



Directives and Guidance
for Fall 2020 School Opening
at St. Mary's School Marathon
During the Time of COVID-19 Concerns



On May, 1, 2020, Bishop William Patrick Callahan declared a year to St. Joseph. It is appropriate that we ask for the intercession of this great saint. May his prayers combined with our own lead to greater understanding of how to faithfully educate the children in the Diocese of La Crosse.

Why Turn to St. Joseph?

The year 2020 marks the 150th anniversary of Blessed Pius IX's decree naming St. Joseph Patron and Protector of the Universal Church. He is also the primary patron of the Diocese of La Crosse, and of course, the Cathedral of St. Joseph the Workman is named for him.

In this challenging time, we can turn to St. Joseph with great hope:

- We can turn to him as protector from harm, even as he protected Mary and the child Jesus from Herod's wrath;
- St. Joseph was worker and provider for the Holy Family, so to him we can entrust ourselves, our schools, and our nation in the face of unprecedented spirit, health, and financial uncertainty;
- As model husband and father, we turn to St. Joseph at a time when good examples of both are so desperately needed. We can ask him to help strengthen our families – as well as the bonds of our “school family” – at a time when these can be fragile.
- As patron of the dying, we can invoke the intercession of St. Joseph on all who are in their last moments of life, including the elderly and others with terminal disease.

From the Superintendent

In the spring of 2020 we were impacted by the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic and national civil unrest. Governor Evers's Safer at Home order went into effect on March 25, 2020 – closing all K-12 schools. The closure of K-12 schools ends on June 30, 2020. On May 25, 2020, George Floyd was killed by a police officer in Minneapolis, MN; Floyd's death led to both peaceful protest and rioting throughout the nation. This unrest continues today. The Catholic Schools in the Diocese of La Crosse will open the 2020-2021 school year to a new "normal."

Although this guide is open to be read and reviewed by the general public, it is written for the deans, pastors, and administrators. This guide is an effort to help our Catholic Schools open successfully. We desperately want all students, parents, faculty, administrators, and support staff to feel safe, happy, and holy throughout the entire 2020-2021 school year. And, we want to make certain we are educating each student in the Catholic Faith.

Except for the "Mandated Items," this guide should be read as recommendations. Catholic School administrators must work with their local county health department and the other schools in their geographical area to determine the best way to reopen.

Prepare for criticism because no matter what you do; it will come. But, if you are prayerfully reflecting and working to follow God's will, the negativity will not pierce as deeply. The Office for Catholic Schools knows you are striving to provide a safe educational environment for everyone. If the situation mandates or the government issues another school closure, we will be support you. We have a duty to our 6500+ students to do everything we can to continue a high quality Catholic education.

Thank you to the other Catholic School superintendents in the state of Wisconsin for their friendship and contributions to this guide.

1. Dr. Kathleen Cepelka – Archdiocese of Milwaukee
2. Todd Blahnik – Diocese of Green Bay
3. Peggy Schoenfuss – Diocese of Superior
4. Michael Lancaster – Diocese of Madison

In the words of Father Woodrow Pace, I wish all of you safety, good health, happiness, and holiness.

God's Grace be With You,



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Mandated items

St. Mary's School will complete this list of items as part of the reopening process.

1. Before a Catholic School reopens the administration must receive approval from:
 - a. Bishop William Patrick Callahan
 - i. (This approval was given to all Catholic Schools in the Diocese through Bishop Callahan's letter on June 17, 2020.)
 - b. The school system's Dean or the parish school's Pastor (Father Joe, June '20)
2. Administration needs to work with its local county health department to ensure the school reopening goes smoothly (weekly meetings with MCHD - Amanda Ostrowski - at a minimum since July 20)
3. Students will be taught or review the importance of proper hygiene: (Ongoing)
 - a. Washing hands often with soap and water for twenty or more seconds
 - b. Sanitizing hands when soap and water are unavailable
 - c. Installation of additional handleless items throughout school
 - d. Keeping hands away from one's face (Don't touch your face)
4. Students who do not feel well should stay home. (Ongoing)
 - a. Documented instructions to guardians communicated before the first day of school. (<http://www.stmarysmarathon.org/COVIDBacktoschool.pdf> - 8/14/20)
5. Employees who do not feel well should stay home. (Staff meeting – 7/21/20).
6. School entryways, hallways, bathrooms, and classrooms have adequate signage to help encourage proper hygiene. (Ongoing)
7. The following plans are on file, ready to use, and updated regularly: (with MCHD)
 - a. Plans:
 - i. Distance learning
 - ii. Response to a student diagnosed with COVID-19
 - iii. Response to an employee diagnosed with COVID-19
 - b. Safety (Security)

Mass

From the diocese: The summit in Catholic Church is the celebration of the Holy Mass. On May 14, 2020, Bishop William Patrick Callahan instructed the priest in the Diocese of La Crosse on how the Holy Mass would be publicly celebrated starting on May 31, 2020. Bishop Callahan's preference is all schools continue to follow the rule of minimally one school Mass a week (Monday-Friday). If, due to the recent Mass instructions, students are not able to attend Mass once a week, students must have reflection / prayer time during the week that they miss Mass.

St. Mary's has divided classrooms and students to meet Diocese directives on Mass attendance. Two classes (7/8, 5/6, 3/4 and 1/2) will have a rotating Mass schedule but 4K and 5K will not be attending. Adoration will be in the church and not the Adoration Chapel.

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) recommendations

From the Diocese: Schools in counties that issue regulations for school reopening will need to work with those regulations. When counties do not issue their own guidance or regulations, schools should review the CDC and DPI information. Schools must determine their ability to comply with these recommendations. Some recommendations, however, may not be feasible.

Strict compliance with CDC and DPI guidance is not possible in some areas, so schools will determine how to ensure student and staff safety in those situations.

The link to the CDC's guidelines for reopening schools is

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html>

The link to the DPI's guidebook, *Education Forward*, for reopening schools is

https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sspw/pdf/Education_Forward_web.pdf

Hygiene and Cleanliness

1. Cleaning the building
 - a. Budgets and personal have been reviewed.
2. All employees will be minimally washing their hands every forty-five minutes. Hands should be scrubbed with soap for twenty or more seconds.
3. Hand sanitizers and soap are available in classrooms and throughout the building.
 - a. Adults will make certain younger students are using these properly.
 - b. If a student, teacher, or aide leaves a classroom, he or she should sanitize his or her hands when reentering the classroom.
4. Areas of the school where illnesses are commonly spread (high traffic areas such as door handles, computer mice and keyboards) should be cleaned at least two times a day.
5. Our building, including classrooms and restrooms will be deep cleaned at least once a week. St. Mary's will use a fogger and/or steamer to deep clean the building.
6. Employees should try to limit physical contact with students and other staff. (no handshakes, high fives, fist bumps, limit huggers etc.).
7. Students need to be instructed that they should do their best to always cough or sneeze into a tissue (discarded). At all times, this needs to be modeled well by school employees.
8. After blowing their noses, students should discard the used tissue and wash or sanitize their hands. There should not be any handkerchiefs or reused tissues. Again, adults working in the school should model this practice.
9. Administrators and faculty should discreetly correct students who do not have good hygiene practices. Students should not get in trouble and be told publicly as it is more likely they will become a target thus parents will privately discuss with students.

Procedures and Policies

Teacher Distance Learning Plans

1. Every teacher will have a documented plan as of September 1, 2020 on how he or she will quickly move to distance learning or blended learning.
 - a. The plan documents necessary student and teacher materials.
 - i. What will the students and teachers need in their homes?
 - ii. If the material is not at home, how does it get home?
 - iii. It includes one week of lesson plans
 - b. This plan will be on file with the principal.
2. In comparison to spring 2020, there will be more of an emphasis on real time learning, where faculty will be teaching virtually from their classroom, if possible. However, with

the percentage of people without internet or without reliable internet, paper copies and more traditional instruction will also occur.

COVID-19 Case Procedure

1. A student or employee who is diagnosed with COVID-19 should receive documented permission from a medical professional to return to school.
 - a. Administration and faculty will adjust work with students and employees who are unable to come to the school building.
 - b. If a classroom(s) is impacted by a student or employee diagnosed with COVID-19, will be deep cleaned before it can be used again.

2. In the event of a positive COVID-19 case, Marathon County Health Department (MCHD) will begin with a phone call to the parent to start a Contact Investigation. If/When close contacts within the school are identified, St. Mary's School will provide contact information for the parents of the students who are determined to be close contacts.

You are a "close contact" if any of the following situations happened while you spent time with the person with COVID-19, even if they didn't have symptoms:

- Had direct physical contact with the person (for example, a hug, kiss, or handshake).
- Were within 6 feet of the person for a total of more than 15 minutes in a single day.
- Had contact with the person's respiratory secretions (for example, coughed or sneezed on; contact with a dirty tissue; shared a drinking glass, food, towels, or other personal items).
- Live with the person or stayed overnight for at least one night in a household with the person.
- Source: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/diagnosed.htm>

Close contacts will be quarantined from the last day of exposure to the COVID+ individual. The COVID+ person has to quarantine with their household members. However, only the close contact of the COVID+ individual must quarantine (not the close contact's household members). A letter will be sent to the school community regarding the positive case. Exclusion criteria is provided by the WI Department of Health Services, and may change quickly.

Masks / Face Shields and Social Distancing

1. Masks are mandated by executive order. Unless a documented medical note from a licensed medical practitioner is submitted, all employees and students five years old and older are required to wear masks. People may remove their masks to eat and drink and when outside. 4-year-old students have the option of wearing masks to school. When the mask mandate ends, the mask policy will be reviewed. The following was St. Mary's mask policy before the mask mandate and depending on the situation at the end of the mask mandate may be implemented or revised. *Masks or clear shields covering the nose and mouth should be worn by adults when in close proximity to students. Masks and face shields are optional for students and should be provided by the individuals entering the school building, but St. Mary's has a supply of masks in case someone forgets to bring*

his or her own. Students in the isolation room due to a fever are required to wear masks or face shield. If a student does not have one, one will be provided.

2. It is important that social distancing is practiced by adults and students when possible.
 - a. Discuss with students the ideal of personal space, each person's circle of grace.
 - b. When possible, classrooms are arranged to allow students to socially distance themselves.
3. Procedures to limit the number of students passing in a hallway:
 - a. Teachers will stager dismissals for class periods, lunch and recess.
 - b. St. Mary's staff will enforce dividing the hallway in half and having students move in one direction on the right side of the hall. Students will stay on the right side facing one direction if waiting for a class
 - c. When dismissing students, students will not be in one line but rather dismissed distanced from each other.

Visitors

1. People visiting St. Mary's should visit for essential education experiences or vital business.
 - a. Regular volunteers in the classroom are accepted. The principal will have been contacted prior to the volunteers' arrival for approval.
 - b. Field trips will be prioritized and reviewed throughout the year. Several have already been cancelled.
2. Visitors should call ahead and if picking up material (homework, SCRIP) and/or dropping off material, will do it outside the main office window. Mrs. Lang or whoever is in the office will slide the window open for drop off.

Drinking Fountains

1. Students should bring their own water bottles and use the hands-free drinking fountain on first floor. We will have a supply of plastic cups for students who do not have a water bottle.

Shared Materials

1. Unless they are sanitized, students should not share books, materials, or equipment. Areas or bins to separate students' belongings have been created. Students are assigned a Chromebook if they are being used on a consistent basis in the classroom such as homerooms. We are encouraging snacks that are individually wrapped. Snacks with lower sugar content will be emphasized.

Classroom Instruction

1. Individual exercises in the classroom will be emphasized over collaborative learning. When appropriate, classes will be outside.

Physical Education

1. To limit physical contact and the need to share equipment, Physical Education classes should focus on individual skill development.
 - a. If a team competition is used, students should sanitize their hands before and after the competition.

- b. If team competitions are used, equipment should be sanitized before and after use.
2. Locker rooms should not be used. Students should participate in P.E. in their dress code clothing.
3. Middle School students will be kept in their grade/cohort.

School Building Use

1. The Diocese will continue to give directives on school building use. Priority is being given to academic and religious use.

Music

1. Middle School students will be kept in their grade/cohort.
2. There will be no group band in grades 5 – 8.
3. The music teacher will go to students' classes and teach a modified curriculum during the first month of school minimally.

Library

1. Selections of books from shelves will be pulled by the librarian and set out on display. If there is a theme for library use, the teacher will have shared with the librarian beforehand.
2. Limit student browsing directly from shelves by having them select options in catalog before retrieving items.
3. Hand sanitizer provided near shelves.
4. Students that are selecting books for check-out in physical space, have limited contact during process.
5. Provide book return containers that can be dated and placed in quarantine for at least 48 hours (2 days). Books will be quarantined in the Guadalupe Room.

Lunch

1. Students will sanitize their hands before going to lunch and when returning from lunch.
2. Students should be socially distanced in the line. There are lines made of tape every 6 feet apart in the cafeteria.
3. Lunch must be served. Students should not serve themselves lunch.
 - a. One or two designated people need to serve the lunch.
4. If possible, students should sit with one seat in between the next student and not across from another student (zig-zag). Assigned seating and tape will be placed on seats to alternate seating between lunches.
5. There will not be shared salt and pepper shakers, student microwave use, water pitchers, condiments, etc.
6. All dishes, utensils, etc. must be thoroughly cleaned after each use.

Playgrounds / Recess

1. Students should sanitize their hands before going to recess and when returning from recess.
2. Students will be in their cohorts and distancing will be emphasized.
3. Playground supervisors need to monitor and try to limit the sharing of toys, balls, jump ropes, etc.

Illness and Absenteeism

Screening

1. St. Mary's School will not screen (take temperatures) students as they enter the school building.
 - a. It is the responsibility of the parent (guardian) to make certain a child is healthy and able to attend school. A parent checklist is located on our website, <http://www.stmarysmarathon.org/COVIDBacktoschool.pdf> .

Students will be monitored as they enter the school

- The Market Street and playground entrances of the school will be designated as the entry for incoming students at the beginning of the school day.
 - For each such incoming child, monitoring staff will:
visually inspect the child for signs of illness, including flushed cheeks, rapid breathing or difficulty breathing (unexplained by physical activity), or fatigue;
 - Classroom teachers will monitor students as they enter school and throughout the day
 - Students should not be permitted to enter the schools when either of the disqualifying conditions is present (“Disqualifying Conditions”):
their temperatures are 100.40 (38.00C) or above, **or**
their visual inspections reveal other signs of illness.
 - For students with a Disqualifying Condition(s), the student's parent or other emergency contact(s) will be called to immediately pick the student up from the school.
 - Until the student is picked up from the school, the student should not be permitted to come into contact with other students, and shall be separated consistent with standard school policy and appropriate social distancing pending the student's parents' arrival.
 - Disqualifying Conditions must not be related to an existing condition and should be new and unusual.
- b. If, during the school day, a student appears to have an illness (training by Marathon County Health Department provided), the school will follow the Protocol to Send Home decision tree developed by the WI DPI to determine if the student should go home or not. If sent home the student cannot return home until 24 hours of improved symptoms have occurred or a negative COVID test and no exposure to anyone with COVID has occurred. Please note: This means if a child is sent home at 10 AM on Tuesday they cannot be at school at 8 AM on Wednesday

2. St. Mary's School will document and cooperate with county or municipal health departments if a student or employee is diagnosed with a COVID-19 or another serious illness.

Physical Health

1. A request to parents and employees for student and employee health files to be kept up to date, as well as emergency contact and pick up information has been made.
2. St. Mary's is aware of local health clinic and hospital information.
3. There is an "isolation room" for ill students. We have invested in multiple contactless thermometers. Sick students with a fever of over 100.4 will wait in an isolation room until a parent arrives to take them home. Employees with temperatures over 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit will be sent home
4. St. Mary's School discourages travel to high risk areas for students and employees.
 - a. If someone travels to these areas, administrators will ask for destination information to determine if it will be necessary for the returning student(s) or employee(s) be kept out of the school building for fourteen calendars after the date he or she returns.

Emotional Health

1. Use the power of prayer to work through difficult situations and problems.
2. Surveys and assessments to determine students' emotional health individually and as a student body have been developed and are on our website
3. We will be monitoring the emotional health of the students, faculty and staff.
4. On the first day of school, we will have teachers rotate to talk to students to provide closure for last year.
5. August in-service will provide for emotional health training

Student Absences

1. Guardians should keep a child home when the child has obvious symptoms of being ill (fever, stomach ailments, severe running nose, a bad cough, difficulty breathing, headaches, sore throat, etc.).
2. Teachers need to prepare for prolonged student absences. Every teacher has a plan to work with individual students who miss many days of school in a row; simply having the student "catch-up" is not an option.
3. Staff will monitor student absenteeism closely. Administrators will communicate with families who are dealing with prolonged illnesses.

Opt-out option

St. Mary's has implemented an opt-out option for parents that don't feel comfortable with sending their children to St. Mary's due to COVID-19 concerns for a period of time. This involves a form St. Mary's has that will need to be filled out by parents and which constitutes the necessary request from the parent and approval from the school. If a parent calls in and tells us that their child wouldn't be at school for COVID-19 fears, this is not a request and approval thus the student is unexcused and truant. Also, this can't be simply because the student does not want to go to school, this is also truancy. If a student has COVID-19 that is obviously a different situation and they are excused. However, if there is a legitimate health concern and a parent request, the school will approve. The intent is the leave wouldn't be just one day or the whole year, rather a period of days or possibly weeks where you don't feel comfortable sending your child to school. The dates will be on the form but can be shortened or extended if need be. Teachers would then prepare lessons and it would be like the distance schooling we did this past spring. Multiple requests within this school year to not attend school for direct instruction due to

COVID-19 concerns can be done. Students can return to school at any time but cannot be bused until the end of the semester.

School closure due to absenteeism

In the case of a widespread illness in the state, county, or community, the school could close for an extended time period out of concern for the health students, staff, and community.

If there is potential for seasonal or pandemic illness affecting your school:

1. Monitor daily attendance and reasons for absences.
2. If the student body has a high amount of absences, we will consider closing the school.

If Marathon public school closes for reasons of wide-spread illness, we may choose to close as well. If St. Mary's administration feels it is prudent to close school while the public school remains open, we may do so.

Communication

1. St. Mary's has contacted the following for information:
 - a. Marathon County health department
 - b. Local schools
 - c. Diocesan offices
2. Parents and guardians know the expectations regarding student attendance.
 - a. Guardians are aware that sending children with obvious COVID-19 symptoms is unacceptable.
3. A crises intervention team was developed at the end of the 2018-19 school year and has meet and will continue to monitor the situation.
4. In the event of a COVID+ case, the school community will be notified.

Plans for Students (Differentiate)

1. Teachers must talk with one another. We have time reserved for weekly Professional Learning Committees (PLC) where teachers can discuss helping students.
2. Differentiation is necessary as students come back with different levels.
3. All documented plans (IEPs, etc.) must be carefully reviewed. These need to be followed until updates can be put into place.
4. The first three weeks of the 2020-21 school year will be "schoolwork, not homework" to help teachers determine where students are at. However, it's not free time; if students do not do any work the first three weeks, the work will be waiting for them at the beginning of week 4. The intent is to see where the students are at and thus to help better serve them through the year.

Transportation of Students

In the state of Wisconsin, the public school districts are required to bus students to and from school; this includes busing students to and from private schools. Busing will be provided for St. Mary's students every day of the week including Wednesdays. However, it is possible your child will have a different bus number, driver, pick up and drop off time on Wednesdays compared to the other days of the week. There will no longer be the 2 transfer buses to the elementary school on any days, rather all 9 buses will pick up from 6th and Market near church at the end of the day

and transport the students home. Students will have assigned seating each day of the week, taking into account social distancing. There will be two drop offs during the morning pick up and afternoon drop off (except Wednesdays), thus some students may be late in the morning (they will be excused) and some will need to wait at school after the school day ends for the second pick up/drop off. We are encouraging parents to drive and pick up students if possible. If a student opts out of St. Mary's for a period of time to do virtual learning, they can return to school anytime they wish but with limited seating they will not be able to ride the bus when they return until the end of the semester.

After Care

1. After Care will be provided from 3 – 5 and will have the same social distancing and cleaning procedures as the school day.
2. After Care staff will sign out students.

Two quotes from Saint Pope John Paul II

1. Although I have lived through much darkness, I have seen enough evidence to be unshakably convinced that no difficulty, no fear is so great that it can completely suffocate the hope that springs eternal in the hearts of the young.... Do not let that hope die!
2. There is no evil to be faced that Christ does not face with us. There is no enemy that Christ has not already conquered. There is no cross to bear that Christ has not already borne for us, and does not now bear with us.

St. Mary's School Administration reserves the right to make situational accommodations and to reasonably enforce and reasonably modify this plan.

