

2020-2021

# Return to School Plan

## Owensboro Catholic Schools

Please note: Information contained in this document is evolving and may be updated as additional guidance is released at the Diocesan, national, state, or local level for returning to school.

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*Updated as of 8/12/20*

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The purpose of this reopening plan is to provide information and guidance to Owensboro Catholic Schools families, employees, and the greater community so we may safely open, in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, for the 2020-2021 school year. It is the intention of the Owensboro Catholic Schools to open in such a way that is safe, maximizes in person instruction to all students, and guarantees to our families the excellence they've come to expect from OCS.

It is also our goal to reduce the impact of the current pandemic as it affects the children, families, personnel, and communities in our care. The guidelines referenced in this plan are based on the guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Kentucky Department of Health, and the Green River Area Health Department, in consultation with the Diocese of Owensboro. Regular updates will be made to this plan based on information provided by the above entities, applicable federal and state laws, and local agencies.

The Owensboro Catholic Schools look to these entities to provide recommendations as to the best practices for re-opening and will open in a manner that is most conducive to the preservation of our schools and with respect to the public health standards. Mandates from local, state or federal governmental agencies will be followed.

All references to bussing in this document are applicable when bussing is available.

The priorities of this plan are:

- **Safe School Sites** – School environments conducive to learning that take into account: appropriate social distancing, use of PPE, best practices in sanitization, the emotional needs of our students and families, continued education in good hygiene.
- **Excellence in Faith Formation and Academics** – Providing tangible expressions of the Catholic faith to our students while preserving school traditions and charisms in physical and remote environments, ensuring liturgical celebrations and strong connections to the Faith community, advancing our emphasis on integrating the Catholic faith in all aspects of school life. Keeping schools physically open as much as possible during the pandemic supports our parents, provides consistent schedules, and maximizes the highest quality instruction.
- **Weekly Mass** – Working closely with the Diocese of Owensboro, we are looking at a variety of options that would allow us to have Mass. As we finalize plans, we will communicate those to you.

## General Protocols

### Temperature and Wellness Checks

- All staff and students will have their temperatures checked daily upon entering the building and all staff will complete a daily health self-assessment form. Anyone with a temperature  $\geq 100.4$  or displaying other symptoms will not be allowed to remain at school. Person must be fever free (and symptom free) for 24 hours (without using medication) in order to be able to return to school.

### Social Distancing

- School sites will observe all social distancing guidelines to the fullest extent possible. Classrooms will be equipped with plexiglass desk top barriers to allow an extra level of protection and students will face the same direction when possible.

## Masks/Face Coverings

- Masks must be worn by all students and staff.
  - ◆ Cover the nose and mouth and be secured to the head with ties or straps or simply wrapped around the lower face.
  - ◆ Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face.
  - ◆ If cloth masks, masks should be washed regularly.
  - ◆ Include multiple layers of fabric.
  - ◆ Allow for breathing without restrictions.
  - ◆ Plastic face shields alone are NOT acceptable per Health Department guidelines.
- Masks must be brought from home and cover both nose and mouth. Disposable masks will be available at the schools in cases where a student misplaces or forgets mask at home.
- **Face Mask Guidelines** – All students in grades KN through 12th and every employee will be required to wear a mask. We are not requiring a specific uniform mask for students. In fact, we are open to students' creative designs and creations provided they do not promote or wear any bias related apparel, sign or symbol which reasonably appears to offend, victimize or intimidate others based on race, age, color, religion, sex, national origin, or disability and/or which disrupts or interferes with the educational setting and/or process. This act includes the wearing of gang clothing or paraphernalia and the use of gang signs and signals. Students also cannot promote any political agenda or make any political statement via their apparel, signs or symbols.

## Good Hygiene

- Following good hygiene practices limits exposure to all viruses. Good hygiene practices include:
  - ◆ Washing hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
  - ◆ Using hand sanitizer with at least 70% alcohol if soap and water are not available
  - ◆ Avoiding touching the eyes, nose, and mouth
  - ◆ Covering the mouth and nose or use the inside of your elbow when you cough or sneeze
  - ◆ Teaching students how to practice good hygiene practices

## Visitor Restrictions

- Normal visitation to our school sites will be discontinued until further notice. This restriction includes parents, grandparents, and volunteers unless permitted by the principal.
- Exemptions will be granted to KN parents (for first week only) as their children transition to school.

## Illness

### Staff

- If an employee becomes ill at work or displays symptoms of COVID-19 at work, they will be instructed to go home and contact their health provider.
- Employees returning to work from an approved medical leave should contact their principal. A healthcare provider's note will be required before returning to work. If diagnosed with COVID-19, an employee may return to work in accordance with the following most recent CDC guidelines:
  - ◆ At least 10 days since symptoms first appeared, and
  - ◆ At least 24 hours with no fever without fever-reducing medication, and
  - ◆ Symptoms have improved
  - ◆ Written release from the Green River District Health Department.
- Employees must be fever free and symptom free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication before returning to work per OCS Return to School Policy. However, if you:
  - ◆ Had close contact (within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes) with a person with confirmed COVID-19
  - ◆ Traveled to or lived in an area where the local or state health department is reporting large numbers of COVID-19 cases
  - ◆ Live in areas of high community transmission while the school remains openthen you must visit your health care provider and receive a note before returning to school.
- If an employee has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and does not get evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, it is assumed that this employee has COVID-19 and may not return to work until the criteria listed above have been met.
- According to our current Diocesan protocols, all employees will be checked for symptoms before beginning work for the day. Employees who have symptoms at this pre-work check will be asked to return home for that day and not return until they are symptom free.
- Staff members will be asked to disinfect their areas including cubicles, classrooms, carts, etc. to reduce exposure and assure that all areas are properly sanitized.
- In certain cases, staff members, who have not in the past, may be asked to monitor students in order to help the school maintain social distancing.

### Student

- If a student becomes ill or displays symptoms of COVID-19, the school will contact parent/guardian and be advised to seek medical attention.
- If a student has tested positive for COVID-19, the following conditions must be met before he/she can return to school:

- ◆ At least 10 days since symptoms first appeared, and
  - ◆ At least 24 hours with no fever without fever-reducing medication, and
  - ◆ Symptoms have improved
  - ◆ Written release from the Green River District Health Department.
- We realize that the symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to those of many other illnesses. Your student must be fever free and symptom free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication before returning to school as per OCS Return to School Policy. However, if you:
    - ◆ Had close contact (within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes) with a person with confirmed COVID-19
    - ◆ Traveled to or lived in an area where the local or state health department is reporting large numbers of COVID-19 cases
    - ◆ Live in areas of high community transmission while the school remains open

then you must visit your health care provider and receive a note before returning to school.

**In the event a positive COVID-19 case arises in a student or staff member:**

- OCS will notify the Green River Area Health Department and will cooperate with the contact tracing. This will allow for quick identification of those at high risk of infection.
- OCS will remain in session and will seek guidance from the local health department and the Diocese.
- Develop and deliver communications for students, families, and staff regarding the infectious illness and the planned response.
- Responses may include but are not limited to one classroom closure, extra disinfection of spaces, or closure of the school site on a short-term basis.
- The Superintendent of the Diocese of Owensboro has the authority to close schools for emergency reasons in accordance with applicable policy.
- The OCS Episcopal Vicar will work closely with Principals and Administration as well as state and local officials to make all decisions related to possible school closure in response to an infectious illness, such as COVID-19.

**Student Emotional Needs**

- Special care must be taken for the emotional needs of our students. Many have increased anxiety as a result of the societal changes and use of unnatural boundaries. As Catholic schools, we must provide responses that are connected to the traditions of our Church to help students manage these in a way that directs them always to our Loving God. There should be increased time for prayer, meditation, and open dialogue connected to our Faith.

## Movement Within the Building

- Elementary schools should aim to keep students in the same group throughout the day and middle and high schools are encouraged to minimize mixing student groups to the extent feasible. In our schools, elementary students should remain in the classrooms with teachers (including non-core teachers) passing between classrooms.
- If students must pass in the middle school or high school, they should follow clearly defined protocols developed by the school administration and must maintain a minimum of 3-foot distance while passing from class to class. To limit movement of students, teachers should pass between the classrooms when possible. Desks must be disinfected before another group of students enters the classroom.

## Sanitization of Classrooms

- Teachers will be required to sanitize their classroom surfaces at the end of each day and before a new group of students enters their classroom. The classrooms will be cleaned thoroughly and sanitized following the guidance provided by the CDC as well as State and local requirements.

## Sanitization of Facility

- The facilities should be sanitized following the guidelines of the CDC as well as State and local DPH requirements.

## Food and Food Delivery

- Students will be allowed to bring clear, refillable water bottles to school. New water bottle refill stations are being installed and the use of water fountains will be discontinued.
- No sharing of food or drink is allowed.
- Students can bring lunch from home or order lunch from the cafeteria.
- Each site will develop plans to best conduct breakfast and lunch protocols and will communicate those to families.

## Transportation

- Public school bus transportation will be available to OCS families on the days DCPS is in session. The DCPS plan to have in person instruction on an A/B schedule would mean that transportation **WOULD NOT** be available to OCS families on Wednesdays. We highly recommend that parents avoid using public school transportation if at all possible.
- OCS families would be responsible for getting their children to school on Wednesday of each week, until DCPS returns to a 5 day a week schedule.
- In the event this schedule becomes their plan, the elementary sites will provide after school to families for the one day (Wednesdays) only at a rate of \$10.00.
- Students who cannot attend on Wednesdays due to transportation issues will be treated as a sick day.