

St. Francis de Sales Cathedral School



*2020-2021
Return to School Information
For School Families*

MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux Catholic Schools Family,

During the spring of our 2019-2020 school year, our Catholic schools, along with the rest of our community, state, and nation, faced an unprecedented national health crisis which put us on a much different path towards completion of our academic year in the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux. Moving to distance learning as the result of our state's Stay at Home Order, our school families faced the many challenges before us with prayerful diligence, grace, and the patience necessary to navigate a path untraveled. We missed our students. We missed our Celebrations of the Eucharist as school families. We missed our "normal." This journey was not an easy one, and we know it would not have been possible without the constant presence of our Lord, Jesus Christ walking beside us. Together, our entire diocesan Catholic schools family not only successfully completed the 2019-2020 school year, but did so with the same spirit, love, and enthusiasm that makes our ministry so unique.

Now, we find the blessings of the 2020-2021 school year before us. The Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux is actively preparing for the safe return to our schools in August. Utilizing a task force comprised of school administrators, teachers, medical health professionals, parents, school board members, community leaders, and diocesan leadership, an intentional Return to School Plan has been constructed. The intent of the plan is to aid in navigating the return to our schools so employees, students, and families feel safe and to reduce the impact of COVID-19 conditions. Our priorities as we return to school are safety, presence, and growth:

- SAFETY- The diocese is committed to utilizing appropriate safety measures in the context of a return to work and schools.*
- PRESENCE- The diocese is committed to keeping our schools open and do not want to burden parents with challenging schedules that would make it difficult to work.*
- GROWTH- The diocese wants our children to continue their academic progress in a safe, secure, and Christ-centered environment in our schools as*

we work in the ministry of Catholic education to form the whole child.

This Return to School Plan is a living document that will be updated as needed as we respond to additional guidance received from our local, state, and federal officials. Our schools will post their Return to School Plans on their school websites, updating as needed.

The Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux is grateful for the deep commitment of its school families to the ministry of Catholic education and looks forward to welcoming its students and staff back to school in August. Together with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, we are eager and ready to embark on our 2020-2021 school year!

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Suzanne Delaune Troxclair". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Suzanne Delaune Troxclair

Medical Partnership

- St. Francis School will work cooperatively through a medical partnership established by the Diocese to assess our campus and make recommendations for student safety.
- Guidelines will be established for our school community, which will increase safety and awareness and support the faculty with training and screening.

Instruction

- It is the intent of St. Francis School to instruct all students for the 2020-2021 school year on our school campus.
- If governmental and diocesan authorities deem a return to school as inadvisable, schools will continue with a comprehensive distance-learning program.
- As a Catholic school, religion will continue to be the core of instruction.
- Programs (examples: Google Classroom, Nearpod, etc.) will be used in the traditional classroom setting. This will assure a better understanding of the programs if the school is required to revert to distance learning.
- Varied teaching methods and assessment tools will be utilized for all grade levels.
- Technology instruction will be a focus for all grade levels.
- Faculty will move from class to class for instruction, not the students.
- Outdoor and larger spaces will be utilized for instruction when possible.

Catholic Identity

- Catholic schools have a two-fold purpose: providing an education that is academically excellent and one that is deeply rooted in Catholic identity.
- Catholic liturgy, prayer, and our Catholic identity will continue to be the primary focus of our school community.
- Religion will be taught daily in all grades.
- St. Francis de Sales School will work in conjunction with St. Francis de Sales Parish to create missionary disciples, who learn, model, and share our Catholic faith.

Monitoring and Screening

Parents will be responsible for reporting to SFS daily if their child has symptoms from the Symptom Screening Checklist for Elementary Schools. Parents will be informed of procedures for reporting if their child/children would respond yes to the Screening Checklist criteria:

- Have any of the children you are dropping off had close contact (within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes) in the last 14 days with someone diagnosed with COVID-19, or has any health department or health care provider been in contact with you and advised you to quarantine?
 - Do any of the children you are dropping off have any of these symptoms?
 - Fever
 - Chills
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - New cough
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Muscle pain
 - Headache
 - Sore throat
 - Rash
 - Since they were last at school, have any of the children you are dropping off been diagnosed with COVID-19.
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- Conducting regular screening for symptoms and ongoing self-monitoring throughout the school day may help reduce exposure. Staff and students will be encouraged to self-monitor for symptoms (fever, cough, or shortness of breath, etc.). If a student develops symptoms throughout the day, he/she must notify an adult immediately.
 - A dedicated space has been established for symptomatic individuals that will not be used for other purposes.
 - Daily symptom screenings will be conducted for any person entering the building (students, staff, family members, and other visitors) when feasible. Screening may be conducted at the school entrance or upon arrival to the classroom.
 - Daily temperature screenings will be conducted for all faculty, students, and visitors entering the school and throughout the day when deemed necessary using a touchless thermometer.
 - Individuals waiting to be screened will stand six feet apart from each other. Tape or other markers will be used on the floor/ground for spacing.

- Staff, students, and their families will be educated about the signs and symptoms of COVID-19, when they should stay home and when they can return to school.
- The staff and students will stay at home if they have tested positive for or are showing symptoms of COVID-19, or they have recently had close contact with a person with COVID-19 until they meet criteria for return.
- If we become aware of a positive or presumptive positive case, we will contact the Regional Medical Director. The Regional Medical Director will advise on communication, quarantining practices, enhanced cleaning or disinfection processes, or school facility closure.
- State's guidelines will be adhered to allowing a student or staff member to return to school.

Water Systems

- The water fountains will not be used until the school receives approval from the Diocese to resume use of the fountains.
- All students must bring a water bottle daily to campus. This may be a refillable water bottle or a single serving water bottle. The water bottle may only be filled with water and must have the student's first and last name on it.
- Since water fountains will be shut off, provisions have been made to keep extra bottled water on hand for use as needed.

Communication

- Parents will receive regular updates through email, video, phone calls, text, social media, etc.
- Signs or posters will be posted in highly visible locations, such as school entrances, hallways, common areas, or restrooms to promote everyday protective measures.
- Guidance on proper hygiene and other measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 will be included in regular announcements via PA systems, in email communications, school website, and social media postings.
- Staff, families, and the public will be notified of school closures and any restrictions in place to limit COVID-19 exposure (e.g., limited hours of operation).
- In our weekly School Scoop on page 2, information will encourage physical and mental wellness. This will be in partnership with our SFS counselor.

Transportation

Bus

Schools will need to consider the following for buses to minimize the risk for the contracting or spread of COVID 19:

- Schools relying on the service of their Local Education Authority (LEA), Terrebonne Parish School District, must defer to the authority and regulations established by the LEA.
- School buses will be cleaned and disinfected regularly when no students are present. Frequently touched surfaces (e.g., driver's cockpit, hard seats, arm rests, door handles, seat belt buckles, controls, doors and windows and grab handles) should be cleaned and disinfected regularly prior to each morning route and prior to each afternoon route.
- The use of open windows should be maximized when the vehicle is in motion to help increase air circulation.
- All passengers should engage in hand hygiene (using hand sanitizer) upon entering and exiting group transportation vehicles.
- Passengers in third grade and up should wear face coverings on group transportation vehicles at all times. Any child over the age of two may wear a face covering. It should be respected that some students and adults may have medical conditions whereby face coverings are not advised. Those situations will be dealt with on an individual basis with proper medical documentation.
- Upon arrival to school, bus riders will stay in bus pods and be directed to the designated screening station.

Car Riders

- Drop-off will be at designated locations with extended drop off times. (Parents will be notified of these times prior to the start of school.)
- All adults in the carline must stay in the vehicle.
- Students will either receive hand sanitizer upon arrival to campus or they will go through the outside hand washing station by the cafeteria.
- Students (grades 3-7) must wear a face covering while in transition to the classroom. We encourage students (Pre-K 3 - 2nd) to wear face coverings while in transition.
- Students will go through the screening station that is designated for their grade level upon arrival.
- Following approval at the screening station, the student should report to the designated breakfast area or to his/her homeroom.

- Student names will be recorded in a Google Document that he/she has cleared screening and will be referenced by the homeroom teacher upon arrival into the classroom.

Walkers

- Walkers must enter at the designated campus entrance.
- Parents/adults will not be allowed to walk into the building or on campus past the drop-off location.
- Walkers will go through the same screening process upon arrival.

Counseling and Wellness Services

- Cathy Klingman will lead this department and establish a wellness and mental health program to be implemented in the Life Skills classes and, if needed, during office hours for students.
- Faculty and student surveys will be utilized to determine needs of students both individually and as a class.
- The School Scoop will have a Page 2 which will include a counselor corner weekly instead of the previous monthly counselor corner. This will be in addition to added information about COVID-19 and school safety.

Social Distancing

- Adults and students (3rd - 7th grades) should wear face coverings, as able, to the maximum extent possible. Any student over the age of two may wear a face covering.
- Face coverings should be worn in all areas of the school to the maximum extent possible including classrooms and when students are transitioning within the facility.
- Any school appropriate face covering will be permitted that covers the nose and mouth. If in doubt, please contact Becki Badeaux at bbadeaux@htdiocese.org for approval.
- Floors, hallways, and other common areas will be marked with social distancing markers to designate spacing.
- Plexiglass physical shields will be utilized at shared tables in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten, office areas, and other designated areas of need.
- During Phase 2, groups will be limited to 25 or less, including faculty in the classrooms.

- Nonessential visitors will be limited/restricted. Adults entering the school campus will wash or sanitize hands before entering and go through the designated screening process.
- Students and staff will be reminded frequently to stay 6 feet apart by marking places where they may gather.
- Excess furniture will be removed from the classrooms to allow for maximum spacing. Class sizes will be modified as needed for spacing.
- All students will have individual supplies and not share items.
- Additional time will be allotted for transitions and transitions will be staggered.
- Stairwells will be designated one way dependant upon peak usage periods.
- Cohort groups will be established as recommended for recess and enrichments.
- Hand hygiene stations will be set up at multiple designated points throughout the school campus.
- School gatherings that include the entire enrollment will not be permitted until permission is granted by the Diocese.

Food Services

- During the 2020-2021 school year students will be given the option to purchase lunch from the cafeteria or bring their own lunch daily.
- Students will be required to make one of the above choices for the entire school year.
- Students will not be allowed to bring soft drinks, candy, or fast food in their lunch.
- Healthy food restrictions are waived during this school year. Mandates for specific included and excluded items are waived.
- Students will not be allowed to share food.
- Parents choosing to purchase lunch for their child in the cafeteria are encouraged to pay using the automated payment system.
- In the school cafeteria, only 2 classes will eat in the cafeteria at a time. A rotation will be established for a class, they: will eat in the cafeteria, will eat a picnic, or will eat in the classroom.
- All meals purchased from the cafeteria will be served in to-go containers with disposable utensils.
- The above guidelines pertaining to social distancing and payment will pertain to breakfast service as well in the cafeteria.
- Only students who purchase lunch from the cafeteria may utilize their breakfast service.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

- Throughout and at the end of each school day, any and all “touched items” in each classroom will be cleaned and sanitized/disinfected.
- The common areas and frequently touched surfaces should be sanitized/disinfected periodically on a schedule established by administration throughout each school day.
- According to the CDC’s directive (Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility), playground equipment, made of plastic or metal, requires **normal routine cleaning**, but **does not require disinfection**.
- Electronic devices, manipulatives, and games will be cleaned and sanitized prior to change in student use.
- Science experiments will be conducted virtually or students will have their own equipment/supplies.
- Books will be removed from circulation for 5 days between student exchange and use.
- Carpets will be removed from the early childhood rooms. Students will use wipeable spot markers to assist with social distancing.
- Signs will be posted, in highly visible locations (e.g., school entrances, restrooms) that promote everyday protective measures and describe how to stop the spread of germs (such as by properly washing hands and properly wearing a cloth face covering).

Aftercare

- Staff will be trained in health and safety protocols, including how to screen for symptoms, maintaining physical distance, wearing appropriate PPE, frequent cleaning and handwashing, and what to do if someone develops signs of COVID-19.
- A central pick-up station will be used that keeps families at least six feet from each other and reduces their need to enter the school.
- All approved adults for aftercare pick-up will enter the front office and the students will be brought to that area for dismissal.
- Face coverings must be worn by those picking up students and social distancing should be observed.
- Hand hygiene stations will be set up at the entrance of the facility so that children may clean their hands before they enter.
- **Pick-up from aftercare may not begin until 3:45**. No one will be allowed entry into the office area for pick-up until 3:45 to allow adequate time for school dismissal.

Athletics

- Elementary athletics (volleyball and cross country), with approval, will begin during Phase 3.
- Monitoring and screening protocols will be followed.
- Group size will be determined by recommended guidelines.
- Social distancing practices will be followed.
- 7th grade students who participate in athletics at Vanderbilt Catholic High School will follow VCHS established protocols.

Extracurricular Activities

- The maximum group size for extracurricular activities will be as follows:
 - Phase 1- 10 including adults
 - Phase 2- 25 including adults
 - Phase 3- 50 including adults
- Social distancing measures should be followed.
- Groups should meet outdoors whenever possible.
- All safety guidelines set forth by the school must be followed.
- Band may resume in Phase 3 with social distance recommendations in effect.
 - Students may not share equipment.
 - Students should wear face coverings before practice, at breaks, and after practice.

Revisions to the guidance set forth in this document will be made as deemed necessary by changes in local, state, and federal guidelines and recommendations. Revisions will be communicated by schools to necessary parties.