

**Our Lady of Mount Carmel School
in collaboration with the
Archdiocese of Philadelphia
Office of Catholic Education**



Catholic Schools Onward

***Best Practices and New Opportunities as We Move
Forward***

Guidance and Procedures

Introduction & Best Practices

This document will provide information regarding the plan to return to Brick and Mortar learning for the 2020-2021 school year. The principles listed below will allow us to remain open while using virtual learning for those that have been identified with COVID-19 or in situations in which a parent feels learning from home is beneficial.

Partnership - Catholic elementary schools are inherently a partnership between the parent and the school. At this time, an even greater partnership is needed. It is our goal to open up this school year and to remain open. This cannot be possible unless the school and the parents agree on the importance of monitoring a child's health on a daily basis. **Most importantly, this means that parents need to keep their children home who are experiencing symptoms such as: fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea.** When symptoms persist, the child should be seen by a doctor and medically cleared to return to school. With parental cooperation, we will be able to keep the schools open and safe.

Cohorting – Cohorting is recommended by many health organizations as an environmental measure to prevent the spread of disease. Some large school systems are using it as the only method of prevention to control the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Although our schools will be using many precautionary measures, cohorting will be a major part of the plan. Using this model, we will keep groups of children together for the entire day. They will attend lunch, recess and classes as a cohort. Cohorting allows for much easier contact tracing. If a case of COVID-19 were to surface, smaller groups of students would need to be quarantined at home. We would work with the Bucks County Health Department to determine who needs to quarantine. While determining who needs to quarantine, the cohort would continue virtual learning at home.

Social Distancing - Social distancing is also a fundamental practice in all of our procedures of operations. Social distancing is deliberately increasing the physical space between people to avoid spreading illness. Keeping distance from others lessens the chances of catching COVID-19. Travel in the hallway, lunch periods, and classroom instruction have all been planned to maximize social distancing in coordination with Bucks County health guidelines.

Strategic Use of Masks and Face Shields - Masks or face shields that cover the mouth and nose will be mandatory in certain situations for certain age groups, such as travel in the hallway, on the bus, classroom situations with non-cohort members, or when travel about the classroom is necessary without effective social distancing. When students are at their desks, they may remove their face coverings.* An extra mask should be kept in each student's backpack in a sealed bag. There may be times when a face shield is more comfortable for students and one will be provided for each student free of charge. Parents may elect for their child to keep their mask on the entire day.

**This could change by Government Order or as directed should an outbreak of COVID-19 occur in the area or school. Any change to this would be communicated to parents as soon as possible.*

Cleaning - The school will increase the cleaning of common areas and highly used features such as door knobs, handrails, and counters throughout the day. The building will also be cleaned thoroughly each night and disinfected using an ionizer and approved solution. Students are encouraged to bring water bottles to school; water filling stations will be used to refill bottles (students may not drink directly from the fountains). With this enhanced cleaning, a safer environment can be established.

Monitoring Health - Every day, teachers will visually monitor the health of their students throughout the day and remind students about healthy habits and signs of illness. Students' temperatures **will not** be taken in a whole group setting. Please make sure that your emergency contact information is current and that your emergency contacts are comfortable picking up your sick child and can do so in 30 minutes or less. Our staff's safety also is extremely important to us; therefore, all staff members will be required to check their temperature before school each day and monitor their own health for symptoms. In the building, our nurses will help to monitor the health of our staff.

Modified Attendance - Children will be marked as present if they attend class in person or virtually. Students who attend school virtually are expected to attend all required virtual classes in order to be marked present (as outlined by the teacher). When children cannot or do not participate in the required virtual lessons, they will be marked absent. If a student is too sick to participate virtually, the parent should call the attendance line to report the illness and the student will be marked absent. Parents of sick children can request homework if desired; the homework will be sent to the office by 3:00 PM for pickup.

Envisioning the School Day from a Student's Perspective

Arrival

Arrival will begin at 8:15 AM instead of 8:20AM and should be completed by 8:35AM. Students will wear masks as they exit busses or cars and make their way into the building. They should continue to wear masks until they are seated at their desks. All students will be instructed to sanitize their hands as they enter the building.

- Bus Riders
 - Bus riders will enter through the gym doors nearest the bus loop and proceed to their classrooms.
 - Most districts have stated students will sit with siblings where possible and with 2 max to a seat.
 - Masks will be required on busses.
- Car Riders
 - Car riders in PreK - grade 8 will enter through the gym doors nearest the car loop. PreK students will be seated inside the gym by class and then brought to PreK as a group.
 - We expect more car riders this year, and we will work to manage the drop off line as best we can.
- Walkers
 - Walkers in K - grade 8 will enter through the main office door.
 - PreK walkers should go directly to the PreK where they will be greeted by a staff member.
 - Parents are welcome to park in the church parking lot and escort their children to the main office door to enter as walkers.
- C.A.R.E.S.
 - Morning C.A.R.E.S. will continue to be offered and hours will remain the same (7:00 - 8:15AM). Students must be pre-registered as there are limited spaces available.
 - The drop off will be the gym door closest to the bus loop.
 - Students will be spaced out 6 feet at arrival unless they are seated next to a sibling.

Walking in the Hallways

- Students will not be in the hallway often, but when they are, they will need to wear masks, follow distancing protocols, and sanitize hands when leaving and entering their destination.
- There will be signage on the walls and floors to reinforce healthy behavior.

The Classroom

- PreK and Kindergarten
 - Students will remain with their assigned cohort (homeroom) at all times including lunch and recess.
 - Specials will rotate into each cohort's classroom with the exception of PE and Art.
 - Every PreK and Kindergarten student will be provided with an Ultraboard Barrier Trio which is a tri-fold, individual barrier to be used during instructional work. Only 4 students will be seated per table.

- The classrooms will continue to be cleaned daily.
- Items in the classroom will be cleaned daily.
- In an effort to follow health recommendations, we will remind students to wash their hands, and we will provide hand sanitizer for each classroom.
- Student Work, Spacing, and Interaction:
 - Students will work independently, at tables, on the carpet, and in small groups. We will do our best to meet social distancing recommendations. We understand that social learning and skills are exceptionally important for this age group, and due to their age, we can not guarantee that they will always be spaced 3-6 feet apart.
- When manipulatives are needed, planning will take place to limit the sharing of materials.
- Students will receive more individual supplies this year to decrease sharing.
- Primary, Elementary and Middle Units (Grades 1- 8)
 - Specials will rotate into each cohort's classroom with the exception of PE, Art and Music.
 - The classrooms will continue to be cleaned daily.
 - Students will have their own supplies as sharing items will not be allowed - Preliminary supply lists are on our website, and we will update these lists in early August.
 - In an effort to follow health recommendations, we will remind students to wash their hands, and we will provide hand sanitizer for each classroom. Students are also required to bring a small bottle of hand sanitizer for individual use.
 - Student Work, Spacing, and Interaction:
 - Students will work from their desks which will be spaced in rows 5 - 6 feet apart following CDC and Bucks County Health Department guidelines.
 - We will work to ensure that socialization occurs between students but understand it may be less than in typical years
 - Group discussion and interaction will be part of instruction.
 - Students will be able to communicate and work with others in their cohort on small group projects through the use of technology.
 - Google Classroom will be used at all grade levels.
 - Students in grades 1 - 3 will remain with their assigned cohort (homeroom) at all times including lunch and recess.
 - Students in grades 4 - 8 will remain with their assigned cohort at all times with the exception of Honors Math.
 - At times, teachers will rotate to student homerooms to decrease student traffic/interaction in the hallways.
 - Honors Math
 - Honors Math students will learn in the Honors Math classroom. Due to the mixing of cohorts, students will have to wear masks or face shields at all times.
 - Parents of students in Honors Math may choose to elect out of Honors Math for this year. These students will have math class with their cohort; Honors Math will not be taught in this class. Students would be

readmitted next school year as long as they have strong grades and are willing to work on any missed material.

- **Specials**
 - Library, Computer, Spanish and Music classes will be held in the homerooms at most grade levels to begin the year. We will investigate moving the students to the specials' classrooms in the future as long as safety standards can be met.
 - Students will be seated at tables in the art room. Acrylic dividers will be used to provide separation at all tables and four students will be seated at each table.
 - Acrylic table dividers have been purchased for the tables in the library and computer lab for use once we return to these classrooms.
 - Other notes regarding Specials:
 - Singing will not be a part of music class until further notice as directed by the health guidelines.
 - Some art supplies will be added to the supply lists in order to eliminate the sharing of materials.
 - Technology will be taught using Chromebooks and iPads.
 - Physical Education will be held outside whenever possible, and students will be engaged in activities that allow for social distancing.
 - Library books will be made available and will be disinfected and stored before they are returned to circulation.

Lunch/Recess

- To begin the year, students will eat with their cohort in their classrooms. Any changes will be communicated to parents.
 - We will explore options for students to eat with their cohorts in the cafeteria or outside.
 - Students may bring their own lunch or purchase a boxed lunch from Aramark which will be delivered to the classroom.
- Students will have recess outside whenever possible with their cohort.
- Each cohort will have a designated lunch/recess aide for consistency.
- Students will sanitize their hands before and after recess.
- Students will be reminded to maintain social distancing. Every effort will be made to maintain social distancing for our students, but we can not guarantee that students will maintain a 3-6 feet separation at all times.
- As long as students maintain 6 feet of distancing, they do not have to wear masks outside.
- Playground equipment will be wiped down in accordance with recommended health guidelines.
- Cohorts will rotate areas each day, so they have opportunities to play in different areas throughout the week. Areas include the kickball field, open field, tennis court, and blacktop areas.

Dismissal

Students will wear masks out of the building. All students will be instructed to sanitize their hands as they exit the building.

- **Bus Riders**

- Bus riders will be called down by bus and exit through the trophy case doors.
- Staff members will be stationed in the hallways to help with spacing.
- Most districts have stated students will sit with siblings and then by grade level with 2 max to a seat.
- Masks will be required on busses.
- Car Riders
 - Students will be picked up via car lane, and times will be staggered based on the age of the oldest student in the family. Specific details will be communicated to parents in the future.
- PreK and Kindergarten Half Day dismissal
 - Students will be dismissed from the bus loop at noon.
- C.A.R.E.S.
 - Afternoon C.A.R.E.S. will be held in the cafeteria and will operate until 6:00 PM.
 - Dismissal will take place through the trophy case doors using a radio system.
 - In order to plan, we are asking families to commit to a weekly schedule and communicate any schedule changes to the appropriate C.A.R.E.S. director.
 - Students will be placed with a staff member based on ages/grades and will remain with this cohort of students throughout their time at C.A.R.E.S.

Catholic Identity

- Our Catholic Identity is integral to the mission of our school.
- We will continue to prioritize Mass, the Sacraments, Reconciliation, daily prayer and Religion classes.

Other

- After School Activities
 - All after school activities in the building are on hold.
 - We hope that after school activities can resume sooner rather than later; in the meantime, we will work toward creating virtual clubs.
 - This helps us limit interaction amongst other groups of students and provides adequate time for cleaning the building.
- Assemblies
 - At this time, there will be no large gatherings or assemblies. School events on the calendar will remain on the calendar and will be addressed as each one arises.
- Class Parties, Special Person Day and Pretzel Sales
 - These activities are on hold for now, and we hope to schedule them later in the school year.
 - Please do not send edible birthday treats as we can not allow students to share food. If desired, non-edible treat bags can be distributed for the students to take home.
 - Soft pretzels will not be available for purchase until further notice.

- Community/Home and School Events
 - The school will not be able to host in-person gatherings for community events.
 - Home and School meetings will take place virtually.
 - Home and School is working hard on alternative options for family events such as Movie Night, Bag Bingo, etc. and will communicate changes in format and dates.
- Extracurricular/Non-Parish Events/Dances
 - All extra curricular activities held onsite are on hold.
 - No Parish or school events will take place in the school at the current time.
 - Dances for students in grades 7 & 8 are on the calendar, but they will not be held unless social distancing requirements are relaxed.
- Field Trips
 - At this point, no field trips are scheduled.
- Learning Support and Catapult Services will be offered throughout the school year.
 - Accommodations will be made to provide these students with appropriate social distancing.
 - Masks/face shields will be required.
 - More information will be sent home at a later date.
- Open House/Back-to-School Night
 - **A virtual Open House and Back-to-School Night will be held on Tuesday, September 1st and a schedule will be shared in the near future.**
- Parent-Teacher Conferences
 - Conferences will be held on November 5 and 6 and will more than likely be virtual.
- Restrooms
 - Students will be able to use the restrooms as needed and appropriate to age level, but students will need to adhere to distancing guidelines.
 - There will be floor markings to help with this.
 - A schedule will be established for each wing to minimize interaction between cohorts.
- Volunteers
 - Volunteers and visitors to our school will be limited until further notice.

Envisioning the School from a Parent's Perspective

Daily Morning Health Check

- Each morning, you will be required to take your child's temperature and check for COVID-19 related health issues.
- A note pad will be provided for you to use as an "entrance ticket" for your child each morning.
- If your child is experiencing signs of illness, report their absence on the attendance line and list all symptoms that your child is experiencing.

- Children who report to school without “entrance tickets” will be sent to the nurse’s office for a daily screening. This is not optimal as these children may miss instructional time and will be exposed to other students outside of their cohort.

Bringing in a Student Late

- In order to maintain distancing, one family at a time will be permitted in the foyer.
- Parents will buzz the front office door and state the name of the student who is entering late. The student will enter the building and head to the classroom after signing in at the office.
 - If needed, students will be escorted to their classroom by a front office staff member.

Picking Up a Student Early

- Please continue to send in notes to help us plan and document early dismissals.
 - Students will wait inside the school for their parent to arrive at the designated time of pick-up.
- In order to maintain distancing, one family at a time will be permitted in the foyer.
- Parents will buzz the front office and will be permitted to enter the foyer.
 - If there are other parents waiting, the parent may be asked to wait outside after checking out his/her student.
- All early dismissals will need to take place prior to 2:30 PM due to school dismissal.

Picking Up a Sick Student from the Nurse’s Office

- The nurse will call home and communicate any issues with the parent.
- Follow the above procedure (picking up a student early).
- If a student has any symptoms of COVID-19, he/she will be kept away from other students in the nurse's office or a corresponding office area until parents arrive.
- The nurse or a staff member will bring the child to the front foyer for pick up.
- Please make sure the office has the correct emergency contact information, and please confirm that your emergency contacts are comfortable picking up your sick child and can do so within 30 minutes.

Student is Sent Home due to a Fever at School

- Follow the above procedure (picking up a student from the nurse’s office).
- Students must remain at home for 3 days instead of 24 hours.
 - They may participate in virtual learning while at home if they are not too sick to participate.
- Siblings of a student with a fever will be checked for a fever.
 - If they have a fever, they will also be sent home.
 - If they do not have a fever, they will stay in the school.

What happens when there is a positive case of COVID-19?

- If there is a positive case of COVID-19 in our school community, we will work with the Bucks County Health Department and follow their recommendations for quarantine. They mobilize when there is a positive test, not when someone has symptoms or only has been tested. This is because many people are tested, and the positive rate is very low. It is possible that the entire

cohort could be quarantined while the Bucks County Health Department makes final decisions on who needs to stay home after a positive test. This could be the entire cohort, but it is more likely to be anyone who was within 6 feet of the ill person for 15 minutes or more. These students and/or staff will participate in class from home and virtual learning for some or all students in this cohort will begin.

- Scenarios
 - In the event of a positive test within the student body:
 - Bobby in 1A has a positive test. The family should contact the school immediately. Additionally, the Health Department will independently let us know within hours. The classroom parents and anyone who might have contact with Bobby would be notified that there was a positive test (names will not be shared). We will share travel patterns, seating charts, etc. with the Bucks County Health Department who will recommend which students and/or staff should be quarantined (if any).
 - In the event of a staff member having a positive test:
 - If a teacher or staff member has a positive test, we would follow the same guidelines as if a student tested positive.
 - In the event of a household family member having a positive test:
 - The Bucks County Health Department will provide us with the necessary guidelines to follow.

What items should I be purchasing for school at this point?

- Thermometer for daily temperature screening.
- Masks - Cotton masks are recommended.
 - Students should have two clean masks with them at all times.
 - Masks should be solid colored or have a subtle pattern. Characters, sports logo, political statements and pop symbols should be avoided.

**Students will use lanyards to hold masks so that they do not fall on the ground/get mixed up. The cost for the lanyards will be included in the stationery list.

- Individual hand sanitizer for each student.
- Please purchase anti-bacterial wipes if you can find them!
- Review school supply lists (posted on the parent tab on our website) for other items and supplies.
 - Please know that the class lists on our website are preliminary and may change in order to adjust to the lack of sharing materials among students.
 - Lists will be finalized on August 12th.

The school will supply all students and staff members with clear face shields:

- Clear face shields can be worn as masks when students are at their desks and not moving about.
 - The school will supply each student with a face shield free of charge.
 - Face shields will be kept at school and cleaned each evening.

Virtual Learning

Teachers will provide Virtual Learning to students at home by live streaming instruction from the classroom using an iPad and Google Meet sessions. Prior to the start of the year, we will offer a pick up day for materials and offer training for students and parents on how to properly use the Chromebook, Google Classroom, and Google Meet.

- Any student choosing to participate from home in any of the below models will be expected to wear their school uniform and work from a desk or table. Students will be expected to have their Chromebook cameras on at all times and their microphones muted unless they are talking.
 - It is understood that students may need to take occasional breaks, and teachers will work with students to accommodate these short breaks.
- A Chromebook will be provided to each student in grades 3 - 8. An iPad will be provided to each student in grades 1 and 2.
- Google Classroom will be accessible and be used by students in grades K-8.
- Google Meet will be used as our telecommunication platform for virtual learning. Students will be able to:
 - Participate in direct Instruction and take notes
 - Complete practice work and receive feedback
 - Join group discussions
 - Work in small groups through Google classroom .
- Schedules will be provided for all learners.
- Students will be excused from the Google Meet for lunch, recess and specials. At this time, they should eat lunch at home and find some time to exercise or play.
- Students in grades 5-8 will be expected to participate in every academic class including Spanish (full day). They should not need parent support at all after becoming acquainted with the virtual learning model.
- Students in grades 3 - 4 will be expected to participate in ELA, Math, and Religion and Spanish. Occasionally, there will be Science and Social Studies lessons. They may need a little support from parents at the beginning.
- Students in grades 1-2 will be expected to participate in ELA, Math, and Religion. Occasionally, there will be Science and Social Studies lessons. Students will need support from the parents each morning to get set up for the day.
- Students in PreK and Kindergarten will be expected to participate in morning meeting and academic instruction each day.
 - Academic subjects include ELA, Math, and Religion.
 - Students will have live interaction on a daily basis; however, some lessons may be recorded and shared through Google Classroom or email. This allows for more flexibility at home since academic lessons are variable in length and spaced out throughout the day. Families could then choose what time to complete ELA, Math, and Religion lessons.
 - Packets may also be provided and will be available for pick up in the office.
 - Enrichment activities to support these lessons will be available daily either through live instruction or recorded lessons.

Virtual Learning Models:

1. Families who opt to participate in Virtual Learning at the start of the year in order to meet their family needs will be placed in a homeroom with students in a class and will be considered part of that homeroom.

Students will be able to follow their daily schedule virtually and complete assignments via Google Classroom. All assignments will be expected to be completed. All assignments graded in the classroom will be graded for those learning from home. Quizzes/tests may need to be printed at home and will be completed in front of the teacher on the Chromebook and submitted electronically.

Students will not be able to see the entire class, but they will be able to see or view the teacher and instruction. They also will be able to work independently from home and work in groups virtually through Google Meet.

2. In the case where COVID-19 has been identified and students or a cohort need to begin Virtual Learning, the students or cohort will utilize distance learning for the isolation period. Direct instruction will be delivered through a virtual platform with reliance on Google Classroom.
3. If a child is sick or a parent suspects the child may be sick for multiple days and they are feeling well enough to complete the day's assignments and classwork, we will have a virtual option where the child can participate in Virtual Learning. Assignments will be completed through Google Classroom. Parents may elect to join the virtual learners on Day 3 of an illness. Parents should plan to come to the office to collect materials on Day 2 in preparation for joining the virtual classroom (added 9/15/2020).

NOTE: If a student is sick for the day, too sick to work from home, or away from school, he or she will not participate in the day's assignments and will be counted absent. Students will make up work upon their return to school.

Parent Guidelines for Virtual Learning

- Parents should let the student take ownership to the maximum extent possible.
- Parents will need to attend a training to learn more about Google Classroom and Google Meet. This will help them troubleshoot potential problems.
- Parents should not be on the screen and should not participate in the class at any time.
- No teacher lessons should be recorded or shared with anyone other than the student in the class.
- Body language, humor, and stories may come across differently at home via cyberlearning than they do in a classroom full of students.
- We believe we have put a great plan in place and have a dedicated team to implement the above plans. We understand that despite the hundreds of hours spent planning and the many resources put into place, Virtual Learning will not be perfect. We will make some mistakes, but we will grow and learn from them.
- Please do not hesitate to contact the teachers or principal with questions or concerns.

Important Dates to Choose Virtual Learning or In-School Learning

- The next available move date would be Monday, December 7th (notification due on Wednesday, December 2nd).
- Future dates will be communicated at a later time.
- If a medical concern arises which necessitates a switch in between the above dates, please reach out to administration to discuss.

PLEASE NOTE:

- An Archdiocesan Virtual Classroom Video/Audio Recording Acknowledgement Form will be included in the summer mailing. One form per child must be submitted to the office by September 3rd.
- An Archdiocesan Student Release, Waiver of Liability and Indemnity Form will be included in the Student Handbook. All families are required to acknowledge receipt of the student handbook in writing each year.
- Parents may elect a hybrid model for their learning preference by request. This model would entail a mixed schedule of in-person and virtual learning. A hybrid model can be set up by contacting the principal.