



July 27, 2020

Please visit [CatholicSchoolsNY.org/opening](https://CatholicSchoolsNY.org/opening) to view our opening plan & videos showing the enhanced environment to which students, teachers and staff will return in September!

Dear Catholic School Community,

Since April, the Catholic Schools Re-Opening Council has worked tirelessly to prepare guidance that will ensure the safe return of our students, teachers, and staff to our school buildings. I am grateful for their efforts. Today, I am pleased to share with you the result of their work - **Catholic Schools Opening: Moving Forward Together**.

Principals are currently developing localized school plans based on the needs of their communities and physical spaces. Those plans and this manual are representative of the most recent guidance from government, state, and local health officials, which is changing continually. As guidance changes, plans will be updated.

While our buildings have been closed our schools were open; teaching and learning has been taking place. It is now time to return to our "homes" and move forward together, reinvigorating our Catholic school buildings with the return of our students.

We are committed to opening schools for 5 days a week for in-school instruction for all students, ensuring social distancing can safely be maintained in our buildings under the direct supervision of a teacher. We have encouraged principals to be creative with space, while ensuring that the health and safety of our staff and students are primary in their decision-making. For some buildings or class sizes that cannot accommodate all students socially distanced for a full 5 days, plans will be created by the principal using an alternating day/week cycle.

I'm grateful to the Catholic Schools Re-Opening Council for their work in assembling this manual and to the principals and teachers who will implement it so that our students can return safely, healthily, and happily.

Throughout this pandemic, I have reflected that we are "*Prophets of a Future not Our Own*." However, like you, I have great faith in the "**Master Builder**." Join me in this prayer on page 5 of our opening manual, entrusting ourselves to the "**Master Builder**."

Please visit [CatholicSchoolsNY.org/opening](https://CatholicSchoolsNY.org/opening) for regular updates, and to view our opening videos which tour the enhanced environment to which our students, teachers and staff will return in September.

Gratefully,  
Mr. Michael J. Deegan  
Superintendent of Schools  
Archdiocese of New York