

St. James Episcopal School

Campus Safety Guidelines

2020-2021 School Year



Introduction

The purpose of this document is to outline a plan for safety processes and protocols and to facilitate a safe return to campus for scholars and faculty. Knowing that true confidence and normalcy will not be achieved until there is a widely distributed vaccine against COVID-19, St. James is committed to ensuring the safety and security of our community by implementing the practices recommended by Federal, State, and local health officials to mitigate the risk of community spread. We understand that the guidelines provided in this document are ever changing and we must remain flexible. We will continue to send updates as new information is provided from the Southwestern Association of Episcopal Schools (SAES), the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Texas Education Agency (TEA), and the governing bodies across the State of Texas.

The guidelines here have been synthesized from many sources, including case studies of international schools who have already returned to campuses amidst the pandemic, and childcare facilities that provided care for the children of essential workers. Like all plans, this is an ever-evolving document, and adjustments can and will continue to be made as new information is learned or our local context changes.

According to the CDC, scholars exhibiting any of the following symptoms in a way not normal for the individual will be assumed to have COVID-19, and will be sent home immediately: feeling feverish or having a measured temperature of 100 degrees or greater, continuous cough, difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, headache, chills, sore throat, shaking or exaggerated shivering, significant muscle pain or body aches, diarrhea, and/or the loss of taste or smell.

Considerations for our campus

Educate and Inform

Staff will complete mandatory safety guideline training at the start of the school year during in-service. The first week with our scholars will be spent using a “Healthy Me” theme focusing on specific ways our scholars can protect themselves inside and outside the school environment. Scholars will receive instruction to learn about the coronavirus, how it is spread, and how the safety guidelines at school will help keep our community safe.

Lessons will focus on:

- Handwashing techniques
- How to sneeze and cough appropriately, and about micro droplets
- Biology of viruses and spread
- How to handle/use masks properly

Teacher resources for these lessons include:

- <https://www.brainpop.com/health/diseasesinjuriesandconditions/coronavirus/>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/talking-with-children.html>
- <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/trinka-and-sam-fighting-the-big-virus>

Appropriate signage will be posted throughout the buildings to remind our scholars of specific procedures. We will utilize CDC images/language for these informative posters, modified to be kid-friendly and accessible. For example, handwashing posters above sinks, distancing posters in the hallways, etc.

Campus Arrival and Screening

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and in order to protect the safety and wellness of our school community, access to the campus will be limited. In an effort to keep scholar contact limited to their own class or grade level, **Before School Care will NOT be provided** on any day. However, the school doors will open for scholars to enter at 7:40. Parents or guardians will not be allowed into the building with the exception of Pre-Primary and Primary parents (only one parent per child) who are required to sign in their scholars. Pre-Primary/Primary parents and scholars will have their temperatures taken outside Foster Hall. Scholars must open their own doors and enter/exit vehicles without assistance as much as possible. Whoever is opening the door will have hand sanitizer to use between each car. SJES staff will not be able to reach in to cars to help with seat belts. Everyone in the car needs to have on a mask before the car door is opened. Parents with children who are unable to exit their car unassisted will need to park behind the School Office and walk the child to the appropriate temperature checkpoint. Masks are required for everyone entering the campus, even on sidewalks.

Entry in to the buildings will require screening as follows:

1. Any scholar, parent, care-giver, visitor, or staff showing symptoms of COVID-19 will not be allowed on campus under any circumstance.
2. All visitors, including parents, will only be allowed on campus with an appointment.
3. Employees and parents should notify the school if they have come in close contact with any individual who has tested positive or is suspected to be positive with COVID-19, or if they themselves have symptoms of COVID-19.

4. Parents are encouraged to screen scholars before leaving for school, observe for symptoms/illness, and keep scholars home if they have symptoms of COVID-19 or have come in close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19.
Ask yourself these questions:
 - a. Have you or anyone in your household had any of the following symptoms in the last 14 days: sore throat, cough, chills, body aches for unknown reasons, shortness of breath for unknown reasons, loss of smell, loss of taste, fever at or greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit?
 - b. Have you or anyone in your household cared for an individual who is in quarantine or is a presumptive positive or has tested positive for COVID-19 and has not been cleared?
 - c. Do you have any reason to believe you or anyone in your household has been exposed to or acquired COVID-19 in the past 14 days?
(Except for those working in the medical profession.)
 - d. To the best of your knowledge have you been in close proximity to any individual who tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days?
5. Scholars are also encouraged to wash their hands before they leave for school.
6. Please do not mask fever by giving fever reducing medicine prior to school.
7. Designated staff members will engage in symptom screening including a temperature check with a no touch thermometer before scholars leave their vehicles (Pre-Primary and Primary may either drive through the horseshoe or be screened under a tent outside). Temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher will be required to return home and must remain fever free for 72 hours without fever reducing medicine. Screening staff will wear a mask and gloves.
8. Scholars will be required to wash their hands as they enter campus buildings.
9. Every person on campus needs to have their own mask and will be taught how to use it properly prior to school via video and again during the first week.
10. All staff, parents, and scholars are required to wear a mask as they enter campus buildings.
11. **Late arrivals** (after 8:00AM) will need to wait in their vehicles outside the Office, call Cari at 883-0835 to let her know you have arrived. Someone will come out to your vehicle to do a temperature screening. Once your scholar has been cleared, they will be walked to class individually. Late arrivals will have to wait until each scholar or family is walked to class individually.

Please be on time to avoid having to wait for this procedure to take place.

Screening Areas

Pre-Primary/Primary scholars and parents will have the option of being screened before they enter the building or, if they prefer the privacy of their vehicle, they may drive through the parking lot horseshoe to have their temperature taken. There will be clearly marked areas six feet apart on the sidewalk indicating where children and families should wait during arrival. Only one parent will be allowed in the building with each child. (Masks required.) Parents will enter by the parking lot and exit through the glass doors by the parlor.

Pre-Kindergarten procedures are changing this year. The Pre-K teachers and Assistants will be waiting by the sidewalk leading to the courtyard on Upper Broadway. Parents will drive through the screening area on the right side of Upper Broadway. Once the scholar's temperature check is clear, they will exit the vehicle and wait with the Pre-Kindergarten staff. They will walk together as a group to their classrooms at 8:00 AM.

Kindergarten and First Grade will drive through the main parking lot horseshoe area for temperature screenings. Once the scholar's temperature check is clear, they will exit the vehicle and walk through the Primary School door to get to their classroom.

Second, Third, and Fourth Grades will drive through the Water Street Parking lot for temperature screenings. Once the scholar's temperature check is clear, they will exit the vehicle and walk to their classroom.

Middle School scholars will have their temperature taken in their vehicles in the Middle School horseshoe. Once the scholar's temperature check is clear, they will exit the vehicle and wait with the Middle School staff in the courtyard until 8:00 AM.

School Dismissal

Dismissal will vary by grade levels. **Pre-Primary, Primary, and Pre-Kindergarten** dismissal at 2:00 PM will be outside in assigned areas by teacher in the parking lot by the playground and the 3:30 pick up for those who stayed in aftercare will also be outside in the same areas.

Parents are required to wear masks to walk up and pick up their scholars.

For 3:30 PM dismissal, all parents will be required to drive through the horseshoes to pick up their scholars in an effort to limit adults on campus and campus contact,

Kindergarten through Fourth Grade dismissal will be in assigned areas around the main Office parking lot, beginning at the Gym with Fourth Grade, then spaced around by grade ending with Kindergarten by the main Office door.

Middle School dismissal will be in the Middle School horseshoe. Scholars will be waiting by grade in the courtyard.

Families picking up multiple scholars will have to pick them up in multiple areas instead of the older scholars walking to the younger scholar's area.

Social Distancing

Social distancing helps ensure particles from one person are less likely to come into contact with the surrounding people. This is accomplished by maintaining a recommended six (6) foot distance wherever possible, and also through maintaining low-density occupation of common spaces. Education, especially in lower grades, often involves close proximity to scholars and amongst scholars and this poses some unique challenges and adjustments for scholars and staff alike. Whenever possible, desks will be configured to keep scholars six feet apart. We also know in the younger grades this is more challenging. To keep contact limited, whenever possible, scholars will be kept in their homeroom classes. For enrichments and specific classes, the teacher will go to the classroom as opposed to the scholars traveling. For Art, PE, Spanish, and Middle School, scholars will be required to wash their hands prior to traveling and after each class. Additional best practices for social distancing are being researched and developed throughout the summer in collaboration with other Episcopal schools in our accrediting body, SAES.

Common Spaces on Campus

For the time being, we will no longer use Mund's Hall or the Gym for Before School Care. Scholars will go directly to their classrooms after their temperature is taken. Mund's Hall will be used for lunch and sanitized between lunch shifts. Some scholars will be required to eat in their classrooms. The Gym will be used for PE classes and, weather permitting; the field behind the Middle School will be used for PE classes also. Chapel services will follow the guidelines COTGS is following. Currently, every other pew in the Church is closed and scholars will be spaced apart on the open pews. All participants are required to wear masks. No visitors will be allowed in All-School Chapel until further notice.

Recess and use of playground equipment is deemed acceptable by multiple groups, one grade at a time to maintain distancing. According to the Department of Health Services (DHS), there is evidence to suggest playground equipment in direct sunlight is safe to use as solar radiation rapidly reduces virus stability. All playground equipment will be sanitized nightly.

To further increase safety and decrease contact with multiple scholars, all stairwells will be designated one-way. The stairwell by the Office will be designated as an UP stairwell only. The stairwell by the courtyard will be a DOWN stairwell only.

In Foster Hall, the stairwell leading to the Kindergarten rooms (closest to the playground) will be an UP stairwell and the stairwell by the Parlor will be a DOWN stairwell.

In Water Street, if a full class is traveling together, the stairwell inside the building is an UP stairwell and the stairwell outside the building is a DOWN stairwell. If small groups of scholars are traveling together, they will use the inside stairwell.

In the Middle School, the stairwell by Carancahua (under the link) will be an UP stairwell and the stairwell by the field will be a DOWN stairwell.

Hand Washing & Hygiene

All scholars will receive a lesson on hand washing upon return to the campus following CDC protocols. Scholars and staff will be expected to wash hands upon entering school, before and after snacks and lunch, when transitioning from one place to another, before and after recess, before and after PE. New hand washing stations are being installed in every building, on the playground, and in the gym. All water fountains are being capped or hands free bottle filling stations are being installed. Scholars are encouraged to bring their own water bottles, clearly labeled to school. Make sure your scholar's water bottle is clearly marked and reinforce no sharing of water bottles at home. Hand sanitizer is available at every entrance and classroom.

Clean Facilities and Equipment

We have purchased a sprayer, fogger, and a 55 gallon drum of Vital Oxide, an EPA registered hospital disinfectant cleaner. Vital Oxide is non-irritating to skin, non-corrosive to most treated articles, NSF-certified (no rinse required) for food-contact surfaces. All areas of the campus will be disinfected every evening with Vital Oxide. All classrooms will be provided with a disinfectant product to be used throughout the day that is safe for our scholars. Each scholar will have their own materials (no sharing of supplies) to use throughout the day. In the Primary School classes, and in any class centers, all shared materials will be cleaned frequently by staff. The guidelines from the TEA outlined the nature of cleaning schools saying, *"Schools should arrange for additional cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces that are touched in common areas throughout the day. This would include objects such as door handles, common tables/desks, shared supplies such as art supplies, and high touch devices such as shared computers or laptops"*. Sextons and the night cleaning crew will make sure all of these high touch areas are sanitized frequently throughout the day and nightly.

Exposure/Positive Cases/Return to School

In the event of a positive case contact or exposure involving someone on our campus, the first step is to contact the Health Department and follow their instructions.

The following procedures are the steps we will take unless otherwise advised by the Health Department:

- Staff or scholars who are sent home with fever and/or symptoms of COVID 19 that last more than one day are required to speak with their physician to determine necessity of testing. (Documentation required)
- Staff or scholars who are sent home with fever and/or symptoms of COVID 19 without lab confirmation may return to campus after they are:
 - Fever free and symptom free for 72 hours without fever reducing medication

- Staff or scholars who are sent home with fever and/or symptoms of COVID 19 and are confirmed positive must have a documented confirmed negative test result before they are allowed to return to school.

Again, any person who has tested positive for COVID-19, must show proof of a negative result before being admitted back to school. Staff or scholars who are sent home due to fever but have not tested for Covid-19, must be fever free for three days without fever reducing medication.

Masks

All scholars and staff are required to bring a mask to school daily. To comply with the governor's current executive order regarding face masks, scholars in 4th-8th Grades are required to bring a face mask to school every day, wear it upon entering, exiting, and during class. Scholars in 3rd grade and below are encouraged wear a face mask daily, especially upon entering. At minimum, face masks will be required (for grades as stated above) upon entering school, moving between classes, departing school, and any other time inside the buildings when they cannot maintain a safe social distance. If your scholar (4th-8th grade) has difficulty wearing a face mask due to any medical condition, they must turn in a doctor's waiver to the School Office.

Scholars will not be required to wear face masks while playing outside, participating in sports, during lunch, and at other times when social distancing can be followed safely. Face masks may be any color or design, must be appropriate for school and chapel, and may not have phrases or slogans on them. Masks should have your scholar's name on them. Please practice face mask wearing with your scholar so they know how to put it on and take it off properly without contaminating their hands or the mask, and are accustom to wearing a mask for longer periods of time.

Note: CDC frequently asked questions:

Should I wear a mask and maintain 6 feet of distance to help protect against COVID-19?

In every location, all employees need to either maintain at least 6 feet of distance from other people at all times, or wear a mask. In clinical areas where 6 feet of space between people cannot be maintained, clinical masks (ear loop/procedure masks) need to be worn.

Who should wear a mask?

CDC recommends all people 2 years of age and older wear a mask in public settings and when around people who don't live in your household, especially when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.

After Care

Aftercare will be provided for the upcoming year. If your scholar is going to stay for aftercare, it will need to be scheduled in advance. No drop in aftercare will be allowed. Aftercare will be provided for scholars in Primary School from 2:00-3:30 by the instructional aides for those specific grades in grade level classrooms. Aftercare from 3:30-5:30 for Primary through 8th grade will be held in the Middle School. Pre-Primary aftercare will remain in Foster Hall. Parents are requested to only use Aftercare if it is a necessity for your family.

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