



## ***INTRODUCTION***

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According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the best available evidence indicates that COVID-19 poses relatively low risks to school-aged children. Moreover, children appear to be at lower risk for contracting COVID-19 compared to adults. In addition, scientific studies suggest that COVID-19 transmission among children in schools may be low. Based on current data, the rate of infection among younger school children, and from students to teachers, has been low, especially if proper precautions are followed. There have also been few reports of children being the primary source of COVID-19 transmission among family members. This is consistent with data from both virus and antibody testing, suggesting that children are not the primary drivers of COVID-19 spread in schools or in the community. Although no studies are considered conclusive, the available evidence provides reason to believe that in-person schooling is in the best interest of students, particularly in the context of appropriate mitigation measures similar to those implemented at essential workplaces.

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

St. Ursula, in partnership with the Archdiocese of Baltimore, developed a plan to reopen our doors of faith and knowledge. Our commitment to provide families the option of in-person instruction is driven by the motive of student learning and academic growth. And as we do all things, our programs and practices are viewed through a lens of the health, well-being and safety for our community.

The following areas encompass the general details as to the reopening of our school building to the students of St. Ursula:

## *HEALTH*

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As primary procedures of mitigation, our school setting will be one where the daily wearing of a protective mask, the routine of repeated washing/sanitizing of one's hands, all while maintaining proper distance throughout the day - will collectively serve as the centerpiece to our personal safety precautions.

The most powerful defense we have in reducing our risk to COVID 19 is the wearing of a face mask. All students, faculty and staff are required to wear this protective facial covering as soon as they arrive on campus until they depart for the day. Students in grades K-8 will be required to wear their masks in the hallways and classrooms. However, mask breaks will be offered by the direction of the teacher (when safely appropriate) at various points during the day.

Due to the importance of wearing masks and making good decisions as it relates to personal hygiene, the students are expected to follow the protocols as directed by the school and its personnel. In the case where a student engages in a pattern of blatant disregard for the safety of others, that student will be sent home until at which time the school administration meets with the family and authorizes that child's return to campus.

As part of our cleaning and disinfection protocol to mitigate the transmission of the COVID 19 virus, we are utilizing a two-step disinfecting and protecting process which will disinfect and protect all surfaces. The surface protectant we have chosen comes with a guarantee of its bacteriostatic product that will mechanically kill both viruses and bacteria on contact. The application of this product allows for 90 days of persistent protection against viruses and bacteria.

In addition, to the use of this bacteriostatic product, our facilities operation team will continue to assiduously clean and sanitize our school building each day.

As a means in which to authenticate the daily wellness of our population, each morning, all faculty, staff and students (grades K-8) will be required to submit a *Google Form* "Wellness Check" survey prior to entering school. A staff team member will be positioned at each of the entrance doorways and will use real time updates to verify that we have received a submitted "Wellness Check" form (one survey form for each child). It remains the practice that a student who arrives later than 8:25am on any given day must enter the school building on Manns Avenue. These students are also required to complete the "Wellness Check" form before they enter the school building. Please click [HERE](#) to view a copy of that daily "Wellness Check". Please note that the "Wellness Check" will serve as a social contract of integrity which will rely on your daily diligence to be aware of the health condition for your child.

For those families with a student in our Pre-K program, the parents of these children are required to travel to school with a touch less thermometer and take the temperature of their young person. The parent is expected to take their child's temperature in front of the assigned staff member while they are stopped in their vehicle.

Our plan to safeguard the well-being of our faculty, staff and students includes a comprehensive set of protocols which are summarized within the [COVID Decision Protocol Flowchart](#). This set of procedures will guide our responses at a time in which non-COVID 19 symptoms appear or the presence of a presumptive COVID 19 case becomes evident. Please make note that the flowchart reference to "close contact" is someone who comes within 6 feet of the affected person for a minimum period of 15 minutes.

As the lead healthcare practitioner for our campus, the school nurse will serve as the point of contact in any case where COVID 19 becomes evident. In preparation for the safe management of any such incident, the Health Suite has been relocated from the area across from the main office to the bottom floor of the adjoining convent building. This expansive area (formerly used for band and music) allows for the capacity to separate students based on their health needs. Parents who are contacted to pick up an ill child will access the Health Suite by the doorway that opens up to the courtyard area that sits adjacent to the bottom floor of the convent building.

## ***FACILITY***

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Within each of the classrooms, we have eliminated excess items (shelving units, file cabinets, storage tables, etc.) so as to provide increased spacing options for each grade level room. This strategy has enabled the opportunity to expand the safe distance boundary range of 3-6 feet between students.

We have removed all multiple seating tables from each grade level classroom and returned to the use of individual student desks that will face forward or within a "U" shaped figure, instead of having students facing one another.

Each child is assigned to one particular desk throughout the entirety of the school day. And as a matter of protocol, please note that individual desk shields may not be brought into school.

Students will not have access to their classroom's coat room. Therefore, all students will need to limit their belongings that they bring to school. Areas for storage will include items that are able to be stowed in a student desk. In addition, your child's book bag and lunch/drink items will be stored in a crate positioned in front of the student's desk. Weis Markets has generously donated a storage crate that will be available for each St. Ursula student. We are most thankful for the support of Weis Markets.

The students will not share communal items. Instead, families are being asked to purchase various items that have been placed on grade level supply lists. When appropriate, teachers will provide specific materials to each individual student which may include textbooks, workbooks, instructional manipulatives and a Chromebook device (depending upon the grade level).

The students will not gather in the cafeteria for lunch. Instead, the students will remain with their classmates and eat lunch within their cohort classroom.

The lunch period strategy includes splitting the cohort into an every other row arrangement. This pattern will create two groups where the odd numbered rows of students will be assigned to eat their lunch while the even numbered rows of students will have their mask on as they use the time to enjoy reading, drawing or catching up on school work. After the first group has finished eating, the students will then switch with the odd numbered rows wearing masks while the even numbered rows eat their lunch.

No hot lunch or special food orders, including milk and juice, will be available to the students. The children are required to bring in their own lunch box or "brown bag" lunch and drink each day (no sodas allowed). All students are expected to bring a cloth napkin or paper towel to serve as a placemat for their child's desk area as they eat lunch. In the case of a cloth napkin, it is expected that this item will return to campus once it is cleaned.

Access to communal water fountains will be eliminated. As such, students will be asked to bring in their own water bottle containers each day (please pack ample enough water appropriate to your child's physical needs). For those students enrolled in our extended day program, please be mindful of the need to increase the amount of water that your child brings to school as a result of being on campus for a longer period of time.

Each restroom door will indicate the permitted number of students who may enter the lavatory. The washroom will only permit the use of every other bathroom stall, urinal and sink area. Those not in use will be identified as "Not in Use".

The students will be sectioned off during the recess periods by utilizing additional spaces on campus. And as well, we will have access to other adjoining areas for play that have been generously shared by our neighbors at St. John's and Parkville High School.

Volunteers and guests to campus will be limited to only those visitors whose presence is considered essential. Given this directive, all visitors will enter the building by Manns Avenue and will be asked to place any items for the front office on a table in the entranceway foyer. Visitors are asked to bring in their own pen so as to minimize the use of shared items.

Until further notice, co-curricular and after school activities will not be permitted to be held within the building (band, choir, team sports, scout groups, etc.).

## *TRAVEL FLOW*

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Each grade level group of students have been assigned to arrive and depart from a designated doorway (as referenced on both of our route maps) with the use of multiple doors as a means in which to create appropriate spacings and limit the crossover of student groups.

Please refer to the accompanying maps that indicate the **NEW** travel route that we will employ for both morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up. Our reopening plan includes arrival and dismissal procedures specific to this new travel route. With this being said, the [Arrival Route Map](#), the [Dismissal Route Map](#) and the [Arrival and Dismissal Procedures](#) are now available for your review. Please note that each of these documents contain a chart that details the staggered drop-off and pick-up times that rotates alphabetically each day.

All grade levels will remain in a cohort group (a class of students) in one classroom all day long. Teachers will travel to the students' classrooms instead of having large groups of students traveling unnecessarily throughout the building. This preventive measure will limit movement and control the environment for each of our cohort groups.

So as to minimize hallway traffic and an excess of students in the restrooms, each floor will follow a staggered use of the lavatory through assigning grade level times in which to use the washroom facilities.

A staggered strategy will also be employed as cohorts will be assigned an arrangement where alternating classes exit their room so as to minimize the hallway traffic.

The hallways will include directional arrows and posted signs that will be intended to create safe distancing between hallway travel.

## *LEARNING*

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Families are being provided an opportunity to select in-person or remote learning. Those families which select remote learning are committed to remain in that mode of instruction throughout the trimester. As we approach the end of each marking period, families will be asked to once again commit their intention for their requested mode of instruction (in-person or remote) for the next trimester. That said, if your family has chosen to engage in remote learning, you are selecting that learning setting for your child(ren) for the entire trimester. You will not have the option to change from remote to in-person learning during the trimester. However, it is permissible at any point for a family to decide to move to remote learning after initially choosing in-person learning.

Daily attendance will be taken for both the students who are enrolled in remote or in-person learning.

Students who engage in remote learning will be able to access the classroom instruction through the *Google Meets* video platform. We have purchased an AMX Acendo Vibe audio camera system for each classroom as a means in which to allow access to classroom instruction for our remote learning students.

As student images will be viewable to the teacher through the *Google Meets* platform, the students will participate in class activities and discussions in a similar way to those within the classroom. Much of their work and requisite assignments will be posted within *Google Classroom*.

To assist both students and parents in the use of both Google Classroom and Google Meets video platform, you are invited to review a series of [Tutorials](#) that will assist you in your family's use of these online tools.

It is our goal to provide individually assigned devices to students in grades 2-8. Unfortunately though, given a national back order on Chromebooks, our invoice request is in delay. However, at the writing of this plan, it is anticipated that our order will be delivered in time so as to provide devices to every student in grades 2-8. Although, if the devices don't arrive in time, the students in grade 4 will begin the school without a device assigned to them.

Remote learning students will not be online for the entire school day. There will be periods of alternating direct instruction coupled with independent learning tasks provided to the students. The daily class schedule will be sent to you by your child's homeroom teacher.

Students will begin their class period with synchronous at-home learning. As is often the case in our younger grades, the subject areas might flow into one another which will then provide a cross-curricular learning journey for both our in-person and remote students. In this case, some class periods might include multiple subject areas for assessment and learning.

After the group instruction period concludes, the remote learning students will be directed by their teacher to log-off and complete their assigned independent work. The students will be directed to log back in at a designated time or class period.

No current cohort enrollment number will require the organization of a hybrid learning arrangement during trimester 1.

However, depending on the number of requests for in-person learning during trimester 2 and 3, an instructional rotation setting may be required during these marking periods. In such a scenario where the in-person learning number exceeds our ability to create

appropriate space between students, a determined number of students would be assigned to remote learning on a particular day during a designated week. The frequency of such a scenario will be dependent upon class size and how many students opt for remote learning (in each class) during any of our trimester marking periods.

It should be understood that on any given week (special schedules, early dismissal days, etc.), instructional class period minutes may slightly shift based on any particular week's activities.

Remote learning students WILL BE required to wear their school uniforms when they attend classes virtually.

The remote learning students will receive their textbooks, workbooks and Chromebook device (for designated grade levels) on Monday, August 31 at 2:00pm. The distribution of these items will take place by the outdoor basketball court area.

All Specials classes will take place within the students' cohort classroom. However, the exception to this situation is Physical Education class which will be held outside, weather permitting. It is important to note that just as in the case of outside recess, when students are outdoors for PE class, they will be permitted to take off their masks if directed by the on duty teacher/staff member and if the students maintain a safe distance of 6 feet or more.

The remote learning option has not been arranged for the purpose of a schedule other than that of the assigned class period time. Consequently, there is not an option to record the class where students arrive at a different time. Attendance will be taken at the start of the class period for both in-person and remote students.

As would be the case for in-person learning, should a student need assistance outside of the class period, they or their parents are asked to contact the teacher by email to arrange a time to meet.

If an in-person learner is required to stay at home (for health precautions or other reasons), the student may attend class via remote learning. However, the family must contact their child's teacher so as to obtain the Google Meet link used to virtually enter class.

## ***CONCLUSION***

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The priorities for the 2020-2021 school year remain centered on student learning, academic growth and the faith life of our young people. We remain committed to providing an educational setting where our practices, policies and procedures are paramount to our continued focus on the health, well-being and safety of our community.