St. Ambrose Catholic School
Reopening Plan
2021-2022

Our St. Ambrose Catholic School COVID Response Team is committed to developing policies and protocols that are designed to keep all students, employees, and volunteers (very limited number) as safe as possible. From these descriptions you can see this Response Team is fully committed to and invested in the success of our school and in the health and safety of our students and staff. This plan was developed with that focus. By sending your students here, you are entrusting their safety and security to us at St. Ambrose. We take that relationship very seriously. We will educate your students and provide them opportunities for growth in many areas. We will care for your children and provide them with an education rooted in our Catholic faith.

To the best of our ability, we are following the recommended best practices. This will allow us to minimize and mitigate risk, but we all must understand and acknowledge that there is some risk that we cannot fully eliminate. We will follow the guidance, recommendations, and directives of the diocese, federal, state, and/or county authorities.

At any time, this plan may require immediate adjustments. We may be given new directives, mandates, or new recommended best practices that may require an immediate alteration of the plan. The plan may be altered at any time to address situations within our school community. These alterations will be made while in consultation with the Madison County Health Department and the Diocese of Springfield. If any changes are necessary, our Response Team will determine our direction and communication will be provided as quickly as possible. If we determine that we failed to adopt a necessary policy or protocol, or something needs to be changed, our Response Team will assess and determine the appropriate response.

The entities responsible for molding our policy and protocols include;

- Diocese of Springfield in Illinois
- Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)
- Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH)
- Center for Disease Control (CDC)
- Madison County Health Department
- Office of the Governor of Illinois

Response To Confirmed cases of COVID and Close Contact Direct Exposures

If St. Ambrose Catholic School has a confirmed positive case of COVID-19 (student or staff member) or any connected case (direct/close contact of a student or staff member to an individual confirmed with COVID-19), St. Ambrose will follow the current isolation / quarantine recommendations from the Madison County Health Department.

If a student or staff member has COVID-19 or anyone connected to any student or staff member has COVID-19, we ask that you immediately email the Principal/Co-Response Coordinator, email the school office staff, or use the "COVID Documentation" link on the St. Ambrose Catholic School website. We also ask that you contact the Madison County Health Department to communicate the situation and contact your physician(s). If there is a positive case, some pertinent information may have to be shared with the St. Ambrose community. Please remember that names or personal information would never be used, and everyone involved will remain anonymous.

Response to Symptomatic Individuals (not in close contact of a COVID positive individual)

If a student or staff member (that is not a close contact of a COVID positive individual) develops any of the listed symptoms while at school, the child and their siblings will be sent home. If a student develops these symptoms away from the school, the student and any other siblings are to be kept at home until the symptomatic individual is evaluated.

Any student or staff member showing any one of COVID-like symptoms, must remain home for the recommended period (per the Madison County Health Department) from the day of the first symptoms,

A doctor's note, a release from a healthcare provider, or a negative COVID-19 test must be provided in order for the child and their siblings to return to school. Students and staff must also be fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications, and other symptoms must have improved before returning to school.

Symptom exclusion from school

Any student exhibiting any of the following symptoms must be kept at home;

- A fever (100.4°F or higher),
- Has a new onset of moderate to severe headache
- Shortness of breath
- New cough
- Sore throat
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- New loss of sense of taste or smell
- Fatigue from unknown cause
- Muscle or body aches

NO RESULTS FROM A HOME COVID-19 TEST WILL BE ACCEPTED.

Face Coverings

Per the new statewide mandate from the Governor of Illinois, all teachers, students, staff, volunteers, and visitors at St. Ambrose Catholic School will be required to wear a face covering while indoors. The CDC, the IDPH, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Madison County Health Department strongly recommend the use of face coverings when unvaccinated individuals are indoors in a congregate setting such as a school. Face coverings will be worn at all times indoors, except when eating. When outdoors, face coverings may be removed.

When worn, cloth face coverings should be clean and fit properly over the nose and mouth. Cloth face coverings shall not contain any kind of statement (political or non- political), slogans, inappropriate images/profanity, references to drugs/alcohol or anything that is contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church. The administration has the right to decide if a cloth face covering is deemed inappropriate. If a student's cloth face covering is deemed inappropriate, it will be confiscated, and the student will be issued a disposable mask. The inappropriate face covering will be sent home at the end of the day. Examples of appropriate images include; St. Ambrose/Marquette logos, team logos, artistic designs, seasonal images and cartoon characters.

COVID-19 Vaccination

The following are the directions from the Diocese of Springfield regarding the COVID-19 vaccination;

1. Receiving the vaccination is a decision that should be made in consultation with the family's physician.
2. Schools may gather information from employees and students as to vaccination status. This status, however, is considered private medical information and must be protected as such. St. Ambrose will only collect vaccination information if there is an outbreak or a situation requiring quarantines necessitates knowing which individuals are vaccinated and those that are not.
3. Public identification of those who are or are not vaccinated against Covid-19 is not permitted.
4. Vaccination status against Covid-19 may not be a basis for disparate treatment and no action should be taken against, or required of, an individual employee or child that would or would not identify their vaccination status.
5. The only exception to this is in the case of an outbreak, in which case, quarantining and safety decisions may be taken to protect those who are unvaccinated. In such a circumstance, every precaution should be made not to publicly identify those who are unvaccinated, nor should there be any stigma or discrimination allowed against any person unvaccinated.
6. Vaccination status may not be a requirement of eligibility to attend any school event or to be a member of any school organization.

BioNaxNOW COVID-19 Antigen Testing

Recently the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois recommended that schools do not use COVID testing like the BioNax NOW program. Based upon this new recommendation we will not employ COVID testing. Based upon recommendations from the Madison County Health Department, St. Ambrose Catholic School will not allow "early out" releases from quarantines or self-isolations due to exposures or being COVID positive. Only releases from the Madison County Health Department will be accepted.

Distance/Virtual Learning

Virtual learning is a tool that can assist students that are sick or are missing school for some other reason. While away from school, students may connect to virtual learning to ensure they are missing as little academic content as possible. If a student is sick or needs to be in virtual learning for the day, please contact the school office by 8:30 a.m. so that we may ensure the student connects with the teacher and the class.

Students and parents may "opt out" of in-person learning, in favor of distance/virtual learning if there are documented medical concerns regarding a child. To request virtual learning, please contact the school office. Once a student has opted out of in-person learning, they will be required to spend a minimum of two weeks in the distance/virtual learning setting. After that period, they would be eligible to return to in-person learning. Students that are sick for a short time or are away from school on a planned absence may connect to virtual learning on a day to day basis.

Students in distance/virtual learning will connect to class by using Google Meet. They will submit assignments and access class content on Google Classroom. As much as possible, they will be included in all things with their class and school. We at St. Ambrose will make the educational experience as similar as possible for those in distance/virtual learning. Occasionally there will be things that only those in person can benefit from or experience. We will attempt to avoid this as much as possible.

Possibly the most important thing that can be done for a student in virtual learning is for the parents or supervising adults to create an environment that is conducive to learning. The student needs a quiet setting that minimizes distractions or disruptions. Uniforms assist in this process. We strongly recommend wearing uniforms during any day(s) of virtual learning as this can make it seem more like school and encourages a school like mindset. We understand that virtual learning likely comes with many challenges for parents, guardians and other trusted adults that assist with supervision. If a uniform adds to that challenge, students out of uniform will face no consequences. For those not in uniform, clothing must be appropriate, including no pajamas or nightclothes, no hats, and clothing must be modest in appearance and free of inappropriate content.

Students in distance/virtual learning are required to attend classes and complete assignments daily. Any absences must be communicated to the school office and the student's teacher.

Symptom Checks & Temperature Screenings

Symptom checks and temperature screenings will not be utilized as part of the 2021-2022 Reopening Plan.

Social Distancing

Social distancing will be practiced and emphasized as much as possible. Classrooms have been setup to ensure there is at least the recommended 3 feet of spacing between students. Furniture has been rearranged to create additional space. We have setup the classrooms to allow for us much space as possible (maintaining a minimum of 3 feet), given the number of students in the room.

Once students arrive at school, we will minimize interaction with students outside of their class. We will enter/exit using outside classroom doors or in the gymnasium if there is bad weather (see arrival/dismissal procedures for more details). We will limit movement in the hallways to coordinate and ensure social distancing is maintained.

Arrival/Dismissal Procedures

Students in PreK, Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grades are to be dropped off at the entrance of the rear upper parking lot near the dumpster. Cones and visuals will show the path as we have created a drop off lane. School staff will direct the process. There is a chain of staff outside the building that will ensure all students reach their classroom safely. Students will exit the vehicle and enter through the appropriate entrance. Preschool aides will be present to escort preschool students. Preschool and Kindergarten parents are welcome to park in the side lot, staying out of traffic, and walk their students to the door.

Students in grades 3-8 may be dropped off in the lower parking lot at the base of the stairs. Students will then proceed up the stairs and enter through the outer door to their classroom. Teachers will open the doors and be available to receive students at 7:30.
If a parent has a PreK / K, 1st, 2nd grade aged student as well as a student in grades 3-8, the older student(s) may be dropped off at the upper entrance. If there is bad weather, students in grades 3-8 will enter through the gym.

The dismissal process will be completed entirely in the lower large parking lot. PreK and Kindergarten will be dismissed at 2:30. We will allow all PreK / K vehicles to dismiss first. At 2:45 all vehicle movement will be stopped and grades 1-8 will dismiss. Students are to proceed immediately to vehicles. Any student that does not have a ride will be kept on the sidewalk. If they do not have a ride after dismissal is completed, the student will be taken to After Care. After we have halted movement, we will direct dismissal of the vehicles. Staff will supervise the process with 8th grade patrols assisting.

Lunch

Lunch will be eaten outside when possible. When it is not possible to eat outside, lunch will be eaten in the classroom at the student's desk. Lunches will be available five days a week. On Mondays we will have food from Julia's, Tuesdays and Thursdays we will have LaMay's catering, Wednesdays we will have Subway, and Fridays we will bring in Little Caesars.

Water

To begin the year, students will be asked to bring bottled water. If a student forgets to bring water, bottled water will be provided. We have ordered 3 new contactless bottle fillers. When our new contactless bottle fillers arrive, students will be able to access water from our drinking fountains more safely.

Visitors

For the duration of the pandemic, unnecessary visitors will be limited from entering St. Ambrose Catholic School. Anyone needing to drop something off, may do so using our main entrance foyer. They will be required to leave the item in a drop off area in the foyer. Office staff will obtain the item and deliver it to the appropriate destination. If a parent/guardian or designated person comes to pick a student up, they need to come to the main entrance and request the student. Office staff will bring the child to the door. The person picking up the child will be asked to digitally sign out the student. If this is not feasible, they will be able to use a paper sign out sheet.

Before Care / After Care

We will continue to conduct Before Care and After Care. Before Care will be held in the gym starting at 6:30 am. After Care will be held in a main hall classroom, starting at 2:50 after the school day. After Care will be available until 6:00 pm.

Hand Washing / Hand Sanitizing

Hand sanitizer will be provided. Students are welcome to bring their own small supply. Students will be reminded and encouraged to wash their hands often. Reminders will assist with instructing the students in the importance of proper hand hygiene. Visual aids will also be present throughout the building reminding the students of the importance of social distancing.

Ventilation

In order to provide fresh air, classroom windows will be opened during the school day.

Cleaning Measures

Increased cleaning measures will take place during school, and after school. We will continue to focus on providing extra cleaning for restrooms and frequently touched surfaces. We will utilize only approved/safe chemicals and cleaning products.