



August 8, 2020

Dear Families,

Saint Joseph School continues to prepare for the reopening of school in September. Our reopening plan is articulated below but subject to adjustment depending upon the state of the pandemic, CDC guidelines and the NJ Governor's and Archdiocese directives. During the initial weeks of school the teachers will reinforce and practice health and safety routines because the health, safety and emotional well-being of all are our priority while we continue to deliver a world-class Catholic education.

**OVERVIEW:** The SJS reopening plan is as follows:

- The school calendar is available on the school website: [sjsusa.org](http://sjsusa.org). School will begin September 8, 2020. The August packet will be prepared and ready for pick-up by the last week of August.
- SJS will offer 5 traditional full days of in-person instruction on campus. Families who wish to utilize remote learning may do so but must sign-up for the entire trimester; the registration form will be in the August packet. Families may adjust the decision each trimester. Trimester dates are:
  - September 8 - November 25
  - December 1 - March 5, 2021
  - March 8 - June 11 (approximately)
- We are working to secure the cameras necessary to enable live stream instruction. Due to an equipment shortage and because of high demand, if necessary, teachers will utilize the same technology and instructional strategies that were in place during the first remote learning period.
- Before Care will operate as usual and doors will open at 7:15 am daily. Families will be billed the routine fee of \$4.00 per child on a monthly basis.
- After Care will be limited to 25 students per day to permit social distancing. The program will operate on a first come/first reserved seat basis to ensure we can accommodate social distancing and everyone's safety. After Care rates *may* be adjusted to ensure the school can cover its costs of providing this service and we will examine how to best provide this service on a first come/first serve daily basis or committed reservation. Please look for a flyer in the August packet. If necessary, After Care may move to the cafeteria to permit social distancing.
- The PTO will continue to offer special events for students during school hours; calendar dates have been reserved for Halloween Trunk or Treat, Veteran's Day Breakfast, etc. The PTO will continue to offer the Pizza Lunches; look for this form in the August packet. Students must be signed up at the beginning of the school year prior to the pizza lunch dates.
- After School Clubs are "on hold," as are field trips and assembly programs.
- In-person PTO fall fundraising and volunteering in the building is "on hold."
- School fire/safety drills will be tabletop exercises to begin the school year; we are required to hold a drill within the first 15 days of school opening.
- We encourage students to bring refillable water bottles; fountains are closed but our refillable water stations are operational.
- Each student will need a yoga mat for Physical Education class. The yoga mat will be taken home each day for cleaning.

## HEALTH and SAFETY:

- We recommend that parents take the student temperature before leaving home for the SJS campus. We will rely upon families to keep students who exhibit symptoms at home for their safety and that of everyone else on campus. Temperatures will also be taken at the school.
- Anyone with symptoms and/or a temperature will not be permitted to attend classes; parents will be notified to pick-up their child. Students may return to school after at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared and having tested negative for the virus twice in a row with tests occurring at least 24 hours apart.
- Students or staff who test positive for COVID-19 and are asymptomatic must wait at least 10 days since the first positive test before a return to campus. Proof of a negative test is required for return.
- Bathroom use will be monitored and controlled to ensure the safety of students; stalls will be restricted. Everyone will assist students to develop a protocol of hand sanitizing before entering the facility, and hand washing with soap and water after use.
- Parents may *not* accompany their children into the school per the CDC and NJDOE guidelines that require schools to limit visitors.
- Per the NJ Governor's recent ruling, and RCAN policy, facial masks must be worn by all students; teachers will provide students with breaks from wearing the masks as necessary.
- The School Nurse's office is equipped with personal protection equipment. Face masks will be available, if needed, throughout the day/week. Parents must provide their student(s) with face masks for personal comfort; disposable masks are fine but must be discarded at the end of the school day. If you opt for disposable masks please send extras to school with your child. If you select to use reusable masks they should be cleaned daily and student's should have at least one extra clean mask in the backpack. Face shields cannot be worn by students. Teachers may use face shields when necessary for instruction.
- Every classroom will be equipped with hand sanitizer, and a hospital-grade spray bottle of cleaner to use throughout the day.
- There will be periodic sanitizing of frequent use spaces throughout the day and the building will be deep cleaned one time per week after school hours.
- A UV Light cart has been purchased to assist cleaning and sanitizing efforts.
- Sneeze guards are installed in both school offices.
- Wall "foam" hand sanitizers are installed throughout both buildings.
- The Lower School teacher lounge has been converted to an isolation room for use as necessary.
- Water refill stations are operational but water fountains are not in use. We recommend students bring a refillable water bottle to school.
- Instructional posters are mounted throughout the school to reinforce personal safety, and good hygiene.

## CONTACT TRACING:

- With guidance from the BCDOH and NJDOH the school nurse will complete forms supplied by the Bergen County Department of Health Services should we have a need or a suspected (+) COVID case in the school setting. The school is required to report any suspect/(+) COVID cases to Bergen County Department of Health Services Communicable Disease Division, in addition to, the local department where the student/staff member resides. The reports must be via person to person contact; emails are acceptable.

## INSTRUCTION and DAILY OPERATIONS:

- Morning meetings will take place in the classrooms and via the public address system until further notice. We will develop a plan for First Friday Masses to enable all to participate, whether in person and/or with zoom meetings.
- Grade 8 students and families can rest easy that there will **not** be an HSPT assessment this year. The Office of the Superintendent of Schools, with input from high school administrators and directors of admissions, has decided that the HSPT will not be administered as part of the Cooperative Admissions Program of the Catholic High Schools of the Archdiocese. High Schools will use *other sources* of information, including the Ninth Grade Applicant Record, to guide their admissions decisions.
- The school day begins at 7:50 am and ends at 3 pm. Students will enter the school at various doorways to permit social distancing. Parents may not enter the building with their child.
- Prekindergarten 3, 4 and Kindergarten students will enter their classrooms directly where the teacher, or assistant, will greet them and take the temperature with a no-touch thermometer.
- Grades 1 and 2 will enter school via the front doorways where an administrator, or designee, will greet them and take the temperature with a no-touch thermometer. Students will report directly to their grade classroom where the teacher will greet them.
- Grades 3 and 4 students will enter school via the playground side doors where the School nurse or designee will greet them and take the temperature with a no-touch thermometer. Students will report directly to their grade classroom where the teacher will greet them.
- Grades 5 and 6 will enter the Upper School via the front doorway where an administrator, or designee, will greet them and take the temperature. Students will report directly to the classroom where a teacher will greet them. These grades will store personal belongings in the homeroom classroom; lockers will be assigned at a later date in the school year.
- Grades 7 and 8 will enter the school from the back doorway on Harrison Avenue where they will be greeted and the temperature taken with a no-touch thermometer. Students will be directed to report directly to the homeroom classroom.
- The Upper School bell schedule was adapted to permit cohorting students and as a result grades 6 through 8 will have one study hall period per day.
- The Upper School grades 6 through 8 have been divided into two sections (cohorts) to decrease class size and permit social distancing in the classroom. They will remain in cohorts for the majority of their instruction in core subjects and electives, except for World Language Spanish, and one period of Library/Research.
- World Language and the Library/Research period for grades 6 through 8 will be taught as a whole in the Upper School computer lab which has been adapted to accommodate the large class size. The classes may also utilize the US cafeteria if desirable/necessary; there will be foot traffic in the building for these classes.
- Grades 7 & 8 students will be assigned lockers at the start of the year. Grades 5 & 6 will store personal items in the classroom closets until further notice.
- Elective class teachers will travel to the classrooms to provide lessons. We will, however, permit some foot traffic to minimize the single setting classroom experience for students/teachers.
- The newly established Fundamental Music Instruction program will continue to be offered; in-person, hybrid (remote and in-person), remote: synchronous or remote: asynchronous. In-person class sizes will be limited to 3 students at a time. For more detail, and to register for instruction, please visit: [fundamentalmusicinstruction.com](https://www.fundamentalmusicinstruction.com).

- Both school buildings have large outside areas. Recess will follow social distancing guidelines.
- Lunch periods will be staggered in the cafeterias, classrooms, and outdoors. Families are encouraged to brown bag snacks and lunch; **no** outside lunches may be delivered to students.
- The school lunch service, Lisa's Kitchen, will provide meals according to CDC and NJDOH guidelines.
- Teachers will take advantage of the outdoors for instruction/recess when feasible.
- If the playground equipment is used the teacher will bring the hospital-grade spray sanitizer outdoors and spray the equipment after use. Students will sanitize hands prior to play on the equipment. Only one group at a time will be permitted to use playground equipment.
- Teachers will continue to deliver high quality instruction and adhere to the Archdiocese/NJSS.
- Special Service staff will be on campus to work with teachers and students providing services and academic/emotional/social support.

We will continue to pray, and use our creativity to move forward, during this time of uncertainty. Let me say now how much I appreciate the support of the school community. Thank you for your continued confidence in our team. We promise to do our very best to meet the needs of all learners during this uncertain time.

Let's continue to partner together for the benefit of SJS students!

- Talk with your children about COVID-19 and its transmission and ways to protect oneself; helpful information is posted to the SJS website to assist you,
- Teach by example: wear a face mask, use hand sanitizer, wash hands thoroughly,
- Limit participation in group gatherings, but if you do gather; demonstrate social distancing while still enjoying activities,
- Inform the school nurse/administrator if you, or a member of your family, comes into contact with anyone who has been exposed to, or tested positive, for COVID-19 to enable us to take action to limit spread,
- Use this summertime to find joy in the simple pleasures of life,
- Let us all pray that a vaccine and/or treatment plan will be developed soon!

May God keep you safe and healthy. Please know that we will make every effort to keep you informed as we progress through the summer months.

Sincerely,

Dr. Paula Valenti  
Principal

C: Monsignor Hubba, Pastor  
Father Anthony Di Stefano, School Liaison  
Mrs. Karen Miro-Drew, Assistant Superintendent, BC  
Teachers/Staff