

St. James Episcopal School

Campus Safety Guidelines

2021-2022 School Year

Updated: Monday, August 09, 2021



Introduction

St. James Episcopal School operated fully in-person over the course of the past year with only one cohort having to shut down and few other concerns. Our success was due primarily because of the combined diligence between the school and our families.

We are asking for the same support for the 2021-2022 School Year. The purpose of this document is to outline a plan for safety processes and facilitate a safe return to campus. St. James is committed to ensuring the safety and security of our community by implementing the practices recommended by health officials to mitigate the risk of community spread. We understand 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. 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 or a variance, 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 viruses, how they 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

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

Campus Arrival and Screening

Pre-screening and parent safety were major factors in keeping the scholars safe this past year. We did not send home any scholars because of temperature checks at the beginning of the day so we are asking parents to continue the same pre-screening processes implemented last year. *We will not be taking temperatures daily.*

In order to protect the safety and wellness of our school community, access to the campus will continue to be limited. In an effort to keep scholar contact limited to their own class or grade level, **Before School Care will ONLY be provided** on Mondays in the school cafeteria, Munds Hall. The school doors will open for scholars to enter at 7:40 **(8:40 on Mondays)**. 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. All sanitation practices put in place last year will continue including scholars should wash their hands at home before leaving for school and will sanitize their hands prior to entering the buildings.

The CDC, the Bishop, our Medical Advisor Christian Rice, and other advisors to the school have all stated the most proactive way to maintain a safe environment is to achieve herd immunity. This happens when 75-80% or more of a community is vaccinated. Unfortunately, the bulk of our scholars are not old enough to be vaccinated. However, **the safety of the school community increases dramatically if everyone who is eligible to receive the vaccine chooses to get vaccinated.** If you and your eligible family members are vaccinated, thank you! If you or your eligible family members are not vaccinated, please prayerfully reconsider choosing to receive the vaccine on behalf of the 200 scholars who are not old enough to receive the vaccine.

Adults, scholars in Kinder and older, and other family members in families choosing not to vaccinate, please wear a mask for your protection and ours.

At this time, the school has the Binax Now Rapid Test so we can test parents and scholars (with parent permission) who feel they may have contracted the virus. It is important to remember to wait 5-7 days after exposure to test unless you develop symptoms. Otherwise, you may feel a false sense of security with a negative test result.

We will continue the following procedures for the safety and protection of our scholars:

1. All visitors, including parents, will be allowed on campus with an appointment. Exception: All-School Chapel on Thursdays at 8:10 is once again open to parents. The first Chapel is August 26th.
2. 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 any variance.
3. 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 10 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. Do you have any reason to believe you or anyone in your household has been exposed to or acquired COVID-19 in the past 10 days? (Except for those working in the medical profession.)
 - c. 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?
4. Scholars are encouraged to wash their hands before they leave for school.
 5. Please do not mask fever by giving fever reducing medicine prior to school.
 6. Scholars will be required to sanitize as they enter campus buildings and wash hands frequently.
 7. Every person on campus needs to have their own mask in case of in school exposure and should be taught how to use it properly prior to school.
 8. Fully vaccinated staff and parents are not required to wear masks. All unvaccinated staff, parents, and scholars are requested to wear a mask inside campus buildings.
 9. **Late arrivals** (after 8:00AM) will need to wait in their vehicles outside the Office, call Crystal at 883-0835 to let her know you have arrived. Someone will come out to your vehicle to walk scholars to class.

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

Screening Areas

Though we will have no “screening areas” this year, Drop-Off and Pick-Up areas will remain the same.

Pre-Primary/Primary scholars and parents walk their child to the classroom door to sign in. Only one parent will be allowed in the building with each child. Parents will enter by the parking lot and exit through the glass doors by the parlor.

Pre-Kindergarten Drop-Off is on Upper Broadway. The Pre-K teachers and Instructional Aides will be waiting by the sidewalk leading to the courtyard on Upper Broadway. Parents will drive up to the sidewalk on the right side of Upper Broadway and scholars will be helped out of the car and escorted to class.

Kindergarten and First Grade will drive through the main parking lot horseshoe area. 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, exit the vehicle and walk to their classroom.

Middle School scholars 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.

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 three-six (3-6) 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. To keep contact limited, whenever possible, scholars will be kept with their grade level or in their homeroom classes. For Enrichment classes, scholars will be encouraged to wash their hands prior to traveling and after each class.

Common Spaces on Campus

Parents will be allowed in All-School Chapel. 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), playground equipment in direct sunlight is safe to use as solar radiation rapidly reduces virus stability. All equipment will be sanitized frequently.

To further increase safety and decrease contact with multiple scholars, all stairwells will continue to 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. 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 utilize an EPA registered hospital disinfectant cleaner. Vital Oxide which 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 frequently. All classrooms will be provided with a disinfectant product to be used throughout the day that is safe for our scholars. In the Primary School classes, and in any class centers, all shared materials will be cleaned frequently. 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.

Exposure/Positive Cases/Return to School

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

The following procedures are steps we will take unless otherwise advised:

- Staff or scholars who are sent home with fever and/or symptoms of COVID 19 are required to be symptom free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication.
- With symptoms lasting two or more days, parents are required to speak with their physician to determine necessity of testing.
- Staff or scholars who are sent home with fever and/or symptoms of COVID 19 and are confirmed positive must wait 14 days or have a confirmed negative test result before they are allowed to return to school.

Masks

The safety of the school community increases dramatically if everyone who is eligible to receive the vaccine chooses to get vaccinated. If you and your eligible family members are vaccinated, thank you! If you or your eligible family members are not vaccinated, please prayerfully reconsider choosing to receive the vaccine on behalf of the 200 scholars who are not old enough to receive the vaccine.

Who should wear a mask?

CDC recommends all people 2 years of age and older wear a mask in public settings. Masks are recommended when around people who don't live in your household or are not vaccinated, 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 as much as possible. 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.

Parents are requested to only use Aftercare if it is a necessity for your family.