

Dear St. Catherine Families,

In alignment with federal, local, and Archdiocesan guidance, our COVID plan has been updated to reflect our school guidance in many areas for preschool-8th grade. Most significant changes to note surround masking and potential exposure (formerly referred to only as close contacts). All changes have been noted in red—some content is completely changed, while some only has small changes in verbiage.

Over the course of the past two years, we have diligently followed all federal, local, and Archdiocesan guidance as a school and community. We feel strongly that this has kept staff, students, and families safe. Just as we gradually added mitigation strategies as they were needed, we are gradually able to pull back and remove strategies as guidance allows. As noted in this updated plan, there are many changes that reflect our next phase in this pandemic. You will also notice many strategies that have not changed, and still others that we are not ready to address at this time.

We have established a timeline for ongoing review of our plan and strategies to continue our efforts in staying safe and healthy, while simultaneously returning to a pre-COVID environment, as we're able.

- This plan will be updated as new federal, local, and Archdiocesan guidance is available.
- This plan will be reviewed every other week, taking into consideration local and school information around current case prevalence.
- As layered mitigation strategies are safely able to be removed/changed, this plan will be updated to reflect the changes.

Tomorrow, I will be meeting with all staff and students (via Zoom) to discuss mask-optional changes. Preschool teachers will be meeting with the preschool students. As mentioned in my previous communications, we will be discussing the importance of respecting individual choices, comfort levels, and worries. Students will be reminded of our mission to remember Jesus is our model in all that we say and do. We will discuss when masks will still be required: when singing, when exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms while at school, and when returning to school after testing positive for COVID-19 on days 6-10 (only if not COVID testing after day 5).

As always, I'm grateful for your support, flexibility, and partnership as we continue to navigate COVID-19.

Best,
Kathy

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Daily Health Screenings at Home

Please complete your own daily health check with your child(ren) before arriving at school. **Students are required to stay home and should get tested and/or see a health care provider and follow the return to school protocol accordingly.**

Face Coverings and Masks

Correct use of well-fitting masks or face coverings protects the wearer as well as others, thereby helping to prevent transmission of COVID-19.

Beginning 3/14/2022, masks are optional for students and staff. There will be situations when the use of well-fitting masks may be temporarily required for individuals by DOH and/or local public health (e.g., days 6-10 when a student or staff returns from isolation after 5 days. Masks may also be required universally during clusters and/or outbreaks in classrooms or with groups of students (e.g., a drama/musical class or a sports team), or within school settings, to limit disease transmission and ensure in-person instruction and care.

Students and staff will have the choice to wear a mask at school and in school settings, with the expectation that others' choices will be respected. Some may need to wear a mask because they or a member of their household is high risk for severe COVID-19 disease. Students and staff who are immunocompromised, medically fragile, and/or otherwise high risk for severe disease should consult their health care provider about whether or not to continue wearing well-fitted masks.

NOTE: There may be occasions when masks will be required that have yet to be determined. In the event of field trip/camp carpools of any sort, masks will need to be worn by drivers and passengers for the duration of the car ride.

Distancing

Teachers and staff will continue to keep students distanced from one another. We will maximize distance between students to the degree possible for the following circumstances:

- When eating lunch.
- In common areas outside of the classroom.
- During high-risk activities when increased exhalation or aerosolization occurs (e.g., PE or exercising indoors, singing or playing instruments, and cheering or shouting). These activities will be moved outdoors or to large, well-ventilated spaces whenever possible.
 - Hallways will remain one-way paths.
 - Restrooms will have a maximum of 3 students allowed at a time.
 - In the event of a school assembly, Mass, or multi-class event, there will be a limited number of students to ensure distancing.

Lunch and Birthday Treats

- Students will eat lunch in the gym, the music room, and/or outside in three waves: (THIS MODEL WILL BEGIN 9/14/2021)
 - K-2 (K/1st in gym, 2nd outside under covered area or in music room if weather is not conducive to being outside)
 - 3-5 (3rd/4th in gym, 5th outside under covered area or in music room if weather is not conducive to being outside)
 - 6-8 (6th/7th in gym, 8th outside under covered area or in music room if weather is not conducive to being outside).
- Students eating in the gym will sit by grade level and be separated by grades with more than 6 feet between grade levels. Students eating outside/in the music room will sit in a single grade level on outdoor waterproof seating pads.
- Students will remove their masks during their lunch period and sanitize their hands prior to eating.
- If your child would like to bring **birthday treats** on their birthday, please make sure each treat is individually wrapped. They will be passed out at a time during the day at the teacher's discretion, likely not at lunch as the lunch period is only long enough to eat lunch.

Handwashing and Sanitizing

Staff will continue to encourage frequent handwashing and good respiratory etiquette to prevent contracting and spreading infectious diseases, including COVID-19.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

Current DOH guidance recommends cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces each night after students leave and if someone in the room exhibits symptoms (they will in turn be immediately isolated, and then sent home.).

Ventilation

We purchased individual ventilation units for each classroom and shared space with a Fulcrum grant we received last year. These units help to improve air circulation. We **have installed** additional operable windows in our science lab, church basement (K-8 Spanish and 7/8 ELA), and Benicasa basement (art room) to increase ventilation in that area of the building. During the school days, windows will also be open throughout the school for increased ventilation. When weather is cold, your child(ren) are encouraged to bring coats daily.

Participation in Learn to Return

St. Catherine is partnering with the Washington State Department of Health and Health Commons Project to offer free COVID-19 testing at St. Catherine. This program provides students and staff with quick and highly accurate COVID-19 PCR and antigen testing as symptoms arise or following known exposure. This is an optional program in which a PCR student consent form or antigen student consent form must be completed prior to testing and submitted to the office (alucero@stcatherineschool.net). We are able to conduct tests during school hours (at mutually agreeable times) and under emergency circumstances on the weekend based on individual circumstances and availability of staffing to test.

Responding to Cases or Potential Exposure

Any student, teacher, or staff who reports COVID-19-like symptoms will be immediately isolated from others and sent home. They should seek diagnostic testing as soon as feasible. In each situation, the school COVID coordinators may need to make individual decisions regarding protocols depending on circumstances, test availability, and other factors.

What if a staff member or student tests positive for COVID-19? - Isolation

A student, child, or staff who tests positive for COVID-19 is required to isolate, regardless of vaccination status.

The individual may return to school/care after 5 full days of isolation if:

- Their symptoms have improved or they are asymptomatic, AND
- They are without a fever for the past 24 hours without use of fever-reducing medications.

If returning to school after day 5, the individual:

- Is **required** to wear a well-fitted mask during days 6-10 of their isolation period, OR
- Test negative with an antigen or at-home test any day after day 5. Testing beyond day 10 is not necessary.

Note: *If for any reason a person undergoes COVID-19 tests, only the result from the **first test** will be considered when determining the timeline to return to school.*

Responding to Cases or Suspected Cases of COVID-19 (“What to do if a Person is Symptomatic” flowchart from the DOH)

- **What if My Child Has One or More of These Symptoms** (fever 100.4° F or higher; shortness of breath or difficulty breathing; muscle or body aches; new loss of taste or smell, cough (new, changed, or worsening)
 - YOU MUST NOTIFY OUR OFFICE MANAGER, AMANDA LUECRO ALUCERO@STCATHERINESCHOOL.NET WHEN YOU FIRST NOTICE A SYMPTOM. You will receive guidance as to how to proceed in regards to testing and returning to school.)
 - Your child should isolate at home AND get tested for COVID-19 via a PCR test.
 - If they test **POSITIVE** for COVID-19, they need to **isolate at home and identify close contacts** (*St. Catherine will identify close contacts for possible school close contacts*). See above section regarding isolation requirements.
 - If they test **NEGATIVE** for COVID-19 (via a PCR test) **OR** receive an alternative named diagnosis from a health care provider **PLUS** a negative PCR **or antigen** test, they can **return to school** if:
 - No fever within the past 24 hours (without medication) **and**
 - Symptoms have significantly improved.
- **What if My Child Has One or More of These Symptoms** (congestion or runny nose; nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea); headache, fatigue, or sore throat)
 - YOU MUST NOTIFY OUR OFFICE MANAGER, AMANDA LUECRO ALUCERO@STCATHERINESCHOOL.NET WHEN YOU FIRST NOTICE A SYMPTOM. You will receive guidance as to how to proceed in regards to testing and returning to school.)
 - Your child should isolate at home.
 - If only **ONE SYMPTOM WAS PRESENT**:
 - **If the symptom resolves within 24 hours** OR is consistent with a diagnosed chronic illness, they can return to school if:
 - No fever within the past 24 hours (without medication) **AND**
 - Symptom has significantly improved
 - **If the ONE symptom does NOT** resolve within 24 hours **OR is not** consistent with a diagnosed chronic illness, they should isolate at home and get tested for COVID-19 (via a PCR **or antigen** test).
 - If they test **POSITIVE** for COVID-19, they need to **isolate at home and identify close contacts** (*St. Catherine will identify close contacts for possible school close contacts*). See above section regarding isolation requirements.
 - If they test **NEGATIVE** for COVID-19 (via a PCR **or antigen** test) **OR** receive an alternative named diagnosis from a health care provider **PLUS** a negative PCR test, they can **return to school** if:
 - No fever within the past 24 hours (without medication) **and**
 - Symptoms have significantly improved.
 - If **MORE THAN ONE SYMPTOM** is present:
 - Your child should isolate at home AND get tested for COVID-19 via a PCR test.
 - If they test **POSITIVE** for COVID-19, they need to **isolate at home and identify close contacts** (*St. Catherine will identify close contacts for possible school close contacts*). See above section regarding isolation requirements.

Livestreaming and Remote Learning Conditions

- If students need to **isolate at home** due to a confirmed case of COVID-19, teachers will provide [a livestream of instruction via Zoom](#). (*Confidential St. Catherine document link provides Zoom links and passwords for each grade.*) Once we receive notification of a confirmed case of COVID-19, there will be a 24-hour period before live-streaming will be available. At that time, your child's homeroom teacher will provide a Zoom link (or multiple links if your child has multiple teachers on a given day). There will not be any interaction during this livestream. Teachers will communicate with individual families regarding missed work. If in grades 3-8, teachers will post assignments through Google Classroom. In Preschool and grades K-2, teachers will communicate with families via email for assignments.
- If an entire class has to isolate at home due to a DOH-defined outbreak, St. Catherine will provide remote learning during the class isolation period.
- If transmissions increase significantly, or if staffing shortages result, it may be necessary for specific classes (or an entire school) to go remote for a period of time. While these future circumstances are uncertain, we recommend that families have a plan in place should this occur. In this event, there will be a 2-day lag enabling teachers to shift to remote learning and prepare student materials, and to provide a materials pickup day for families.
- All other non-COVID-19 related sick days and unexcused absences will be treated as typical missed school days. Students will receive information about missed work and instruction from their teacher(s) upon returning to school.

When an individual **is isolating at home**, they should stay home and away from others except to get medical care. If a student is doing remote learning or livestreaming due to isolation/outbreak, they should not go anywhere except home or to seek medical care. Parents/Guardians should notify all care providers (e.g., child care, school) when their child is in **isolation** and thus excluded from all settings. Children in **isolation** should go or stay home.

Contact Tracing

To aid in the process of contact tracing if necessary, the school is keeping detailed attendance records, seating charts for all classes and specialists' classes, and individual attendance records for Extended Care and all other in-school after school activities. We have protocols and strategies in place to avoid situations that could be defined as close contact within the building or on campus. In the event a close contact situation does occur, families of students of possible contact will be notified ASAP after conferring with the local health jurisdiction for their determination of close contact in the given situation.

All cases of COVID-19 and outbreaks will be reported to the local health jurisdiction per Washington State law (WAC 246-101). In addition, we will cooperate with public health authorities in the investigation of cases and outbreaks that may be associated with our school (WAC 246-101).

Travel During COVID-19 by planes, buses, trains, and other forms of public transportation (excludes travel by car)

- **Before you travel:**

- Fill out a [pre-absence form](#) (found on our website) and submit to the office at least 2 weeks before absence)
- Notify our office manager, Amanda Lucero alucero@stcatherineschool.net, of your student's travel dates
- **If you are up to date with your COVID-19 vaccines, after you travel:**
 - Self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms; isolate and get tested if you develop symptoms.
 - Follow all state, tribal, local, and territorial recommendations or requirements after travel.
- **If you are NOT up to date with your COVID-19 vaccines, after you travel:**
 - Self-quarantine and get tested after travel:
 - Get tested with a viral test 3-5 days after returning from travel.
 - Stay home and self-quarantine for a full 5 days after travel.
 - Follow additional recommendations below for ALL travelers.
 - Self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms; isolate and get tested if you develop symptoms.
 - **Note: Live stream instruction will not be provided for quarantining due to travel.**

International Travel During COVID-19 (per [CDC recommendations](#))

- **Before you travel:**
 - Fill out a [pre-absence form](#) (found on our website) and submit to the office at least 2 weeks before absence)
 - Notify our office manager, Amanda Lucero alucero@stcatherineschool.net, of your student's travel dates
- **If you are NOT up to date with your COVID-19 vaccines, after you travel:**
 - Stay home and self-quarantine for a full 5 days after travel
- **Regardless of vaccination status, after you travel:**
 - Get tested with a COVID-19 viral test 3-5 days after travel and submit to the school office.
 - Self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms; isolate and get tested if you develop symptoms.

Vaccinations for Eligible Students and Volunteers

In accordance with the Governor's August 18th proclamation (and the DOH and L&I guidelines), all schools must verify vaccination status of staff, eligible students, and volunteers/visitors. **Parents or guardians of children 5 and over are required to confirm their student's COVID-19 vaccination status to our office. For students ages 5-11, this includes completing our Google Form indicating your intent to vaccinate or not vaccinate. As the year progresses, and your child turns 5, or you seek vaccination after December 1, 2021, you will be required to communicate and/or verify their vaccination status to the office.** Please email a photo of your student's vaccination card to Amanda Lucero (alucero@stcatherineschool.net) or complete [this form](#) indicating your student is not currently vaccinated.

Volunteers/visitors will also need to communicate and verify their vaccination when they are in the school building. Due to this protocol, other than staff and students, we will only be allowing vaccination verified adults/volunteers/vendors in the school building. When volunteers are scheduled, we will ask you to send vaccination verification to our office before you come in the building. This will need to be done in advance and will not be available for any drop in scenario. For those volunteers who are not

vaccinated, we will be providing opportunities for volunteering outside of the school building when children are not present as we're able.

In alignment with Department of Health guidance, we continue to strongly recommend that all students eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine become fully vaccinated. Current guidance allows that fully vaccinated students will not be required to quarantine following a known exposure, if asymptomatic. We will continue to update families on any changes in the guidance from the state.

Information on Optional Strategies for Layered Prevention (from: [WSDOH](#))

The Washington Department of Health (DOH) encourages schools to coordinate with their local health jurisdiction (LHJ) for any decisions related to the strategies outlined herein. While we are moving into a new phase of the pandemic, COVID-19 remains with us, and it should be recognized the COVID-19 pandemic response must remain flexible with the possibility for changes that occur at the state and local levels. Conditions may require implementation of additional mitigation practices to lessen the impact of disease in schools and provider settings, and to ensure continuity of in-person instruction and care.

Evidence to date suggests that when prevention strategies are layered and implemented with fidelity, transmission rates within schools and provider programs can be limited. Further, transmission of SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) in the community is correlated with incidence of infected individuals in schools and provider settings. When community rates of COVID-19 are high, there is an increased likelihood that SARS-CoV-2 will be introduced to, and potentially transmitted within, a school or provider setting.

Lessons learned over the first two years of the pandemic have identified the importance of the following to prevent COVID-19 transmission and related outbreaks:

- Staying up to date on vaccinations.
- Wearing masks for personal protection and source control.
- Enhancing ventilation to reduce transmission of aerosolized viruses.
- Remaining at home when ill.
- Conducting rapid diagnostic testing.
- Exercising good respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene.
- Practicing physical distancing to the degree possible and practical.
- Cleaning and disinfecting as indicated.
- Maximizing outdoor activities.

Schools and providers need to maintain flexibility in how layers of mitigation practices are applied. Removal of a layer of protection should be done factoring in considerations such as community levels of transmission, local outbreaks, and vaccination rates. Schools and providers should also ensure an environment that supports individuals who choose to continue a protective practice, like wearing a mask. As disease prevalence increases, schools and providers should consider adding back in additional layers of prevention or mitigation measures. Coordination with local public health will ensure this is done in the way to best ensure the safety of students, children, employees, families, and the community. Individuals who choose to continue to use preventative measures to protect themselves should be supported. Schools and programs should not tolerate harassment or bullying of any kind.

Behavior and Mental Health

Feeling anxious about changes in school/provider routines, such as the discontinuation of masking, or when disease levels rise, is normal and expected. The experiences of children, teens, families, and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic has frequently been complicated and challenging; and has had an impact on bodies, minds, and emotions.

As children, teens, parents, caregivers, and school staff navigate the next phase of the pandemic and what that means for schools and families, these factors may impact their individual emotional functioning. Some students will be relieved and happy, but others may feel anxious and not ready for the changes. It will take time for everyone to adjust. It will be important to provide support and guidance for students, to allow time for them to adjust to new guidelines, and to offer permission for students and staff to continue to wear masks or physically distance if they feel uncomfortable with the changes.

[The Behavioral Health Toolbox for Families: Supporting Children and Teens During the COVID19 Pandemic](#) provides general information about common emotional reactions of children, teens, and families during disasters. It also has suggestions on how to help children, teens, and families recover from disasters and grow stronger. The [COVID-19 Back-to-Classroom THINK Toolbox](#) provides behavioral health tips and resources for navigating some of the common emotional responses of children, teens, and adults during disasters and how these may present in the classroom and other areas of life.

Daily Arrival and Departure Proceedings

Our daily drop-off and pickup procedures will be returning to a much more normal state. When you drop off your child in the carpool line, make sure your child(ren) are already masked and ready to exit the car promptly upon arriving. All K-8 families may arrive between 8:10-8:25, and all preschool families may arrive between 8:20-8:30. K-8 students will exit cars and walk directly to their respective homeroom classrooms. Preschool students will be escorted to the preschool classrooms. Students will be counted tardy when the final bell rings at 8:30 (8:40 for preschool students) if they are not in their homeroom.

At the end of the day, all K-8 students will be dismissed at 3:10 (2:25 on Wednesdays), and escorted by their homeroom teacher to the parking lot. Families picking up only one child should begin arriving at 3:13. Parents picking up 2 or more children should begin arriving at 3:18. (2:28 and 2:33 respectively on Wednesdays). If the drive through line is full when you arrive, please park in the parking lot. You may then walk and meet your student at the orange coned area by the crosswalk or your student may come to the crosswalk and head to their car if they see their car. Each class will have a designated area to sit and wait for their carpool. Staff will oversee continued minimum 3-foot distancing between students at this time. If your child(ren) is not ready for you when you are in line, you will be asked to park until they are ready. When you exit the parking lot, please turn right only on 85th to keep the flow of traffic going.

Walkers will be directed to go immediately to their homeroom classrooms upon arrival in the morning. At the end of the day, walkers will be dismissed at the front of the school and will be standing against the brick wall at the south end of the main building. Parents who meet their children to walk home may do so at the front of the building at 3:10 (front of preschool portables for Cubs and Tigers).

Late Arrival Procedure

If your family arrives after 8:30 (8:40 for preschool students), please follow this protocol:

1. Please park on 8th Avenue in front of the main school entrance. (Please DO NOT park directly in front of the houses across the street from the school; park on the side directly in front of the school).
2. Parents must escort their child to the front door and ring the buzzer.
3. Please announce who you are and that you need to sign your child in for the day.
4. A staff member will then meet you at the front door (parents are asked to remain outside of the building).
5. The student will be instructed to walk directly to their classroom (preschool student parents will escort their child to the preschool classroom).
6. The staff member will sign the K-8 student into the building.

Mid-Day Pick Up Procedure

If your student must be picked up early, please contact the office ahead of time. If you are picking your child up for an appointment, please ensure that you arrive with plenty of time to spare. The office will call for the student once you have arrived.

1. Please park on 8th Avenue in front of the main school entrance. (Please DO NOT park directly in front of the houses across the street from the school; park on the side directly in front of the school).
2. Ring the buzzer and announce who you are and that you are there to pick up your child.
3. Parents will be asked to wait outside the front door while a staff member retrieves the student. Please be patient as this may take a few moments.
4. A staff member will escort the student to the front door to meet you, then will sign him/her out of the building.

Classroom Assignments

In order to maintain a minimum 3-foot distance between students in the classroom, it was necessary to relocate most classes to different spaces again. The following chart shows where each grade level will be located for this year:

Cubs	West Preschool Portable
Tigers	East Preschool Portable
K	Main Floor Main Building
1	2 nd Floor Main Building
2	Main Floor Main Building
3	Main Floor Main Building
4	2 nd Floor Main Building
5	2 nd Floor Main Building
6	North Middle School portable
7	2 nd Floor Main Building
8	South Middle School Portable

Thank you for continued vigilance and support.

Best,

Kathy Cox