

**COVID-19 Return to School Guidelines  
for  
School Administrators**



**Archdiocese of Cincinnati  
Catholic Schools Office**

July 2020



*A message from the superintendent:*

*The Catholic Schools Office of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati is pleased to offer the following considerations under four guiding principles: Create, Protect, Prioritize, and Operate to support schools and principals as they prepare to successfully and safely reopen our schools and buildings this fall. The Catholic Schools Office serves 107 schools within 19 counties, with various mandates aligned to local stakeholders. These considerations are based on the Ohio Department of Education – Reset and Restart Guide, COVID-19 Health and Prevention Guidance for Ohio K-12 Schools and the Ohio Department of Education – Planning for Blended or Remote Learning Guide (links for these documents can be found in the appendix section at the end of this document). It is our commitment to all Catholic schools within the Archdiocese of Cincinnati to provide support, resources, and collaboration around concepts and ideas to best meet the specific needs of all our schools.*

***The Archdiocese of Cincinnati Catholic School’s Guiding Principles:  
Create, Protect, Prioritize, and Operate.***

- 1) *CREATE a community centered around Christ that supports the social and emotional well-being of all members.***
- 2) *PROTECT students, staff, and families within our school communities.*** Schools will follow the health and safety guidelines outlined by the Ohio Department of Health and their local health departments.
- 3) *PRIORITIZE student learning to ensure all students are learning at grade level and are receiving rigorous instruction focused on essential skills that are necessary for future learning.*** Schools will be prepared to offer instruction within three learning models:
  - a. Full opening of your Catholic school with regular operations.
  - b. Full closure of your Catholic school with some type of remote learning.
  - c. A blended operation that will include some students in school with regular operations on campus and others distance learning at home due to illness, exposure, quarantine, etc.
- 4) *OPERATE efficiently, collaboratively, and responsibly.*** Schools should be prepared to operate within the health and safety guidelines outlined by the Ohio Department of Health, their local health department, the Ohio Department of Education, and their specific community stakeholders.

**CONSIDERATIONS**

**CREATE – Considerations**

- Design meaningful and relevant prayer and ongoing Catholic faith formation opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to deepen their spirituality and commitment as missionary disciples.
- Collaborate with priests and pastors regarding school masses and prayer services.

### **PROTECT - Considerations**

- **Daily Health Assessments:** Each school should have a plan for daily temperature checks (touchless thermometer); any student or staff member with a temperature of 100.4 or higher should stay home. In the event a student does not meet the health requirements, an isolation area should be utilized where students can wait for a second temperature check using a different thermometer and to be picked up, if necessary. Symptom checks should be done daily (according to the CDC, symptoms include fever, chills, 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, etc. For more information see, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>).
- **Isolation Areas:** Each school should designate an area for isolation of sick students with an ability to maintain adult supervision. The student should be wearing a face mask unless there is a medical reason not to. Sick students cannot be sent on the school bus. Parents must have back-up contacts on file in the event they cannot pick up their sick child or are not responding to contact from the school. The isolation area must be cleaned and sanitized after each use.
- **Physical/Social Distancing:** School staff should make every attempt to maintain 6-foot social distancing among students, staff, volunteers, etc. in all school environments.
  - Where social distancing is difficult or impossible, face coverings are essential.
  - Declutter classrooms to maximize floor space.
  - Arrange all desks in rows and distance where possible. Face students towards the front of the room if possible.
  - Develop a schedule and plan for departmentalized or leveled classes focusing on limited exposure for multiple groups of students.
  - Develop a schedule and plan for related arts classes (i.e. art, music, and physical education). Related arts teachers should visit classes when possible. Shared spaces (i.e. gymnasium) must be cleaned and disinfected after every use, including all sports equipment.
  - Complete a plan to offer recess following health and safety mandates.
  - Consider assigning a single class/cohort a day to specific recess equipment (e.g. slides, swings, etc.). Equipment should be cleaned and disinfected before use by another cohort/class.

- **Face masks:** Schools must have a face mask/covering policy, which include the following provisions: (1) messages or images on masks must align with the Catholic faith and school dress code, as determined by the school in its discretion; (2) masks must be worn when students are moving from place to place in classrooms, school buildings, and other school facilities; (3) masks must cover the nose and mouth, stay in place, be cleaned regularly and be in good condition; and (4) masks should be labeled with names and every student/staff should have multiple masks.
  - School nurses or staff who care for individuals with symptoms MUST use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) provided by the school, in accordance with OSHA standards.  
(see <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/standards.html>).
- **Hygiene:** Handwashing and sanitizing are important to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Schools must provide opportunities for handwashing and ensure hand sanitizer is available in all rooms.
- **Supplies:** Ensure all students use their own personal school supplies. Shared supplies are discouraged.
- **Contact Tracing:** Schools should be prepared to cooperate with the contact tracing investigation with class lists, cafeteria seating charts, etc., as well as documentation on what precautions have been taken (masks, social distancing, cleaning, etc.) and when, that will allow quick identification of those at high risk of infection from the positive COVID-19 student/staff. (see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/contact-tracing.html>). Accurate record keeping is essential.

### **PRIORITIZE – Considerations**

- Instruct and support teachers in the knowledge and understanding that student centered instruction is the goal for student learning. In the upcoming school year, students may be learning on campus, learning from home, and/or a combination of both. However, the principles of quality instruction remain the same: creating a culture of learners, establishing clear learning objectives, that are communicated to all stakeholders, using authentic assessments that measure growth, monitor mastery and provide clear and consistent feedback.
- **Curriculum & Instruction Considerations**
  - Ensure teachers have access to and are utilizing the Archdiocesan Graded Course of Study and have a clear understanding of pacing guides/curriculum maps/exiting skills that are provided within the GCS.  
(See <http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/ministries-offices/catholic-schools-office/school-resources/curriculum/>)

- Ensure teachers have access to existing school based Essential Skills documents and should revise curriculum maps and exiting skills as needed and appropriate.
- Facilitate alignment (vertical/horizontal) among teachers to promote an understanding of instruction and student learning from the previous grade that may not have occurred due to campus closures.
- Identify shifts that need to happen within the Essential Skills to highlight the most critical elements and crucial skills within the curriculum for success in the following grade.
- Identify and access additional high-quality instructional materials that are conducive to on campus and remote learning to support the acquisition of Essential Skills.
- Identify effective and efficient tools teachers should utilize during on campus and remote learning in order to provide detailed feedback which supports learning to students.
- Develop a plan to integrate the reteaching and/or intervention of specific skills that were taught but not acquired and are necessary for students to be successful in future learning.
- Create a Remote Learning Plan considering the specific resources available.
- If the school has a remote learning option, in lieu of the traditional classroom learning, such option is designed for COVID-19 related concerns, quarantine, or illness. Parents and students who choose a remote learning option must commit to the guidelines set forth by the school. Students are held to the same grading and performance standards as those students learning in school. Likewise, students are held to the same attendance standards as those students learning in school, and they may be marked absent if not logged on at the times designated by the school. Students who choose a remote learning option may not participate in school-sponsored extra-curricular activities. A request to return to the traditional program must be made to the principal one week in advance of the student's intent to return. However, a student may have to remain an at-home learner through an entire quarter/semester/trimester, as determined by the school. When video capabilities are used for a remote learning option, the camera should be focused on the teacher, aid or instructional materials.

○ **Assessment Considerations**

- Revisit or develop an assessment plan that emphasizes the use of a diagnostic test in the first month of school to identify student learning needs that will demonstrate subsequent growth throughout the year.
- Identify and implement assessments to meet the needs of the school's demographics to provide specific data needed to plan for continued student learning and growth throughout the year.
- Consider utilizing a Gap Analysis tool to identify standards that were not mastered before or during the school closure the previous year.
- Facilitate teacher collaboration around consistency and alignment in grading schedules and remain student-centered.

- Ensure all assessments are aligned to and meet the level of rigor of the standard.
- **Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Support Considerations**
  - Review and update Positive Behavioral Intervention & Support to include new expectations due to changes made in the school's on campus learning environment in response to COVID-19 or other identified needs within the school.
  - Review and/or create online learning expectations for students and staff. Refer to The Archdiocesan Remote Learning Policy (See <http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Remote-Learning-Policy-Revised-7-1-20.pdf> ).
  - Create/revise a plan of support and resources that are easily accessible in response to the social-emotional needs of students and staff.
  - Provide clear, intentional, and consistent communication to all stakeholders including all logistics for restarting in the fall, planning and actions that have/will take place around curriculum and instruction, that address specific needs due to school closure along with protocols and procedures for health and safety. Provide all stakeholders with the opportunity to ask clarifying questions as needed.
- **Technology Considerations**
  - Identify no more than two platform(s) that will be used as a Learning Management System for grade bands (PreK-2, 3-5, and 6-8). Common and consistent learning platforms across a school reduces anxiety and stress for all stakeholders.
  - Identify a single video conferencing tool that should be used in Remote Learning for all grades PreK-8.
  - If possible, determine 1-1 student and teacher device plan that is viable for on campus and remote learning.
  - Create a technology training plan for staff, students, and parents.
  - Review building infrastructure and connectivity; consider the amount of bandwidth and access points in buildings needed for additional devices.
  - Identify what barriers exist for each student (internet access, physical disabilities, parental support, etc.) when planning for technology integration into instruction.
  - Identify program specific technology needs that will enhance and strengthen instruction and assessment for students during on campus and remote learning.
  - Establish training and schedules for professional learning for remote learning/blended learning environments as well as other highlighted needs or other available data.
- **"Specialists" Considerations**
  - Create a model for schedules limiting individual student exposure to multiple groups of students. Whenever possible, students should remain in the same classroom with the same group of students for all core and related arts subjects.
  - Enrichment and intervention opportunities should not be eliminated if there is adequate space on the school campus for the specialist to meet smaller groups of students following health and safety guidelines.

- When planning for departmentalized or related arts instruction, (i.e. arts, music and physical education) teachers should move to the students' classrooms. The specialist should maintain social distancing of at least six feet from students.
- Relocate related arts classes outside, whenever possible to give the students a fresh environment and allow for increased movement.
- Evaluate the current delivery of instruction model your school follows for students on accommodation plans or ISP/IEP's. Change or modify delivery of instruction following health and safety guidelines, in consultation with the student, his/her parents/guardians, and the local public school district.
- Establish training and a schedule for professional learning for teachers on remote learning/blended learning environments as well as other highlighted needs from your school's OCSAA plan and available student data.

### **OPERATE – Considerations**

- Schools should be prepared to be fluid and responsive to the needs of their school community.
- Schools should operate responsibly by abiding and implementing mandates and procedures outlined by governing agencies. This would include considerations needed for transporting students to and from school.
- Create an arrival and dismissal plan to ensure adherence to health and safety guidelines.
- Assign staff to assist with new school protocols including "daily health assessment".
- Assign classes/grades/cohorts to follow specific routes when travelling through the school building.
- All stakeholders operating within the school community share a commitment to frequent and effective communication.
- Education and training for all employees is essential. Such training must include how to properly put on, use, take off and dispose of personal protective equipment; appropriate handwashing; physical distancing; use of face masks, in line with requirements; identifying symptoms; staying home when sick; and strategies to reinforce these concepts with students and parents. Adequate education must be provided for all school personnel to know and recognize the most likely symptoms of COVID-19 and how to protect employees and students from infection. The Ohio Department of Education, in partnership with the Ohio Department of Health and other health professionals, will make available general training resources for use by school personnel, including resources about COVID-19 infection control strategies and related school policies and procedures.

### **RESOURCES:**

Ohio Department of Education – Reset and Restart Guide

<http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Reset-and-Restart/Reset-Restart-Guide.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US>

COVID – 19 Health and Prevention Guidance for Ohio K-12 Schools

<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/responsible/schools/K-12-Schools-Guidance.pdf>

Ohio Department of Education – Planning for Blended or Remote Learning

<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Reset-and-Restart/Blended-and-Remote-Learning-Comparison>