

# PS - 8TH GRADE SCHOOLS RE-OPENING PLAN

DRAFT AS OF JULY 1, 2020



**CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**  
DIOCESE *of* DES MOINES

July 1, 2020

Dear Parents,

We understand you've been anxiously awaiting the re-opening plans of our diocesan schools. As we've prepared to welcome back our students and teachers this fall, our partnership with you will continue to be instrumental throughout the school year.

It remains our goal, and is included in our daily prayers, to open our school doors for on-site learning for the first day of school. We understand the value of face-to-face instruction and the faith-based learning environment that your child/children experience in each of our schools. Our Diocese of Des Moines Catholic Schools have worked diligently to create re-opening plans that focus attention on the whole child.

We continue to seek input from our diocesan medical partners to stay abreast of the fluidity of the virus. This team has assisted in our health and safety plan with mitigation strategies to help keep us in school and our students, faculty and staff as safe as we can be. The Diocese of Des Moines Catholic Schools will continue to work with our health professionals in conjunction with state and local public health officials to solidify decisions related to best practices surrounding infectious disease control.

Each diocesan school's Iowa Department of Education Return-to-Learn approved plan is posted on their websites. Included in this document are the diocesan-wide protocols that all of our elementary schools will follow. This plan represents what we know as of July 1, 2020. I ask that you continue to watch for communications from your child/children's school for updates.

Thank you for your continued support of Catholic education.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donna Bishop". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial 'D'.

Donna Bishop  
Superintendent of Schools  
Diocese of Des Moines

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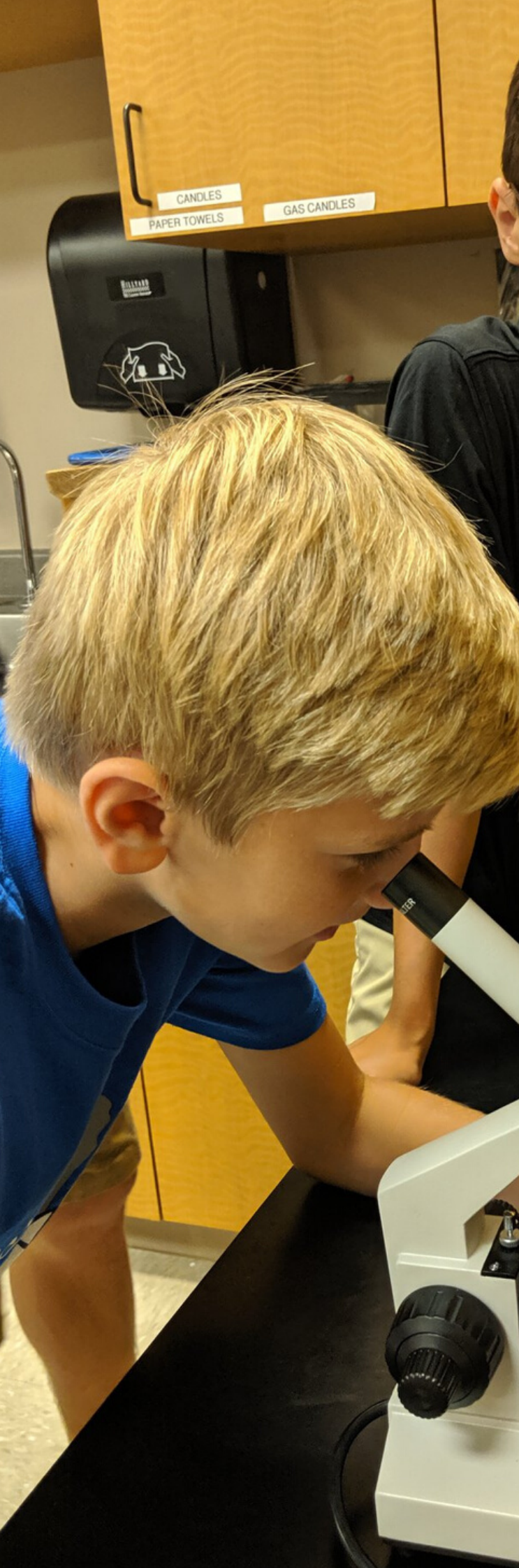
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# OVERVIEW

Each of our diocesan Catholic PS-8th grade schools plans to re-open school for in-person instruction in August. Please consult your local school for their scheduled opening day. The key components of each school's re-opening plan addresses the health and safety of our students, teachers and staff at school. It is every person's responsibility to help us keep our school community safe.

Please remember - these are plans as of July 1, 2020. As this is a fluid situation, we will continue to revise protocols and update you as we approach the opening of school.



# GENERAL MEASURES

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The following provides a snapshot of changes that will be implemented to support the overall safety and well being of our students and staff.

- Access to school building and campuses will be minimized.
- Shared objects and materials used at school will be limited.
- Use of drinking fountains (except for refilling stations) will be prohibited.
- Students and staff are encouraged to bring water in reusable containers.
- Water bottles must go home daily to be cleaned.
- Student belongings will be kept separate.
- All student field trips and travel are cancelled until further notice.
- Lunch program workers will follow safety guidelines for food preparation and distribution.
- Plexiglass/sneeze guards will be installed where feasible.
- Delivery drop zones may be created to limit the number of visitors in the building.
- Review and monitoring of re-opening plans will continue throughout the year.



# PROMOTING A HEALTHY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

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## I. ENHANCED CLEANING AND DISINFECTING:

Our facilities team in conjunction with our faculty will implement enhanced cleaning protocols on a daily basis.

- Routine cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces within the school building throughout the day.
- Cleaning regimen to use EPA approved cleaning and disinfecting products and equipment for use against viral pathogens including COVID-19.

## II. HEALTH SCREENING:

- The health of students, faculty and staff will be monitored daily. Temperatures will be checked throughout the school day.
- All student, faculty and staff concerns will be reviewed by Public Health and the Diocesan Medical Health Team.



### III. HEALTHY HYGIENE PRACTICES:

- Daily routines enabling students and staff to regularly wash hands and use hand sanitizer.
- Practices that ensure personal health and safety will be used including: hand-washing, avoiding contact with one's eyes, nose and mouth, and covering coughs and sneezes.
- Hand sanitizer will be available throughout the school.

### IV. PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT:

- Students will wear face coverings (face masks/shields) when entering/exiting the building and when maneuvering in the hallways (e.g. the bathroom). *Face coverings are particularly helpful when physical distancing is not feasible.*

### PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (CONT.):

- Small group activity while in classrooms may require shields and masks.
- Staff will wear face coverings (face masks/shields) when working with students.
- Proper wear and use of face coverings will be taught and reinforced by classroom teachers.

### V. PHYSICAL DISTANCING:

- To the extent possible, we will practice physical distancing in classrooms, hallways, bathrooms, on the playground during recess/lunch and during drop off/pick up. To promote physical distancing, the measures outlined on the next page will be implemented.

# PHYSICAL DISTANCING

## *Measures*

1

We will teach physical distancing practices.

2

We will maximize space between student desks as much as possible.

3

We will reduce extra items from the classroom to allow for more space.

4

We will avoid congestion when students use bathrooms.

5

We will stagger recess/lunch and designate play areas by grade.

6

We will reduce hallway traffic during passing periods.

7

We will limit direct contact during drop-off and pick-up procedures.

8

We will promote physical distancing in the office area.

9

We will limit unnecessary movement around the school and campus.





# ACADEMICS

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Our primary objective is to provide a learning rich environment grounded in our Catholic faith to all students.

Our highly trained faculty is ready and prepared to provide a quality education that facilitates mastery of all Iowa Common Core and Diocesan Content Standards.

The team is also ready and prepared to provide both asynchronous (recorded) and synchronous (live) learning should it be required in the event of a school closure.

## **I. CLASSROOMS:**

To the extent possible, we will minimize mixing students in classrooms, hallways and bathrooms, on the playground during recess/lunch and during drop off/pick up.

Each school will put in place measures that will minimize student contact. Sample procedures can be found on page 10.



## ACADEMICS (CONT.)

### II. COLLABORATION:

Our teachers continue to collaborate as Professional Learning Communities (PLC). Staff share expertise and instructional strategies to meet the needs of each individual learner.

### III. INITIAL SCREENING ASSESSMENTS:

At the beginning of the school year, teachers are prepared to assess students' current academic needs and address any potential gaps in learning.

# CLASSROOM

# Measures

1

Where possible, we will limit the number of staff and classroom spaces to which students are exposed.

2

We will minimize sharing of materials and community supplies.

3

There will be no shared storage of student materials, i.e. cubbies/lockers.

4

Student field trips and travel are cancelled for the foreseeable future.

5

We will stagger classroom release times to reduce the number of students in the hallways.

6

We will put recess protocols in place to encourage physical distancing.



# CONTINUITY OF EDUCATION

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A key component of our re-opening plan is to prepare contingencies should there be a need to implement a distance learning program due to extended absences or a mandatory school-wide closures.

## **I. BRIDGING THE CLASSROOM AND HOME:**

Each school will use cloud based platforms for the delivery of instruction, workflow, communication and collaboration with students. Technology platforms will support in-school classroom instruction and provide a means for maintaining continuity should the school be required to close and move to distance learning.

- Allows for student-teacher feedback.
- Completing and turning in assignments.
- Provides access to educational tools.
- Live instruction video capabilities.



## II. DISTANCE LEARNING DUE TO ILLNESS:

We understand that at any given time, a student may be required to stay at home to recover from illness. The learning plan for these students is to provide continuity between in-class and distance learning on a short term basis (two weeks or less) to minimize the disruption to learning.

*This plan is not meant as a replacement for in-class instruction; individual live instruction is not available due to teacher instructional schedules.*

By frequently checking the school's platforms, parents and students will be able to keep up with assigned work. Parents and students are encouraged to keep in contact with their teachers.

## III. DISTANCE LEARNING DUE TO SCHOOL CLOSURE

The distance learning program is necessary if the stay-at-home order is reinstated. Distance learning can occur asynchronously (recorded) or synchronously (live).

Asynchronous learning is when instruction and learning do not happen at the same time for all students. The teacher provides instruction which could be pre-recorded videos, resources and tasks. Students access learning at a time that works for them and their families.

Synchronous learning is an approach where students and teachers are engaged online and learning at the same time. This occurs through video-conferencing (ie Zoom). Expectations will be clearly defined for students, parents, and teachers. Models of consistent learning experiences for each grade level are being developed.



# SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND SPIRITUAL HEALTH

We understand the importance of establishing a positive, safe and supportive learning environment as our students navigate the unprecedented challenges due to the disruptions caused by the pandemic.

We are committed to helping our students by infusing social and emotional support into our students' experience at school.

- Opportunities for students to interact with their classmates, teachers and staff in the classroom as well as during recess and lunch.
- School counselors and teachers are developing plans to identify and address student needs.
- School administrations are working with parish pastors and the diocesan reopening committee to put in place the celebration of Mass.
- Our schools are collaborating with various outside agencies to provide additional social-emotional support for students, families and staff.



# COMMUNICATIONS

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We are committed to ongoing, timely, and informative communication between school and home. In order to provide effective communication, the following will be provided:

- **Website:** The school will post resources and updates on the COVID-19 resource tab.
- **Parish Communication:** Information will be shared via parish bulletins, email and newsletters.
- **Email:** The school will use email to notify and inform parents about COVID-19 information.
- **Social Media:** Each school will use its social media platforms to share information.

“

AS A BODY IS ONE  
THOUGH IT HAS  
MANY PARTS, AND  
ALL THE PARTS OF  
THE BODY,  
THOUGH MANY,  
ARE ONE BODY, SO  
ALSO CHRIST.

”

1 CORINTHIANS 12

Together we will continue to navigate these unprecedented waters.  
- The Diocese of Des Moines, Office of Catholic Schools



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS  
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