

REOPENING FAQ FOR FAMILIES

THIS FAQ ANSWERS QUESTIONS RAISED IN OUR SURVEY AND INDIVIDUAL CONVERSATIONS WITH FAMILIES. THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE AND SUPPORT AS WE PREPARE A SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR OUR COMMUNITY. ALL ST MARY'S ACADEMY FAMILIES NEED TO REVIEW, ACKNOWLEDGE AND CHOOSE YOUR STUDENT'S LEARNING OPTION VIA THE REOPENING PARENT DECISION FORM THAT ACCOMPANIES THIS FAQ.

Q. How are you approaching learning during this return and reopening?

A. Our priority is the health and wellbeing of our SMA family. We are allocating generous time and attention to supporting new protocols and to pacing instruction and assignments in this new environment. To facilitate a smooth transition back on campus, and to allow families, students and staff to practice check-in, curbside drop-off, daytime protocols and check-out, we will have a staggered start in the Lower School and Middle School, September 1-3. The Pre-K and High School program will start on September 1.

Q. How flexible is the SMA remote learning option?

A. You have the flexibility to choose learning options that work best for your family upon reopening: on campus, remote, or a combination of both. If you plan to start with our remote learning option, please let us know of that choice in the Reopening Parent Decision Form that accompanies this FAQ.

Q. What does remote learning "look like"?

A. Thanks to our new Swivl technology in combination with Zoom, your child will experience lessons much like on-campus learners. A robotic camera swivels to track with the teacher, using a wide shot and microphones to include students. The virtual learner will be able to ask questions and participate, too. Other campus experiences are being designed to include our virtual learners.

Q. What does cohort grouping mean?

A. Cohort grouping is a strategy that minimizes the number of people with whom students and teachers interact on campus. It is highly recommended by health officials, and something easier to design at St. Mary's Academy. In the Lower School, students are in their classroom cohort groups. In the Middle School, students will be in cohort groups of about 16 students. Math and world language schedules, as well as the students' peer groups, gender ratios, new student needs, cultural and ethnic representation and learning styles, are all considerations for building the cohort groups. Our block scheduling in both the Middle School and the High School results in fewer, longer classes, so there is not as much mixing of students. Across the Academy, specialist teachers will teach within cohort classrooms as much as possible, to limit use of common spaces.

Q. How are you employing social distancing?

A. We have employed numerous strategies to provide social distancing of about six feet between students. Smaller desks and tables have been purchased for divisions where needed. Larger tables have plexiglass dividers, and only a few students will use each table, never side-by-side. Hallway traffic flow has been configured for one way passing. Only one or two students may use the restrooms at a time and not during passing periods. Locker use will be limited to the high school only, with a color-coded system that provides for staggered access and a small number of students using them at any one time..

Q. What additional hand-cleaning is available?

A. In addition to building in frequent times for handwashing during the day, we have installed dozens of standing and wall-mounted hand sanitizers across the campus. Frequently used surfaces will be cleaned by faculty, staff, and a newly-hired custodial porter.

Q. What are you doing to upgrade building ventilation?

A. At the recommendation of an independent consultant, SMA has invested in a time-tested air disinfecting system, called needlepoint bipolar ionization, that will permanently upgrade the quality of air in our three educational divisions and the Bishop Evans Sports Center. Integrated into our HVAC systems, this technology from Global Plasma Solutions (GPS) utilizes needlepoint bipolar ionization technology (NPBI) electrodes, or “needles,” that take oxygen molecules from the air and convert them into charged atoms that then cluster around microparticles, deactivating harmful substances like airborne mold, bacteria, allergens, and viruses. They also attach to expelled breath droplets and dust particles that can transport viruses, enlarging them so they're more easily caught in filters. It's an active process that provides continuous disinfection. Locally the system is used at the Pepsi Center and several private schools, and it is in place at major airports and hospitals nationally, and in 150,000 installations worldwide. GPS has done substantial testing to confirm its efficacy. We're pleased to be able to take advantage of this opportunity with the leader in indoor air quality.

Q. Will you always have health staff on campus?

A. St. Mary's Academy has a school nurse consultant, Debbie Bradley, who is on campus weekly and available remotely during school hours. Additional school staff are trained and able to provide care and medication in accordance with the Delegation Clause of the Nurse Practice Act. We will have additional health aide coverage this year from 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. St Mary's Academy has designated a health hub in Sanders House that features an isolation room in the event students exhibit symptoms of COVID-19, where they will await pick up from their parent or guardian.

Q. What happens if a child or teacher in my child's cohort gets Covid-19?

A. St. Mary's Academy's school nurse consultant Debbie Bradley, RN manages the health needs of the campus, and will work in cooperation with the Tri-County Health Department and local authorities in the event of a case of Covid-19.

The school nurse shall be contacted by any staff, student, parent/guardian or household person that is isolating, under quarantine, or has a positive Covid-19 test. Covid-19 is a reportable disease. All additional campus communication will be treated with confidentiality. At this time, the person who is positive will isolate at home for a minimum of 10 days after symptom onset, and the last three days fever-free, and with improving symptoms. Close contacts and possibly cohort exposures will be notified accordingly and would quarantine for a minimum of 14 days. That cohort will continue lessons through our remote learning option.

SMA will follow current recommendations. As of 8/11/20 this is one primary resource related to cases, isolation, quarantine, outbreaks, and closures: <https://covid19.colorado.gov/cases-and-outbreaks-child-care-schools>. Our Readiness to Reopen Plans contain levels to which we can adjust our academic program if needed.

Q. How will you enforce the proper wearing of masks on campus?

A. All members of the SMA community must adhere to the requirement of wearing a cloth face covering over the nose and mouth on campus. Faculty and staff will enforce this requirement. We also have signs posted across campus, including a captivating series of SMA community health posters created by our recent high school graduates. If students are not following the mask-wearing protocols, St. Mary's Academy will require that these students adopt the remote learning plan from home.

Q. Are you requiring self-quarantine of families who travel out of the area?

A. St. Mary's Academy families are caring families. We trust that our families will follow public health mandates locally and wherever travels may take them. The CDC recommends if you do choose to travel out of state, please do so with the safety of yourself, family and peers in mind. Be aware of U.S. hot spots, and limit your exposure. SMA families have the option to enact their own self-quarantine period after U.S. travel, using our remote learning option for that period of time. Per current CDC guidelines, any travel out of the country may result in a 14-day quarantine.

Q. How are you handling social emotional needs during this challenging time?

A. St. Mary's Academy is very intent on maintaining our warm, supportive community this year. We are working internally and externally, through many organizations and consultants, to prepare for additional support for our students. In Middle School, for example, the CAT (Community Action Team) advisory is expanding its team-building experiences for the cohort groups, while maintaining physical distance. Our small class sizes have always allowed us to be in tune and to check in individually with our students, and your insights are always valued. Our Lower and Middle School counselor, Carol LaRoque, and High School counselor, Julie May, are ready to work with students and provide resources and support to faculty and staff. We also encourage parents to refer to resources for mind and body on our Reopening Page of the SMA website, and to please let us know how it is going for your family.

Q. How will electives work this year?

A. It is very important that students find the release and creativity offered through electives, especially during these times. Specialists in the Lower School and Middle School will continue to offer the arts, rotating through classrooms and cohort groups. In the Middle School, this includes art, drama, music and intramurals. In the High School, all courses will be offered.

Q. Will we still have Orchestra and Band?

A. The Lower School program is taking shape. Please stay tuned. The Middle School will continue to offer orchestra and band two out of three trimesters, this year during winter and spring terms. We are also looking into virtual options for interactive practice and performance experiences via Zoom this fall. The High School Jazz Band keyboard and strings players will continue to meet on schedule, and our horn player will receive one-on-one instruction via Zoom.

Q. What will PE look like?

A. PE in all divisions will continue, outdoors, with masks and social distancing. Our teachers are flexible and fortified to lead valuable health and fitness experiences.

**Please join Bill Barrett, Academy President, the Division Principals, and
Debbie Bradley, RN for a Reopening Town Hall on**