



THE BASILICA SCHOOL OF SAINT MARY'S COMMUNITY POLICIES AND OPERATIONS GUIDE IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19 SCHOOL YEAR 2020-2021

OUR COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS, PARENTS, FACULTY AND STAFF

- To move forward in our mission to form Saints, Stewards, and Scholars, placing ourselves in the care of Our Lady;
- To protect the safety and health of our school community;
- To deliver a high standard of academic education and formation in the Catholic faith;
- To welcome new families to our school with the warmth of our faith-filled community;
- To communicate in a timely and transparent manner new and changing information related to the operation of the school in light of COVID-19

With guidance and direction from the diocesan Office of Catholic Schools, state, and local health agencies, and with consideration to our unique school community needs, we have established the following policies and operational guidelines. It is critical that each member of our community adhere to these guidelines to safeguard everyone's health and well-being.

The following guidelines will be adjusted as needed in light of the evolving pandemic.

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PLAN FOR REOPENING

In developing its plan for reopening, The Basilica School of Saint Mary relied on reputable sources of data and guidelines (e.g. the Centers for Disease Control, the Virginia Health Department, the City of Alexandria Health Department, and the Diocese of Arlington Office of Catholic Schools). Given the dynamic nature of the situation, we are prepared to be flexible and are aware that the guidelines presented in this document may change over time. We will continue to monitor information as it is available and in partnership with diocesan offices.

On-Campus Reopening with the Possibility of Distance Learning by Mandate

The Basilica School of Saint Mary will reopen on Monday, August 31, 2020. While following all COVID-19 precautions, the school and its campus will be open to all enrolled students Monday through Friday.

The pandemic is likely to continue to wax and wane until a vaccine is available. If by mandate of the Governor or local authorities, we are required to close our school building(s) at any time during the 2020-2021 school year, we will do so. While complying with any such directive, we will follow a distance learning model.

We will primarily use an increase in live Zooms and the mySMS learning management system to deliver the same standard of academic education to which parents and students are accustomed. Our distance learning schedule will be posted on our website at the beginning of the school year, not after any possible school closing.

All students will have access to a device for use at home if and when the school is closed, but not before a possible mandated closing. Those who are on campus for in-person learning will not be able to bring a school device home unless they are part of the one-to-one school iPad program (6th and 7th grades).

If the school moves to a distance learning model, we will share information about grading policies and attendance at that time.

Students with Documented Health Challenges

Any parent(s) of a child(ren) with documented health challenges where in-person instruction on campus might pose a risk, should email Mrs. Christine Danaher, RN, at cdanaher@smsva.org. Mrs. Danaher will work with our academic and resource team to advance and implement a Student Assistance Plan which meets the unique academic needs of the child(ren). The school will work with families to make all possible accommodations for those students not able to attend school in person.

Parent Prerogative

Any parent(s) with concerns about COVID-19 has the prerogative to opt-in their child(ren) to on-line learning instead of sending their child(ren) to the school campus. Students who are opted-in to this program will have access to a school-issued device for home use. At a minimum, teachers will post all school work by 8:00 pm the night before a school day. Teachers will also communicate the best means to turn in the work once it is completed. The school will work to support the academic growth of participating students, who may be struggling to understand lesson objectives.

On the days students participating in the on-line learning option complete and turn in work, they will be considered present at school. If they do not complete and turn in work, they will be considered absent from school, and the absences will be noted on the report card. Encore grades will be entered for those students in the on-line learning program, however, it may not be possible for the teacher to determine grades for all non-academic aspects of the report card. In this situation, that part of the report card will be left blank, and the homeroom teacher will notate in the comment section that the student participated in the online learning program. If you would like to opt-in to the on-line learning program for the 2020-2021 school year, please email Mrs. Elizabeth Byrns, Assistant Principal, at ebyrns@smsva.org by Friday, July 31, 2020.

Any other parent(s) with concerns not addressed in this document should email Mr. Daniel Cinalli, Principal, at dcinalli@smsva.org. We are committed to open dialogue to help overcome difficulties that your family might be experiencing.

HEALTHCARE & WELL-BEING

Presumptive Case of COVID-19

Students and staff who are presumptively ill will be isolated in a designated area and attended to by a member of the clinic staff. Emergency forms must be current and identify the main contact person, who will be available to pick-up within 20-30 minutes of being notified. Students or staff members with life-threatening conditions will be transported to a healthcare facility by ambulance and the emergency contact will be notified.

Areas that have been exposed to a suspected case of COVID-19 will be vacated, closed off, and disinfected before they are used again.

Probable Exposure, Self-Monitor, Self-Quarantine, and Self-Isolate Instructions

When a parent, student, faculty, or staff member has probable exposure to COVID-19, *defined as being within six feet for over fifteen minutes of someone who has tested positive*, he or she will be advised to self-monitor *and* self-quarantine for two weeks.

When a family member tests positive for COVID-19, the whole family should self-monitor *and* self-quarantine for two weeks. The family member who tested positive needs to self-isolate within the home, defined as remaining in one part or room of the house and away from others as much as possible.

Students well enough to complete work during a period of self-quarantine are expected to do so (as part of the on-line learning option) until their return. On the days they complete and turn in work they will not be considered absent from school. If they are not well enough to complete work and have an extended period of absence, the absences will be noted on the report card. If needed, it will be noted in the comment section of the report card that the child was experiencing symptoms and ill during this time.

Once the time of self-quarantine is completed, and the student(s) *and* his or her family members do not present with symptoms, he or she will be allowed to return to school.

We will rely upon our school parents to make decisions in the best interest of the community during this time.

Positive COVID-19 Test, Possible Contact with COVID-19

If the school is informed of a positive COVID-19 test (regarding a faculty/staff member, enrolled student, or anyone living in his or her home) the said faculty/staff member or enrolled student will be sent home from school and will self-monitor *and* self-quarantine for fourteen days.

Members of the community who may have had contact with the individual who tested positive will be informed and asked to self-monitor for fourteen days. They will not be required to self-quarantine unless they present with symptoms and/or receive a positive test result and/or have had probable exposure (see above) to someone who has tested positive.

To be clear, the parents of students who have had probable exposure to a student who has tested positive will be advised to self-monitor *and* self-quarantine themselves and their family members for two weeks.

It is important to note that The Basilica School of Saint Mary will follow HIPPA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) guidelines to secure the privacy of members of our community who have tested positive for COVID-19.

The Centers for Disease Control web page is a helpful resource for parents who would like more information about positive test results, self-monitoring, self-quarantining, and possible exposure to COVID-19: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html>

Daily Personal Health Monitoring

Each morning please evaluate your child(ren)'s health. Do not send your child(ren) to school if they have a fever, cough, sore throat, diarrhea, or have a loss of smell and/or taste. A temperature of 100°F or higher will be considered a fever. Parents will be responsible for taking their child(ren)'s temperature daily, Monday through Friday before coming to school. Daily temperature readings will be entered into an application [details regarding the app will be shared in August], which will compile reports for the nurses' office. The school will contact families who are not recording daily temperature readings before coming to school and ask them not to return to school unless they are using the app daily.

Faculty and staff will be required to perform daily health checks on themselves to monitor for fever and/or other symptoms. Daily temperature readings will be entered into an application, which will compile reports for the nurses' office. Administration will ensure that all faculty and staff are participating in daily temperature and symptom monitoring.

Social Distancing Behavior

We will maintain a minimum three feet distance between students, and when possible more distance between students. Six feet of distance is preferred, however, it is not possible in all of our classrooms and/or utilized spaces. Students will not be disciplined for coming into incidental proximity of classmates. However, faculty and staff will remind them of personal space and redirect them if necessary. Markings on the floor and ground will help your child(ren) to maintain an appropriate distance.

Faculty and staff will maintain a minimum of three feet distance from students whenever possible. Six feet of distance is preferred, however, it is not possible in all of our classrooms and/or utilized spaces. Faculty and staff who are helping a student(s) with challenges requiring them to be in proximity to the student(s) may be in proximity to the student(s). Examples include actions that are necessary to the physical or emotional well being of a child (e.g. taking a child's temperature, comforting a child, directing or instructing a child in a way he or she can understand regarding safety matters). If your child requires daily and/or scheduled medication, the medication will be distributed by the nurse inside the classroom in an effort to decrease unnecessary movement in the hallways.

In these more proximal interactions, masks and other COVID-19 precautions will be maintained.

Classrooms and spaces are being thoroughly reviewed to determine the best layout for the greatest possible distance between students. Since some classrooms are not big enough to accommodate sufficient distance, expect some classroom assignment changes. To increase safety measures while students are seated in their classrooms, the school has purchased personal space desk dividers for every child.

As much as possible throughout the day, groups of children will remain together as opposed to mingling with other groups of children. There will be staggered use of the hallways and lockers in the middle school building. There will be less use of the hallways and stairwells throughout both buildings, and the movement will be more organized. For example, staircases will be designated for either up or down traffic.

Encore, Spanish, and fifth through eighth-grade teachers will travel to each classroom to teach their lessons.

Face Masks

All students grades PreK through 8 should have an appropriate, solid, dark color, washable face mask to use at school. Parents may contact Mrs. Jeanne Canavan, Assistant Principal, at jcanavan@smsva.org with questions about the type of mask to purchase or other specialized concerns regarding the mask.

If your child(ren) forgets his or her mask, the teacher will have a replacement one to offer. Your child(ren) will not be reprimanded for losing or dropping his or her mask. To promote the highest level of social-emotional health, faculty and staff will be trained regarding how to interact with students in a positive manner regarding the use of their face masks.

All Faculty and Staff will be wearing face masks or face shields with masks while in school.

Face Masks: Drop Off and Pick Up

All members of our community should wear masks at drop off and pick up to ensure the greatest possible safety while large numbers of people are interacting. Drop off remains the same, except students will be encouraged and/or escorted inside upon arrival instead of lingering on the blacktop. Pick up will be revised to eliminate overcrowding [details regarding our physical distance, electronic pick up will be released in August].

Face Masks while Outdoors

Recess, Daily Mile, and other outdoor activities, such as classes held outside, or going outside to play for Extended Day, will be revised to prevent overcrowding. Though many students will wear masks outdoors, students will not be required to wear masks under these circumstances. Students exiting the building for recess, Daily Mile, and other outdoor activities should exit the building with their masks, but may, if they wish, then take their masks off for physical activity and play.

Masks should not be intermingled or collected, therefore students without pockets (who wish to remove their masks at appropriate times) should work with their parents to ensure that they have a place to put

their masks when/if removed. For example, some students may choose to slip their masks off of their faces so that they hang loosely around the neck while they are running.

Students exiting the building for fire drills will exit with their masks on. Teachers will ensure that students know where their masks are at all times and will also have replacement masks on hand for students who drop or lose their masks. In a real-life emergency, students will exit the building with their masks on if feasible and safe, but the immediate exigency may take precedence over placing a mask.

There may be other outdoor occasions when the school requires students to wear their masks.

Face Masks: Students in Grades PreK to 3 while Inside the Building

When students in grade PreK to 3 enter their classrooms, they should keep their masks on until after they have unpacked. When they are seated at their desks, they may remove their masks upon the teacher's direction.

Students in grades PreK to 3 will not be required to use their masks while eating or drinking or while physically exerting themselves in the gym.

Students in grades PreK to 3 will use their masks while walking in the hallway while moving in lines, while in public spaces in the building, at drop off and pick up, or while at Mass in the gym or at the Basilica.

Students in grades PreK to 3 will use their masks while traveling to or from the restrooms unless any challenges the child faces cause the use of a mask in the restroom to be a greater hygienic issue than not wearing a mask. For their safety, younger students not wearing masks while in the restroom will be subtly directed to areas in the line or restroom to avoid clustering of young children without masks in tighter less ventilated spaces.

Face Masks: Students in Grades 4-8 while Inside the Building

When students in grades 4-8 enter their classrooms and while seated at their desks, they will keep their masks on. The school recognizes that some students may need breaks from their masks while indoors. After the break, the student will be told to put his or her mask back on. Any breaks from wearing masks will be staggered and will comply with CDC recommendations and best practices at all times.

Students in grades 4-8 will use their masks while walking in the hallway while moving in lines, while in public spaces in the building, at drop off and pick up, or while at Mass in the gym or at the Basilica. Students in grades 4-8 will use their masks while walking to the bathroom and/or going to the bathroom.

Students in grades 4-8 will not use their masks while eating or drinking.

Students in grades 4-8 will not be required to wear face masks while physically exerting themselves, for example, while in the gym.

Visitors

All visitors to our school will be screened at the main office entrance and will be required to follow COVID-19 precautions: wearing a face mask and respecting social distancing. Visitors (of all ages) who do not have a mask, will be provided one by office staff. Hand sanitizer will be provided to visitors upon entry to the school. If a visitor presents with a fever (100° F or higher) or presents with other symptoms, he or she will not be allowed to remain in the school building.

Signs and markings on the floor will help everyone to remember to follow the protocols.

Hand Sanitizer, Hand Washing, Water Fountains, and Student Supplies

Students, faculty, staff, and visitors will upon entry, at regular intervals (e.g. after bathroom breaks, before eating, etc.) and in the event of a possible hygiene issue (e.g. after blowing one's nose) be asked to use our new hand sanitizing stations located in the classrooms and by the major doorways.

The school is committed to providing hand sanitizer for everyone's use.

Students, faculty, staff, and visitors will be expected to dispose of used tissues properly.

Students will be encouraged and/or trained to wash their hands appropriately throughout the day.

Faculty and staff will wash their hands at regular intervals and when key opportunities arise.

Key opportunities to wash hands:

- At the beginning and end of the school day
- After blowing the nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After using the restroom
- Before and after eating
- Before preparing food
- After contact with other people, animals, or pets

Water fountains will not be used. Make sure your child(ren) has a clean full water bottle every day. They will be able to fill their bottles at the automatic dispensers in both buildings.

There will be no shared supplies. All student supplies will be labeled including writing implements.

Daily Facilities Cleaning

School maintenance staff will conduct regular, meticulous cleaning of school facilities throughout the day.

Holidays and weekends will provide maintenance staff the time and space needed to work in collaboration with outside contractors for deep cleaning of classrooms, offices, and other spaces.

Classrooms and office spaces will be well-stocked with disinfecting wipes so that faculty and staff can clean office items, toys, manipulatives, instructional tools, and desks daily or more frequently as needed.

Frequently touched surfaces including but not limited to the ones listed here will be sanitized regularly.

- Handrails
- Doorknobs
- Door handles
- Light switches
- Countertops, tables, and desks
- Keyboards
- Toilets
- Faucets and sinks
- Walls

Air Circulation

The school is doing a thorough review of air circulation and ventilation in both buildings and is taking steps to address any problem areas.

Ventilation issues will be addressed with outward-facing window fans, no use of rooms without adequate ventilation, and any other possible ventilation strategies recommended by a mechanical engineering group in conjunction with the diocese.

SCHOOL LIFE

Lunch, Recess and Physical Education

All students will eat lunch in their classrooms. We will share details about our new pre-packaged lunch items and how to order them. Items will be delivered to the classroom.

Recess will be held outdoors, weather permitting, and the recess schedule will be revised to provide for social distancing on the blacktop.

Physical education may take place in the gym, but students will participate in activities at a distance. PE teachers will bring students outside when possible and may use spaces such as Jones Point.

The Daily Mile will continue to be encouraged and promoted. As long as social distancing is observed, teachers may bring their classes to the cemetery for exercise.

Teachers will take advantage of outside spaces when possible, including the front lawn of the school, Jones Point, the front of Stephens Hall, and the blacktop.

Extended Care

Extended Care will be open when the school buildings are open. All policies which apply during the school day will apply during Extended Care as well. Extended Care staff will receive training regarding COVID-19 policies, including guidelines regarding distancing, cleaning toys, and the use of supplies.

Extended Care registration is suspended temporarily. Parents who have already registered their child(ren) in Plans A and B may attend every morning/afternoon while school is in session. Due to the logistics, staffing and ratios needed to keep Extended Care safe for all involved, parents who have registered their child(ren) for Plan C will not be able to attend or participate in Extended Care at this time. They may use Morning Care beginning at 7:00 am whenever needed, however. We will not charge the registration fee for those students who have previously registered for Plan C and will re-evaluate Plan C as the school year continues.

Extended Care pick up will be handled outside. Parents will not come into the building to sign out. The parent or guardian should tell the staff member at Door #2 who they are picking up. The staff person will radio staff inside to let them know the parent or guardian has arrived. The parent or guardian will wait on the blacktop for their child(ren) to exit the building, remaining at a distance from all children who may be playing.

If a parent or guardian receives a phone call from Extended Care because their child is ill, he or she must pick up the child immediately.

Any questions regarding Extended Care should be directed to Mrs. Anne Hampton, Director of Extended Day, at ahampton@smsva.org.

Extracurricular Activities

As the school will implement the highest level of safety recommended, some extracurricular activities may be affected. The school is determining the feasibility of groups meeting in person and also will necessarily have to manage spaces so that students can be at an appropriate distance from one another.

Mass and Liturgical Events

Students will assist at weekly Mass on a rotating basis. Others will watch it live-streamed from their classrooms. Students will be given individually assigned worship aids in order to practice important parts of the Mass.

Students will not be singing indoors. However, while outside at a distance, students may sing and use individually assigned hymnals, especially to practice parts of the Mass and liturgical music.

For Adoration, students will be seated at safe distances and will be assigned individual worship aids.

School assemblies will be live streamed and/or socially distanced.

Confession will be modified to allow for social distancing and all participants will wear masks during the sacrament.

CYO Sports Programs

Decisions regarding CYO sports will be made at the diocesan level. Questions or concerns may be sent via email to Arragon Perrone, Youth Director, at aperrone@stmaryoldtown.org.

Families in Service (FIS)

Parent volunteers provide critical support to the school throughout the year and this need remains for the 2020-2021 school year.

Due to the current health guidelines, certain FIS positions will be temporarily suspended because parents cannot be physically present at school during the school day at this time.

The school and parish administration is currently reviewing the FIS service hours for the 2020-21 school year and will work with the Home and School Association (HSA) to determine the number of service hours needed.

There will be both new and familiar volunteer opportunities, some of which are new, to fulfill the FIS obligation. Please review the updated FIS Catalogue when it is published.

UNDERSTANDING THE EFFECTS OF COVID-19 ON STUDENTS

Students, parents, and staff may encounter a range of emotions regarding the start of school. These emotions may include relief and excitement to be back in school, in addition to worry, stress, and sadness. Students spend a significant portion of their waking hours in school. As such, our faculty and staff play a significant role in shaping how they understand and experience what is going on in the school setting, community, and world around them.

Additionally, we anticipate that changes in the school routine may further heighten difficult emotions for some students. Our school counselors will continue to support students as they process these emotions, and will encourage students to develop and utilize positive coping skills. The counselors will also provide frequent check-ins with individuals and appropriately distanced groups to provide opportunities for connection, reflection, and support.

Social-Emotional Learning & Promoting Student Resilience

Social and emotional learning and support will be critical to re-engaging students, supporting parents and staff, and fostering relationships while creating a strong academic foundation. Social-emotional learning is the process through which children understand and manage their emotions, set and achieve goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, cope with uncertainty and difficult circumstances, and make wise decisions.

The school counselors will introduce age-appropriate conversations and lessons to activate student self-awareness while providing safe and supportive opportunities for students to share about their feelings and experiences about COVID-19 in regards to school, their community, and the world. As needed, the counselors will also provide class lessons (in class or virtually) highlighting age-appropriate strategies on managing stress, practicing self-care, conflict resolution, and social skills, practicing empathy and coping with feelings of loss and grief. Specific coping skills and self-care concepts include: emphasizing the importance of seeking reliable information, considering self-limiting social media use, accepting unique

feelings and their expression, setting goals, actively practicing positive reflection and gratitude, engaging in healthy daily habits, and knowing when to seek out help and support and where to find it.

In the event that we are distance learning, the counselors are available to collaborate with parents regarding social and emotional learning and will utilize creative solutions and virtual class meetings to support students in cultivating personal connections and belonging to the school community.

Additional Support

While providing all students with opportunities to collectively process and validate their unique experiences and perceptions, we also recognize that some students may need additional support. Whether on or off-campus, the counselors will work with teachers to utilize a confidential referral system for students who may need extra support. In collaboration with parents, the school counselors may recommend or assist in referring students to community mental health providers.

Additionally, we anticipate that some students may be more vulnerable to experiencing significant stress or trauma due to circumstances related to COVID-19 such as the death or illness of a family member, financial insecurity, and other challenges. School staff understands that these experiences may affect students' academic, emotional, and social functioning, including the ability to self-regulate.

Our Partnership With Parents

As we anticipate the upcoming school year, our goal is to support all students by promoting a sense of safety and hope, emphasizing relationships and connectedness, providing predictability through supportive boundaries and routines, and responding to students' emotional needs with empathy and support. As always we are eager to partner with parents in this endeavor and are grateful for this partnership, particularly during these challenging times.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH MINDSET

The Basilica School of Saint Mary is committed to planning professional development for teachers this summer and throughout the school year. We are employing resources that will allow for continuity in the event of distance learning and which encourages individualized growth goals. The professional development we have planned addresses concerns and situations which have arisen or may arise due to the pandemic. Here is the list of topics we are using while planning:

- Social-emotional health of children and families during a pandemic and how best to partner with families to achieve common goals;
- How our Catholic faith can help us through this difficult time;
- Planning fun and engaging Zooms to increase student understanding and learning;
- Utilizing learning apps and platforms for instruction, as distance learning needs require;
- Understanding pacing guides and the curriculum if variation of learning models come into play;
- Understanding gaps in education and how to make up for them due to the pandemic;
- Best hygiene and cleaning practices as recommended by the CDC

The Basilica School of Saint Mary is committed to growing as professionals and sustaining a growth mindset during this challenging time. We are open to your concerns and will use feedback from our families to address educational, spiritual, and social-emotional needs as they arise.

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