

Dear Members of the Sacred Heart School Community,

The weather in New Orleans trains us to be agile and adaptable. It changes all the time; sometimes, even within a few hours.



The rain flows in torrents. Cars move to neutral grounds. Boom! Power goes down. Flashlights are found. Phones are ringing. Text messages fly. In minutes, our family and friends are drawn together across geographies to form a circle of support and safety.

Will Rogers has been quoted as saying, "If you don't like the weather, wait a minute and it will change." I think that his off-side comment references a powerful truth for these pandemic times: patience and flexibility are ninja virtues in times of uncertainty and change.

Holding the tension of turbulence in the larger environment of COVID-19 reminds me of our weather response systems, whether personal of collective. Both call us to remain centered and balanced while riding on the ever-changing waves of our current circumstances.



With anticipation and excitement, I am happy to share that

Sacred Heart remains poised to re-open school on its currently scheduled dates. We have prepared well for multiple eventualities, and we are confident about work "inside the Gates" to "open our Gates" next month.

To this end, our team of administrators, staff and faculty has developed level-headed reentry procedures which offer equanimity while we adapt to the new normal ahead of us. In the following pages, you'll find an overview of our planning and protocols. We will continue to update our website (at<u>https://www.ashrosary.org/beyond-the-gates</u>) with additional details as circumstances evolve and in response to frequently asked questions.

Summer Learning Program

So many of you have shared with me how happy you and your daughters have been with our Summer Learning Program. It has been our joy to offer the program, and we have benefited from the rich blessing of being back in school with children and, together, all learning! Learning is at the heart of who we are as educators, so we all thrive in the dynamic of teaching and learning with young people.

Our Summer Learning Program for over 150 Little Hearts, Lower School and Middle School students has provided us with immensely valuable information about the conduct of our educational program within the guidelines and protocols of our civic and health authorities. Through the implementation of these summer programs, we have observed our protocols through the eyes, ears, hands and hearts of our young students and their teachers.

Their experience has been a portal into "what works" and to **strengthening our systems** for safe practice when they return to school for the 2020-2021 school year.



School-Wide Health & Safety Measures



On both campuses and in each Division, our primary concern has been to re-open in an environment of both safety and care for our students, our faculty and staff, and our families. Sacred Heart is well-staffed with two full time nurses, one an emergency care nurse. She is providing us with a plethora of information needed to develop safe protocols in our school.

Besides our resident expertise, Sacred Heart has formed a partnership with Children's Hospital to provide consulting and other support services related to ASH's safe re-opening amidst the evolving COVID-19 pandemic. Children's Hospital incorporates two academic pediatric medical programs through partnerships with LSU Health New Orleans and Tulane University School of Medicine. It is the official partner of the Louisiana Department of Education for safely re-opening schools.







School-Wide Health & Safety Measures

While we are all anxious to re-open school and return to a semblance of a routine, we are committed to doing so with the highest standard of safety for your daughters. To this end, ASH will steadfastly implement the health and safety protocols that are in place at the time we re-open. Across the school, we will operationalize the following:

Temperature Checks and Screening Questions

- In-home monitoring
- Screening at school when entering school.
- Anyone with a temperatures over 100.0 may not remain at school. Parents will be notified.

Continual Handwashing and Use of Hand Sanitizer

• Use of hand sanitizer at stations located throughout the campus and in classrooms.

Facial Coverings

- Masks will be required for all adults on campus, and students in Kindergarten through Grade 12.
- Masks will be optional for students in Pre-K.
- Children under the age of 2 will not wear masks.

All students will receive an ASH-branded mask as a gift of the Fathers' Club at the beginning of school. Students may wear ASH-branded masks (several options available in the ASH Cornerstore), ASH-themed masks (in ASH plaid, red, white or cardinal) or a solid colored mask of their choice at school and school activities.







School-Wide Health & Safety Measures

Physically Distanced, Socially Connected

- Standard = 6 ft.
- Respective to age group

Limited Visitors on Campus

- Appointment required
- Visitors will be screened
- Visitor reservations should be coordinated with Division Heads

Full Time Nurse on Each Campus Isolation Rooms on Each Campus





Partnership with Our Families

To carry out our operational plan, I must emphasize the need for your partnership at home in safety.

Each member of our school community must take seriously their responsibility for the health and safety of the whole.

At school, we will be implementing measures to mitigate risks and to protect your daughters from getting sick while she is at school. We ask for your rigorous support at home, as well.



Facility Modifications



Our spacious campuses lend themselves to flexibility, comfort, safety, and learning. We will operationalize the following:

Extensive Cleaning and Disinfection

- ASH has hired two additional members of our janitorial staff on both campuses to clean throughout the day, between classes, during meetings, and all common spaces. This is in addition to our regular crew, who remain in place for regular cleaning at the end of each day.
- Furniture and fixtures in common spaces and classrooms are spatially arranged with regard to physical (social) distancing for that age group.

Controlled Traffic Flow

- Staircases have been designated as "up" and "down."
- Hallways have been designated as one direction, when possible.
- Classes are staggered so that numbers in hallways are limited.

Airflow/Air Conditioning

• All AC units have been cleaned, and all filters have been changed to be prepare for our students' return.



Academics: Teaching & Learning



Signage

- Friendly, fun and age-appropriate signage will guide us all along the path of safety.
- Outdoor settings for recreation, breaks, recess and learning abound.

Large common areas

• Will flex for multiple usage throughout the day

Spacious grounds, galleries and balconies

No-touch water bottle refilling stations









Academics: Teaching & Learning

Sacred Heart's standards of rigor and innovation are constant and will remain intact regardless of circumstance. This is your expectation of us, and our promise to you.

We are committed to executing our high standards 1) on campus, 2) in a hybrid or blended model of on and off campus (depending on "phasing" in place by City or State), and 3) off campus through virtual modalities.

- **Traditional Learning:** Instruction will take place on campus during the regular school day.
- **Hybrid Model:** Some students will be learning on campus while other students are learning and working from home.
- **Distance Learning:** Students learn from home, with teachers providing all instruction, support, and intervention. In addition, Sacred Heart provides support with social and emotional needs of students.

Our first line of action is that all students attend school on our campus whenever possible. We will provide an alternative to our on-campus program and services if:

- 1) The school is unable to run its programs due to "phasing" restrictions, or
- 2) A student is unable to attend school due to COVID-19 or the need to quarantine.

Division-Specific Learning Modalities Planned for Each Phase

More detailed information provided at <u>https://www.ashrosary.org/beyond-the-gates</u> and in parent newsletters.

| | Little Hearts | Preschool/ Lower School | Middle School | Upper School |
|---------|---------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Phase 1 | Traditional | Traditional Hybrid Distance | Distance | Distance |
| Phase 2 | Traditional | Traditional Hybrid | Traditional Hybrid | Traditional Hybrid |
| Phase 3 | Traditional | Traditional | Traditional | Traditional |



Academics: Teaching & Learning

As educators, we know that the value to being on campus far outweighs our students being at home. Whether at home or on campus, we are ready with the support of technology and online learning platforms.

Online Learning Management Systems

- **Brightwheel** in Little Hearts connects our littlest ones with parents
- Seesaw in Lower School is being deployed; teachers are being trained
- **MySchoolApp** in the Middle and Upper School

Online Instructional Platforms

- **Google Meet** for classes in Lower, Middle and Upper School
- **Zoom** for some administrative meetings
- Screencastify for creating convenient instructional screen recordings
- **Google Jamboard** for a collaborative digital whiteboard experience
- Albert I.O. in Upper School for practice work and online delivery of instruction

SofieConnect and OneSchoolHouse (Upper School)

- **SofieConnect** is an online learning provider hosted by our Sacred Heart School in Greenwich, Connecticut. All educators and students are from Sacred Heart Schools across the 24-school Network of Sacred Heart Schools in the U.S. and Canada.
- **OneSchoolHouse** provides online classes for many independent schools through the NAIS and ISAS networks.

Grading and Reporting

- Faculty will continue to track student progress both in school and during remote learning
- Respective to age group
- Both formative and summative assessment will provide data to monitor progress

Synchronous and Asynchronous Instruction

Arranging Instructional Spaces for Flexible Grouping

Learning in Small Groups and Cohorts



Food & Mutrition Services

Food and hydration are both important parts of our day. Many of you have asked about our food services. We are New Orleaneans, after all! At ASH, we appreciate that families have different preferences, so we utilize cafeteria-style dining or "brown-bagging" from home. Here is our current plan:

Mater Campus

- We will continue our food service partnership with the Archdiocese of New Orleans, a program that offers nutritional lunches.
- We have worked directly with the Food and Nutrition Manager to refine the menu so that our students can enjoy nutritional meals in a safe way.
- Menu items will include crowd favorites such as pepperoni pizza and the most popular of all "made-from-scratch" cinnamon buns and sticks!
- Lunches will be eaten in classrooms or outside, when possible.
- Students are welcome to bring their own lunch (please refrain from sending in any items containing peanuts).

Rosary Campus

- Toulouse Gourmet Catering may continue to provide services. We are exploring alternatives.
- We plan to offer wrapped sandwiches, wraps and boxed salads.
- Our students will eat in and out-of-doors and in small groups on our spacious campus.
- Microwaves and toasters will not be available at the start of the school year due to the need for limiting contact with high touch areas.

We ask that biodegradable and eco-friendly materials are used on both campuses to every extent possible to maintain our commitment to environmental sustainability.

Sacred Heart has received a prestigious three-year grant from the E.E. Ford Foundation to support our commitment in this area.



More information will follow about our plans for this schoolwide initiative. Goûter will still be served, but, perhaps, with paper wrappers!

Athletics & Arts

The Academy of the Sacred Heart is committed to a successful athletic department that adheres to all rules as issued by both the State of Louisiana and the LHSAA for sports activities. Our Athletic Director, Sue Bower, is a highly competent professional with years of experience in designing school-wide sports, Physical Education, and comprehensive athletic programs.

Sacred Heart has been conducting conditioning and sport specific training (when permitted) on campus during June and July in anticipation of having sport seasons in 2020-21.

Our robust P.E. program will continue; and we will expand with new health and wellness programs to respond to the social and emotional needs of our students, faculty and staff.







The Athletic Department will keep the Sacred Heart Community updated as information is revealed regarding the State of Louisiana and LHSAA's stances on COVID-19, and whether fall sports will be conducted.

Middle School sports are not governed by the LHSAA, so along with our peer schools, we will make a joint decision regarding fall sports. All decisions, in addition to following state guidance, will be made with the safety and welfare of our students in mind.



Athletics & Ants



Our Digital Arts Program is becoming another one of ASH's "signature" programs, offering text/script development to post-production training.

Over the summer, we moved and expanded our studio to accommodate the growing interest of our students. Our new studio—still located in in the Favrot Arts Center—is ready for our students!

We are also excited about the move of our Upper School Arts studio to the Favrot Arts Center. With new accommodations, and a wall of windows overlooking the Benson Outdoor Track and Field, our students will be inspired to create on their canvases. We have added additional plumbing to our outdoor ceramics studio for our Middle and Upper School students. Outdoor wheels and a kiln are spinning: here we go!





Support Services

ASH's commitment to the "whole child" is guided by a gifted staff of Deans, Learning Specialists, Nurses, Counselors, and a Tulane Athletic Trainer. We offer a developmentally appropriate program focusing on the social, emotional and spiritual needs of our students at each level.

In these times, our staff will continue to provide the following:

Online Resources

Articles, videos and webinars on topics such as stress, advice on face masks, caring for a sick child, and many other topics can be found at: <u>www.ashrosary.org/beyond-the-</u> <u>gates</u>

This page will continue to serve as our resource for sharing COVIDrelated plans and protocols.



Beyond the Gates: School Information & Messages

Advisories

- Middle School students will begin each day in advisory with activities to support their social and emotional learning.
- Upper School students will have regular meetings with their advisors and advisory groups to support their social and emotional learning.

Counselors

• Our counselors will be holding regularly scheduled group guidance classes to support social and emotional learning with our students.

Learning Specialists

- Learning Specialists will continue to develop learning profiles for students with current evaluations.
- Learning Specialists will work with students to develop executive functioning and study skills.

Two Full-time Nurses



Technology is integrated throughout each division with age appropriate hardware, software and supervision. We are working to provide Chromebooks for every student, starting in first grade. In Upper School, students continue their studies with their own personal laptops.

Our Technology Department provided continuous support for all families and students during our time "beyond the gates," and moving forward, it will continue to provide 1:1 support whenever needed.

Additionally, faculty and staff have participated in multiple professional development programs during the summer, and they are prepared to meet the needs of our students in innovative ways.

Communications

Throughout the year, each Division communicates through regular newsletters and the parent portal. During the pandemic, we began to work "Beyond the Gates" and organized specialized resources in a centralized and convenient page webpage: https://www.ashrosary.org/beyond-the-gates.

Please visit this page to learn much more about the particularities of the Divisional Learning Plans, Counseling Resources, and many COVID-19-related questions, which we will continue to update as we introduce additional resources and respond to frequently asked questions.

Additionally, you can follow us on social media via <u>Instagram</u>, <u>Facebook</u> and <u>Twitter</u> for an additional perspective of life at Sacred Heart.

Last year, as we shifted to virtual modes for our events and celebrations, many of you submitted pictures to us to share with the broader community, keeping us connected beyond the gates.

We look forward to continuing to build this shared experience online, with your permission and while modeling conscientious and safe use of social media for our students.





What if ... Protocols for Positive Diagnosis

If a member of our school community contracts COVID-19, the school will follow the guidelines of civic and health authorities.

In the event of a diagnosis or exposure, we ask you to contact your daughter's Division Head. As mentioned, Sacred Heart has contracted with Children's Hospital for its professional guidance. Our Parent Handbooks in each Division further detail medical and health-related policies and procedures.

These guidelines can be summarized as follows:

Quarantine period of 14 days

- Learning continues remotely, if possible.
- Support services are provided, including support of Children's Hospital, if necessary for advice on procedures and to make determinations regarding any additional precautions that must be taken.
- If a faculty member is quarantined, Sacred Heart has a steady cadre of qualified professionals available.

Contact Tracing

- Public Health officials are notified to provide contact tracing support.
- Individuals who were in "close contact" with an infected student, coach, or faculty/staff member will be asked to stay home and monitor symptoms for 14 days. Close contact is defined as a person who was less than six feet away from the infected student for more than 15 minutes.



Start Dates, Arrivals & Dismissals

Each Division will send out detailed information about school start dates and parent orientations. August 12 will be orientation day for the Upper School and first Prep (5th Grade). August 13 will be the first day of school for PreK – Grade 12. August 17 will be the first day of school for our Little Hearts.

Our dates have not changed, but our <u>times and procedures have changed</u> to adjust to health and safety guidelines.

Details of arrivals and dismissal are specific to each Division. It is important to smooth operations that these procedures are carefully followed.



Sacred Heart has hired three Sheriffs to manage traffic flow — two officers will be stationed on the Mater Campus, and one will be stationed on the Rosary Campus. These officers will be positioned to assist the school and the parents during these high traffic times. In addition, we will continue to engage our armed guards for ongoing protection during the school day.



As mentioned at the beginning of this letter, I believe that living in New Orleans acclimates us to the mindset and behaviors that will be necessary as we go forward this year. We will not be able to predict how things will happen, but we are able to respond in positive, caring ways.

What is most beautiful about Sacred Heart is our mission as expressed in loving care for one another, especially in times of struggle or



adversity. Our community draws together in such times with prayer and support. As we look forward, let us pray together for the graces we will need as individuals and collectively to be present to one another, to find strength in one another and to grow closer to one another.

As people of faith, we know that God accompanies us on the journey of our life. Let us lean back into this Loving Embrace which waits for us in each moment of our journey this year.

Sacred Heart of Jesus: WE PLACE OUR TRUST IN YOU.

Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns. Count on my prayer each day for you and your family.

In CJM,

8. Helanie Alurto Ry

Sr. Melanie A. Guste, RSCJ Headmistress

