



Espirito Santo Parochial School

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SCHOOL REOPENING PLAN – FALL 2020 Revised: July 29th, 2020

Dear Espirito Santo School community,

As you are aware, the Diocese of Fall River Catholic Schools will be returning to school in Fall of 2020. Per the press release on July 8th, 2020, it is our intention “that all Catholic schools serving Pre-K through Grade 8 students will fully re-open this fall with in-classroom instruction five days per week.”

(<https://www.catholicschoolsalliance.org/catholic-schools-across-southern-massachusetts-to-fully-reopen-this-fall/>)

We will have three plans in place going forward. These plans will be needed, if in the case that the COVID-19 data in Massachusetts begins to trend upward, and the Governor orders the schools to be closed. It is important to note that these guidelines/plans **are subject to change, depending on state data, and guidance from the Massachusetts Department of Education**. These three plans and their details can be found below:

- **In-Person learning with new safety requirements. (Intention for Fall 2020)** – In this model, students will return to in-person learning, with school settings modified to accommodate the health and safety requirements put forth by the Massachusetts Department of Education.
- **Hybrid Learning (Students learn both in-person & remotely)** – In this model, students will alternate between in-person and remote learning, depending on current conditions, or external factors.
- **Remote Learning (Learning takes place completely remotely)** – In this model, students will complete remote learning, depending on current conditions, or external factors.

What does the Return to School Plan look like for Espirito Santo School in Fall 2020?

As stated above, we are planning to return to school in Fall 2020. Students in Grades PS-8 will return for full-time instruction at the school. We will also use the church hall for additional space, as needed. Included in this plan will be live-streaming technologies, and well as a modified schedule to accommodate the maximum learning time possible. There will be more details on this below. (Please note: a separate guidance will be issued in relation to Pre-School & Pre-Kindergarten classes.)

What are the specific guidelines being used regarding Physical Distancing at Espirito Santo School?

Each classroom has been modified per guidance from the Massachusetts Department of Education & the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Under this guidance, we have been able to accommodate our student body within the school. Classrooms in Grades K-8 have been cleaned, and the desks have been separated between three to four feet. The distance between the desks was determined by the number of students in the classroom, as well as available spacing. The desks will also face one way (facing forward toward the front of the room.)

For grades K-8, those classes will remain in their individual classrooms. Traditionally at Espirito Santo School, grades K-3 is self-contained and grades 4-8 involve a rotation of students. Under this new model, the students will remain in their spaces, and teachers will rotate to those classrooms as needed. At this time, specials (such as Portuguese, Art &/or PE) will take place in that classroom, or at an alternate location such as the outside playground. Lunch & recess procedures will be detailed below.

Since students will not be moving from class to class, we will be able to reduce the amount of traffic in the hallways, and allow for students to properly social distance.

At this moment, we are reviewing scheduling procedures, and how to stagger arrival & dismissal times, as well as entering and exiting the building after recess. More information on this to come.

What is required of students and teachers regarding Face Masks and/or Coverings?

Per guidance from the Massachusetts Department of Education, all staff and students in Grades 2-8 will be required to wear a mask while they are at school. To allow for uniformity across the grade levels, the school has placed an order of masks for the students. Each student will receive five red cloth masks (one of each day of the week, to allow for washing of the masks at the end of the week.) This will be a part of the school uniform, and must be worn. This will be at no-cost to families.

Alternative face coverings, such as face shields and/or clear masks will be utilized under certain conditions, and/or educational needs. These situations will be considered in a case by case basis.

It is most important that a clean mask is worn to school each day. With five masks, you can rotate through the masks each day, and wash them at the end of the week. We will have extra disposable masks on hand, for emergency use only. Students and families who do not comply with these standards may not be allowed to attend school.

As stated above, as we look into scheduling, we will integrate moments for “mask breaks”. This will most likely take place when the students are outside of the building, where fresh air is available. Students will follow social distancing guidelines when this occurs as well.

Please note for students in Grades PS-1, though masks are not required, they are encouraged.

What is the school’s policy regarding student and teacher screening procedures each day?

It is important that parents and the school keep in constant contact regarding the health of the students. With that said, it is important the student remain home from school if they are sick, especially if they show any symptoms of COVID-19, and contact their medical professional. Parents should self-screen the children before coming to school each day. If for any reason your student is not coming to school, **you must contact the school, and notify the office the reason for the absence.** The office will log absences and reason behind the absence. This is to track student health and to reduce the possibility of other students getting sick.

When students arrive at the school, they will be observed by teachers/staff at point of entry to ensure that they are feeling well. If students are not feeling well, they will be instructed to return home with

their parents. Please note that temperature checks will not take place, per the recommendation from the Massachusetts Department of Education.

My student is not feeling well, and is showing symptoms. What should I do?

The rule of thumb is simple, **when in doubt, stay home.**

If your student has any of the symptoms below, they are to stay home:

- Fever (100.4 degrees or higher), chills, or shaking chills))
- Cough (not due to other known cause, such as chronic cough)
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Headache when in combination with other symptoms
- Muscle aches or body aches
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Fatigue when in combination with other symptoms
- Nasal congestion or runny nose (not due to other known causes, such as allergies) when in combination with other symptoms.

If a student has any of the above symptoms, they must get a test for active COVID-19 infection prior to returning to school. The school will have a list of available test site if you require guidance. If a student gets a positive test for COVID-19, the student will have to remain home for at least 10 days, **and** until at least 3 days have passed with no fever and improvement of other symptoms.

How will lunch & recess be handled this year?

Based on the guidance from the Massachusetts Department of Education, the following procedures have been established for lunch. For Grades PS, PK, K & 1, lunches will take place in the classroom. For Grades 2-8, students will have lunch in the cafeteria. In order to provide distance between the students, we will not be using the traditional cafeteria tables, and instead using the round white tables. Also, we are building tabletop dividers to give students their own space to eat lunch. Lastly, we will be adding additional lunch shifts to reduce the number of students in the cafeteria at one time. Hot lunch will still be available, and students can continue to bring lunch from home if they choose. We would recommend that if students bring a lunch from home, they use a bag that can be disposed of.

For recess, this will follow the same procedure as lunches. Students will go outside in smaller groups, and social distance. Recess is largely an opportunity for a mask break, as well as fresh air.

How will hand washing, hand sanitizing and cleaning work?

Under the current conditions, frequent hand washing & hand sanitizing is critical in order to remain healthy. The school has purchased additional hand sanitizing stations that will be installed across the school, as well as additional soap dispensers for bathrooms & classrooms. Upon our return to school, each class will review proper hand washing techniques.

Cleaning of surfaces is also an important part to keep everyone healthy. As part of PPE ordered for the school, we will have chemicals to properly disinfect surfaces. Surfaces will be cleaned at the end of each school day, as well as during the day (i.e. before and after meals, sick child, etc.)

As per the supply lists sent to families, any materials donated (paper towels, hand sanitizer, etc.) will be used to keep everyone healthy, as well as the supplies ordered for the return to school.

Will there be any changes to the school's curriculum for this year?

Generally speaking, the curriculum will be slightly modified, due to scheduling modifications, and other factors. Under the In-Person return to school plan, all subjects will continue to be taught as usual. As stated above, teachers in Grades 4-8 will rotate to those classes to avoid student traffic. Specials, such as Portuguese and Art will take place in that respective grades classroom. PE will either take place outside, or an alternative activity will replace the class for the day. This will usually take place if the weather is not ideal to allow for outside PE class.

Also, it is our intention to continue with our MAP testing going forward. A schedule and timetable for that testing is to be determined.

What will remote learning look like this year and who can take part in it?

Regardless of what plan the school is under, remote learning will be an option to families. Technology has been ordered that will allow for students in Grades PK-8 to "live-stream" the classroom, to still be able to access the curriculum. The technology allows the student to access live teaching from home, just like as if they were sitting in the classroom. They will be able to hear the teacher during instruction, as well as hear other students if they were to ask a question. This technology will also be useful to us if we are forced into a hybrid model, or have to go to remote learning, due to a rise in metrics in the State of Massachusetts. Details on expectations of students while learning from home will be included in the student/parent handbook. (Please note: orders have been placed for the technology through the Fall River Public Schools, which controls the ESSER funding from the federal government. It is our hope that these technologies will be in place for the 1st day of school. However, as you can imagine, there may be a delay in shipment, due to such high demand.)

How will extended care and extracurricular activities be handled this year?

At this time, it is our intention to offer before and after-care services to families, especially during this in-person return to school. We are currently developing a plan to utilize the church hall space to host before and after-school care. Procedures for using this will be forthcoming.

In terms of extracurricular activities, athletics, school masses, and field trips, these will be determined once additional guidance from the Massachusetts Department of Education is released.

What are some other important health and safety guidelines that the school will be following?

Here are some other topics to highlight in relation to health/safety and return to school:

- The school is in process of hiring a nurse, that is currently ongoing.
- The school will keep in contact with families if any changes to this plan occur.

- For the time being, there will no volunteering at the school. Alternative procedures for the 1st day of school, drop-off of school supplies, office business, and meetings will be forthcoming. This will ensure reduced traffic in the school.
- As highlighted above, PPE supplies have been ordered, and will be used within the school.

In closing, I hope that this plan has answered many questions that you may have regarding the reopening of school for Fall 2020. Please feel free to contact me via email if you have any particular questions, or something is unclear. Lastly, as stated earlier, any plans are subject to change. Any and all updates will be communicated to families. We look forward to our return to school this Fall.

Sincerely,

Mr. Andrew J. Raposo
Principal