



Plan for Opening School 2021-2022 School Year

St. Patrick Catholic School remained true to its mission during the 2020-2021 school year. We were able to keep the school open for students all day every day, with the exception of a few necessary transitions to remote learning to provide an extra layer of protection for all. Our ability to maintain high standards for learning and keep our students and school community healthy and safe was an amazing accomplishment last year! Thank you for your support and vigilance in adhering to the guidelines and protocols that were in place. Above all, thank you for your trust.

Our efforts did not go unnoticed. St. Patrick Catholic School was voted a Family Favorites winner among Fredericksburg Parent and Family Magazine readers. Our school won 1st place for “Best COVID Response” and was a winner for “Best Private School.” I am proud of our entire faculty and staff who, on a daily basis last year, kept the health of your children in the forefront of every decision and activity. We are truly blessed to have such a loving and talented group of educators committed to providing the very best every day.

I am looking forward to welcoming everyone back for a great 2021-2022 school year! However, I remain focused on providing the safest environment for our students, faculty and staff, families, and visitors as we continue to navigate the effects of the Covid-19 virus. While we will continue to follow strict guidelines and protocols for the 2021-2022 school year, our Catholic identity and faith formation will continue to be at the heart of who we are and what we do each day. Thank you in advance for your support and trust as I outline our opening plan for the coming school year. Much time and effort has been spent in providing nothing but the best plan for our school community. The health and safety of our students, faculty and staff, families, and visitors continues to be my top priority in every detail.

A framework for making decisions regarding our approach to opening for the 2021-2022 school year was published on July 21, 2021 in *Interim Guidance for Covid-19 Prevention in Virginia PreK-12 Schools* from the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE).

The guidance document, along with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Catholic Diocese of Arlington Office of Catholic Schools, and the Rappahannock Area Health Department (RAHD) guidance, was used and applied to ensure the safe operation of St. Patrick Catholic School with the appropriate number of restrictions. Reasonable measures have been employed to guide health risk mitigation decisions appropriately now and throughout the school year. I am grateful for the support of our Diocese Office of Catholic Schools and Local Health Authorities, and I will continue to work closely with them throughout the school year. Our partnership is invaluable.

The goal of this Opening Plan is to have a well-considered mitigation plan in place for the 2021-2022 school year that reflects the particular circumstances of our school and its surrounding community as we all work to prevent the introduction and/or transmission of Covid-19 in St. Patrick Catholic School.

As I roll out our plan to open St. Patrick Catholic School, I want you to know that my pledge to our students, families, and the entire school community is:

- First and foremost: To ensure students, faculty, and staff are safe at school and are not unknowingly transmitting or contracting the virus.
- To keep our proven successful spiritual and academic curriculum in place.
- To maintain effective and regular communication to our school community.

St. Patrick Catholic School will continuously monitor three sources of data to make necessary adjustments to the guidelines and protocols used throughout the school year. It is possible that as the data changes, specific requirements, such as face coverings, could be loosened or removed. All decisions will be based on careful attention to the following data sources.

1. **School Metrics** - *School Metrics* is located on the Virginia Department of Health website, and evaluates the level of community disease transmission in our community. The *Metrics* categories include low, moderate, substantial, and high. Two measures are used to establish each category: the total number of cases in the past seven days and the percentage of nucleic acid amplification tests that are positive in the past seven days. Categories of Substantial and High Transmission level in our community will require mandatory face coverings and social distancing. Additionally, limits on athletics and other extracurricular activities may be necessary until transmission levels decline.

Indicator	Low Transmission	Moderate Transmission	Substantial Transmission	High Transmission
Total new cases per 100,000 persons in past 7 days	0-9	10-49	50-99	>=100
Percentage of NAATs that are positive in past 7 days	<5.0%	5.0%-7.9%	8.0%-9.9%	>10.0%

<https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/key-measures/pandemic-metrics/school-metrics/>

2. **Vaccine Data Dashboard** - Vaccine data on the Virginia Department of Health website helps us understand community and locality level vaccination coverage. Age-group vaccination coverage at the local level will provide important data regarding estimated vaccination coverage at St. Patrick Catholic School. Because children under the age of 12 are not yet eligible for the Covid-19 vaccine, there may be protocols that are necessary for younger students while not necessary for older middle school students. However, most guidelines and protocols will remain consistent across all grade levels, as all students use both school buildings during the school day and interact with each other during recess, Mass, and other school-wide activities and events.

<https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/covid-19-vaccine-demographics/>

3. **School Impact Data** - Just as important as the local data, information specific to St. Patrick Catholic School will help monitor the effectiveness of our protocols. Criteria we will consider is transmission within the school, student absenteeism, and staff capacity. We will regularly evaluate the impact that Covid-19 transmission is having on our school community and adjust protocols accordingly. For example, if the level of school impact is low and other local data mentioned above is at or below the moderate level, school protocols may be loosened. For example, the face covering requirement may be removed. On the contrary, if the level of school impact is worsening, protocols will be adjusted to provide a higher level of protection (i.e. required face coverings and increased social distancing) which may include a transition to remote learning.

Criteria	Level of School Impact		
	Low	Medium	High
Transmission Within School	Zero or sporadic cases with no evidence of transmission in school	Two breakouts within a short time period or sporadic outbreaks in school. Size of outbreaks remains small.	Several outbreaks in school within short time period; size of outbreaks is large or scope of outbreaks is significant (i.e. multiple classrooms or grade levels impacted)
Student Absenteeism	At baseline/low	Slightly above baseline	High
Staff Capacity*	Normal	Strained	Critical

*The school's ability to maintain adequate staff for facility operation, teaching, and administrative functions.

www.vdh.virginia.gov

I do expect to strongly consider transitioning to remote learning one week prior to and/or following Thanksgiving, Christmas, and/or Easter break. Specific information regarding this will be provided to all families in a timely manner so that necessary arrangements can be made for a smooth and informed transition.

Our plan for opening St. Patrick Catholic School includes the careful and intentional management of four key areas:

- Managing Physical Distancing
- Managing Contact and Movement
- Managing Cleaning and Disinfecting
- Managing Health of Students, Faculty/Staff, Families, and Visitors

Managing Physical Distancing

The plan is to open the school year on August 23, 2021 with face coverings (masks) mandatory for all. All students, faculty, staff, and visitors will be required to wear a mask while inside the school buildings. Plexiglass partitions will be used on desks or tables in classrooms and in the front office to provide a layer of protection as we adhere to a three-foot social distancing guideline. Students will be allowed to remove facial coverings (masks) while seated behind the plexiglass and while outdoors.

During lunch, students will be allowed to remove face coverings and will be socially distanced using every other seat.

Classrooms will not have shared or common use supplies and materials. Students will use their own.

Managing Contact and Movement

St. Patrick Catholic School will be carefully managing contact and movement. We are taking a very controlled approach with restrictions for PE class and recess. Our students need to maintain physical exercise and our PE curriculum will be followed. However, we will creatively manage student personal space to maintain safe distancing and will be sanitizing equipment. PE class will remain a grade level class and will be conducted outdoors on our field unless we have inclement weather.

Students will be able to eat lunch in the Parish Hall with social distancing in place. With our additional lunch tables, students will be seated a safe distance from each other while eating. We will continue to offer a variety of lunch options with My Hot Lunchbox. More information will be available about where and how to place these special lunch orders.

Students will report directly to class in the morning and walk directly to the carpool lanes at dismissal. Our Extended Day Program will operate with the same restrictions and social distancing as we will be using in our classrooms and school buildings.

We will reinstate our weekly School Mass for all students on Fridays at 9:00 a.m. Masks will be required while in the church until further notice.

Our athletic program will be reinstated for the 2021-2022 school year. Our Athletic Director will provide more information regarding protocols, practices, and games.

Managing Cleaning and Disinfecting

The cleaning crew at St. Patrick Catholic School will be present during the entire school day to provide the highest quality of cleaning and disinfecting throughout the school day. Touchless sanitizing stations will be outside each classroom and entryway throughout the school. Since we utilize touch-free water bottle filling stations, students are encouraged to bring refillable water bottles to school each day.

Our newly renovated and upgraded library will be open for the 2021-2022 school year. However, a sanitizing protocol for used books will be utilized.

Students will have the use of the new technology lab and classroom Chromebooks or iPads. However, strict usage and sanitization guidelines will be in place.

Managing Health of Students, Faculty/Staff, Families, and Visitors

Our top priority is to manage the health of our students, faculty, staff, families, and visitors. As I mentioned earlier, we have a great partnership with the Rappahannock Area Health District, and the resources and training provided will be invaluable for our faculty, staff, and families.

Please understand that more than ever, students entering school will need to have the required physicals and immunizations prior to being allowed to attend school.

All students, faculty, and staff will be required to utilize the *I'm Healthy Today: Schools* daily screening program. *I'm Healthy Today: Schools* is a "Data-Driven, Doctor-Managed" program that utilizes technology for daily health screening that includes doctor established algorithms and doctor tele-health visits for every student, faculty, and staff member as needed for diagnosis and assessment of COVID-19. Along with the safety protocols outlined in this opening plan, the *I'm Healthy Today: Schools* program offers the following added layer of protection and monitoring.

- Track the daily COVID-19 related health status of every individual on campus.
- Should a student, faculty, or staff member display symptoms of COVID-19, he/she will be connected via a tele-health call with a doctor to assess their condition PRIOR to coming to school.

- Should any student, faculty, or staff member test positive for COVID-19, a tele-health doctor can oversee his/her status until a negative test result allows him/her to safely return to school.

Please visit the *I'm Healthy Today: Schools* parent portal for a more detailed explanation of how the daily health checker program works. <https://imhealthytoday-parents.com/> .

In order to cover the cost of the daily health check program, a Covid-19 fee will be added to your tuition for the 2021-2022 school year. The cost is \$11 per child per month for the 2021-2022 school year. Should the school need to make the decision to transition to remote learning, the monthly fee will cease until the school is reopened for in-person instruction. Families not using FACTS to pay tuition will need to submit a check to the school by the first of each month.

The *I'm Healthy Today: Schools* program will launch beginning with the first day of school - August 23, 2021. In order to meet this deadline, you will be asked to complete the required form (one form per child) so that the initial health screening can take place. You will receive a separate email with a link to complete the form. The deadline for completing the form is August 9, 2021. August 16 is the target date for you to begin receiving the daily health alert so that you have time to become acclimated to the daily checker prior to the first day of school. The daily health check MUST be completed each school day before your child can enter the school building. Please plan to complete the check before you leave home. The alert will arrive on your phone or email by 5:30 a.m. Monday through Friday to remind you to complete the screening for your child.

All visitors will be required to complete a health screening upon arrival at St. Patrick Catholic School.

Students or staff that present communicable symptoms will need to be evaluated and isolated for a short period of time. Our isolation room is a self-contained area that was designed with input from healthcare professionals and has a separate filtration system.

Should a student or faculty/staff member test positive for Covid-19, a close contact list will be created, the Rappahannock Area Health Department (RAHD) will be contacted, and families will be notified of any need to quarantine. We will follow the guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) regarding isolation and quarantine requirements for vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals.

In Summary

The plan is to open St. Patrick Catholic School year on August 23, 2021 with face coverings (masks) required for all students, faculty, staff, and visitors. Plexiglass partitions will be used on desks or tables in classrooms and in the front office to provide a layer of protection as we adhere to a three-foot social distancing guideline. Students will be allowed to remove facial coverings (masks) while seated behind the plexiglass and when outdoors.

St. Patrick Catholic School will continuously monitor three sources of data to make necessary adjustments to the guidelines and protocols used throughout the school year. It is possible that as the data changes, specific requirements, such as face coverings, could be loosened or removed.

Should changes or adjustments need to be made to the plan prior to the first day of school or throughout the school year, all families will be notified in a timely manner. Thank you in advance for your patience, cooperation, and trust.

The St. Patrick Catholic School Opening Plan for the 2021-2022 school year was written with the approval of Fr. Ziegler, Pastor of St. Patrick Catholic Church, and with the guidance of the following entities, publications, or individuals.

- *Interim Guidance for Covid-19 Prevention in Virginia PreK-12 Schools* from the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). (July 21, 2021)
- The Catholic Diocese of Arlington Office of Catholic Schools
- Rappahannock Area Health Department (RAHD)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Sally A. Nicholson, Ed.D
Principal