Saint Patrick School Planning Guidance Document

Overview

In these difficult and uncertain times, we have constructed a plan that we believe will allow us to provide our students with the best education possible, while keeping health and safety a top priority. This plan details the policies and procedures that we have determined will enable students and staff to return to campus safely and maintain as much stability and consistency as possible in these challenging circumstances. This is a preliminary draft that is subject to change; it will be revised and finalized in August prior to the start of the school year. This document is meant to supplement the SPS Parent/Student Handbook. It contains updated information that applies to the current COVID situation; policies included here supersede those in the Handbook. Parents and students should still review the Handbook for any policies not included or updated here (i.e. dress code guidelines, general school information, etc.) As we move forward, we are excited to welcome our students back on campus, and we remain committed to inspiring them to grow in faith, knowledge, and service.

Kelly Stevens
Principal

A Message from the Contra County Superintendent of Schools and the County Health Officer

When the 2020-2021 school year begins in Contra Costa County, schools, classrooms, and in-class instruction will look much different this year due to new COVID-19 measures. The Contra Costa County Office of Education (CCCOE) and Contra Costa Health Services (CCHS) have been working closely together with local school districts in our county to address issues associated with school closures and prepare for the reopening of schools for 2020-2021. With the tremendous impact of COVID-19 on our education community, schools and school districts have come together to collaborate, share best practices, and advocate for appropriate resources in order to reopen schools safely and effectively in a COVID-19 environment. The health and safety of our students, staff, and families are our highest priorities. Guidelines are based on the best available information about COVID-19 in the county at this time and are subject to change.

*The proceeding planning guide is based on the work of these two agencies.
What to Expect When Schools Reopen

Contra Costa Health Services (CCHS) recommends the following health and safety guidance for the reopening of schools based on current information. This guidance will be updated as the situation changes.

General COVID Procedures

We ask that parents discuss the following health and safety procedures with their children, and emphasize the importance of physical distancing, wearing masks, and frequent hand washing/sanitizing. Following these guidelines is essential for keeping our community safe and healthy.

• All students, faculty, and staff will be required to wear masks on campus. During instruction, teachers may also wear a clear face shield.
• Everyone on campus must refrain from shaking hands, hugging, and other close physical contact.
• Frequent hand washing and hand sanitizing procedures will be implemented in each classroom.
• Water fountains will not be available. Students should bring adequately-filled water bottles from home to last them the entire day. Students will not have an opportunity to refill water bottles at school.
• Bathrooms routines will be established to ensure physical distancing and sanitizing. Additionally, bathrooms will be cleaned and sanitized between cohort visits and each evening.
• High-touch points in each classroom will be sanitized frequently throughout the day. (Door handles, light switches, sink handles, bathroom surfaces, tables, student desks and chairs)
• Classroom visitors and volunteers cannot be accommodated at this time.
• Classroom furniture will be arranged to promote physical distancing (3-6 feet apart according to CCCOE guidelines)
• All students and staff will be encouraged to wash their hands regularly and thoroughly. Hand washing stations with soap and/or fragrance-free, 60% ethyl alcohol hand sanitizer will be made available in every classrooms, restroom, and common space.
• Supply sharing will be limited between students and disinfected between uses if sharing is unavoidable.
• Students/Adults who are not feeling well should not go to the school site.

Self-Screening for Symptoms

• Before students and staff come to school, they will need to conduct a self-check for signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
• Anyone who has been exposed to someone with COVID-19 in the past 14 days (exposure means within 4-6 feet for 15-minutes or longer), has COVID-19 symptoms, or who is showing symptoms should not come to the school site.
• Students and staff should self-check for symptoms throughout the day. Those who develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19 will be sent home.
Long-term School Closure Plan

In the event that school is closed for an extended period of time, SPS will revert to an online distance-learning plan. A structured, full day schedule will be implemented with a combination of daily GoogleClasses and assignments delivered via online learning platforms. All necessary resources and information will be posted for parents for easy access.

Other Safety Considerations

- Cloth face coverings will be worn by all faculty, staff, students, and adult visitors. Teachers will have access to face shields, which will enable younger students to see their teachers’ faces and to avoid potential barriers to phonological instruction.
- Students are required to wear cloth face coverings. Cloth face coverings are important even when physical distancing and cohort groups are occurring. Physical distancing is important at all times, including during drop-off and pick-up of students.
- Students will be frequently reminded to avoid touching their face and face covering, and to wash their hands often.
- Gloves should be used by those conducting duties such as cleaning, first aid, providing medical procedures, or food service.
- Physical barriers may be used when physical distancing is not possible.
- Teacher will prioritize the use and maximization of outdoor space for activities where practicable.
- Teachers will minimize movement of students and teachers or staff as much as practicable.
- Teachers will redesign activities for smaller groups and rearrange furniture and play spaces to maintain separation.
- Staff should develop instructions for maximizing spacing and ways to minimize movement in both indoor and outdoor spaces that are easy for students to understand and are developmentally appropriate.
- Activities where there is increased likelihood for transmission from contaminated exhaled droplets such as band and choir practice and performances are not permitted indoors. Activities that involve singing must only take place outdoors.
- Teachers will implement procedures for turning in assignments to minimize contact.
- Privacy boards or clear screens may be used to increase and enforce separation between staff and students.
What to Expect When Schools Reopen

HOW TO WEAR A NON-MEDICAL FABRIC MASK SAFELY

Do's

- Clean your hands before touching the mask
- Inspect the mask for damage or if dirty
- Adjust the mask to your face without leaving gaps on the sides
- Cover your mouth, nose, and chin
- Avoid touching the mask
- Clean your hands before removing the mask
- Remove the mask by the straps behind the ears or head
- Pull the mask away from your face
- Store the mask in a clean plastic, reusable bag if it is not dirty or wet and you plan to re-use it
- Remove the mask by the straps when taking it out of the bag
- Wash the mask in soap or detergent, preferably with hot water, at least once a day
- Clean your hands after removing the mask

Don'ts

- Do not use a mask that looks damaged
- Do not wear a loose mask
- Do not wear the mask under the nose
- Do not remove the mask where there are people within 1 metre
- Do not use a mask that is difficult to breathe through
- Do not wear a dirty or wet mask
- Do not share your mask with others

A fabric mask can protect others around you. To protect yourself and prevent the spread of COVID-19, remember to keep at least 1 metre distance from others, clean your hands frequently and thoroughly, and avoid touching your face and mask.

Saint Patrick School 2020-2021 School Planning Guide
Based on CCCOE Recommendations
On Campus and in the Classroom

Physical distancing helps limit the spread of the virus. Saint Patrick School has considered the following strategies to maintain smaller groups of students in shared spaces:

- Visitors will be limited on campus
- Students will be kept in smaller cohorts with minimal mixing to the greatest extent practicable
- Lunchtimes will be staggered and lunch will be in small group settings in the classroom/outside
- Student desks will be spaced three (3) to six (6) feet apart to promote physical distancing where practicable. Teachers must maintain a 6 foot distance at all times from students
- Hot Lunch will be served individually as always
- Recess/PE will be staggered as well as other transition times as needed
- SPS will avoid large gatherings such as assemblies and all school masses
- A sick room has been designated for students who are not feeling well to minimize contact with others until they can go home. Parents must pick up sick children within the hour - designate a reliable person for this task if you are unable to pick up your child in a timely manner.

What is physical distancing?

Social distancing, also called “physical distancing,” means keeping space between yourself and other people outside of your home. To practice physical distancing:

- Where practicable, maintain physical distancing of six feet between adults and students; four to six feet distance is permissible between students within a classroom or instructional area
- Do not gather in groups
- Stay out of crowded places and avoid mass gatherings

In addition to everyday steps to prevent COVID-19, keeping space between you and others and wearing face coverings are the best tools we have to avoid being exposed to this virus and slowing its spread locally, nationally, and globally.
Attending to the physical, mental, social, and emotional well-being of our students will be a top priority as they return to school.

To maintain physical distancing, activities that require students to congregate will be limited and modified as guidelines change.

Physical distancing is critical to limiting the spread of COVID-19. It will impact how some courses will be taught and which sports and extracurricular activities students will be able to participate in safely.

At this time, the following activities will not take place:
- After school programs like band and choir
- Altar serving
- Dances
- All School Masses
- CYO Sports

At this time, the following activities may take place virtually, using online resources:
- Assemblies/Rallies
- Faith Families/Buddy Class Activities
- Field trips
- School Musicals and Performances

In-Class
- To minimize the number of students interacting, at least three to six feet of physical distancing between students (at least six feet between students and adults) will be maintained in all classes and courses as practicable.
- Some courses may need modifications on how the course will be taught if physical distancing is not feasible or when there is an increased risk for spreading the virus.
- Schools will work with students and families to ensure accommodations are made and alternative options will be considered.
- All students are required to wear face coverings.
- Due to health and safety restrictions, recess procedures will be modified. Following guidelines for physical distancing and sanitizing, students will have the opportunity to eat a snack, use the restroom, socialize with their peers, and engage in physical movement during their scheduled breaks.
- If a student needs to use the restroom during class time, a staff member will escort them to the door of the restroom. This staff member will ensure that only one student is in the bathroom at a time and that students sanitize their hands after using the restroom and when re-entering the classroom.
**Healthy Hygiene Practices**

St. Patrick School will teach and reinforce – to both students and staff – healthy hygiene practices: such as washing hands; avoiding contact with one’s eyes, nose, and mouth; and safely covering coughs and sneezes.

**Other methods to promote healthy hygiene include the following:**
- Staff will model and practice hand washing. Students and staff should wash their hands for 20 seconds with soap, rubbing thoroughly after application.
- Routines will be developed enabling students and staff to wash their hands at regular intervals, including before and after eating; after coughing or sneezing; after classes where they handle shared items, such as outside recreation, art, or shop; and before and after using the restroom.
- Each classroom has its own sink and washing station.
- Staff will teach and reinforce the proper use of cloth face coverings, masks, or face shields. Cloth face coverings are most essential at all times.
- Students and staff will be frequently reminded not to touch their face covering and to wash their hands frequently.
- Adequate supplies will be available to support healthy hygiene behaviors, including soap, tissues, no-touch trash cans, face coverings, and hand sanitizer.
- Staff will teach students to use tissue to wipe their nose and to cough/sneeze inside a tissue or their elbow.
- Students and staff should use fragrance-free hand sanitizer when handwashing is not practicable. Sanitizer must be rubbed into hands until completely dry. Note: frequent handwashing is more effective than the use of hand sanitizers.

**Screening and Testing**

Implementing screening measures for students and adults entering campus will likely be challenging to implement. Therefore temperature screening by schools has been deemed optional by the CCCOE and the CCHS.

We ask families to take temperatures each morning before coming to school. Anyone with a fever of 100.4 or higher and/or shows signs of COVID-19 should not come on a school campus. Students and adults experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 or who have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 in the past 14 days should not come on a school campus. School staff has the right to take student temperatures at school, and if found to be over 100.4 will isolate the child and call for the child to be picked up ASAP.
What is the protocol for handling students or staff exhibiting symptoms?

Students or staff who are exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, fatigue, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, loss of taste or smell) should not come to school. If they begin exhibiting symptoms after arriving at school, the individual will be separated from others as much as possible and arrangements will be made for the individual to go home as soon as possible. A “sick room” has been identified where symptomatic individuals will remain until they can go home.

CCHS has procedures in place for investigating communicable disease cases. CCHS staff will conduct contact tracing using classroom rosters and information obtained from school personnel through interviews and in coordination with school officials in the event of a positive test.

Communication recommendations will vary depending on the specific circumstances of a case in a school community. At a minimum, the affected cohort will need to be notified. Media is handled in coordination between the school administration and the CCHS public information officer (PIO).

The CDC guidelines for determining when a person who was recently in close contact with a person with COVID-19 or a person with COVID-19 can return to work or school include:

- Stay home until 14 days after your last exposure.
- Check temperature twice a day and watch for symptoms of COVID-19.
- If possible, stay away from people who are at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19.

If a student or staff has a household member that tests positive for COVID-19, the student must quarantine at home for 14 days. CCHS may issue an order with explicit instructions on quarantine and details on its expiration. If needed, CCHS may provide clearance letters at the end of isolation/quarantine. Staff or students should contact their personal medical provider if a return-to-school/work clearance note is needed since individual health situations may vary.

“As pediatricians, our top priority is the health and safety of our children. We urge those in public health and education to work together to strike the right balance between preventing the spread of COVID-19 and providing children with the education, nutrition, physical activity, and mental health benefits provided through the reopening of schools.

The risk of COVID-19 transmission among groups of children has not been well-studied, but current research suggests that the risk is much lower than the adult population. The negative effects of missing in-person educational time as children experience prolonged periods of isolation and lack of instruction, however, is clear. Children rely on schools for multiple needs, including but not limited to education, nutrition, physical activity, socialization, and mental health. Special populations of students receive services for disabilities and other conditions that are virtually impossible to deliver online.

Prolonging a meaningful return to in-person education would result in children being at risk for worsening academic, developmental, and health outcomes.”

American Academy of Pediatrics, June 2, 2020

To read the full news release, visit https://bit.ly/PediatricsJune2020
General Safety Concerns

Will campuses be required to close again?

Saint Patrick School has developed a plan in case of the possibility of repeated closures of groups/cohorts of students, particular classes, or the entire facility. Classes will be live-streamed and recorded daily so children who are staying at home will not miss valuable classroom instruction. Teachers will be prepared with classwork in the case of an unexpected school closure. Students and parents will be trained in the Fall so that learning will not be interrupted by online teaching.

Preventive measures like keeping sick children home, physical distancing, and cloth face covers will decrease the number of contacts and the spread of the virus. This also means that just because there is a positive case in a classroom, the entire classroom or school will not necessarily need to be closed.

We expect that it is not a matter of if, but when, a positive cases of COVID19 will occur, just like there will be cases of influenza this flu season. We will consult with CCHS when determining whether a school/class closure is warranted, including the length of time necessary.

Online Video Conferencing Guidelines

When attending a class or meeting via GoogleClassroom, please follow the following etiquette guidelines:

• Ensure your workspace is quiet, clean, and has an appropriate background.
• Be on time to classes and meetings.
• Keep video on at all times and stay muted, unless otherwise instructed.
• Be seated at a desk or table and look directly into the camera.
• Wear either a SPS sweatshirt or uniform polo shirt when participating in a GoogleClass meeting.
• Avoid eating, getting up, and moving around during class time.
• All school GoogleClassroom and meetings will be recorded (for internal school use only).
Attendance

- **Regular attendance** is required of all students in order to ensure student success. Students must participate in both at-school and at-home learning sessions (if and when they occur.) Attendance will be recorded at the start of each at-school learning session. In the event of a long-term school closure, attendance will be taken at daily GoogleClassroom sessions.

- **Tardiness:** Morning student drop off is between 7:45 and 8:15 am. Although the drop-off window has been extended to 8:15 am, we encourage parents to drop off students by 8:00 am to allow for hand washing and the delayed drop off pattern. Students not in the classroom by the 8:10 a.m. bell may be marked tardy unless there is a delay in the drop-off line. Students arriving after 8:15 a.m. must report to the School Office to receive a Tardy Slip before proceeding to class.

Arrival and Dismissal

In order to eliminate congested areas and allow for safe physical distancing, the drop-off and pick-up procedures are detailed below. Parking and walking students to and from classrooms is not permitted at this time.

**Morning Arrival**
- The Morning Drop-Off pattern will remain the same
- Drop off window is between 7:45 and 8:15 am
- Enter through the faculty gates for the regular drop-off pattern

**Afternoon Dismissal**
- Families with single children will pick up their children in the school lot
- Enter through the faculty parking lot and proceed through the pick-up line
- Families with multiple children will be picked up in the church’s parking lot - families will be grouped together along the right side of the lot for pick up together

It is our hope that two pick-up locations will speed up the pick-up process and keep students safely distanced from one another.
Parent Communication

Back-to-School Night
Due to health and safety protocols, Back to School Night will be not be held as normally scheduled. Teachers will offer afternoon/evening sessions for parents (in small groups) during the first week of school. More details will be shared in August.

Parent Teacher Conferences
Required Parent Teacher Conferences will take place on November 23rd and 24th via online GoogleClassroom platform. All parents are expected to attend these conferences. Only students in grades 3-8 attend conferences with their parents. Parents are encouraged to prepare a list of questions/concerns in regard to their child’s academic and/or social progress.

Parents who wish to meet with the teacher during the year are encouraged to call, send a note, or email the classroom teacher to arrange an online meeting.

Drop-in conferences on campus are not permitted at any time due to health and safety protocols in place.

School Newsletter
Each Monday, the School Newsletter is sent home to all families via email. This newsletter is our primary means of communication and contains all the important information for the week.