

Saint Mary Magdalene Catholic School

COVID-19 Handbook



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As we welcome back our students, faculty, and families for the start of the 2021-22 school year, we are pleased to present this information on how we plan to safely operate our school under the guidelines given to us by the State of North Carolina and Catholic Schools Offices of the Diocese of Raleigh. This document reflects our best knowledge at the time of writing and will be continually updated to incorporate new learnings as they surface.

Our main goal remains to keep all students, faculty, and families safe during this pandemic impacting our society. While I recognize this is not the “return to normalcy” we had all hoped for as we began this school year, our school is committed to reconnecting our families and students in a safe way. Our team has worked very hard to find creative ways to pray, learn, and care on our campus, despite unusual circumstances.

Our school will fully operate under Plan A this school year. Last year, our school operated under Plan B, which included precautionary measures such as six-foot social distancing, masks at recess, not being able to change classrooms for classes (middle school), the pausing of before and after school care, limited capacity at Mass, and no athletics, clubs, and camps. This was a challenging time for our campus, which is such a vibrant, Catholic community.

Under Plan A, we will have restrictions, which are outlined in this plan. The protocols put in place in this plan are designed to keep all members of our community safe and healthy. As they always will be, our classrooms are designed to create safe spaces for our students to receive a quality, Catholic education. This will not change.



We encourage you to familiarize yourself with this updated plan for St. Mary Magdalene Catholic School. Should you have any questions, please contact the school offices. We are looking forward to a great school year ahead.

Covid-19 Health and Safety Management

StMM Catholic School is committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment for our families and employees. StMM Catholic School is aware of the current risks associated with potential exposure of staff and students to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (and variants of SARS-CoV-2) and is committed to working within guidelines set forth by the Diocese of Raleigh, state, and local health officials and in cooperation with faculty, parents, students, and physicians to minimize the risk of exposure and/or spread of the disease. The health and safety of our students, staff, and community are a top priority. We urge any student, staff member or visitor who is not feeling well to please stay home.

St. Mary Magdalene Catholic School has a plan for transitioning to distance learning strategies in the event of a natural disaster, disease outbreak or any other circumstances that make it unsafe or imprudent to continue on-campus education. The judgment of the school administration, in consultation with their pastor (where applicable), and in conjunction with the Office of Education of the Catholic Diocese of Raleigh, will determine when the change to the school's normal instructional model warrants the transition to distance learning. The strategies used for distance learning will be developed by the school administration and faculty.

In the case of a public health crisis/pandemic situation, guidance from public health experts (i.e. NCDHHS) shall be incorporated into the school plan for prudent precautions for student/faculty health. This plan may be modified as necessary and:

1. School retains the right to implement any such changes, whether prior to and/or during the Academic Year, in its sole discretion
2. No adjustments can be made with regard to the student attending virtual/in-person outside of the School's policies; and
3. No adjustment will be made to the current school year's tuition charges in response to such changes.

Additionally, students will be required to comply with School's health and safety protocols as described in the school's policies, protocols, and procedures to limit the spread of COVID-19 and failure to comply with such protocols may result in the immediate removal of the child from campus.

Parents accept and assume all risks of returning their child to school.

Coronavirus Disease 2019

A newly identified coronavirus, SARS CoV-2, has caused a worldwide pandemic of respiratory illness, called COVID-19. People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus.

People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

Symptoms Include

- Fever (100.4 or above) or chills
- Cough
- Congestion or runny nose
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- New onset of severe headache, especially with a fever
- New loss of taste or smell
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Sore throat
- Diarrhea or vomiting

This list is not all possible [Symptoms of COVID-19](#). Children, adolescents, and adults with the virus that causes COVID-19 may experience any, all, or none of these symptoms.

COVID-19 Vaccine- Immunization against COVID-19 is one of the best measures available to protect people from COVID-19 illness. Even when more staff and students are vaccinated, schools must continue prevention measures, especially as vaccines are not yet authorized for children under the age of 12.

How Covid-19 Spreads

Person-to-person spread

The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person

- Any scenario in which many people gather poses a risk for COVID-19 transmission.
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks.
- These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
- COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms.
- [Children and Adolescents](#) can also transmit SARS-CoV-2 infection to others.

It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes. This is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads, but we are still learning more about how this virus spreads. This is why personal prevention practices (such as wearing face coverings, maintaining physical distance, handwashing and staying home when you are sick) and environmental cleaning and disinfection are important practices.



What Does In-Person Learning Look Like?

We are excited to welcome our Monarchs back on campus for this school year!

- All students (unless exception as above) must wear face coverings brought from home.
- Students will maintain a minimum of three (3) feet of distance between PreK-8 students to the greatest extent possible without excluding students from full-time, in-person learning. Desks can be placed safely with 3 feet of distance at all angles for students with an allowance for the teachers to stand in front for instruction.
- Have desks facing forward 3 feet apart as feasible.
- Students should bring minimal items to school, keeping a backpack and coat in their lockers. While students will be permitted to have lockers this year, there will be assigned times for students to visit their lockers to minimize the number of students at one time. Students should not congregate around their lockers.
- Specials classes will take place in the specialist classroom. Example, physical education in the gym, Art in the Art Room, etc.
- Janitorial staff will continue to clean classrooms per our protocols.

Lunch

Lunch will be brought to classrooms, delivered to the rooms by cafeteria staff in disposable packaging. Students will eat in their classrooms or outside should classes elect to do so, weather permitting.

St. Mary Magdalene remains a peanut/tree nut free campus.

Other Classroom Safety Measures StMM will be following:

Classrooms will incorporate frequent handwashing and sanitation breaks into daily activity. Students and staff should wash hands before and after eating, after using the toilet, anytime they sneeze, cough, or blow their nose, after touching objects which have been handled by other individuals, after putting on and before taking off face coverings, frequently throughout the day, and whenever soiling occurs (after recess).

Upon arrival into the building each day, students should use hand sanitizer.

Faculty will monitor hallways during arrival and dismissal to discourage congregating and ensure students go straight from a vehicle to their classrooms and vice-versa.

Symptom Screening

Parents are responsible for ongoing monitoring for symptoms of COVID-19 and other illnesses, following typical school policies and keeping their children home when ill. It is the responsibility of parents to notify the school nurse of a potential COVID-19 illness in an effort to help StMM prevent further spread within the school.

Faculty and students must disclose and stay at home/go home if:

- They have tested positive for COVID-19, until they meet criteria for return.
- They have recently had close contact with a person with COVID-19, until they meet criteria for return.
- They are showing COVID-19 symptoms, until they meet criteria for return.

Parent Volunteers/Visitors

We are happy to welcome parent volunteers back to our campus in a limited capacity. This would include helping in the main office or with outdoor activities and events during the school day. Parents who are volunteering are required to follow the same guidelines of all faculty and

students. This includes wearing a mask at all times while in the building. If a parent has any symptoms of Covid-19, they should reschedule their volunteer day.

School Mass

As a Catholic school, Mass attendance is an important component of our week. Students in grades K-4 will attend Mass on Wednesday at 9:00 am. Students in grades 5-8 will attend Mass on Thursday at 9:00 am. Students will remain three-feet apart while in the church with face coverings.

On school Mass days, students may sit with parents in a reserved section of the church. When parents and students attend Mass together, they must both wear masks and safely distance themselves from other families/parishioners to the best of their ability.

Remote Learning Option for 2021-22 School Year

High-risk students or student's with family members at risk may need remote learning. For the 2021-22 school year, our school will be partnering with the Diocese of Raleigh to offer a remote learning environment for students who choose this option. The Diocese of Raleigh's Office of Education is offering a full remote learning opportunity for the next school year. This virtual school will be its own school, and should you choose to enroll in this program, your enrollment in Saint Mary Magdalene Catholic School will end. You will be unable to participate in any extracurricular activities or programming.

StMM will only provide a remote-learning option for students who are quarantined as a result of a Covid-19 exposure or positive test. During this time, there will be no live instruction, unless the student reaches out to the teacher for assistance, which can be set up during a WebEx video call. Students who are in Covid-19 related quarantine must login to their Google Classroom each day of their quarantine for assignments and classwork. In the event an entire grade level or class is forced to quarantine, teachers will provide limited core direct remote instruction for that class period or grade level. There will be no specials during a quarantine period.

Face Coverings

Per the recommendation from the North Carolina Toolkit and Diocese of Raleigh Catholic Schools Office Reopening Plans, all children and faculty are required to wear cloth face coverings consistently when indoors (regardless of vaccination status). The coverings must cover both the nose and mouth.

[NCDHHS Face Coverings and Masks Mandates](#)

Face coverings are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected but does not have symptoms. **Face coverings should be worn by all workers, faculty, guests, other adults and children.** Face coverings should be worn when indoors, at all times, unless an exception applies:

- A medical or behavioral condition or disability and cannot wear a face covering
- Is under two (2) years of age
- Actively eating or drinking
- Strenuously exercising
- Is seeking to communicate with someone who is hearing-impaired in a way that requires the mouth to be visible
- In PreK students, when they are napping

Students and faculty may remove face coverings during the following times:

- Eating lunch
- Outdoor recess
- Classes being held outdoors
- During faculty-led mask breaks

It is strongly recommended that all individuals (vaccinated and unvaccinated) wear face coverings in crowded, dense outdoor areas and in outdoor situations in which social distancing is difficult or not possible.

[Strategies to assist children with becoming comfortable wearing face coverings.](#)

[How to Use A Cloth Mask- video by StMM Fritz Family](#)

Wash face covering frequently, ideally after each use, but must be washed if it becomes wet or soiled from sputum with coughing, talking, etc., otherwise daily. Launder with detergent in hot water and dried on a hot cycle. If you must wear it before laundering, wash your hands immediately after putting the mask back on. Avoid touching your face.

Discard face coverings that no longer:

- Cover the nose and mouth
- Have stretched on the face
- Cannot stay on the face
- Have holes or tears in the fabric

How to safely wear and take off face coverings:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/cloth-face-covering.pdf>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

Communicable Disease Monitoring

St. Mary Magdalene Catholic School will follow the guidelines from the NCDHHS StongSchoolsNC toolkit and guidance from the Wake County Health Department for all possible, suspected, presumptive, or confirmed cases of COVID-19.

Parents should report all absences to the school office, school nurse, teacher, or enter absences via PikMyKid app. Parents that do not call in a child's absence will be contacted by a designated staff member. StMM will track absences for Covid like symptoms.

Confirmed Cases of COVID-19

Please inform the school nurse if your child (or if you're an employee) has tested positive for COVID-19, have recently had close contact with a person with COVID-19, or are experiencing any of the following symptoms: fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat or gastrointestinal symptoms or other known symptoms of COVID-19.

We will notify parents via email and text when the school is notified that someone reported to have COVID-19 was in the school. For privacy reasons, the name(s) of those who have tested positive cannot be provided.

Even with thorough measures in place to reduce the spread of COVID-19 on our campus, everyone in the community could be exposed to the virus through everyday interactions with others on-campus or off-campus.

StMM is required to report confirmed cases of COVID-19 to Wake County Public Health and work with them for follow-up and contact tracing. If a person with COVID-19 was in StMM's facility while infectious, StMM will coordinate with local health officials to notify anyone who was in close contact with the infected person, while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with **FERPA**, **NCGS 130A-143**, and all other state and federal laws. Close contact is defined as being within 6 feet of someone confirmed to have COVID-19 for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more within two days of the infected person experiencing symptoms or testing positive.

Fully Vaccinated People with COVID-19 Symptoms

Although the risk that fully vaccinated people could become infected with COVID-19 is low, any fully vaccinated person who experiences [symptoms consistent with COVID-19](#) should [isolate themselves from others](#), be clinically evaluated for COVID-19, and tested for SARS-CoV-2 if indicated. The symptomatic fully vaccinated person should inform their healthcare provider of their vaccination status at the time of presentation to care.

Fully Vaccinated People with No COVID-like Symptoms Following an Exposure

Fully vaccinated people with no COVID-like symptoms do not need to [quarantine](#) or be tested following an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, as their risk of infection is low.

Fully vaccinated people who do not quarantine should still monitor for [symptoms of COVID-19](#) for 14 days following an exposure. If they experience symptoms, they should isolate themselves from others, be clinically evaluated for COVID-19, including SARS-CoV-2 testing, if indicated, and inform their health care provider of their vaccination status at the time of presentation to care.

Vaccine Information

[COVID-19 Vaccination Information](#)

[COVID-19 Vaccines for Teachers, School Staff, and Childcare Workers](#)

[Field Trips](#)

St. Mary Magdalene Catholic School will resume field trips beginning on January 1, 2022. While on school field trips, students will be required to wear masks while on the bus traveling to and from their destination. Every effort will be made to maintain three-foot social distancing while on the buses.

In order to attend an overnight field trip, the student must present one of the two scenarios listed:

- a. A fully vaccinated status two weeks prior to the date of the trip.
- b. A negative Covid-19 PCR test completed two days prior to the departure date of the trip.

Parents who wish to chaperone on a field trip are required to meet the same requirements as the students. The guidelines for safety illness protocols will be included with the permission form for each field trip.

Emotional Support for Our Students

We have a full time counselor on faculty who will be able to assist our students mentally and emotionally. We also look to the positive and upbeat attitude of our faculty to provide an atmosphere where children feel safe, loved and encouraged when returning to school. We encourage teachers to teach with the same enthusiasm and love that our families and students come to expect from StMM as we guide them through this different learning process.

[Wellness Resources](#)

[Talking with Children About Coronavirus](#)

[Helping Children Cope](#)

Parent and Student Responsibilities

- Students must stay at home if they are experiencing any symptoms associated with COVID-19 such as: fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, headache, new loss of taste or smell, diarrhea or vomiting, fatigue, muscle or body aches, congestion or runny nose, or other known symptoms of COVID-19.
- Parents must report all absences to the school by 9:00am. This information will be very important in helping the school track absenteeism patterns. If an absence is not reported a school staff member will follow up to obtain information about your child's absence and any symptoms they may be experiencing. Parents may report student absences using the PikMyKid App.
- Please be sure your child/children have a cloth face covering everyday. Having extra masks is wise if soiling occurs. [Wash Your Face Mask](#) often, especially if the mask(s) becomes soiled.
- Students should use the provided hand sanitizer when entering the building/classrooms.
- Students should minimize the items they bring to school bringing only necessary items.
- All student belongings should be labeled. We will not have a lost and found this year.
- Please send your child with a water bottle labeled with their name. The drinking fountains will be taped off but students can refill their water bottle using the touchless water bottle fountain.
- Once in the building the students must go straight to their classrooms after placing items in their lockers and avoid congregating in the hallways.
- Social distancing of three feet must be maintained whenever possible. Students will be reminded of this throughout the day. Please review often with your child/ren the importance of maintaining social distance between them and other students and staff.
- Parents must make sure that all contact information is correct in RenWeb with additional contacts (who can pick up your child if they are ill) in case parents can not be reached. Please make sure these additional contacts are local and available to pick up your child.

- Students must wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with warm water and soap, if their hands become soiled or after any of the following activities: using the restroom, blowing their nose, cleaning, eating, drinking, before and after touching high contact surfaces, and before putting on a mask. A great way to do this is to wash for an Our Father, rinse for a Hail Mary, and dry for a Glory Be prayer. Get your hands clean, as well as offer up a prayer at the same time!

[Coronavirus | How to wash your hands](#)

- If a sink and soap are not immediately available, students should use hand sanitizer which includes at least 60% alcohol content.

[How to Use Hand Sanitizer Effectively](#)

- Students should follow proper respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or using their elbow rather than their hands to cover the cough. Throw tissue in the trash and immediately follow with proper hand washing.

[Cover Your Coughs and Sneezes - Kids](#)

- Students should avoid touching their nose, eyes, and mouth. Students will be reminded of this frequently throughout the day but once again please review this often with your children.
- Students should avoid sharing equipment such as using friends' phones, computers, or other items, when possible. If necessary to share equipment, it should be sanitized before and after each use.
- Students should strive to maintain appropriate physical distance from each other and avoid any type of physical contact-- no hugs, handshakes, high fives, fist bumps, etc.
- Students should not share food, any cups or eating utensils. This is for allergy safety, as well as Covid-19 precautions.
- Students and parents should avoid congregating outside of school during drop-off and pick-up. We would ask for all parents to please use the carpool line for drop-off and pick-up this school year.

Travel Guidelines-

There are no travel restrictions in place for North Carolina, and visitors do not have to quarantine upon arrival. Domestic and international travelers to and from North Carolina are urged to follow [guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) as well as

recommendations from the U.S. Department of State and their airline or other travel company.

Domestic Travel During COVID-19

International Travel During COVID-19

After International Travel During COVID-19