



Questions and Answers 2020-2021

Q. When is the first day of school for 2020-2021?

A. School begins for students on Tuesday, August 25, 2020. This is the same as Alma Public School.

Q. Does St. Mary's School have to follow the Governor's executive orders, including the MI Safe Start Plan requirements?

A. Yes; these requirements apply to all schools in the State of Michigan; however, there are some requirements that may look different because we are a smaller elementary school.

Q. I hear about phases. What does this mean?

A. The MI Safe Start Plan (economic engagement phases and guidance) has 6 phases. Phases 1, 2, 3, dictate that schools are closed and remote learning is required for everyone. Phases 4 and 5 allow for school to be open with varying degrees of guidance and restrictions. Phase 6 is essentially post-pandemic.

Q. Will the time of the school day change?

A. No.

Q. Will drop-off and pick-up times be different? Will parents be allowed in the building at drop off/pick up?

A. At this point, these times will be the same; however, you should plan on this taking more time. We will have the exact procedure available next week at teacher's parent meetings. Parents will not be allowed in the building except under extenuating circumstances.

Q. Will the classrooms be broken up if the class sizes get too big?

A. Our classes are capped at 20 students. Teachers have spaced the classroom so that teachers will be with 10 students in separate areas for the majority of class time.

Q. I am considering options for my children. I don't want my kids to have to wear a mask.

A. This is a very real concern for many parents. In Phase 4, PK will wear masks when they enter and exit the classroom; however, they do not need to wear a mask in the classroom. Parents may choose for their child to wear a mask in the classroom. If your child is unable to medically tolerate a facial covering please provide medical exemptions signed by your child's physician to the school office by August 25, 2020. The form is here www.nativityparish.net/school

Q. What about facial covering for kids with asthma?

A. Any student that is unable to medically tolerate a facial covering must not wear one. A form is available online that requires a physician's signature.

Q. What will snack and recess look like?

A. At this time, we are eliminating snack. Water breaks will be provided. This is subject to change. Students will wash hands before going outside to the gym and/or playground and upon returning inside. Masks do not need to be worn outside.

Q. Will students still use the gym/cafeteria/playground?

A. As of now, at morning recess students will play with their cohort classes in separate spaces and at lunch recess we have classes staggered so that students will remain in their cohort classes but have the entire outside space to themselves.

Q. What additional supplies will my child need?

A. A supply list was made available to families. This is also posted on our website www.nativityparish.net/school A small bottle of hand sanitizer would be a good idea but we will have stations set up throughout the classroom and school.

Q. What sanitation measures has St. Mary's School put in place?

A. The following protocols will be in place :

- Hygiene and hand washing lessons will be built into the daily schedule.
- Desks, chairs and high-touch surfaces will be wiped down after every 4 hours in the elementary school.
- Hand-sanitizing stations will be installed throughout both buildings and in every classroom.
- Required protocols will be followed to ensure that St. Mary's School facilities exceed the standards required for cleaning and sanitation in all areas.

Q. What social distancing measures has St. Mary's School put in place?

A. The following protocols will be in place :

- Social distance markings will be placed on the floors in the hallways and all common areas.
- Classroom tables are being replaced with desks to appropriately social distance.
- Class seating will be spaced to provide the most social distancing possible

- Specials' teachers will serve students in the classrooms to limit movement throughout the building. Physical education will take place outside, whenever possible.
- Lunch and Recess will be in cohorts and staggered.
- Guests to the building will be limited based on health department guidelines.

Q. What preventative measures are necessary?

A. Teamwork is of utmost importance in preventing the spread of disease.

- Families will need to check their child for symptoms each morning.
- Families are asked to follow the current guidelines from the local health department.
- Students showing any symptoms must stay home and the school must have a minimum of three current emergency contacts for each student, in case symptoms arise at school.

Q. What will happen if a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19?

A. Students and staff who display symptoms during the school day will be quarantined until they may be safely transported off-campus. We have been working with the Mid-Michigan Health Department and will continue to work with them to follow their recommendations as these are continually being updated. They have committed to being ready and available to help guide schools with addressing COVID-19 cases and exposures, including testing and quarantining requests.

“In the event of a lab or clinically diagnosed case of COVID-19, immediate efforts should be made to contact any close contacts (those who spent more than 15 minutes less than six feet in close proximity to the student or staff member) so that they can be quarantined for 14 days at home. Students and staff should be closely monitored for any symptoms of COVID-19. At this time, empiric testing of all students or staff members in the class is not recommended. Only those that develop symptoms require testing for COVID-19.” Taken from Executive Order 2020-142 School Preparedness Plan Template

Q. What is the protocol for a classroom/student exposure? Will the entire class have to quarantine?

A. At this point, we are looking to the Mid-Michigan Health Department for guidance. It is not a black and white answer. It depends on the kind of exposure. Therefore, there is not an easy answer as to if the entire class would have to be quarantined. We are doing everything we can to plan for minimal contact with the students.

Q. If your child is not feeling the best one day and is kept home will they need to stay out of the school for fourteen days?

- A. By sending your child to school, you are indicating the following
- a. That your child has not had a temperature above 100.4 in the past twenty four hours without medication
 - b. That your child does not have a sore throat

- c. That your child does not have a new uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (for students with chronic allergic/asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline)
- d. That your child does not have diarrhea, vomiting, or abdominal pain
- e. That your child does not have a new onset of severe headache, especially with a fever
- f. That your child has not had close contact (within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes) with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the last 14 days
- g. That they have not travelled outside of Michigan within the last 14 days.

Any of the above symptoms indicates a possible illness that may decrease the student's ability to learn and also put them at risk for spreading illness to others.

Reference:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/symptom-screening.html>

Q. Covid symptoms and allergy symptoms are similar. If a child presents with allergy symptoms are they to remain home?

A. Children are asked to stay home if they have the above symptoms and for students with chronic allergic/asthmatic cough, it is a change in their cough from baseline.

Q. What is the daily protocol for child health screenings (if any)?

A. We will have daily health screenings; however, we are not finalized in what that will look like.

Q. What changes has the school implemented to keep our children safe without compromising the typical school routine of previous years(recess, lunch, gym etc)?

A. We have hand sanitizing stations throughout the school, surface cleaning will take place at least every four hours, increased cleaning procedures, teachers will be wearing masks, drinking fountains will not be used, staggering of lunch, recess and hallways times, daily screenings, no family members or visitors allowed in building unless extenuating circumstances, students will have their own personal items...these are just to name a few. Our plan is on our web page www.nativityparish.net/school

Q. Will my child still be able to ride Alma Public School buses before and after school?

A. All transportation requests for morning and afternoon busing through APS will be handled through their transportation office and follow their guidelines for phase 4.

Q. If kids are forced to wear masks all day, could they wear the Face shields instead?

A. Kids do not need to wear masks all day; however, they do need to wear MASKS not face shields when required in hallways and in common areas.

Q. Will parents be allowed in the building at drop off/pick up?

A. No. "Family members or other guests are not allowed in the school building except under extenuating circumstances determined by district and school officials" (Executive Order 2020-142 School Preparedness Plan Template).

Q. Do you foresee the academic calendar year changing at all, and if so, why?

A. We do not foresee the academic calendar year changing.

Q. I have specific questions about how things are going to work.

A. Principals will be meeting with teacher groups to outline details. This work is on-going and we'll be making specifics available as we near the start of school. The changing nature of this virus means we are learning new things and adjusting our decisions weekly and sometimes daily.

Q. How is St. Mary's School planning for the 2020-2021 school year?

A. Our administrative team has been planning throughout the summer, but this planning sometimes creates more questions than answers. Using information and resources provided by our diocesan task force, we are in the process of developing our COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan. Our administrative team has been in contact with our teacher team leaders and will continue to collaborate with our faculty and staff to complete our plan. As circumstances and guidelines continue to change and evolve, we appreciate the patience, flexibility, and resilience of our students and families.

The link below has a lot of good information that will help answer questions as well:

https://www.mmdhd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/COVID-19-Return-to-School-Toolkit_07.30.2020.pdf

Please note that this information may change as the we more updates may be made