



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. Is St. Mary's School going to be in-person or online?

A. At this time, St. Mary's School is planning for five days per week of in-person learning, as our region is currently in Phase 4. We are willing to work with your family, so please contact us and let us know your concerns if you are not able or willing to come for in-person instruction.

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 25 students. Teachers are putting together their classrooms this week and next week. Based on the social distancing, etc. we will make a decision then.

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, Y5-6 have to wear masks when moving throughout the building, but not necessarily in their self-contained 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 lunch and recess look like?

A. Lunch and recess will be staggered and in the cafeteria/gym with one classroom at a time. Lunch may occur in individual classrooms based on staff discretion. Students will wash hands before going outside 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. Will students attend Mass?

A. Due to the current restrictions on the number of people who can attend Mass at one time, all students will not be able to attend Mass together. We are working with Deacon Rick and the Diocese of Saginaw to put a plan in place for students to participate in online Masses or attend Mass in small groups.

Q. Will Kindergarteners and Young 5's remain at tables or will they go to having individual desks to maintain social distancing in the classroom?

A. All classrooms Y5-6 will use desks.

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 Extra masks and a water bottle will be required for all students. 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 happens if we start school and then return to Phase 3?

A. We are prepared to return to distance learning for all students, if necessary. St. Mary's School was prepared in March to offer distance learning and we are prepared to offer excellent instruction under any scenario this year. Teachers have spent many hours training for online instruction.

Q. How early will we know if we are going to be virtual learning?

A. You will know as soon as we do if we will be going to virtual learning.

Q. If we must return to Phase 3, what will distance learning look like?

A. Teachers and administrators will work together to provide the best distance learning program possible for each grade level/content area. We are continuing to learn and implement best practices in concurrence with teacher collaboration and consideration of student/parent feedback. We will be providing specific distance learning policies, procedures, and requirements in the 2020-2021 St. Mary's School Student/Parent handbook. Our foundational procedures will include:

- All teachers using Google Classroom as the delivery platform
- Teachers will have access to Boardworks to develop lessons
- Video lessons or live streams (Required Viewing)
- Whole class, small group and individual virtual sessions (Required Participation)
- Assessment, deadlines, and grading will adhere to standards/St. Mary's School grading policies
- Scheduled teacher office hours

Q. Will the curriculum be lightened if school has to go back to online again?

A. No. Teachers will continue with the rigor. They will communicate their expectations on Parent Night and what this will look like. Teachers will be available for one on one instruction.

Q. Why would I pay tuition at St. Mary's School instead of just enrolling in an online school?

A. We believe in St. Mary's School and our strong relationships with our teachers, families, and community. We know, love, and care for and about your child. We know what your child is capable of and can make sure s/he is completing quality work while being held to high expectations. If students have to transition between in-person and distance learning, St. Mary's School is prepared to do this seamlessly. **Teachers will take immediate response to continue teaching. We do not need to wait for the state to mandate regulations.**

Q. Can we pull our kids from St. Mary's school and stop payments if the school gets shut down again? Daycare and school payments are very expensive together.

A. We will work with you for the benefit of the child. 90% of our budget is salaries and they will be working harder to get things done remotely. We want to continue what St. Mary's School is all about and that is higher quality education. Your children will be learning the same academic skills even though they will not physically see the teacher. We plan to offer

students the level you are paying for. Eight of the ten Alma High School seniors who are St. Mary School Alumni for the 2019-2020 school year had a GPA over 3.5. One of those students was the Valedictorian. One of those students was the Salutatorian. Four of those students were in the Top Ten. Six of these students were Kiwanis Students of the Month with one of them Student of the Year. Homeschooling or changing schools will disrupt the child's education.

Q. Will families be charged full price tuition when we are on stay at home order?

A. Families will have the expectation to pay full tuition. Teachers will be working more than normal. Teachers will be available for not only online whole group instruction but for one on one instruction if your child needs assistance.

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 a child is quarantined due to Covid, how do they move forth academically?

A. Teachers are prepared to have materials and lessons available for those students that need to be kept home. The platform that will be used is Google classroom. Teachers will have more information regarding this on Parent Night.

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. Will the students still have their specials? Art, gym etc..

A. Yes. Students will have Art, Computers, Fitness, Music. We are currently looking for a Spanish teacher. Fitness will be held outside as much as possible, Art will be in the Art Room, Computers will be taught in each classroom using a mobile laptop cart and Music will be taught in each classroom.

Q. Will students be required to wear a mask in Fitness?

A. No, precautions will be taken to do our best to keep social distance. Fitness will be held outside as much as possible.

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 purchased desks to ensure social distancing, 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. Will St. Mary's School offer a 4 year old 8-4 pm program or offer child care?

No.

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. How many children would you project to be in the Y5/K classroom this year?

A. At this point we have 8 Young Five students and 19 Kindergarten students. We plan to have two separate classrooms for these grades. Mrs. Little will be the lead teacher with either Mrs. Sommerfeld or Mrs. Atchinson as the Young Five's teacher. We are capping our classrooms at 25 students.

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