



Our Mother of Consolation Parish School



School Reopening Guidance and Procedures August 2021



A National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence
Our Mother of Consolation Parish School
17 E. Chestnut Hill Ave ♦ Philadelphia, PA 19111

school.omcparish.com ♦ www.facebook.com/OMCParishSchool

August 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians,

The OMC Taskforce met recently to discuss our school reopening guidance and procedures for providing a safe environment for our students, faculty, and staff as we begin the 2021-22 school year. The guidance and procedures for this academic year are based on the work that the taskforce did last summer while incorporating the latest recommendations from the Office of Catholic Education, the City of Philadelphia Department of Health, and the CDC. We thank the members of the taskforce: the school parents, OMC parishioners, and the medical professionals, who have participated and have consulted with us throughout this process.

The guidance and procedures in this updated version will be reviewed and revised on a periodic basis by the medical team and the taskforce committees.

With the new Delta variant contributing to the surge in COVID cases, let us invoke our patroness, Mary, Our Mother of Consolation, that she may continue to keep us under the protection of her motherly care.

In Christ,

Fr. Bob Bazzoli, OSFS
Pastor

Mrs. Patricia Sheetz
Principal

2021-22 OMC Taskforce Members: Fr. Bob Bazzoli, Mrs. Patricia Sheetz, Peter Amuso, Christine Bischoff, Jason Bofinger, Paul Cillo, Miranda Clark-Binder, Diana Cosgrove, Gloria DiLullo, Angela Dobbins, Aileen Harbour, Justin Harbour, Andrea Horos, Paul Horos, Steve Lawrence, Richard Leonard, John Sprandio, Melissa Sullivan, Tiffani Wilson, Samantha Angelone, Kate Daly, and Patrick Morgan.

Introduction and Highlights

This document will provide information regarding the plan to return to school for the 2021-2022 year. Before we discuss the specific aspects of the plan, let us start with an introduction to several of the key foundational premises that the plan is built upon. The principles listed below will allow us to open for in-person learning

Partnership: As we experienced last academic year, Catholic elementary schools are inherently a partnership between the parent and the school. As you may remember, in July of 2020 a task force consisting of self-selected parents, teachers, our school administration, and outside professionals was formed to address the variety of issues associated with the reopening of the school. We also formed a medical task force consisting of parents and parishioners with medical expertise to advise us. In addition, our maintenance staff and business manager have been integral in putting this plan together. Our plan was based on the recommendation of the Office of Catholic Education (OCE) of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, CDC protocols, and the recommendations of the PA Department of Health, the OMC Taskforce, and the advice of our medical taskforce.

Again, this year our plan for re-opening the school building will require the parents to take the responsibility of monitoring your child's health daily. Most importantly, this means that that parents of children who are experiencing symptoms – such as fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion, runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea - need to keep their children home until medically cleared to return to school. As last year, with parental cooperation in this matter, we will be able to keep the school open and safe.

Cohorting: Once again this year, each grade will be a cohort. Cohorting is an environmental measure to prevent the spread of disease. Although our schools will be using other precautionary measures, cohorting will be a major part of the plan. With this, we will keep groups of children together for the entire day. They will attend lunch, recess, and classes as a cohort. If a case of COVID-19 were to surface with a cohort, we would then move to virtual learning at home with just the identified cohort. With the input from the Philadelphia Dept. of Health and our own medical task force, the rest of the school would continue to operate with in-class instruction.

Social distancing: Social distancing is also a fundamental practice in all our procedures of operations. Social distancing is deliberately increasing the physical space between people to avoid spreading illness. Keeping your distance from others lessens the chances of catching and spreading COVID-19. Last summer, with the assistance of our Building Operations subcommittee, our Classroom set-up subcommittee, and Mr. Jeffery O'Neill (Senior Director of Facilities of the University of Pennsylvania Hospital), capacity for each classroom, travel in the hallway, recess, lunch periods, and classroom instruction have all been planned to maximize social distancing. We will continue these practices this year.

Use of Masks: Masks are mandatory throughout the school day - on the bus, on school property, in the school building, and during recess. In keeping with the CDC recommendation, masks with an exhalation valve or vent may NOT be used. If a student needs to remove their mask, they will need to get permission from the teacher. We do not recommend the use of plastic desk partitions, as they can pose unintended complications.

Enhanced Cleaning: The school has contracted with Coverall for initial deep cleaning and regular daily cleaning of the entire building: <https://www.coverall.com/>. See appendix #1 for scope, process, and cleaning product information. In addition, the school maintenance staff will wipe down the high touch areas (doorknobs, handrails, and bathrooms) throughout the day. The water fountain will not be operational; children need to bring their own water bottles to school.

Monitoring health: Parents are primarily responsible for monitoring the health of their children. The school nurse will be responsible for monitoring the overall health of the students, faculty, and staff.

General Principles for the Building

- All visitors must wear a mask in the building.
- Fully vaccinated parent volunteers will be permitted in school. Proof of vaccination is required.
- There will be signage throughout the school reminding students, faculty, and staff to wear a mask, practice social distancing, and use proper hand hygiene. Hand sanitizers will be available at the entrance to each classroom and through the building. Students, faculty, and staff will be reminded about these protocols throughout the day.
- Each student is to provide his/her own school supplies for use in the classroom to reduce the need to share supplies. Teachers will stipulate which supplies are needed. Parents may choose to supply their children with their own hand sanitizer.
- There will be no sharing of food/drink. Please be sure to pack lunch, snacks, and bottled water for your child to use throughout the day. The newly installed bottle-fill water fountains in the basement and on the second floor will be operational for students to fill their water bottles. The school will have a supply of snacks and water for use when needed, but we are unable to provide these to students on a regular basis.
- Classroom windows and doors will remain open (when feasible) throughout the day to provide proper ventilation.

Catholic Identity

Catholic schools have a two-fold charge: providing an education that is academically excellent and one that is deeply rooted in Catholic identity. Excellence in education is characterized by having a strong curriculum, engaging students, utilizing quality instructional methods, making good use of data, and regular communication with parents and stakeholders. What is at the heart of learning in a Catholic school is the inclusion of faith and Catholic identity in all we do.

- School Masses will be attended with a mask mandate and proper social distancing throughout the church setting.
- Modifications will be made to all faith-based activities that are important in the life of the school (i.e., retreats, prayer services).

Daily Monitoring of Health

Health monitoring will be done in conjunction with efforts taken at home by the parents. Parents have the greatest information regarding the health of their children and are an integral part of this process. As we learn about the variants, we may need to alter the list by adding or subtracting symptoms. Currently, symptoms are: Fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea.

OMC Arrival & Dismissal Procedures

A foundational premise when designing a safe entry throughout the day and controlling transmission of any virus is to help keep it from the building. During the entry into the building, the use of masks, social distancing, and proper hand hygiene will be implemented.

Arriving at School Remains the Same As Last Year

All Students must wear a face covering when arriving to school

For the benefit and safety of everyone, please observe the following procedures for morning drop-off. Students will not be allowed to gather in the parking lot prior to school. We ask that you not drop off your child until 7:45 AM.

Car Drop-off:

- Pull into the parking lot in the lanes indicated.
- Drivers and students are asked to wait in the car for a school staff member.
- Please have your health screening form available for each child.
- Children are to go directly to their classroom, keeping appropriate distancing.
- Once your child leaves your car and is at a safe distance, the staff member will direct you to leave the parking lot.

Walkers:

- Arrive at the parking lot no earlier than 7:45 AM.
- Please proceed immediately to the back door of the school maintaining social distancing (3 feet apart).
- Please have a health screening form available for each child.
- The school staff member will review the form at the back door.
- Children are to go directly to their classroom keeping appropriate distancing.

Buses:

- The driver will hold the children on the bus and wait for a school staff member.
- Children are to go directly to their classroom keeping appropriate distancing.

Dismissal: Students will not be allowed to gather in the parking lot and will be dismissed according to family groupings.

Buses:

- The students will remain in the classroom until their bus arrives.
- When their bus arrives, the children will be called by class to proceed to their bus.
- Once the bus is full, it will depart immediately.

Car line:

- The students will remain in the classroom until their ride arrives.
- Pull into the parking lot in the lanes indicated and wait for a school staff member.
- The school staff member will confirm the student(s) you are picking up and inform the school office.
- The school office will ask the student(s) to proceed to your car.
- Students must exit the school building from the rear door and go directly to the car.
- Students cannot re-enter the school building.
- The school staff member will inform the driver when it is safe to leave the parking lot.

Walkers:

- Students will remain in the classroom until they are dismissed.
- Walkers will be dismissed as individuals/family groups.
- As their name is called, they will exit the school through the front door only.
- Students will wait in the front schoolyard for school staff members, appropriately distanced.
- Students cannot re-enter the school building.
- If you are meeting your child(ren), you are asked to wait on the grass on the street side of the fence.

CARES: Children who participate in CARES will remain in their classrooms.

Classroom Set-up & Procedures

The organization of the classroom is important in supporting the academic progress of students. Classroom space should provide an environment that allows teachers and students to interact comfortably and safely.

Fundamental premises when designing a safe classroom environment are the concepts of maintaining cohort and social distancing. The use of cohorts is recommended by the CDC and other health agencies to help control the spread of any viruses and manage any possible outbreaks.

- Each grade will be a cohort and remain together throughout the day.
- Desks will be placed 3 feet apart from the center and face in the same direction.
- Students and teachers must wear face masks in the classroom when they are moving about.
- If a student needs to remove their mask, they will need to get the permission of the teacher.
- If parents choose for their child to wear a face shield, they are responsible for purchasing, maintaining, and sanitizing the equipment. Student face shields may not remain in the classroom overnight and must be taken home each day to be sanitized.
- If a student uses a face shield, teachers may permit the removal of the face mask when seated at their desk.
- We do not recommend the use of plastic desk partitions, as they can pose unintended complications.
- Students will store bookbags, coats, personal items, etc., in the coatroom. The teacher will develop a procedure for students to go to the coatroom.
- Floor space between desks must be kept clear to allow for ease of movement.

- When materials must be shared, cleaning in between use is essential. The teacher will establish procedures to wipe down before and after every use.

Traveling Within the Building

- Movement throughout the school will be limited; masks must be worn.
- Movement through the school for arrival and dismissal will be coordinated through the school office.
- The teachers will develop a schedule for the movement of the cohorts throughout the day so that several cohorts are not in the hallway simultaneously.
- Cleaning of all commonly touched items, railings, doorknobs, etc., will occur throughout the day.
- Classroom doors will be open throughout the day, as much as possible, to avoid unnecessary touching by students and to allow for ventilation.

Lunch and Snacks

- Please be sure to pack lunch, snacks, and bottled water for your child to use throughout the day.
- No shared food or drink is allowed.
- The newly installed bottle-fill water fountains in the basement and on the second floor will be operational for students to fill their water bottles.
- The school will have a supply of snacks and water for use when needed, but we are unable to provide these to all the students on a regular basis.
- Students will eat in their classroom cohort and remain socially distant during lunch/snack time.
- Students will practice proper hand hygiene before and after lunch/snack.
- The desks will be wiped down before and after lunch/snack.

Recess

To the best extent possible, recess will continue, applying safe use of the equipment and social distancing. Face masks are to be worn during recess.

- Grades 1-8 will use the parking lot. School staff will maintain social distancing of cohorts.
- Grades Pre-K3 to Kindergarten will use the front schoolyard. School staff will maintain social distancing of cohorts.
- The teachers will organize the procedures for movement to outside recess.
- Students will practice proper hand hygiene before going to recess and before returning to class.
- Games and activities used during recess need to be approved by the teacher/staff member as part of the safe list for limiting the spread of infectious diseases. Equipment will be wiped down after each recess.
- Students are to have their own bottled water for hydration before, during, and after activity.

Physical Education

Physical education is an integral part of the curriculum and it is essential that it continue safely. Face masks are to be used during PE.

- Weather permitting, PE class will be held in outside space.
- When the weather does not permit, PE will be in the classrooms and will consist of teaching personal health, well-being, personal skill development, and concepts to promote physical fitness.

Students are to have their own water bottles for hydration before, during, and after activity. Please note that in keeping with the current CDC guidelines, the water fountains will not be operational.

CARES

It is integral for our schools to provide a CARES program, especially during the current circumstances. CARES is an offshoot of the regular school day; thus, all procedures in place for the school will be adhered to during the CARES program.

It is paramount that we provide a safe, healthy, and sanitized environment for those students entrusted to our care before and after regular school hours. It is important to engage these students in a social setting which they have not experienced in months and to provide a pleasant atmosphere for them. We are the protectors and providers for these students during the hours they are entrusted to us.

- Students are responsible for providing their own snack and beverage during their time in CARES. There is no snack sharing.
- All CARES employees will follow the same health checklist practices as school employees.
- All operational guidelines put into place in the school (e.g., movement through the building, recess, etc.) will be practiced during CARES sessions.
- Materials used by CARES students will be sanitized.
- Proper hand hygiene will be monitored on a regular basis.
- Suspected cases of COVID-19 will be handled by the CARES Director as during school hours.
- The CARES program will comply with any emergency actions and resulting decisions that occur during the school day.
- The CARES Director will communicate procedures so that parents know what to expect, including the obligations of the parent to take daily health checks.

After School Activities

- All CYO Sports for the 2020-21 season will be scheduled in a safe manner, in accordance with the directives of Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Confirmed or Suspected Cases of COVID-19

The School Nurse will coordinate efforts to monitor the health of the students and staff throughout the day. **The school, however, will not screen students or staff to identify cases of COVID-19.** If a COVID-19 case is identified in the school by a health professional, the Philadelphia Department of Health will be contacted immediately and will help identify those individuals and follow up on next steps.

If a student, teacher, or staff member has a CONFIRMED case of COVID-19

- The principal will notify the local health officials for guidance.
- The person will be sent home for up to 10 days as health officials determine next steps.
- The cohort will be dismissed according to health official guidance for up to 10 days and learn virtually.
- The potentially infected area will be closed off, cleaned, and sanitized by maintenance professionals.
- Notification to families, faculty, and staff of a confirmed case will take place in a timely manner, without using a name or identifying information of the person(s) involved.
- During the initial 2 to 5-day period, any other potential cases related to the initial case will be evaluated by health officials.
- Medical professionals will determine when the infected person and cohort can return to school.

If a student, teacher, or staff has a SUSPECTED case of COVID-19 or is demonstrating symptoms.

- The school nurse will determine the course of action. .
- Individuals who are demonstrating symptoms should stay home up to 10 days as determined by medical professionals. CDC guidance for caring for oneself and others who are sick should be followed.
- The person can return when:
 - 3 days with no fever **and**
 - Symptoms improved **and**
 - 10 days since symptoms first appeared,
 - or if cleared by a medical professional.