SAINT THOMAS ACADEMY

STrAtegy 2021-2022





Table of Contents

03 ***INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION***
Purpose & Planning
Guiding Principles

04 ***ACADEMICS***
In-Person Learning
DiSTAnce Learning
Classroom Technology

05 ***ACTIVITIES & ATHLETICS***
MSHSL Guidance
Busing & Transportation for Activities & Athletics
Performing Arts
Fan Plan

06 ***HEALTH & SAFETY***
Social Distancing
Face Coverings
Hand Washing & Sanitizing
Respiratory Etiquette
Building Cleaning & Sanitation
Disinfectants & Cleaning Solutions
Ventilation
Drinking Fountains
Lunch & Cafeteria
Health Office & School Nurse
Screening
Contact Tracing
Absence from In-Person Attendance
COVID-19 Positive Student, Faculty or Staff
Quarantine and Isolation
Co-Curricular Sanitation
Visitor Protocol
Travel Protocol
Transportation

COMMUNICATION 11
COVID-19 Resource Webpage

APPENDIX 12
Committee & Sub-Committee Membership
Relevant Resources for Schools



INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION

Purpose & Planning Process

Prior to the start of the 2020-2021 academic year, Saint Thomas Academy convened a COVID-19 Response Committee to provide recommendations for the Saint Thomas Academy leadership. A full listing of committee membership is available in the Appendix. The result is was *STrAtegy 2020-2021*, which answers questions asked by many families, including safety protocols on campus. *STrAtegy 2020-2021* was reviewed weekly and updated as necessary to consider changing guidelines and recommendations from school administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), Dakota County, Minnesota Governor's Executive Order 21-07, and the Archdiocese of Saint Paul & Minneapolis (ArchSPM). Throughout the 2020-2021 school year, the pandemic response committee met daily to assess the current situation and evaluate Saint Thomas Academy's response. After careful consideration the decision has been made to transition back to a solely in-person learning environment for the 2021-2022 school year. The pandemic response committee will continue to meet regularly and engage in an ongoing assessment of Saint Thomas Academy's protocols and procedures for student safety.

Guiding Principles

Saint Thomas Academy is committed to providing a safe and healthy campus for our students, families, faculty, staff and community. Our goal is to provide each student with an authentic Cadet experience while mitigating the potential transmission of COVID-19. Only through a cooperative effort can we establish and maintain the safety and health of our school community. Saint Thomas Academy is committed to providing guidance, support and clarity to safely continue to offer in-person learning for the 2021-2022 school year.

Community-wide cooperation is essential in implementing a successful plan. Following these guidelines will require instruction, guidance and support. We ask families to prepare students for their return to In-Person Learning at Saint Thomas Academy by:

- creating awareness of local and state guidelines for safety practices
- helping them understand the importance of personal hygiene
- teaching and modeling proper coughing and sneezing practices
- helping them understand the goal of physical distancing and wearing face coverings when appropriate
- emphasizing the serious nature of this pandemic and respecting the concerns of others in the community.



ACADEMICS

In-Person Learning

When Saint Thomas Academy will open for In-Person Learning and all students are invited to campus to participate in their regular academic schedule.

DiSTAnce Learning

Saint Thomas Academy has implemented an Asynchronous Learning program for the start of the 2021-2022 school year. Absent students will be provided with an asynchronous learning program to be facilitated by an assigned case manager from our school counseling department.

Teachers will provide work to be completed independently and to be submitted online via Unified Classroom.

A students who is absent for longer than three days will meet with his case manager via Google Meet (video conferencing) weekly. Teachers will post assignments and course materials on Unified Classroom, correspond to Asynchronous Learners weekly via email, and arrange individual (virtual) tutoring as needed.

Synchronous DiSTAnce Learning will not be utilized this year; however Saint Thomas Academy may make modifications based on the most current guidance or other extenuating circumstances.

Classroom Technology

To accommodate all academic scenarios, Saint Thomas Academy's Technology Department has assembled a standardized Hybrid & DiSTAnce Learning video and sound system for each classroom that equips every teacher with:

- 2020 MacBook Air laptop with HD FaceTime camera,
- an Apple TV for in-classroom screen-sharing and projection,
- an easily adjustable and movable rolling lectern,
- a swivel pad for laptop & camera,
- a Hey Mic! wireless, bluetooth lavaliere microphone for audio when video conferencing and
- a Logitech StreamCam with extended bendable arm for document sharing and wide angle view capabilities.

Lunch & Flex Periods

Three lunch periods will be utilized to allow us to limit the number of students dining at a single table to six.



ACTIVITIES & ATHLETICS

MSHSL Guidance

Saint Thomas Academy will operate in accordance with the guidance provided by the Minnesota State High School League.

Busing & Transportation for Activities & Athletics

During the pandemic and until such time that all parties agree otherwise in writing:

- Minnehaha Transportation (Contractor) will provide large, 71 passenger buses for every route to help ensure the appropriate level of safe distance between students.
- Contractor will screen all drivers daily, according to Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) guidelines, prior to drivers starting morning routes.
- All persons driving or riding buses will wear cloth face coverings during all routes.
- The appropriate amount of social distance will be maintained on the bus between the driver and students during drive times.
- Contractor will maintain on all buses a supply of CDC recommended hand sanitizer and a supply of new, unused disposable face masks for students to use on an as needed basis.
- Every bus will be disinfected between every trip and cleaned and disinfected at the end of each day, in accordance with MDH and Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines.
- Visitation/Saint Thomas Academy will assign seating for all students on each bus and contractor's drivers will monitor and help enforce compliance with student seating assignments.

Performing Arts

Protocols for performing arts will be refined and changed based on emerging guidance as it relates to best practices for student safety in this area.

Fan Plan

MSHSL guidance will be utilized as it is updated.



HEALTH & SAFETY

Social Distancing

Per the CDC, social distancing, also called "physical distancing," means keeping space between yourself and other people outside of your home.

Limiting face-to-face contact with others is the best way to reduce the spread of COVID-19. To the greatest extent possible, Saint Thomas Academy activities must be in accordance with social distancing directives: maintaining 3 feet of space between you and another person whenever feasible.

Face Coverings

On-campus:

During the 2020-2021 school year, masks were required due to the emergency order by the Governor of the State of Minnesota. This emergency order has ended and there is currently no required mask mandate for Saint Thomas Academy.

Masks are encouraged, but not required for the start of the school year. Faculty, staff, and students who choose to wear a face covering will be respected and there will be no tolerance for questioning the decision to wear or not wear a face covering.

On buses:

Masks are required on all public and private transportation, which includes bus stops and the actual bus ride.

Hand Washing & Sanitizing

Per the CDC, hand hygiene is an integral part of the COVID-19 pandemic response. Practicing hand hygiene, which includes the use of an alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR, i.e., hand sanitizer) or hand-washing, is a simple yet effective way to prevent the spread of pathogens. Students, faculty, staff and visitors are expected to wash or sanitize their hands regularly in accordance with public health guidance.

Hands should be washed for at least 20 seconds with soap when visibly soiled, before eating and after using the restroom. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the CDC also recommends washing hands after you have been in a public place and touched an item or surface that may be frequently touched by others, such as door handles or tables. Per the FDA, there is currently no evidence that consumer antiseptic wash products (i.e., antibacterial soaps) are more effective than plain soap and water. Students are encouraged to wash their hands with soap and water once every four times they use hand sanitizer. Accommodations will be made during the school day to encourage hand washing.

Hand sanitizer dispensers are placed at each main entrance, in all classrooms, meeting rooms, offices and gymnasiums.

Respiratory Etiquette

To prevent the transmission of all respiratory infections (including COVID-19 and influenza), community members are expected to implement appropriate respiratory/cough etiquette as a standard precaution. Per the CDC, the following measures to contain respiratory secretions are recommended for all individuals:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Use the nearest waste receptacle to dispose of the tissue after use.
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow, not your hands.
- Perform hand hygiene (e.g., hand-washing with non-antimicrobial soap and water, alcohol-based hand rub, or antiseptic hand wash) after having contact with respiratory secretions and contaminated objects/materials.

Building Cleaning & Sanitation

CDC/EPA Cleaning and Disinfecting Guidance and CDC guidance for Disinfecting Your Facility will be used in making cleaning/disinfecting decisions.

Daily Cleaning Routine – In accordance with the CDC guidelines, the following areas will be cleaned/ disinfected at the end of each school day:

- classrooms
    - tables
    - doorknobs
    - light switches
    - countertops
- restrooms
    - toilets
    - faucets
    - sinks
    - handles
    - doorknobs
- hallways
    - railings
    - light switches
- lockers
- ATM machine
- countertops

- railings
- gyms
- keyboards in technology lab spaces
- all high touch areas
- all classroom and hallway floors
- vacuum all carpeted areas and scrub all floors
- clean and disinfect the faculty/staff lounges, kitchen and cafeteria
- clean and disinfect the health office, all locker rooms and the weight room

Weekend Cleaning Routine – In accordance with the CDC guidelines the following areas will be cleaned/ disinfected each weekend:

- vacuum all carpeted areas
- scrub gym floors
- scrub Ciresi Atrium floor
- clean and disinfect all high touch areas in hallways
- clean Chapel of Saint Thomas Aquinas
- clean and disinfect all restrooms and locker rooms

Additional classroom cleaning may be performed at the teacher's discretion. Students may be instructed to clean and disinfect their desk space prior to departing each classroom with supplies provided to them.

Disinfectants & Cleaning Solutions Used by Saint Thomas Academy

- QT Plus
- Quick and Clean germicidal disinfecting wipes
- SAO Cleaner
- Protex Electrostatic Sprayer and Purtabs

Ventilation

Saint Thomas Academy, in consultation with Harris Companies to provide expert advice, has done the following to improve indoor air quality:

- Ventilation system adjusted to bring in the maximum amount of outside air
- Every air filter in our HVAC system is changed when appropriate.
- Updated HVAC system has been installed in updated classroom spaces.
- We will continue to consult with Harris Company in order to pursue the highest air quality in all our buildings
- Leave classroom doors open and windows open - weather permitting

Drinking Fountains

Drinking fountains are available, and students are allowed to bring water bottles to utilize with touch free bottle fillers. All water fountains in Flynn Hall are touch free. One water fountain in the Middle School and one water fountain in Founders Hall have been converted to include touch free bottle fillers..

Lunch & Cafeteria

Breakfast will again be offered from 7:00 AM to 7:45 AM. To reduce handling of cash, prepaid $20 SAGE cards will need to be purchased.

Three lunch periods will be utilized to reduce the number of students in the lunchroom at one time to minimize congestion.

Protocols will be as follows:

- 6 students to a lunch table
- All students and employees are urged to wash their hands prior to entering the cafeteria.
- Servers and kitchen employees will wear gloves and facial coverings.
- Tables and serving stations will be cleaned after each lunch.
- The dish return and garbage area will be managed to minimize congestion.

Health Office & School Nurse

Saint Thomas Academy's Health Office, located on the lower level of Flynn Hall, will be cleaned per protocol after a student leaves. Ventilation will be increased by opening windows. Students who are being isolated with symptoms will wear their face covering and be monitored by staff wearing appropriate PPE. This space includes access to a sink and toilet.

Screening

Saint Thomas Academy will not be screening students for COVID-19. Parents/guardians will be asked to committing to monitoring their sons for fever and other symptoms indicative of COVID-19. Saint Thomas Academy may offer employees on-site COVID-19 testing as provided for by the State of Minnesota.

Contact Tracing

Saint Thomas Academy will follow current guidance as it relates to contact tracing for positive COVID-19 cases on our campus and will support the MDH and Dakota County in their efforts to complete contact tracing as they request.

Absence from In-Person Attendance

Students who are absent from the In-Person Learning environment for three or more days must provide the School Nurse with a negative COVID-19 test or a physician's note to return to campus.

COVID-19 Positive Student, Faculty or Staff

Saint Thomas Academy will follow the decision tree based upon current, published guidelines from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) for persons in schools.

Quarantine and Isolation

Saint Thomas Academy will the follow most current, published guidelines from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) for persons in schools.

For persons who test positive for the COVID-19 virus, isolation may end after five days for anyone who

- tests positive and has no symptoms (asymptomatic)
- is symptomatic and if other symptoms have improved, including being fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication *(Note: Loss of taste and/or smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation.)*

Day 0 is the day of the positive test or the onset of symptoms (not necessarily when results were received) and day 1 is the first full day after the test or the onset of symptoms. The isolation period ends after five full days (unless symptoms are developed, then the person must stay in isolation). At the end of the isolation period, the person must strictly mask when around others at home and in public for 5 additional days (days 6 through 10) to complete the 10 day quarantine period.

If an asymptomatic person develops symptoms after exposure, the 5-day isolation period is in effect from the date of symptom onset.

For persons who are unvaccinated against COVID-19 and are identified as a close contact of an individual who has tested positive for the virus, quarantine may end after 5 full days. Day 0 is the last date of exposure to a positive case and Day 1 is the first full day after the last exposure date. If the close contact does not develop symptoms and tests negative for COVID-19 no sooner than day 5, they can leave quarantine after five full days, but must strictly mask when around others at home and in public for 5 additional days (days 6 through 10) to complete the 10 day quarantine period.

This guidance does not apply to persons with severe COVID-19 or with weakened immune systems (immunocompromised). A full 10 days is required.

Co-Curricular Sanitation

All activity and athletic sites and workout/training facilities will be disinfected with an electrostatic misting machine by Facilities staff after use. Any classroom space used by a co-curricular program will be cleaned following the procedures laid out for classroom sanitation.

Visitor Protocol

All visitors to Saint Thomas Academy will sign in via the Visitor Management System and provide their contact information.

Travel Protocol

When families or staff elect to travel, they must self-assess whether or not their activity adhered to COVID mitigation protocols such that they will not risk exposing other students or staff by returning to campus immediately.

Students/staff SHOULD NOT return to campus immediately following travel if:

- They have any symptoms of COVID-19
- They learn that they have had close contact with someone who has since tested positive for COVID-19.
- Contact the school health office with questions or for guidance before returning to campus.



COMMUNICATION

COVID-19 Resource Webpage at cadets.com

Saint Thomas Academy will maintain our COVID-19 Resources webpage and dashboard on cadets.com/covid19. This webpage will house all relevant resources, new information and updates.



APPENDIX

Saint Thomas Academy COVID-19 Response Committee:

Mrs. Tina Monosmith, Director of Technology (chair/COVID-19 Response Coordinator)
Mr. Kelby Woodard, Headmaster
Mr. Brian Edel, Director of Upper School
Mrs. Deborah Edwards, Director of Marketing & Admissions
Mrs. Tammy Greenlee, Executive Assistant to Senior Administration
Ms. Norma Gutierrez, Director of College Counseling
Col. Neil Hetherington, Commandant of Cadets
Mr. Reed Hornung, Director of Activities & Athletics
Mr. David Hottinger, Director of Advancement
Mr. Jamie Jurkovich, Director of Middle School
Mrs. Pamela Kunkel, Director of Business Affairs
Ms. Michelle Mechtel, Director of Academic Life
Fr. Mark Pavlak, Chaplain

The 2020-2021 Committee's work was performed by subject matter Sub-Committees which reported into the Committee as a whole. The Sub-Committees were comprised of stakeholders in the assigned area. Full listing of Sub-Committee members can be found in *STrAtegy 2020-2021*.

Relevant Resources for Schools

**Resources listed here do not indicate Saint Thomas Academy approval or endorsement.*

- Minnesota Department of Education Updated CDC Guidance (MDH)
- Quarantine and Isolation (CDC)
- Advice on the Use of Masks in the Context of COVID-19 (WHO)
- Advice on the Use of Masks for Children in the Community in the Context of COVID-19 (WHO)
- Hand Hygiene (CDC)
- Hand Sanitizers and COVID-19 (FDA)
- Respiratory Hygiene/Cough Etiquette in Healthcare Settings (CDC)
- Social Distancing (CDC)
- Considerations for Opening Institutions of Higher Education in the COVID-19 Era (ACHA)

- Social Distancing (University of Chicago)
- Office for the Mission of Catholic Education Memorandum on Face Coverings in Schools (ArchSPM)
- Army Band COVID-19 Risk Mitigation for Large Groups
- Safe Learning Plan for the 2020-21 School Year (Stay Safe MN)