

Good Shepherd Catholic School  
Return to In-person Instruction  
During the COVID-19 Pandemic  
Plan of Action

Created: August, 2020

Approved by Superintendent, Jeanne Gearon: TBD

This document was created with the guidance of the Catholic Schools Office of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Burlington, Vermont in collaboration with the Vermont Catholic school principals. All practices designated herein were established with heavy reliance on the guidance from the following health and/or educational authorities:

- American Association of Pediatrics in their document titled Guidance for School Re-entry  
<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Considerations for Schools  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html>
- Vermont Agency of Education and the Department of Health  
A Strong and Healthy State: Safety and Health Guidance for Reopening Schools, Fall 2020  
<https://education.vermont.gov/documents/guidance-strong-healthy-start-health-guidance>

The purpose of this document is to inform our school community of policies and procedures we will be following to help mitigate the spread of illness during the COVID-19 public health crisis as we open for in-person instruction. A public health crisis is a serious matter and it is incumbent on the schools to take all steps to implement the guidance from the Bishop of Burlington, the Superintendent of Schools, and, as reasonable and feasible, to ensure compliance with guidelines from national, state and/or local public health authorities. Due to the evolving nature of this public health crisis, this document is fluid in nature. It will be updated as new information is learned and/or recommendations from national, state and/or local public health authorities become available.

Good Shepherd Public Health Crisis Coordinator: Jodi Gingue

## The School Day

### Arrival Procedures/Health Screening

Prior to entry into the school building, students will undergo a temperature check and symptom screening conducted by a school faculty or staff member. Parents are expected to keep children at home if they are ill. Any student or staff member with a fever of 100.4 degrees or greater or symptoms of possible COVID-19 virus infection (fever, cough, or shortness of breath) should not be present in school.

Components to Assess Presence of Symptoms during the School-based Screening:

- The student will be asked the following questions :
  - a. Have you been in close contact with a person who has COVID-19?
  - b. Do you feel unwell with any symptoms consistent with COVID-19? For example, have they had a cough, temperature, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell?
- The screener will visually assess if there is evidence of the following and if there is, send the student home:
  - a. A significant new rash, particularly when other symptoms are present.
  - b. Large amounts of nasal discharge in the absence of allergy diagnosis.
- The screener will conduct temperature screening, using the guidelines in the section below.

School personnel will request that parents/caregivers answer these questions when students are too young or otherwise unable to answer.

Students/Staff who answer either of the above questions affirmatively, have visual signs of a new rash or large amounts of nasal discharge not associated with an allergy, or have a temperature greater or equal to 100.4°F must be sent home as soon as possible.

\*Parents must remain until the health screening is completed so that they can take the student home if the health screening is not passed.

\*Should inclement weather make outdoor screenings difficult, the students will be screened immediately upon entry. Parents should wait until the child has passed the screening prior to pulling away.

- Temperature Check Guidelines
  - Should occur prior to entrance or immediately upon entrance in certain circumstances
  - A non-contact thermometer is strongly recommended.
  - Wear a facial covering, eye protection and a single pair of disposable gloves.

- Check each child's temperature
  - If disposable or non-contact thermometers are used and the screener did not have physical contact with a child, gloves do not need to be changed before the next check.
  - If non-contact thermometers are used, they must be cleaned routinely.
  - Follow instructions provided by the manufacturer for any device used.
- Remove and discard gloves in between students or at the end of each morning's checks if using non-contact thermometer.

Students at the Early Ed Center and any students arriving at school by bus will be required to perform a health screening at home prior to each school day.

#### Home-Based Health Screening Protocols:

- Prior to the start of school, parents/guardians are required to sign an agreement with the school stating that a home-based health screening will be done daily prior to the child(ren) arriving at school (see Appendix A ).
  - The Agreement contains the following:
    - Details of what constitutes a proper home-based health screening as noted below.
    - Commitment by parent to keep child(ren) home if:
      - Symptoms manifest themselves.
      - Child(ren) has had close contact with a person diagnosed with the COVID 19
      - Parental will notify the school if the child(ren) are remaining home due to exposure to or diagnosis of COVID 19.
      - Statement that parent is committing to conduct the health screening daily with compliance indicated by dated signature on form.
  - School will keep signed forms on file in the school office.
- Components of a proper home-based health screening to assess presence of symptoms
  - Visually assess if there is evidence of the following and if there is, keep the student home:
    - A significant new rash, particularly when other symptoms are present.
    - Large amounts of nasal discharge in the absence of allergy diagnosis.
  - Conduct temperature screening and keep student home if temperature is at or above 100.4°F without the aid of fever reducing medication.

\*Upon entering the building every student and staff member should go directly to his/her classroom to wash hands prior to touching any surface.

## Hygiene

Students and staff will be expected to wash hands frequently, including but not limited to the following:

- upon arrival
- before and after eating or assisting others with their food/beverage
- after using the bathroom
- after coming in contact with bodily fluids
- before and after handling face coverings
- after playing outdoors
- before and after playing with sand and sensory play
- before and after cleaning
- prior to switching rooms
- before and after attending to the personal needs of others (i.e. changing diapers, wiping faces/hands, etc.)

## Facial Coverings

Effective August 1, 2020, the Governor of the State of Vermont has mandated that everyone over the age of two must wear a mask in public spaces.

Early Ed Center:

Students in the early education center will need to wear masks while at the center. While every child must have a facial covering, we will implement their use in the Early Ed Center as meets the needs of our students. Teachers will wear facial coverings when inside. Outdoor use of facial coverings is only necessary if close physical contact is needed. We will plan to spend as much time outside as possible to limit the need for facial coverings.

- Grade School:

Students and teachers in the grade school (Maple St. building) will be required to wear a facial covering when in the building. Facial coverings will not be necessary when outside unless close physical contact cannot be avoided. Students will be provided many opportunities during the day to be outside to allow them mask-free time.

Note: The governor has indicated that there are exceptions to the requirement to wear masks. We will take into account those exceptions on a case by case basis.

## Classroom Considerations

Wherever possible, students will be seated a minimum of 6 feet apart from classmates. In the grade school, when the classroom furniture does not allow for that scenario, physical barriers (sneeze guards) may be used to limit contact. Teachers will be encouraged to teach classes outside whenever feasible

and practical. At a minimum, classes should be brought outside periodically throughout the day for a few minutes of fresh air.

Classroom and hallway doors should be left open whenever possible to minimize the frequency of contact with surfaces.

## Hallways

In the grade school, students will move through hallways with facial coverings on, separated by 6 feet between students whenever feasible. We will encourage classes to practice one-way traffic to limit close contact. Students will be dismissed to lockers and hallway hooks in a staggered manner to limit close contact.

## Meals/Snacks

Students will be asked to bring lunch, snacks, and a full water bottle from home during this time. Additional water will be available at school for refills. Most students will eat in their classrooms rather than the traditional practice of gathering together in the gymnasium; however, it is possible that our oldest students will be able to achieve better social distancing during lunch time using the gymnasium.

## Cleaning/Disinfecting

Desks and chairs will be disinfected prior to a new group using a classroom. Although the practice of sharing items will be minimal, teachers will ensure that shared items (i.e. electronic devices) are disinfected between uses. Commonly touched surfaces will be disinfected regularly throughout the day by assigned staff.

## Parents/Volunteers/Visitors

As a general rule, parents, volunteers and visitors will not be allowed beyond the front entryway during this time to minimize traffic in the building. Extenuating circumstances may require an outside person to be allowed in other areas of the building, at which time a mask must be worn and the individual must undergo a health screening as described previously in this document.

## Daily School Dismissal

Dismissal procedures will continue as they have in the past at the grade school. Parents who are picking up students should pull into the back parking lot pickup line and wait for their child to exit the building. Parents should not come into school to pick up their child.

Students who walk or take the bus will be called via the public address system to exit from the front of the building.

Parents of children at the Early Ed Center are asked to collect their children at the classroom door, without entering the classroom.

Should an extenuating circumstance require that a parent enter a classroom, a mask must be worn.

Please note: An individual who is self-quarantining, running a fever, and/or exhibiting symptoms of COVID 19 should not drop off or pick up a child.

## Teaching and Learning

### Schedule:

- The schedule for the academic year has been created with several factors in mind. Class times have been modified to allow more time for transitions and to limit the number of students in common areas.
- We have worked to minimize the number of student transitions and to minimize the number of individuals accessing each area of the building.

### Instructional Support:

Classroom teachers will formulate and utilize developmentally appropriate assessments to determine academic readiness. These assessments should be completed within the first three weeks of school to establish a baseline of learning for each student and the class as a whole. Teachers will then use these assessments to make informed curricular adjustments focused on fostering student academic growth.

### Instructional Delivery:

All teachers will utilize the instructional delivery method best suited to facilitate student learning. The administration is encouraging teachers to regularly integrate distance/remote learning tools during in-person instruction. This will help support a smooth transition to distance/remote learning should this be needed.

### Attendance:

The school has established and teachers will implement policies/procedures for tracking student attendance. Classroom teachers, under the direction of the school's Administrator, will communicate with students and parents/guardians clear guidelines regarding student participation in the learning process while absent from school. This communication will include how students will be held accountable during distance/remote learning and how teachers will provide instruction and support for students should this be implemented.

### Work Submission:

In an effort to minimize the exchange of materials, whenever possible, Good Shepherd will utilize Google Classroom for students and teachers for the submission of assignments. Using this platform for in-person instruction will make for an easier transition in the event of a return to remote learning at some point.

## Specials Classes

Specials classes will continue during the school year. Music and Physical Education will likely happen outside quite often. It will not be safe for students to sing or use wind instruments in an enclosed space, so when the weather does not cooperate, music classes may revolve around percussion instruments and music appreciation. Instrumental lessons will take place remotely, after school hours using a platform such as Zoom or Google Meets. Art and Technology classes for the younger students will be held in their classroom to minimize transitions.

## Preparing for Distance/Remote Learning

All teachers will establish classroom procedures that would support a smooth transition to distance/remote learning should this be needed. To achieve this, teachers will:

- Create a Google Classroom for each class in the grade school.
- Communicate with parents the distance/remote learning tools available, the conditions under which these will be employed, and the expectations for student participation when these are implemented.
- During the school year, teachers will intentionally plan lessons that utilize distance learning tools to help students develop a comfort level with these resources.

## Progress Reports

Parents/guardians will receive regular feedback regarding student progress. This will be attended to whether the school is utilizing in-person and/or distance/remote learning.

## *Supporting Students and Staff*

### Students and Group Sizing

To the extent feasible, the following steps to support physical distancing will be utilized in all areas of the school:

- Students will be kept in cohorts by class to the extent possible
- Students will be spaced apart when standing in line and moving through hallways
- The sharing of materials will be limited by ensuring students have individual supplies whenever possible

- Seating will be arranged so that students are at least 6 feet apart wherever possible. Acrylic dividers may be used when 6 feet cannot be achieved
- Students will have assigned seats to limit the number of different people using a specific space
- At the Early Ed Center children will be assigned a specific cot for their exclusive use at rest time
- Cots will be spaced a minimum of 6 feet apart when in use

## Students/Staff who Develop Symptoms while at School

If signs and symptoms listed under the Health Screening section of this document begin while at school, the student or staff member must be sent home as soon as possible. A child who is sick will be separated from other students and staff to limit contact as much as reasonably possible, while ensuring the safety and supervision of the sick student(s) until they leave.

- Students and staff must be excluded from school until they are no longer considered contagious.
- Students and staff with fever greater than 100.4°F and no specific diagnosis must remain at home until they have had no fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications (e.g., Advil, Tylenol).
- Materials, toys and furniture touched by the student who is sent home must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.

Healthy students and staff with the following symptoms/conditions are not excluded from in-person school activities:

- Allergy symptoms (with no fever) that cause coughing and clear runny nose may stay if they have medically diagnosed allergies and follow medical treatment plans.
- Well-controlled asthma

## Students/Staff who Develop Symptoms while not at School

If signs listed under the Health Screening section of this document begin while not at school (i.e. at home) the student or staff member must not come to school until they are no longer considered contagious.

## Following a Positive COVID 19 Test

To know when it is safe for students/staff to return to school/work, refer to the following two strategies:

1. For staff who have symptoms, use the symptom-based strategy. Exclude from work until: At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery. Recovery is when fever resolves without the use of fever-reducing medications and respiratory symptoms (like cough or shortness of breath) have improved; and at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

2. For staff who do not have symptoms, use the time-based strategy. Exclude from work until 10 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 test if they have not developed symptoms. If they develop symptoms, then use the symptom-based strategy outlined above.

Neither a negative test for COVID-19 nor a letter from the Department of Health should be required to return to work.

## Facilities

### Signage

Signs will be placed at entrances, in the main office, and in each classroom describing when to stay home and how to prevent the spread of illness, as well as the need for wearing facial coverings and maintaining social distancing. Signage will be posted at every sink describing proper handwashing technique.

### Hand Sanitizing Stations

Hand sanitizing stations will be available at the entrances to the school. Teachers will also ensure that hand sanitizer is available on the playground. Every classroom is equipped with a sink to allow for frequent handwashing (the preferred method for disinfecting hands).

### Cleaning of Common Areas and Frequently Touched Surfaces

Common areas will be cleaned/sanitized at the beginning and end of each day and at least once during the day.

Instructional areas including desks, chairs, shared equipment, toys, learning aids, etc. will be cleaned/sanitized frequently throughout the day.

### Isolation Room/Area

Should a student become ill during the day, an isolation room, located opposite the front office, will be utilized in the Maple St. building so that the student may rest quietly until he/she can be picked up. The space will be supervised either by a faculty/staff member directly or through the use of a baby monitor depending on the circumstances.

At the Early Ed Center, a transparent, portable wall system will allow for an area to be cordoned off from the general population in each classroom. The child will be able to rest on a cot until a parent can pick the child up. This will provide a means to minimize the transmission of germs while maintaining supervision and safety for all children.

## Playground Disinfecting

Playground equipment will be disinfected at the beginning of each day and after each group uses the space.

## Ventilation

The school will practice intentional ventilation of classrooms including opening windows and running fans to move air, as well as the periodic use of the existing exhaust fan system which allows for the transfer of air from inside to outside. The school is working with a contractor to install upgrades to our ventilation system which will serve to improve air quality throughout the building.

## Good Shepherd Catholic School

### HOME-BASED HEALTH SCREENING AGREEMENT

The purpose of this form is to establish an agreement between the parent/guardian and the school in order to meet the state mandated requirement that every student undergo a daily health screening. The implementation of home-based screenings will facilitate the process of student arrival at school being done in the most efficient and educationally productive manner possible and parental/guardian support is a key component of this effort.

Components of a proper Home-Based Student Health Screening:

- Visually assess if there is evidence of the following:
  - o A significant new rash, particularly when other symptoms are present.
  - o Large amounts of nasal discharge in the absence of allergy diagnosis.
- Conduct temperature screening and keep student home if temperature is at or above 100.4°F without the aid of fever reducing medication.

Parent/Guardian Commitment:

By signing this form, you agree to:

- Conduct a health screening for your child(ren) each day prior to arriving at school
- Keep your child(ren) home from school if any of the symptoms noted above are present
- Keep your child(ren) home if there has been close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID 19
- Notify the school if your child(ren) are remaining home and share if this is due to exposure to or diagnosis of COVID 19

My/Our signature(s) on this form confirm(s) my/our commitment to abiding by the above for the duration of the 2020 – 2021 school year unless directed otherwise by the school's administration.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Grade

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date