staff.

School administrations are required to develop re-entry plans for returning to school. These plans will need to incorporate scenarios in which they are 1) successful in being able to return person-to-person, 2) a response in case they need to return to distance learning instruction only, or 3) a hybrid of both. These plans must be submitted to the local governing body (here at the Diocese) then to the Michigan Department of Education by August 15th.

As we return to school, we pray for our students and families by turning to the patron saint of children, St. Nicholas of Myra, in prayer, *"God, we pray that through the intercessions of St. Nicholas you will guide our children. Keep them safe from all harm and help them grow to become loving disciples of Jesus in your sight. Give them strength to always mature into deeper faith in Jesus, and to keep alive joy in your creation. Through Jesus Christ Our Lord, Amen!"*

Sincerely,



Frank Sander
Superintendent of Catholic Schools

RETURN TO SCHOOL TASK FORCE

CHAIR, FRANK SANDER, SUPERINTENDENT OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS, DIOCESE OF GAYLORD

Matt Bauman, Curriculum Director, Grand Traverse Area Catholic Schools, Traverse City; Curriculum Consultant, Diocese of Gaylord Office of Catholic Schools

Chase Closs, Middle School Teacher, Assistant Principal, Bishop Baraga Catholic School, Cheboygan

Penny Clemens, Principal, St. Joseph Catholic School, West Branch

Adam Dobrowolski, Principal, St. Francis Xavier Catholic School, Petoskey

Kathleen Dvoracek, Principal, St. Mary Catholic School, Charlevoix

Heather Glasby, Teacher, Assistant Principal, St. Mary Cathedral School, Gaylord

Megan Glynn, Principal, St. Mary Catholic School, Lake Leelanau

Nicole Hatch, Principal, All Saints Catholic School, Alpena

Michelle Johnson, Principal, Our Lady of the Lake Regional Catholic School, Prudenville

Lisa Medina, Principal, St. Mary-Hannah Catholic School, Kingsley

Amy Rabeau, Principal, St. Ignatius of Loyola Catholic School, Rogers City

Tim St. Aubin, Principal, Holy Family Catholic School, East Tawas

ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTORS

Michael Buell, Superintendent of Grand Traverse Area Catholic Schools, Traverse City

Julie Erhardt, Chief of Staff, Diocese of Gaylord

Most Reverend Walter A. Hurley, Apostolic Administrator, Diocese of Gaylord

Caryn Jacobs, Resource Assistant, Diocese of Gaylord

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR RE-OPENING

The main principles that need to be considered as schools re-open include:

1. Safety Protocols
2. Mental and Social-Emotional Health Considerations
3. Instructional Practices for both in-person and remote learning environments
4. School and Building Operations

Safety Protocols

Safety protocols involve the steps necessary to keep students and staff healthy, both in mind and body while in school. School preparedness activities should include being vigilant of, and actively mitigate against, the risk of COVID-19 spread. Schools will be asked to follow the judgement of the local health department for the particular county in which they are located.

Personal Protection

- Face masks will be worn by staff when they are within six feet of students or other adults or in common gathering areas of the school such as hallways, staff lounges, vestibules, etc.
- Students will wear masks when they are in hallways and common areas except when they are eating meals.
- Facial coverings should be worn in classrooms by grades 6-12, unless social distancing in the classroom can be achieved.
- Staff members or students who cannot tolerate wearing a mask for medical reasons will need written and signed documentation from a physician to be excused from this protocol.
- Face coverings may be homemade or disposable level one/basic-grade surgical masks or face shields.

Hygiene

- School leadership needs to provide adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors (including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol for safe use by staff and students, paper towels, etc.)
- Students need to continue to be taught proper handwashing technique with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Staff and students need to continue to be educated on how to cough and sneeze into their elbows, or to cover with a tissue.
- Students will frequently wash hands, including when they enter the classroom, before and after meals, and before and after recess.
- Staff will systematically and frequently check and refill soap and hand sanitizers.
- Limit sharing of classroom materials to small groups and disinfect between uses.

Spacing, Movement and Access

- Space students as far apart as feasible in classrooms, whether at desks or tables.
- Post signage to indicate proper social distancing.
- Provide social distancing markers in waiting and reception areas, bathrooms and cafeterias.
- Entrances to the school will be restricted to students and staff only, with the following allowances:

- Family members or other non-staff adults are not allowed in the school building except when extenuating services are determined by school officials.
- All non-staff adults entering the building must be screened for symptoms, wear a facial covering, and wash hands prior to entering.
- A record of visitors will be kept in the school office.

Screening Students and Staff

- Schools must communicate with their local public health department regarding implementing protocols for screening students and staff.
- Identify and designate a quarantine area and a staff person to care for students and staff who develop signs or [symptoms](#) of COVID-19 at school.
- Students and staff who become ill with signs or [symptoms](#) of COVID-19 will be placed in an identified quarantine area with a facial covering in place, until they can be picked up.
- Symptomatic students and staff sent home from school will stay home until they have tested negative or have completely recovered according to CDC guidelines.
- Staff will conduct daily safety self-examinations, including a temperature check, prior to coming to work. If they exhibit any new or unusual symptoms as reported on the COVID-19 school monitoring form, they will stay home.

Testing Protocols for Students and Staff

- Students and staff who become ill with signs or [symptoms](#) of COVID-19 will be placed in an identified quarantine area with facial covering in place, if able, until they can be picked up.
- Symptomatic students and staff sent home from school will stay home until they have tested negative or have completely recovered according to CDC guidelines.
- Families will be notified of the presence of any laboratory positive cases of COVID-19 in the classroom and/or school (template may be needed).
- The local public health department will be contacted if a confirmed case of COVID-19 is identified. Collect the contact information for the affected individual from two days before he or she was last present in school. Communicate this information with the local health department as they will initiate contract tracing. Confidentiality of the identity of the student or staff member must be maintained.

Food Service, Gatherings and Extracurricular Activities

- Assemblies or gatherings that bring together students from more than one classroom are suspended at this time.
- School Masses will be allowed but need to follow all Diocese of Gaylord guidelines. Masses may need to be added as necessary to accommodate the increased need for social distancing.

- If cafeterias are used and six feet of distance between students is not possible, meal times should be staggered or physical barriers should be used. Serving and cafeteria staff will use barrier protection including gloves, face shields, and surgical masks.
- Classrooms and outdoor areas can be used for students to eat meals at school.
- After school programs may continue with the use of social distancing and/or the use of facial coverings.

Athletics

- Schools will comply with all guidelines published by the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA).
- Students, teachers and staff must use proper hand hygiene techniques before and after every practice, game or gathering.
- Every participant will confirm that they are healthy and without symptoms prior to any event.
- Equipment must be disinfected before and after use. There should be no sharing of equipment, water bottles, etc.
- Indoor weight rooms and physical conditioning activities are allowed, but social distancing should take place as much as possible and sharing equipment will be avoided.
- Spectators are allowed provided that facial coverings are used by observers and six feet of social distancing can be maintained.

Cleaning

- Frequently touched surfaces including light switches, doors, benches, and bathrooms will all undergo cleaning at least every four hours with either an EPA approved disinfectant or diluted bleach solution.
- Student desks will be wiped down when students change classrooms or as often as is reasonably possible when students leave rooms.
- Schools will provide adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors (including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol for safe use by staff and students, paper towels, tissues, and signs reinforcing proper handwashing techniques).
- Schools will post signage to indicate proper social distancing and hand hygiene techniques.
- Playground equipment will undergo normal routine maintenance and should be wiped down daily.
- Visitors to the school building will be discouraged at this time. However when visitors, contractors, and other guests enter the building, they will be screened for symptoms, wear a facial covering, and wash/sanitize hands prior to entering. Strict records, including date and time, will be kept of non-school employees or other visitors entering and exiting the building.
- Staff must wear masks and gloves when performing cleaning activities.

Transportation

(Schools that use public school busing will defer safety guidelines to those providers. The following guidance is included for schools who are their own provider of busing services.)

- Schools will require the use of hand sanitizer before entering a school bus. Hand sanitizer will be supplied on the bus.
- The bus driver and all students will wear masks on the bus unless social distancing can be attained based on limited ridership.
- Schools will clean and disinfect transportation vehicles before and after every transit route.
- If a student becomes sick during the day, they will not be able to use group transportation to return home and must follow protocols outlined above.

Medically Vulnerable Students and Staff

- Current plans need to be reviewed for properly accommodating students with special healthcare needs in relationship especially to their risk for exposure to COVID-19.
- A plan will be developed to address requests for alternative learning arrangements or work assignments.
- Enable staff who identify as high risk for severe illness to minimize face-to-face contact and to allow them to maintain a distance of six feet from others if possible.

Mental and Social-Emotional Health Protocols

Mental and Social-Emotional Health Protocols have to do with looking out for the mental well-being of our students and staff. Students and staff will be under varying levels of stress when returning to school based on their individual response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Being aware of these needs will be a factor in a successful re-entry of students to school, as well as reassuring worried parents as they return their students to school. Below are basic principles in these areas for returning to school.

Student Mental Health/Well-being

- Establish and communicate to staff guidelines for identification and referral of at-risk students to appropriate building level support person or team.
- Identify a point person to centralize mental health referrals and communications to families.
- Update crisis management plans to leverage internal and external resources as needed for the assistance of students who are experiencing difficulties.
- Compile a list of resources related to COVID-19 issues to make available to both staff and students. These should include help with understanding what a normal behavioral response to a crisis looks like, general best practices of talking through trauma with children, and teaching positive self-care strategies that promote health and wellness.
- Local resources such as the Catholic Human Services or the Department of Mental Health should be accessed if questions arise about student emotional or behavioral issues.

Teacher Mental Health/ Well-Being

- Principals should provide access to mental health experts and resources during times of crisis and remote learning.
- When creating academic schedules, take into consideration the additional time and effort that is necessary in a remote instruction environment and adjust accordingly by providing ample planning time for teachers to be successful.
- Establish a regular schedule of virtual faculty meetings to maintain contact with teachers and staff.
- School administrators should be attentive to the individual health and wellness of fellow employees and provide relevant resources as needed.

Instructional Practices

Schools within the Diocese of Gaylord provide educational opportunities in varied and diverse settings. As highlighted in the section on Safety Protocols, as long as school is held in-person, the staff need to take essential actions to mitigate risk and operate as safely as possible.

The following information relates to recommendations for both face-to-face learning and distance learning, in case a need arises to revert to this format. Schools ought to consider designating days/times for usage so as to maintain familiarity with the online learning platforms and to ensure a smooth transition for all if required.

Remote Learning

- School Administrations will create a work group to gather feedback from families, teachers and students about their experiences with remote learning. Utilize the feedback to revise school's learning plans in the case of a return to remote learning.
- School Administrators will familiarize the school's remote learning plan with all stakeholders in case of a return to remote learning.
- If needed, revise IEP's, IFSP's and accommodation plans to reflect the student's changing needs based on assessment data and parent feedback, and design accommodations and services accordingly that can be utilized both at school and at home.
- Schools should work with families to provide a web-enabled device that is compatible with the platforms utilized for distance learning.
- Regarding **attendance**, school personnel should require parents to acknowledge the day's lessons to ensure parents are informed of each day's learning goal and expectation.
- Teachers will take attendance of all meetings/lessons with students and follow up with parents if students are absent from a lesson.
- Teachers will maintain standard grading methods. Late work policies should be established by the classroom teacher and clearly communicated to students and parents.
- Schools will establish and communicate specific timelines for posting grades.
- Administrators will ensure that accommodation plans are made digitally accessible to the teachers at all times.
- Even with online learning, accommodations should be made to the best of the school's ability in regards to students with special needs.
- A system of frequent monitoring and intervention for students with accommodation plans should be in place to ensure that student's needs are met, regardless of format of delivery.

Communication and Support for Families

- When developing plans for the various learning scenarios, clearly communicate expectations to your families around your students' return to learning.

- Help families learn how to access and use the school's digital systems and tools so that families can build digital competencies.
- Provide resources for families to use at home, such as grade specific activities and strategies for teaching.
- As best as possible, try to ensure that all students and families have adequate connectivity and the devices necessary to successfully engage in and complete schoolwork.
- Parents will need to understand that attendance and schoolwork completion will be monitored and students will receive feedback on the student's work production.

A Special Note about our Catholic Curriculum

- As before the pandemic, religion and Catholic faith will be integrated daily at all levels.
- Weekly Mass will be provided. Consider livestreaming daily Mass so students and families can tune in if a return to remote learning occurs.
- Sacraments should continue to be offered in the schools, with precautions in place, as necessary.
- Schools should provide virtual retreats and opportunities for spiritual growth to students and parents.

Operations

School Administration and School Pastors have worked to plan, organize and mitigate the conditions that lead to the spread of transmittable diseases, including COVID-19, but other illnesses, as well. As a general rule, most organizations are following the most stringent cleaning, disinfecting, PPE (personal protection equipment), and other measures. The items below are a portion of what must be done to re-open our facilities to students.

School Buildings and Other Facilities

- Plexiglass dividers are being recommended for use in each school building. They will be placed in offices and other areas where face-to-face contact is necessary. Offices and screening points will be the primary areas impacted.
- HVAC systems and fans will be optimized to move more air and increase fresh air into the buildings.
- Frequently touched surfaces including light switches, doors, benches, bathrooms, will undergo cleaning at least every four hours with either an EPA-approved disinfectant or diluted bleach solution.
- Libraries, computer labs, arts, and other hands-on classrooms will undergo cleaning after every class period with either an EPA-approved disinfectant or diluted bleach solution.
- Student desks will be wiped down or sprayed with either an EPA-approved disinfectant or diluted bleach solution after every class period.
- We will ensure safe and correct use and storage of cleaning and disinfecting products, including storing products securely away from children, and with adequate ventilation when staff use products.
- When cleaning and disinfecting electronic devices, staff will consult their IT department for specific recommendations. 70% alcohol wipes will be the likely solution.
- Schools will add to existing Hand Sanitizing and Hand Washing Stations (wall-hanging units as well as pump bottles) and increase the quantity of what may have already been shipped to their facility. A site analysis will be conducted.
- Staff will wear gloves, a surgical mask, and face shield when performing all cleaning activities.
- Custodial staff will undergo additional training on the latest cleaning and sanitizing methods.
- Coordinate with Local Emergency Management Programs (LEMPs) for support with procurement of cleaning and disinfection supplies.

Budget Food Service and Technology

- Develop a technology plan which includes training and support for educators to adapt to remote learning.
- Conduct staff and student outreach to understand who is coming back to school and who is undecided.
- Develop a staffing plan to account for teachers and staff who are not returning or at-risk.
- Utilize CARES Act funding for key purchases, e.g. cleaning supplies.
- Be aware of changing enrollment patterns and how they put a constraint on resources.
- Collaborate with food service staff to ensure any necessary food handling changes are based on local public health guidelines.

CONTINGENCY PLANS

Phase 5 - 6

If the schools in the Diocese stay in Phase 5 of the MI Safe Start Plan for longer than 4 weeks after the start of school, schools can begin to relax some requirements as determined by the State guidelines. Furthermore, if the schools move into Phase 6 of the MI Safe Start Plan, they can further relax some requirements as determined by the State Guidelines.

Phase 4

The protocols in this plan have been written in such a way that schools can easily move back to Phase 4 status, if necessary. School preparedness and response activities will continue so that schools can continue to execute active mitigation measures. Schools will need to continue, and perhaps increase, contact with the health department in their region of the state. In-person instruction will still be permitted with increased safety protocols.

Phase 1 - 3

If a school or schools in the Diocese of Gaylord moves back to Phase 1 - 3 of the MI Safe Start Plan, they will operate in a remote learning environment for that period of time. Faculty will be afforded the opportunity to work from the school building if desired in order to facilitate instruction. All faculty will develop contingency plans to enable a 24-hour transition to remote learning. The schools will further evaluate other options and consider other strategies to expedite in-person instruction. Other strategies and efforts may become necessary to assist in this objective.

RESOURCES

General

State of Michigan: Executive Order
[EO 2020-142.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-37818_53456--,00.html)

State of Michigan: Roadmap
[MI Safe Schools Return to School Roadmap](https://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-37818_53456--,00.html)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):
Coronavirus (COVID-19)
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/>

State of Michigan: COVID-19 response
https://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-37818_53456--,00.html

CDC: Resources for Childcare, Schools and Youth Programs
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>

Federal OSHA
<https://www.osha.gov/>

Hygiene

Handwashing video translated into multiple languages
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LdQuPGVcceg>

CDC Prevention
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>

CDC Hygiene Etiquette
https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/etiquette/coughing_sneezing.html

Housekeeping

CDC Disinfecting
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>

CDC Cleaning
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2-covid-19>

Employees Exhibiting Signs and Symptoms of COVID-19

CDC Sickness Steps
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>

OSHA Training

Federal OSHA
<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>

Social Distancing

CDC
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>

Social Distancing Calculator
<https://www.banquettablespro.com/social-distancing-room-space-calculator>

Mental Health

Catholic Human Services
<https://www.catholichumanservices.org/>

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Health and Safety

Q: What does “reopening our schools” really mean?

A: Gathering as a school community is an integral part of Catholic education. Our plan is to reopen our school buildings to students this fall. This means that all students are welcome to return to classes for face-to-face instruction. We have developed an in-depth plan that addresses numerous aspects of the reopening process, and how schools will function once reopened.

Q: Will students be safe when school is reopened?

A: Safety is always our top priority in Catholic education. In constructing our reopening plan, we have closely studied guidance from federal and state authorities.

Q: Who decides when a school has met the requirements to reopen? When will this happen?

A: Our plan includes specific requirements that schools must meet in order to reopen. Schools must complete a plan and submit it to the diocese for review. In completing this plan, the schools must take into account both opening for school with face-to-face instruction and/or returning to a remote learning platform, if necessary.

Q: Will all students be allowed to return to school at the same time?

A: Yes. Our plan provides for the return of all Catholic school students for full-day instruction.

Q: Will students and Staff need to wear masks at school?

A: All 6th-12th grade students will need to wear masks while at school, unless social distancing in the classrooms can be assured. Masks may be removed for brief periods of time under certain circumstances (such as outdoor play or lunch). However, when masks are removed, students must remain physically distant from one another (at least six feet).

All students in grades kindergarten through 5 will not be required to wear facial coverings in their classrooms, unless 1) students do not remain with their cohort class throughout the school day, and 2) come into close contact with students in another class.

All staff will wear facial coverings when in classrooms, except 1) if social distancing can be maintained in the classroom, 2) during meals and 3) unless face coverings cannot be medically tolerated as documented through written and signed verification by a physician.

Q: Do I need to purchase masks for my child?

A: Yes. We are asking all parents to purchase masks for their child. Parents may opt to buy disposable or reusable masks. For disposable masks, each mask must be thrown away at the end of every school day and parents should send plenty of extra masks to school with their child. For reusable masks, masks should be cleaned after every use and students should send at least one extra reusable mask to school.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Can face shields be used instead of masks?

A: Face masks have proven to be more effective than shields to contain the spread of COVID-19. Therefore, we are strongly encouraging the use of face masks while at school.

Q: Will teachers teach children how to use masks?

A: Yes. We know that students will need training to learn how to properly wear masks. We will spend time at the beginning of the school year helping children learn how to safely keep masks in place.

Q: Will students be required to physically distance at school?

A: When students are with their class or cohort, they should remain as far apart as possible, but do not need to keep at least six feet apart. **Schools are encouraged to keep students in cohort groups (self-contained classrooms) for as much as possible throughout the day.**

Q: Should I take my child's temperature every day before school?

A: Yes. A high fever is a key symptom of COVID-19. Parents should take their child's temperature every day before their child is taken to school. If your child has a temperature of over 100.4°F, your child needs to be kept home from school. You should contact your child's doctor and the school's main office. Similarly, you should ask your child if he/she has any of the other [symptoms](#) of COVID-19, such as a sore throat, coughing, or nausea. If your child complains of these symptoms, you should keep him/her home and contact your doctor and the school office.

Q: How will drop-off and pick-up be handled?

A: We are asking each school to carefully evaluate drop-off and pick-up procedures. Schools will use various entrances and exits to minimize contact between student cohorts. Parents will be asked not to congregate near school doors. Your principal will communicate specific drop-off and pick-up procedures to you ahead of the start of school.

In addition, when students enter school every day, they will be asked to participate in two tasks. These are:

1. Students will wash their hands with soap or use hand sanitizer.
2. Students will be asked if they are feeling well.

If a student has a temperature above 100.4°F or complains of other COVID-19 symptoms, he/she will be immediately sent to a quarantine room.

Q: What does the plan say about safety and cleanliness requirements for school buildings?

A: Our plan includes very specific requirements for the ongoing cleaning and sanitizing of our school buildings. Generally speaking, buildings will be cleaned very frequently, with a particular focus on high-traffic areas and common surfaces. Windows and/or vents should be opened to maximize air flow. Barriers will be installed in main office areas.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: How will lunch take place when school reopens?

A: If cafeterias are used and six feet of distance between students is not possible, meal times will be staggered and physical barriers will be used. Serving and cafeteria staff will use barrier protection including gloves, face shields, and surgical masks. Classrooms or outdoor areas can be used for students to eat meals at school.

Q: What about recess?

A: Schools may still conduct recess, but schools must fulfill defined safety requirements. For example, cohorts must be spread out from one another. If recess is outdoors, masks may be removed, but students will stay at least six feet apart.

Q: Can I still volunteer at school?

A: We have asked schools to minimize the number of volunteers this year in an effort to mitigate risk.

Q: Will extended care (before and after care) be available this year?

A: Yes. Schools may continue to offer extended care. Our schools will follow LARA Regulations for extended care.

Q: My child and/or another member of my household is in an at-risk group for COVID-19. Should I send my child to school?

A: Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has defined [conditions in which certain people may be more at risk for severe illness through COVID-19](#). If your child or another member of your household is in an at-risk group, we encourage you to speak to your doctor. Ultimately you should decide whether it is safe for your child to attend school.

Q: Is it okay for my family to travel out of town during the COVID-19 pandemic?

A: We recommend that you not travel out of town during the current pandemic. However, if travel is necessary, we encourage you to become familiar with the CDC's Travel Guidelines. If you or a member of your household travels to another country or to a state identified by the CDC as having a surge in COVID-19 cases, your school may ask you to wait for 14 days until returning your child to school.

Q: What happens if there is a COVID-19 surge in Northern Michigan and the state imposes more restrictions on schools?

A: If a COVID-19 surge occurs, we will work closely with state officials to determine whether we can continue face-to-face instruction (even on an alternate schedule). If necessary, we will return to at-home virtual instruction.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Infection Protocols

Q: What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

A: The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has identified several [symptoms](#) of COVID-19, including high fever (above 100.4°F), sore throat, coughing, nausea, headache, muscle aches, loss of taste or smell, runny nose, fatigue, diarrhea and difficulty breathing.

Q: What should I do if my child has symptoms of COVID-19?

A: If your child shows [symptoms](#) of COVID-19, you contact your doctor. Your doctor may ask that your child participate in a COVID-19 test. You should alert your school's main office and not send your child to school.

If the symptoms occur during the school day, your child will be immediately sent to the office and you will be contacted to pick your child up from school.

Q: My child had COVID-19-like symptoms, but tested negative for COVID-19. When can he/she return to school?

A: If your child does not have COVID-19, but has another illness, you must keep your child home until the illness symptoms disappear.

Q: What should I do if my child tests positive for COVID-19?

A: Immediately contact your doctor for additional instructions. Also contact your school's main office. Do not send your child to school.

Q: When can a student return to school after receiving a positive COVID-19 test?

A: If a student tests positive for COVID-19, the student must isolate and not return to school until they have met [CDC's criteria to discontinue home isolation](#). This includes:

1. Three or more days without a high fever;
2. An absence of other COVID-19 symptoms; and
3. At least 14 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

Q: What should I do if a member of my household (who is not my child) tests positive for COVID-19?

A: Immediately contact your school's main office. Your school will ask that you keep your child home for at least 14 days. If your family member recovers from COVID-19 (through meeting the criteria in the previous question) AND your child shows no COVID-19 symptoms for the 14-day period, your school may allow your child to return.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What happens if my child's teacher tests positive for COVID-19?

A: Should any employee have COVID-19 symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19, we will follow the same protocols used for students (see above). If your child's teacher becomes sick and is unable to work, your school will provide a substitute teacher.

Q: What happens if another student in my child's class tests positive for COVID-19?

A: Your school will make all parents aware that a student has tested positive for COVID-19. All students in the cohort will be monitored closely for COVID-19 symptoms. If more than one student tests positive for COVID-19, it is likely that the entire cohort will be sent home for at least 14 days. Students will be allowed to complete work virtually while the cohort is away from school.

Q: Could my child's school building be closed down due to COVID-19 this year?

A: We will do our best to ensure a safe and healthy environment in the coming year. However, if numerous cases appear in a single school, resulting in the isolation of multiple classes/cohorts, we may need to close the school building and transition all students to virtual learning for a time. Parents will be updated regularly should that need arise.

Academics and Programming

Q: Will my child's curriculum be changed this year?

A: Schools will still deliver high-quality instruction in core subjects (religion, language arts, math, science and social studies). Special requirements will be in place for departmentalized classes and special area subjects (see sections below). The implementation of safety and health requirements (outlined earlier in this FAQ) will create new complexities in instruction, but our commitment remains to provide your child the best possible faith-based education.

Q: Will my child's classroom look different?

A: We have instructed schools to spread out desks and tables in classrooms as much as possible. In order to maximize floor space, we've asked teachers to remove non-essential furniture and other items. We have also asked that desks and tables be arranged so that they face the front of the room. These steps were taken to minimize risk of any infection in the classroom.

Q: Will students share school supplies?

A: No. We are asking schools to ensure that students not share school supplies (e.g., books, crayons, technology, etc.), including such subjects as art and music. Exceptions may be made for activities outdoors (such as outdoor physical education classes). If it is impossible to avoid sharing supplies, such as computers in a computer lab, such supplies must be cleaned after every use.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Will students still change classes?

A: Many schools offer departmentalization, in which students change classes for core subjects (religion, language arts, math, science and social studies). Students will wear masks when changing classes throughout the day.

Q: Will schools still offer classes in special subject areas (e.g., art, music, PE, etc.)?

A: Yes. As with departmentalization (see last question), we will ask special subject area teachers to travel to each class' homeroom for instruction whenever possible. This will be particularly likely for such subjects as art, music, health and foreign language. If students visit spaces such as the gymnasium, computer/STEM lab or library, the room must be cleaned after every cohort.

Q: Will students participate in field trips?

A: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, schools will not participate in in-person field trips while the District is in Phase 4. Students in Phase 5 may participate in field trips but only with students practicing social distancing and masks being worn.

Q: I need to meet with a teacher or my school principal. Can these meetings occur?

A: Yes. These meetings can take place virtually via phone or video chat. Please contact your building administrator to make arrangements for these types of meetings.

Q: Will school Masses still take place?

A: The diocese has defined a specific plan for parishes that allows for the celebration of Mass under specific conditions. Schools will be asked to follow this plan, in close coordination with the local pastor and parish, in determining how Masses may be celebrated.

Q: How will extracurricular activities be impacted this year?

A: Our plan provides guidance on specific extracurricular activities. Highlights of this guidance include (by activity):

- **Athletics:** We are awaiting further information from the state regarding athletics. More information will be provided to parents as it is known.
- **Band:** Rehearsals for small groups may take place for non-wind instruments (e.g., percussion, strings, etc.). Students must be physically distant. Rehearsals must occur virtually or outdoors for wind instruments (woodwinds and brass).
- **Choir, Drama/School Play, Christmas Program:** Due to ongoing health concerns, we are asking schools to conduct such programs virtually or postpone or cancel them until later in the school year.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **Other Activities:** For other activities (e.g., robotics, debate, etc.), schools must meet specific health and safety requirements. If such requirements cannot be met, these activities should be conducted virtually or canceled.

Tuition and Fees

Q: Will schools still collect tuition this year?

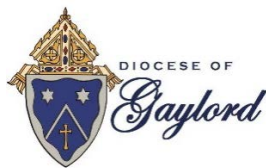
A: Yes. While this school year may look different, our schools will continue to provide a rigorous academic experience while supporting the moral and spiritual development of each student. Our Catholic schools depend upon tuition revenue to pay our employees who do this work and support other school-related expenses.

Q: I am having difficulty paying tuition, as my own workplace has been impacted by COVID-19. What do I do?

A: We know that some families may have difficulties paying tuition due to the loss of pay during workplace closures and are ready to support those in need of assistance. If this is happening to you, please contact your school's principal. We understand your situation and will do our very best to work with you.

Q: Will fees be changed this year?

A: Each school develops their own fees based upon their own local needs. Fees may be adjusted if a program or activity has been directly impacted by COVID-19. For example, if a fee is collected for a particular field trip, it is likely that the fee will not be collected this year (as field trips will not occur).



Office of Catholic Schools
611 W. North St., Gaylord, MI 49735
989.732.5147
www.dioceseofgaylord.org