

Frequently Asked Questions

For Return to School, Fall 2020

Our learning plan for the 2020-2021 school year has three educational options for returning and prospective students. In these uncertain times, with state and local COVID-19 mandates and individual needs and concerns, we want you to choose what is best for your family. We know that some families may not be comfortable with their child(ren) returning to school in late August, so we have developed educational options for you to consider. **For a safe return on Monday, August 31, our goal is to be responsible and reasonable in our approach, sharing updated details on our plan's protocols weekly. Please refer to our Reopening Plan for more details.**

What are the specific guidelines being used regarding physical distancing in the school?

The number of students in classrooms at 3-6 feet apart:	
PK 3 = 10 students	Grade 4 = 15 students
PK 4 = 13 students	Grade 5 = 11 students
Kindergarten = 23 students	Grade 6 = 19 students
Grade 1 = 20 students	Grade 7 = 12 students
Grade 2 = 19 students	Grade 8 = 30 students
Grade 3 = 16 students	

Where will each grade level be located?

- Due to the physical and social distancing guidance, we must rearrange classrooms and classroom spaces to accommodate all students on campus. A maximum distance between students will be the aim of any classroom space. Teachers and administration will work together to arrange classrooms so they are conducive to safety and learning.
 - Preschool will be divided into 2 groups.
 - PK 3 will be located in the former Grade 8 classroom and instructed by Mrs. Fernandes and Ms. Tavares.
 - PK 4 will remain in the Preschool classroom instructed by Mrs. Vareika and aide to be named.
 - Kindergarten-Grade 7 will remain in the usual classroom.
 - Grade 8 will be in the school cafeteria. Grades 6, 7, and 8, teachers will move from group to group rather than students, per the MA guidance.
 - Special Education/Academic Support will be in the Art Supply Room.

How far apart will students' desks be positioned?

- Desks will be positioned 3-6 feet apart.

Alternative uses of school areas and outdoor space

- Teachers will have the option to hold classes outside as well as having lunch and mask breaks outside, weather permitting.

How will students in grades 4-8 move from class to class safely?

- Students will remain in their classroom and teacher(s) will go to them. Specialists will also go to individual classrooms.

How will the school maintain social distancing when students are in hallways or common areas?

- Schedules have been created for bathroom use to make sure that different classes do not mix. School staff will monitor the hallways throughout the day to ensure that there is no congregating in the hallways. There will be signs in the hallways and on the floors reminding everyone to keep a safe distance.

Will middle school students be using lockers?

- Students in middle school will not be using lockers at this time.

Will there be any field trips?

- Class field trips will not occur for the time being.

Will there be extended care?

At this time, St James-St John School will continue to provide Extended Care following CDC Guidelines and all SJSJ protocols given for daily activity. This includes the use of face masks, physical distancing, and cleaning protocols. Students in our ExtendedCARE program will be kept in cohorts, especially in younger grades, as much as is possible.

- Extended Day will use various spaces throughout the morning and/or afternoon. Morning extended day will be in the library. Parents will need to come to the front door to drop off. Afternoon extended day will take place in the Library, and other parts of the school, and outdoors in the playground. Parents, please use the back door for entrance.
- The Extended Day program schedule will be adjusted to accommodate all students in various groups.
- Students will be required to wash hands/use hand sanitizer at set times during Extended Day, including, but not limited to: check-in, upon exiting the classroom, upon entering a classroom, before and after snack, etc.
- Parents coming to pick their children up from Extended Day must wear a mask, use hand sanitizer upon entry to the building, and maintain social distancing while in the building.
- **To plan for adequate space and supervision, Extended Care will become RSVP only. No drop-ins will be allowed. Parents will need to complete a sign up form weekly to sign up for extended care both for the morning and afternoon.**
- Before School Care begins at 7 AM. Teacher supervision in the classrooms begins at 7:45 AM. Students are not allowed into the classrooms before 7:45 AM and should arrive on campus at 7:45 AM.
- Children whose parents must leave them at school before 7:30 AM are to report to the library where there is supervision beginning at 7:00 AM. These students will be dismissed to their classrooms at 7:45 AM. Pre K students may be brought to their classroom.

- After School Extended Care 2:40 PM - 5:30 PM

Student morning drop-off, dismissal, early dismissal, and movement around the building

- Drop off and pick up locations and procedures will be similar to usual, with the line of cars forming along our Cobblestone Driveway to drop off students in the morning. Students will enter through back doors after 7:45 am. Homerooms will open at 7:45 am. There will be no adult supervision in the morning. Extended Care will be available for 7-7:45 am. Pick Up will be conducted by rolling release starting at 2:20 pm each day. Students who are waiting for pickup will be asked to wait in their classroom until their name is called. Extended Care will be available after 2:40 pm.

Visitors

Visitors during regular school hours:

- **The number of outside visitors or volunteers will be reduced:** No outside visitors and volunteers are permitted, except for contracted service providers for special education, required support services, or program monitoring as authorized by the school or district. All office staff members will enforce this protocol.
- **Single entry/exit:** The main entrance at the front of the school will be the designated single entry and exit point for all visitors and volunteers to be visually screened and logged in. For visitors who need to enter, they will first gain approval, be briefed on school COVID-19 policies, and verify they do not have symptoms. They will be asked to sanitize their hands upon entering. We will ensure that these individuals all are wearing masks covering their nose and mouth at all times and are aware of any other health and safety protocols for the school.
- **Visitor log:** A log of all visitors will be kept and maintained for 30 days, with the date, contact phone number, arrival/departure times, and areas visited within the building for each visit
- **Checkout:** Visitors are to check out with an office staff member before exiting to ensure visitor log is filled out appropriately with departure time/areas visited
- **Parents/Guardians:**
 - Only when it is necessary will a parent/guardian be permitted to enter the building, and they must have a pre-scheduled appointment.
 - The school will continue to utilize virtual communication options with families whenever possible as the preferred method of communication.

Early dismissal procedures: Before 2:25 pm ONLY

- **Single entry/exit:** The main entrance at the front of the school will be the designated single entry and exit point for all early dismissals.
- **Call Ahead:** Parents/guardians are to contact the office via phone for early dismissal when they have arrived outside of the building and have parked.
- **The child is dismissed to lobby:** Office staff will call down to the classroom for the child to be dismissed to the front
- **Parent proceeds to front entrance:** Parents/guardians will not be allowed to enter the building. They must be wearing a mask/face covering and will be asked to sanitize their hands upon entry.
- **Sign Out:** Office staff will meet the parent/guardian at the door and have them sign an early dismissal slip for the child
- **Sanitize:** Child & parent/guardian will sanitize their hands before leaving the building

Late arrivals:

- **Single entry/exit:** The main entrance at the front of the school will be the designated single entry and exit point for all late arrivals.
- **Ring Buzzer:** Students will ring the buzzer outside to the right of the main entrance doors.
- **The student enters:** Office staff will ensure the student is wearing a face mask/covering, and let the child enter the building.
- **Sanitize:** Children will sanitize hands upon entry, and be advised to proceed directly to the classroom.

General Office:

- **Reconfigure spaces:** Rearrange furniture to support physical distancing, with staff desks facing in the same direction.
- **Barrier Use:** Plexiglass shielding will be placed in the main office to assist in physical distancing.
- **Minimize visitors:** Visitors to the office will be permitted only when necessary. Staff will monitor and control the number of people in the office at any one time.
- **Cleaning:** Regular cleaning and disinfecting of the office area will be ensured
- **Signage:** Proper signage will be installed in the office and leading into the office in regards to appropriate procedures.
- **Face covering:** A face mask or face shield is required for everyone when moving around the office area.

- **Photocopies:** An area outside the main office will be set up for faculty to drop off their copies. Once copies are completed, they will be returned to the same area outside of the office.
- **Paperwork:** There will be a bin outside of the office where any documents/forms being returned from the classrooms can be placed.

What is required of students and teachers regarding face masks and/or coverings?

Who is required to wear a face mask?

- Students in grades 2-8, employees, and visitors are required to wear a mask/face covering that covers their nose and mouth. Students in PreK, Kindergarten, and Grade 1 are strongly encouraged to wear a mask/face covering or a face shield, especially if 6 feet of distancing is not possible. Transparent masks may be the best option for both teachers and students in classes for deaf and hard of hearing students. They may also be useful for teachers and younger students who rely on visual/facial cues. Prints and designs on masks/face coverings must be appropriate for school.

Can a face shield be used in place of a mask?

- Face shields may be an option for those students with medical, behavioral, or other challenges who are unable to wear masks/face coverings.
- Face shields are an option for students in PreK, Kindergarten, and Grade 1 who may be unable to wear a mask.

Is the family responsible for the cost of the masks?

- Parents will be responsible for providing students with face coverings or masks.

Will the school be providing masks for students?

- The school will have backup disposable masks for students who may forget to wear one to school.

Policies about cleaning masks.

- Students must have 5 different masks and are expected to wear a clean one to school every day. Masks should be labeled with the student's name.

Consequences for students who are noncompliant with mask rules.

- Students who are noncompliant with mask rules will be sent to the principal's office and a call will be made to the parents.

Will neck masks or disposable masks be allowed?

- Yes

Will there be mask breaks?

- Mask breaks will be given throughout the school day as well as with eating. While masks are not being worn, students will have to be distanced 6 feet from each other. Before mask breaks, masks will gently be placed in a paper bag that is labeled with the student's name.

What is the school's policy regarding student and teacher screening procedures each day?

Will temperature checks be taken each day at school?

- No, temperature checks will be expected to be done at home, every morning, before leaving for school for all students and staff. Temperatures may be taken during the day if needed.

What are the parents' responsibilities regarding screening their child each day and reporting to the school?

- A symptom checklist will be provided to each family and the expectation is that the screening will take place at home before students leave for school. Families are asked to report a COVID-19 related absence to Nurse Anna at 508-996-0534 for additional guidance.

What are the symptoms that would require a student or staff member to stay home or to be sent home from school?

The symptoms for which students and staff should be monitored are:

- Fever (100.4° Fahrenheit or higher), chills or shaking chills
- Cough (not due to other known cause, such as a chronic cough)
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath

- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Headache *when in combination with other symptoms*
- Muscle aches or body aches
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Fatigue, when in combination with other symptoms
- Nasal congestion or runny nose (not due to other known causes, such as allergies) *when in combination with other symptoms*

Per the CDC, if staff or students have any of these symptoms, they must get a test for active COVID-19 infection and stay home while awaiting results before returning to school. If the test result is positive, they will need to stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days and until at least 3 days have passed with no fever and improvement in other symptoms. If the result is negative, the individual may return to school once they have no symptoms for 24 hours.

What are some other important health and safety guidelines that the school will be following?

- In addition to all the guidelines that have been mentioned, our school will have Nurse Anna available from 8-3 daily. She will work closely with local boards of health on any issues and concerns that may arise.
- Students will be medically assessed throughout the day, as needed.

Will there be a designated isolation room?

- Yes, the isolation room or “medical waiting room” will be located near Nurse Anna’s office in what was Mrs. Brady’s office. Masks and appropriate PPE will be required to be worn by anyone entering the room.

What will be the guidelines for the use of the medical waiting room?

- Any student or staff member that presents with COVID-19 like symptoms during the school day will be met in the hallway, outside their classroom, by Nurse Anna, and will be taken to the medical waiting room to be assessed. Masks are strictly required in this

space, even for students in PreK- Grade 1. A parent/guardian will be contacted to dismiss the student as soon as possible. Students will be monitored by a trained staff member while waiting to be dismissed.

Will parents be notified if there are any positive cases reported to the school?

- Yes, parents will be notified, while maintaining confidentiality, of a positive reported case with the guidance of the New Bedford Board of Health.

What is the protocol for possible exposure?

- Any student or staff member that comes in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or is symptomatic must stay home. In school settings, close contacts include other students and staff who were within 6 feet of the student or staff for at least 10-15 minutes in a classroom, in other school spaces, on the bus, or at an extracurricular activity. In elementary and other school situations where the students are in self-contained classrooms for an extended period, all students/staff within this “cohort” are considered close contacts as they may have been within 6 feet of the person with a positive test result. Possible close contacts should not come back to school until they have been tested (or elected instead to self-quarantine for 14 days). If an individual tests positive for COVID-19, then self-isolation is for a minimum of 10 days **and** until at least three days have passed with no fever and improvement in other symptoms as noted. If the test is negative, the student/staff can return to school if asymptomatic and wearing a mask.

Protocol for closing a school due to COVID-19

- The decision to close school due to COVID-19 is one that will be made with guidance from the school administration, school nurse, Diocese of Fall River superintendent, and the New Bedford Board of Health.

What will recess look like this year?

Will students have recess?

- Yes

Will students have to wear masks at recess?

- Students will not be required to wear masks during recess as long as they remain 6 feet apart.

How will recess look different this year?

- Recess times will be staggered so that there are fewer students outside, allowing for proper physical distancing. Each grade will have a designated area for recess to prevent contact with other grades.

How will lunch be handled this year?

Will my child need to bring lunch every day?

- Students may bring in their lunch or they may order hot lunch as in the past. However, we will not be able to allow lunches to be brought in from outside sources such as McDonald's, Subway, Metro, etc. It will be extremely important for students to come to school prepared with a lunch if lunch has not been ordered.
- Microwaves will no longer be available for student use because lunches are being eaten in the classrooms or outdoors.
- No outside food including Bake Sales and Birthday Celebrations with food.
- Students are required to have a cloth placemat, towel, or napkin in their lunchbox to cover the area that they will eat on.
- Students will be responsible to bring all the necessary supplies needed to eat their lunch such as forks, knives, spoons, napkins. The school will no longer be able to provide these.

How will food services be handled?

- Hot lunch will be delivered to the classroom in individual containers.

Where will lunch be eaten?

- Students will have lunch in their classroom or outside with their teacher. Due to not wearing masks while eating, students will have to be 6 feet distanced from each other.

What are the specific guidelines being used regarding handwashing, hand sanitizing, and disinfecting school areas?

Daily hand washing routines and schedules

- Please see the bathroom schedule in the Reopening Plan. All classrooms have a sink and hand sanitizer will be available.

Hand sanitizer use

- Hand sanitizer will be available at all entrances into the school building, classrooms, and in common space areas. Parents/guardians will be required to sign a consent form allowing for the use of hand sanitizer while in school.

Protocol for disinfecting desks and classrooms.

- Students in grades 1-8 will clean desks and seats after each class and lunchtime. PK and Kindergarten Staff will clean desks and seats after each class and lunchtime.
- The custodian and teacher will disinfect classrooms after school.

Cleaning procedures/schedules for all areas of the school.

- Please see our Reopening Plan.

Will each family be responsible for bringing in extra supplies to cover the cleaning needs?

- No, just what is listed on the supply list.

Will the cost of cleaning supplies be added to my child's tuition?

- No

Curriculum

Will there be any changes to the school's curriculum for this year?

- The curriculum and specialists will remain the same.

What will remote learning look like this year and who can take part in it?

If I choose to keep my child(ren) home, is there an option for remote learning?

- Yes

Can a student with a health condition do distance remote learning exclusively?

- Yes

If students opt for remote learning, would they be locked in for the year?

- No

Can students choose to stay home on certain days?

- No

Would remote learning be an option if a family member is sick?

- Yes

Can you take part in class virtually if you feel sick and want to be cautious?

- Yes

For the students that stay home, will they take the same courses and receive the same credits?

- Yes, as long as the work is completed timely and the student has participated in all their classes.

Will there be homework help for students who stay at home?

- Students will be able to email their teachers for clarification and questions.

Are there plans for remote learning if the governor closes all schools?

- Please see our Reopening Plan.

How will bussing and transportation be handled safely this year?

What social distance guidelines will be set up for busses?

- Social distancing will be enforced on buses, with students required to sit in assigned seats and with no more than one person per bench. An exemption will be made for children from the same household, who will be allowed to sit together.
- Masks will be required.
- Bus windows will be kept open at all times unless weather conditions make it impossible to do so.

How will extended care and extracurricular activities be handled this year?

Will pre-care and after-care services be offered?

- Yes, in a smaller capacity. Parents will need to preregister for extended care.

Will there be any after school activities such as drama club, choir, or sports offered?

- Not at this time.

Are there any different accommodations for students with learning differences?

- We will handle it on an individual basis.

Will volunteering be allowed?

- Unfortunately, we will need to strongly limit the number of volunteers we have on a daily/weekly basis to limit the number of people any given staff member or student may come into contact with. We know that our school is successful because of our volunteers, so we will be working to find ways to keep volunteers involved as well as keeping them and all others safe.

Will there be all-school Masses offered?

- Not at this time, School Masses will be organized so that our students can still attend Masses and worship regularly. Students will attend in small cohorts, distancing guidelines will be followed according to the Diocese of Fall River's guidelines for parishes celebrating Masses.