



St. Helen Catholic School

2020-2021

Revised 08.011.2020

Welcome Back Plan



“Let the little children come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”

Matthew 19:14

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Overview

Our plan is to bring our Lions safely back to campus for regular day/time school days based on the latest policies and guidance provided from the Diocese of Austin Office of Catholic Schools, the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops Education Department (TCCB ED), the Texas Education Agency (TEA), the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the American Academy of Pediatrics, and local, county, and state governmental entities. ***Please keep in mind the plan is subject to change and will be amended as needed or required by the circumstances and latest directives.***

There are many moving parts in this crazy time, but my promise is to work from a place of faith, work from facts, and always work to make the best decision possible based on the circumstances at the time.

As always, my primary focus is on our children. May we all continue to pray and work together for the good of the young ones God has entrusted to our care.

Jesus, we trust in You!

Campus Closures

TEA's comprehensive guidelines for a safe return to in-person instruction for the 2020-2021 school year states: "There will almost certainly be situations that necessitate temporary school closure due to positive COVID-19 cases in schools. Parents, educators, and school administrators should be prepared for this in the event that it occurs, while actively working to prevent it through prevention and mitigation practices."

Each case will be handled individually due to the fact that there are so many factors involved. SHCS will work with the Office of Catholic Schools and the local health officials to make decisions about class, level, or school closures. Our plan is to use the make-up days in our calendar OR Remote Synchronous Instruction in these cases.

Safety Protocols

Daily Screenings

Parents will self-screen their child(ren) before coming on campus. Teachers and Staff will self-screen before coming on campus.

Self-screening questions:

- Have you or anyone in your household tested positive for COVID-19? How recently?
- Have you had known contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19? How recently?

Symptoms:

Have you recently begun experiencing any of the following in a way that is not normal for them?

- Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 °F
- Loss of taste or smell
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Shortness of breath
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Chills
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Shaking or exaggerated shivering
- Significant muscle pain or ache
- Diarrhea
- Nausea or vomiting

Safety Protocols (cont.)

Staff Training

All teachers and staff will receive training on COVID-19 protocols and specific practices for our school prior to the start of school and stay in constant communication to revise/improve when necessary.

Student Training

- Students will receive age appropriate instruction on hygiene practices (hand washing, use of sanitizer, covering sneezes, coughs, yawns) with reminders throughout the year.
- Each teacher will teach proper handwashing skills to students.
- Each class will have scheduled handwashing times throughout the day..
- Hand sanitizer will be used in all classrooms.

Face Coverings

- Face masks or face shields are required for adults and students in Grades 1 – 8 and encouraged for students in PK & Kinder when entering the building, exiting the building, and during travel times (ex: class transitions, restroom use, etc. when physical distancing may not be possible). In class, mask requirements will be in place at times when physical distance cannot be maintained.
- The school will have masks on hand in the event that a student forgets to bring theirs from home or misplaces theirs during the day.
- Parents are asked to make their child's(ren's) mask/face shield individual and unique. The design should be comfortable, appropriate, and allow for the student's personal style.
- To mitigate the spread of germs, masks/shields should be laundered or cleaned daily.

Visitors

- SHCS will limit school visits to only those essential for school operations.
- Parents or other adults will not be permitted to come on campus during the school day for reasons other than picking up their child for an appointment, dropping off or picking up medication, or attending a pre-arranged meeting with Faculty/Staff.
- Substitute teacher needs will be filled from within current staff rather than pulling subs from the current sub list.

Cleaning & Disinfecting

The entire SHCS campus was deep cleaned in the spring when the school building was closed for classes. An additional layer of disinfecting and protection was added by employing Capitol City Janitorial, Inc. to fog the school with an EPA approved disinfectant along with RAZOR Antimicrobial Coating which helps protect against cross contamination for up to 90 days.

St. Helen Parish has purchased the system used for such cleaning. The school campus will be fogged on August 8, 2020 and again every two months.

Bringing Students Back to Campus

Student Well-Being

We anticipate our students will experience some level of apprehension or anxiety as we return to school. We are committed to creating an environment that will address the needs of students' physical, emotional, and mental safety.

We ask parents to make time to discuss returning to school with you children. Giving children the opportunity to voice their concerns and discussing them will help set them at ease. We encourage families to make this a daily practice.

We will monitor and respond to signs of stress while students are in our care and work in partnership with parents to help our children feel safe and loved.

Morning Carline

- 7:30 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.
- Morning drop-off will run as usual with the exception of ALL students being dropped off through the line – parents will not be allowed to exit their cars
- Students will be instructed to proceed to their classrooms with physical distancing in place.

Dismissal Carline

- ALL students and staff will sanitize hands before exiting the classroom.
- ALL dismissal will be conducted through the side doors of the Gym which open to the driving loop around our campus.
- Parents will enter off of Hwy 29 by the Parish/School sign to line up and exit by passing in front of the SRAC and heading off campus back onto Hwy 29 (a map will be sent).
- Students will be assembled in the Gym separated by their cohorts. The large space will allow for proper distancing between cohorts and all students and staff will be wearing face masks or shields.
- Loading will be done at both doors (6 – 8 cars at a time).
- Please be patient with this change to dismissal procedure. It will take time for us all to adjust and get things running smoothly.

Student Cohorts (groups)

- Students will largely function throughout the school day in consistent groups. This will minimize the number of students each child comes into contact with during the course of the day.
- The groups are: PK & K, 1 & 2, 3-4-5, 6-7-8.

Mass

- Students in PK – 2 will be participating in our Friday school Mass via live-stream while remaining in their classrooms.
- Students in Grades 3 – 8 will be attending the Friday school Mass while observing all safety procedures in place for both the school and the parish.
- Until further notice, school Masses will not be open to parents or the public.

Bringing Students Back (cont.)

Classrooms – Homeroom & Elective

- Students will wash their hands upon entering the classroom each morning and before they leave each afternoon. In addition to other handwashing/hand-sanitizing times.
- Social distancing will be practiced, where feasible without disrupting the educational experience. Desks will be spaced 3-6 feet apart as space allows in classrooms.
- Student's belongings will be stored separately.
- Students will use their own supplies in place of shared supplies/materials.
- Equipment will be sanitized between classes if being used by more than one class – every effort will be made to use different equipment for each class and sanitize at the end of each day.
- The number of different teacher(s) and educational assistant(s) that interact with groups of students throughout the day will be kept as minimal as possible.
- During group activities where social distancing is at a minimum, face shields and masks will be worn.
- Frequent cleaning practices, including the opportunity for children to clean their own spaces before and after they are used, in ways that are developmentally appropriate, will occur throughout the day.
- Desks, doorknobs, and other non-porous surfaces will be disinfected frequently throughout each day.
- Students may remove masks once they are arranged in positions that allow them to maintain safe distancing.

Hallways

Procedures are being established by Faculty/Staff at each level to ensure movement between classes and other travel times happen with all safety precautions in place.

Lunch/Snacks

- Hands will be washed/sanitized before and after eating.
- Students in PK – 5 will eat lunch in their classrooms or outside (if weather permits).
- Students in Grades 6 – 8 will eat lunch in the cafeteria.
- Tables and desks will be sanitized before and after eating.
- At this time, visitors cannot join students for lunch.
- Students must bring their own individually packaged snack each day.
- Students will not be permitted to share food.
- Students may bring their lunch from home. Our lunch program may be an option if enough students are interested.
- Water fountains will be used by students to fill their own water bottles. Drinking from our water fountains will not be allowed. Bids are being researched to bring bottle filling stations onto campus.
- No communal snacks/treats are allowed including those in celebration of student birthdays.

Bringing Students Back (cont.)

Recess

- Students in PK – 2 will utilize the playground and the Gym on an alternating schedule while remaining with their group (PK & K, 1 & 2).
- Students in Grades 3 – 5 will have recess together (their cohort).
- Students in Grades 6 – 8 will have brain break together (their cohort).

After-school Care

- ASC will operate as usual with ALL safety procedures in place.
- Students will occupy the cafeteria and the Library to allow for physical distancing between students and cohorts.
- All students will continue to be picked-up through the doors of Frizelle Hall.

Library

- The library will be open. When books are returned, they will be handled with gloves, disinfected, and held for 72 hours before being re-shelved for checkout. Students will wear their face coverings while choosing books

Extra-Curricular and Other Activities

- Sports
Practices begin August 31, 2020
Games begin September 14, 2020
- NJHS – meeting as usual with all safety procedures in place
- Study Hall – not operating at this time
- Choir – not operating at this time
- PSIA – not operating at this time
- Adoration Group – not operating at this time

Illness Protocol

Individuals Confirmed or Suspected with COVID-19

Any individuals who **themselves** either: (a) are lab-confirmed to have COVID-19; or (b) experience the symptoms of COVID-19 (listed below) must stay at home throughout the infection period, and cannot return to campus until the school system screens the individual to determine any of the below conditions for campus re-entry have been met:

- In the case of an individual who was diagnosed with COVID-19, the individual may return to school when all three of the following criteria are met:
 - 1) at least one day (24 hours) has passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications)
 - 2) the individual has improvement in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath; and
 - 3) at least ten days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
- In the case of an individual who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and who is not evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, such individual is assumed to have COVID-19, and the individual may not return to the campus until the individual has completed the same three-step set of criteria listed above.
- If the individual has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to school before completing the above stay at home period, the individual must either (a) obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis or (b) obtain an acute infection test at an approved testing location (<https://tdem.texas.gov/covid-19/>) that comes back negative for COVID-19.

Identifying Possible COVID-19 Cases on Campus

- SHCS will immediately separate any student who shows COVID-19 symptoms while at school and clean the areas used by the individual (student, teacher, or staff) as soon as is feasible.
- Employees or students who report feeling feverish should be given an immediate temperature check to determine if they are symptomatic for COVID-19. Any employee or student should be sent home if becomes ill at school based on the following criteria:
 - *Symptoms of COVID that are not normal for the individual
 - *Any temperature of 100°F or higher
 - *If temperature is 99.0 - 99.9°F, recheck temperature in 30 minutes and continue to check the temperature throughout the day. If temperature increases, send employee or student home.

Actions if Individuals with Lab-Confirmed Cases Have Been in the School

- If an individual who has been in the school is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19, SHCS will notify the Office of Catholic Schools and the local health department, in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations.
- SHCS will close off areas that are heavily used by the individual with the lab-confirmed case (student, teacher, or staff) until the non-porous surfaces in those areas can be disinfected, unless more than 7 days have already passed since that person was on campus.
- Consistent with school notification requirements for other communicable diseases, and consistent with legal confidentiality requirements, SHCS will notify all teachers, staff, and families of all students if a lab-confirmed COVID-19 case is identified among students, teachers or staff who participate in any on campus activities.

Resources

Point of Contact - Mary Kay Sims - mksims@shcslions.org - 512-868-0744

From TEA (July 28, 2020)

Public Health Considerations

The virus that causes COVID-19 can infect people of all ages, and school system leaders should do everything feasible to keep students, teachers, staff, and our communities safe. That said, research from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), among others, has found that while children do get infected by COVID-19 and some severe outcomes have been reported in children, relatively few children with COVID-19 are hospitalized or have severe symptoms. Furthermore, the American Academy of Pediatrics notes that COVID-19 risks must be balanced with the need for children to attend school in person, given that lack of physical access to school leads to a number of negative consequences, placing “children and adolescents at considerable risk of morbidity, and in some cases, mortality.

From The Center for Disease Control (July 23, 2020)

COVID-19 and Children

The best available evidence indicates that COVID-19 poses relatively low risks to school-aged children. Children appear to be at lower risk for contracting COVID-19 compared to adults. To put this in perspective, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as of July 17, 2020, the United States reported that children and adolescents under 18 years old account for under 7 percent of COVID-19 cases and less than 0.1 percent of COVID-19-related deaths. Although relatively rare, flu-related deaths in children occur every year. From 2004-2005 to 2018-2019, flu-related deaths in children reported to CDC during regular flu seasons ranged from 37 to 187 deaths. During the H1N1 pandemic (April 15, 2009 to October 2, 2010), 358 pediatric deaths were reported to CDC. So far in this pandemic, deaths of children are less than in each of the last five flu seasons, with only 64. Additionally, some children with certain underlying medical conditions, however, are at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

Scientific studies suggest that COVID-19 transmission among children in schools may be low. International studies that have assessed how readily COVID-19 spreads in schools also reveal low rates of transmission when community transmission is low. Based on current data, the rate of infection among younger school children, and from students to teachers, has been low, especially if proper precautions are followed. There have also been few reports of children being the primary source of COVID-19 transmission among family members. This is consistent with data from both virus and antibody testing, suggesting that children are not the primary drivers of COVID-19 spread in schools or in the community. No studies are conclusive, but the available evidence provides reason to believe that in-person schooling is in the best interest of students, particularly in the context of appropriate mitigation measures similar to those implemented at essential workplaces.