

***Inaugural Opening &
COVID-19 Preparedness Plan***



SAINT PAUL
DIOCESAN JR/SR HIGH SCHOOL

2020 - 2021

Last spring, the Catholic schools of the Diocese of Worcester provided a robust and rigorous distance learning program to over 7,000 students in our diocesan schools. The circumstances that necessitated doing so were extraordinary. With little time to prepare, and little precedent to rely upon, Catholic educators brought forward their sense of mission, purpose, and adaptability in educating the young people entrusted to our care through distance learning.

Though our teachers became quickly versed in using distance learning in new and innovative ways, for them it is a second-best approach. The excitement of being and learning together, in-person, is a hallmark of Catholic education. It inspires all of us in Catholic education to reach higher, to go further, and to be the people God has called us to be. Our collective preference is for in-person instruction and faith formation. Public health experts and educators mutually agree on the holistic benefits of in-person education. Still, school communities across the Commonwealth also recognize that in-person learning may not always be feasible in the midst of COVID-19. So too does Saint Paul Diocesan Jr/Sr High School. Knowing that parents are the first and primary educators of their children and must make decisions based on their unique circumstances, this Preparedness Plan is intended to better inform and equip families as Saint Paul prepares for the start of the new school year. In planning for the 2020-2021 school year at Saint Paul, please know:

Saint Paul will begin a new school year.

Saint Paul administration, faculty, and staff welcome the opportunity to start our inaugural school year.

Our opening will center on safety and adaptability.

An on-campus experience is dependent upon two key factors: safety and adaptability. Saint Paul is committed to the health and safety of every student and faculty member. Saint Paul has implemented several facility and academic scheduling changes to accommodate Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) social distancing recommendations. We will conduct extended orientations for students and staff alike at the outset of the school year. We will educate on new school protocols based on DESE guidance for mitigating the risk of COVID transmission in a school setting. We will actively coordinate professional development training in the use and application of online resources and virtual learning technologies.

We will keep you informed.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made for an extraordinary time in history and in our lives. Saint Paul in conjunction with the Catholic Schools Office of Worcester regularly monitors policy guidelines and recommendations as issued from municipal and state agencies, including the Governor's Office. As Saint Paul adopts proactive measures in safeguarding the teaching and learning environment, we will disseminate updates via email and on the school's website www.saintpaulknights.org

A successful opening means we all need to work together.

Each of us must be ready and willing to create a campus culture of responsibility and cooperation. We have a mutual obligation to protect the health and safety of everyone in our immediate school community and the larger community in which we live. If our expectations are clear, and if we each do our part and exercise self-discipline, then we will be safer and stronger together.

Ever thankful of your support, I remain

Michael J. Clark
Head of School

For Saint Paul administration, teachers, and staff this has been an arduous summer of forecasting and planning, oftentimes trying to anticipate various possibilities amid unknown conditions. Key areas of focus have centered on:

- Academic scheduling
- Opening school calendar
- Applying social distancing guidelines to classrooms and common areas
- School health services, cleanliness, and personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Contact tracing
- Transportation
- Food services
- Enhancements to classroom technology
- Student support and activities

Academic scheduling

Pertaining to the 2020-2021 academic year, Saint Paul administration was requested to address three learning models: fully in-person, hybrid, and distance learning. In consideration of DESE guidelines pertaining to social distancing, the built environment of our brick and mortar facility, and our total school population, we find that a fully in-person learning model cannot be sustained while adhering to present DESE guidelines.

Given this conclusion, the Saint Paul administration recommends:

- Limiting the overall number of students in school to 50% total population
- Adopting a weekly teaching and learning schedule of a hybrid format
- Utilizing multiple learning modalities including *In-person Synchronous*, *Online Asynchronous*, and *Virtual Synchronous*
- Organizing the weekly schedule with (2) in-person, synchronous teacher/student sessions, (1) virtual teacher/student session, and (2) online asynchronous / independent student sessions
- Utilizing a dual cohort model with social distancing and capacity limits to facilitate in-person sessions
- Designing fully online course curricula accessible through one Learning Management System (LMS)

Utilizing a hybrid, dual cohort model at the outset of the school year:

- Provides for in-person teaching and learning while maintaining appropriate COVID social distancing guidelines within classrooms and common areas
- Establishes a well-defined and sustained consistency of student experience
- Allows for teachers and students alike to become more practiced and conversant in the use of online resources and course curriculum should circumstances necessitate a pivot to all virtual teaching and learning
- Acts to safeguard the school community from possible COVID transmission by employing a dual cohort model that minimizes in-school exposure risks
- Creates a “buffer zone” between in-person and online learning in case local public health officials should need to conduct contact tracing within a cohort
- Allows for the proper sanitizing of the school building between cohorts

The chart below illustrates how a hybrid, dual cohort model would be scheduled at Saint Paul:

<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>
ALPHA Group In-Person Regular Day Schedule	ALPHA Group In-Person Regular Day Schedule	ALPHA & BRAVO Virtual & Synchronous Modified Day Schedule	BRAVO Group In-Person Regular Day Schedule	BRAVO Group In-Person Regular Day Schedule
BRAVO Group Independent & Asynchronous	BRAVO Group Independent & Asynchronous	Facility Cleaning	ALPHA Group Independent & Asynchronous	ALPHA Group Independent & Asynchronous

Opening school calendar

The following calendar of events has been adopted so to provide the necessary time to acclimate students and staff to this new school year:

- Faculty Orientation and Professional Development Monday 8/31 through Friday 9/4
- Grades 7 & 8 In-person Orientation Tuesday 9/8
- Grade 9 In-person Orientation Wednesday 9/9
- Grades 10 & 11 In-person Orientation Thursday 9/10
- Grade 12 In-Person Orientation Friday 9/11
- Start of classes Monday 9/14

Applying social distancing guidelines to classrooms and common areas

Life at Saint Paul will look decidedly different from the ordinary school year, and each of the following items will be required. Students will be assigned classroom seating at a minimum distance of 3 feet per DESE guidance. Whenever possible, it is recommended that persons maintain 6 feet of distance. School corridors and staircases will be marked with directional signage to encourage individuals to keep to one side to allow for greater social distancing between class periods and to allow for efficient single-file foot traffic. There will be extra time throughout the day for students to move from class to class so to alleviate hallway foot traffic. Classes will be dismissed by grade, and an end-of-school tiered dismissal schedule will be utilized.

A face covering is required to be worn at all times while on campus. We will also limit the number of non-essential persons (visitors, vendors, volunteers) in the school building, opting for video or teleconferencing as

the first and preferred means of communication in lieu of in-person meetings. Capacity limits will be placed on restrooms, office spaces, and common areas as need.

School health services, cleanliness, and personal protective equipment (PPE)

Given the multiple precautionary recommendations health authorities have made relative to school nursing, Saint Paul administration has determined that a triaged approach to student health services is most prudent. Two school nurses will staff the school this year, with each nurse assigned to a specific cohort. The Saint Paul health office (nurse's office) will be equipped to act as a COVID isolation office. Students with non-COVID and/or less serious medical needs will be addressed in a triaged fashion through the Main Office. In addition to ordinary health supplies, Saint Paul will have on-hand infrared thermometers, pulse oximeters, facemasks and other PPE as necessary.

Students, faculty, and staff will be required to conduct daily health screenings, and to report if they are feeling ill before arriving on campus. This reporting will be facilitated through the *LiveSafe* mobile app <https://www.livesafemobile.com/>

Since COVID-19 can mirror symptoms from common childhood illnesses such as bad colds, strep throat, flu, and other viruses, it is not possible for our school health office to confirm a diagnosis. Therefore, we strongly recommend that families refer to their primary care physician for advice, and adhere to any recommended public health measures.

Remember, please seek medical assistance if you are not feeling well and have COVID-like symptoms such as congestion/runny nose, headache, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, fever or chills, cough, difficulty breathing, fatigue, aches, loss of taste or smell, or a sore throat. Saint Paul will act under the direction of our school nurse(s) and follow the state's recommendations to send symptomatic children home immediately out of an abundance of caution. When in doubt, be safe and stay home!

Hand sanitizer will be readily available throughout Saint Paul. Disinfecting wipes will be available in every classroom to disinfect any high-touch surfaces or frequently used items. Unnecessary furniture, rugs, and items that cannot be easily sanitized will be removed from the school. Our custodial crew will clean more frequently and in accordance with industry recommended sanitizing protocols. Procurement and use of hydrostatic cleaning machine(s) to spray high-use areas with appropriate solution will occur as necessary. And, everyone is reminded to wash hands with soap and water frequently for a minimum of 20 seconds.

Contact tracing

Contact tracing will be a primary measure Saint Paul employs in minimizing any potential transmission. Students will be asked to identify their means of transportation to school, and students will be assigned seating each period of the school day. Saint Paul will work with vigilance to avoid a school closure by quickly assisting public health authorities in identifying community members who may have encountered a positive COVID case.

Transportation

Saint Paul will follow the Worcester Public Schools (WPS) district guidelines pertaining to the transportation of our Worcester student residents to Saint Paul. In the event WPS is unable to provide transportation, or Saint Paul is in session and WPS is not, families will need to make alternate plans for school transportation.

Related to transportation, Saint Paul is unable to provide school-based van transportation this academic year. MassDOT will not permit the school to use its two (15) passenger vans in transporting students on a regular / defined bus route. This prohibition is a statewide mandate effective October 1, 2020. School administration strongly suggests driving your student(s) to school as the best and safest means of transportation.

Food services

Due to several limitations, an in-person transaction food service is not possible to maintain under current COVID conditions. Students are advised to bring a packed lunch to school. Vending snacks and beverages will continue to be available.

Technology enhancements

Faculty, staff, and classrooms this fall will be equipped with the necessary technology to allow for instruction and seamless continuation of educational services. Several technological enhancements have been made to Saint Paul's overall technological infrastructure including:

- Adoption of a single Learning Management System (LMS)
- Assignment of LMS credentials to students and parents alike in remaining fully informed by accessing academic and student life information (homework assignments, posted grades, student absences, discipline notices, general school communications)
- Further expansion of wireless access throughout Saint Paul, particularly in the gymnasium, so to accommodate potential repurposed school space
- Acquisition of new 7th Generation Apple iPads mounted on tripods, equipped with optimized wide-angle lenses so that teachers may record lessons from their classrooms
- Fully outfitting a second computer lab with (30) brand new HP All-In-One desktops units in furnishing students with state-of-the-art equipment for in-school use
- Expansion of our Chromebook initiative to include (2) fully portable in-school mobile carts, each equipped with (30) new Chromebooks
- Providing each teacher with a school issued laptop in facilitating electronic portability within the school building and at-home during online learning
- Fully upgrading the Saint Paul telecommunications system to provide for Cloud based storage, as well as, transmission of all voice messages to staff emails for increased accessibility and responsiveness

Extended Online Learning

In the unforeseen event that school operations must move to a fully online platform, the Saint Paul technology infrastructure will provide for a seamless transition. The use of synchronous distance learning technologies, such as Microsoft Teams, Zoom, or Google Meet to engage students learning at home at least (3) days each week with real-time video instruction between students and teachers will be an integral component of extended online learning. Saint Paul will communicate an extended online learning schedule that will include virtual sessions and assignments which teachers will curate or create, sharing with students curriculum-aligned digital learning resources, lessons, and activities. Online learning days will be limited to no more than (4.5) hours of total instructional screen time.

Student support and activities

Catholic education has a long tradition of innovation in the face of adversity. This past spring, COVID-19 forced our diocesan high schools to pivot to remote learning. Within this very fluid environment, teachers and staff created student-centered opportunities for online learning, reflection, virtual student life events, and

faith formation. These past months have been informative, and there have been many lessons learned. In opening school, Saint Paul teachers are preparing enriching teaching and learning experiences through a single LMS. As an online gateway, a single LMS will act as a hub and clearinghouse for the many and varied learning resources teachers and students alike have come to know and appreciate including Schoology, Google Classroom, EdPuzzle, Quizizz, Notability, Khan Academy, and many more.

Under the direction of Ms. Pollette, Assistant Principal of Ministry, the Campus Ministry team is prepared to meet the spiritual needs of students and staff through contemplative programming and meaningful connections with community partners in proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ. In accordance with the liturgical protocols of the Diocese of Worcester, Saint Paul will offer a variety of liturgical, sacramental, and faith-formation opportunities this school year.

Saint Paul is fully committed to launching a highly anticipated fall sports season. Under the direction of Mr. Manzello, Director of Athletics, our Knights are fully poised for success. Team uniforms, equipment, and coaching staff are in place and ready to go. We await further guidance from the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) as to the status of fall sports. On August 8th, MIAA stated, "Please be advised the Association has no current policy which negates any athletic participation relative to a District's school re-opening plans. Members will be notified if there is any future modification to this guidance." In the event that the MIAA fall season should be canceled, team training and seasonal conditioning programs will continue as permissible under MIAA and applicable COVID guidelines.

Clubs and extracurricular activities will continue to be offered as permissible. Under the direction of Mr. St. John, Assistant Principal of Student Life, our Class Deans and Club Moderators are prepared to offer creative extracurricular opportunities to students, whether in-person or virtually.

Frequently Asked Questions

- When do students need to report to school? *Required student orientations begin on September 8th. Refer to the Plan for specific class orientations. The first scheduled day of classes is September 14th.*
- Have changes been made to the academic calendar? *Adjustments continue to be made to the academic calendar based on recent DESE-issued guidance. An official Saint Paul 2020-2021 school calendar will reflect these adjustments and will be published soon.*
- Will all teachers be present for the start of school? *We plan for all teachers to be on campus for in-person instruction. However, if a faculty member is quarantined or at home for self-monitoring, the Saint Paul technological infrastructure will allow for faculty needing to teach remotely to do so.*
- Will everyone need to wear a face covering while at school? *Yes. This COVID transmission prevention measure will be enforced throughout the school day, indoors and outside. State-issued guidelines are applicable throughout the entire campus.*
- What if a student needs to stay home and learn remotely while in-person learning is taking place? *In such instances, parents are asked to contact the School Counseling Office to discuss reasonable accommodations for online learning at Saint Paul.*

- Are social distancing guidelines and PPE requirements applicable to outdoor activities? *The simple answer is yes.*
- What about school field trips and travel programs? *Given the many uncertainties of student travel at this time, all field trips and travel programs are postponed indefinitely.*
- What if a family chooses to travel outside of Massachusetts during the school year? *All families are asked to be prudent in their personal travel plans, adhering to Massachusetts and other state-specific guidelines where applicable. Required periods of quarantine due to voluntary student / family travel may interrupt a student's matriculation at Saint Paul and risk promotion.*

Saint Paul Contacts

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Online Resources

Helping Children Cope with Changes Due to COVID-19

<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/helping-children-cope-with-changes-resulting-from-covid-19>

A Prayer in Time of Pandemic

<https://d2y1pz2y630308.cloudfront.net/5647/documents/2020/3/PRAYER%20HANDOUT.pdf>

Standards for Places of Worship and Religious Services (Massachusetts)

<https://www.worcesterdiocese.org/documents/2020/7/Worship%20Standards%20Massachusetts%20July%206.pdf>

Preventing the Spread of COVID-19

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/sick-with-2019-nCoV-fact-sheet.pdf>

Protecting Yourself and Others from COVID-19

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention-H.pdf>

Symptoms of COVID-19

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/COVID19-symptoms.pdf>

Stopping the Spread of Germs

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/stop-the-spread-of-germs-11x17-en.pdf>

Managing COVID Symptoms at Home

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/10Things.pdf>

When to Stay Home

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/StayHomeFromWork.pdf>

City of Worcester COVID-19 Community Information Homepage

<http://www.worcesterma.gov/coronavirus>

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/>

Massachusetts State-of-Emergency COVID-19 Homepage

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-state-of-emergency>

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2Findex.html

World Health Organization (WHO)

https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab_1