

Dear St. Agnes School staff and families,

I want to begin by thanking you for your support of our school. I recognize that as a diverse community, there are different opinions about what the school year should look like when we return on August 17<sup>th</sup>. I respect your views and understand that all of you want what is best for your children and families. As a parent myself, I can relate to these feelings and the anxiety it may cause you. We must also recognize that we have adults who will be working with your children who are experiencing anxiety as well because they are parents and caregivers who want to remain healthy for both your children and their own families. As a Catholic School community, we must remain compassionate and considerate of all lives. Although no plan will make everyone “happy”, nor will it meet the needs of all individuals, we have put together the best plan possible under the guided direction of our community leaders.

We believe that “being in school” is the best place for our students to receive a faith-based education, interact socially with peers, and be enriched by positive consistent routines. Our ability to re-open and keep our school open will be a shared responsibility that is dependent on all of us to do our part to keep our community safe and healthy. There is not a one size fits all plan to re-opening schools. The Center for Disease control (CDC), Nebraska Department of Education (NDE), and Panhandle Public Health District (PPHD) continue to offer recommendations to help us keep students and staff safe in the school environment. With the help of staff and guidance from the PPHD and local medical professionals, we have put together the plan that we think will work best for our school community. We realize that these plans may be subject to change as the year progresses. We ask for patience and flexibility as we progress and ask all in our St. Agnes community to do their part to protect themselves and others by washing hands, maintaining social distancing, cleaning and disinfecting all areas throughout the day, and wearing masks as directed.

We cannot ignore that the virus remains active in our community, and as we know, information is constantly changing. There will likely be outbreaks during the 2020-2021 school year that may cause us to move away from in-person learning. We are planning for those times as well. The state has created a “Risk Dial” that will provide guidance focused on where we are in our particular area. This risk dial, along with what is happening within our own school community will guide us in our decision- making process.

As you can imagine, planning for all scenarios that may occur is quite an undertaking. We have spent countless hours in planning and will continue this work as we navigate the ever-changing expectations.

We all desire to return to “the way things used to be.” However, we know that our Catholic community is strong and vibrant. We stand together in good times and times of stress, and we know that God the Father will guide our path and will give us the tools we need as we continue on this journey. We all want what is best for the students and staff of St. Agnes School. As a staff, we are committed to providing the quality education our school prides itself on, while maintaining the health and safety of all. We remain grateful for your support and cooperation and ask for your continued prayers as we move into the new school year.

Blessings to all,

Mrs. Brown

# St. Agnes School Re-Opening Plan

## Guiding Principles

- Protect the health and safety of students, staff, and the St. Agnes School Community as we return to in person learning
- Ensure the social, emotional and mental health of our students and staff
- Deliver the highest educational and spiritual experience to each student to prepare them for future success
- Learn from remote learning during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2020 to plan for and efficiently implement remote learning in the future if necessary
- Promote equity and opportunity for each student and their family
- Thoughtfully prepare for future decisions from the Panhandle Public Health Department, the Nebraska Department of Education, and from State and Federal officials related to schooling for the coming year
- Remain faithful to our school mission of providing our students with a quality education in a faith-filled environment

## School Model

### In Person Education:

- Classes beginning in person with **all** students (Pre-K-5<sup>th</sup> grade) on Monday, August 17<sup>th</sup>.
- School will begin at 8:00 with designated entrances opening at 7:45.

**Remote Learning:** In the event there is a need to return to remote learning (we are in the red risk dial zone), we will take a few weeks to switch to this mode. A combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning will take place. Schedules will be created for “real time” instruction. Our teachers are being trained to provide robust lessons during remote learning using the program See Saw and will also use Zoom for “real time” lessons. Students will begin using See Saw daily when they return to school. This will help with the transition to remote learning if it becomes necessary. Parents will be receiving information on this program from the classroom teachers when the school year opens. Ongoing communication will be provided to support families in the learning process in the event we are forced to switch to remote learning. Families needing devices or assistance with internet access, should contact Mrs. Brown.

**Distance Learning Option:** We will only be using remote learning in the event that we move into the red zone on the risk dial and are forced to close our building. Trying to run in person and a distance learning option at the same time will be too great of a press on our small staff. We **will** provide education at home for students on 504 plans for health impairments, those who have an IEP that would validate the need to be serviced at home or if a student has been quarantined for 14 days for a COVID exposure or positive test.

**Student Support:** We understand that changes in the learning environment potentially create a barrier for our learners. Many parents have expressed concern over lost learning during the long stint away from school. It has been advised that schools do not go back and try to make up concepts or do stand-

alone review of prior year content. Instead, it is suggested that teachers plan to move forward within their curriculum map and identify gaps as they proceed then address them as necessitated for individual students. Our fall MAP testing will help teachers to see where these gaps might lie and plans will be made to work towards mastery of these concepts.

## School Drop Off & Pick Up

### School Drop-off:

- Students will have **assigned entrances** to help maintain our cohorting and to avoid large groups.
- **Parents and younger siblings are asked not to enter the building during drop-off.**
- Parents need to be sure their child/children have entered the building and are without health issues before leaving the premise. If a student exhibits a fever of  $>100.4$ , the parent will be asked to take their child home.
  - Pre-K: enter in Pre-K side door (#2) Door monitor: Miss Meghan
  - Kindergarten: enter in back playground door (#4) Door monitor: Miss Mary Ann
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Grade: enter in west side door (#3) Door monitor: Ms. Teresa
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade: enter in NW door by kitchen (#5) Door monitor: Ms. Tritt
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade: Last name A-K: enter in back playground door (#4)  
Last name L-Z: enter in NW door by kitchen (#5)
  - 4<sup>th</sup> Grade: enter in Front door (#1) Door monitors: Mrs. Brown / Orlando
  - 5<sup>th</sup> Grade: enter in Front door (#1) Door monitors: Mrs. Brown / Orlando

### Tardy Students

- Students who are more than 10 minutes tardy will be checked in at the office.
- We ask that you work hard to get your child to school with all necessary items (PE shoes, band instruments, library books, cold lunches, etc.) We realize that sometimes important things will be forgotten. Should this occur, we ask that you ring the front bell, announce yourself, and Teresa will come and acquire the item and get it to your child.

### Appointments

- If a student has an appointment, parents must pre-arrange with the office to come to the front door and wait for their student to be dismissed.

### After School Pick Up:

- A staggered dismissal will be used to avoid mass exiting out the back door and large groups congregating on the playground.
- Please pick up students on the back playground at the assigned times.
- At this time, students will not be allowed to play while waiting for parents. This helps us to maintain our distancing amongst cohorts.
- Dismissal times:
  - **3:10** – Pre-K, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade
  - **3:15** - Kindergarten & 4<sup>th</sup> grade

- 3:20 – 1<sup>st</sup> grade & 5<sup>th</sup> grade
- Parents and younger siblings are asked not to enter the building during pick-up.

## Other Programs / Activities

### Morning Club:

- Open daily beginning at 7:30 a.m.
- Enter through back playground door
- Health checked upon entry
- Sanitize hands before entering
- Masks required

### After 3 Program:

- After 3 will be in operation on all days that school is in session.
- Hours are 3:15-5:45
- This program will be run out of the gym which will allow us to maintain our grade level cohorts.
- There will still be time for homework.
- Structured activities will be used (art, board games, science activities etc.)
- Snack will be provided – served by an adult.
- Students will remain with others from their cohort and will not be allowed to cross over and socialize and play with students from other grades.
- A 3<sup>rd</sup> provider will be used to help maintain the social distancing in this program.
- **Parents: please use the back door only for pick up from this program.**

### Singspirations:

- This group will practice 1 time per week during school hours.
- Practices will be held in gym with social distancing measures in place.

### Student Council

- Students in 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade will be allowed to apply beginning mid-September
- To adhere to our cohorting, individual grades will be assigned to specific months and will be responsible for activities and service projects done in their assigned month.

### Fieldtrips

- Class fieldtrips will be determined on a case by case basis.
- The parameters on these outings will likely change as the year progresses.

## Facilities Safety

- **Cohorting:**
  - At the recommendation of the PPHD, individual classes will be cohorted during the school day.
  - Seating charts will remain consistent in classrooms, lunch room and at Mass.

- Staff will work to keep individual classes together as a group and avoid crossing other groups as much as possible.
- Mass buddies and reading buddies will not be used at this time.
- Classes will attend recess individually.
- Classes will be seated together at Mass in a socially distanced fashion.
- Classes will eat together either in cafeteria or their classroom, seated in a socially distanced fashion.
- **Staggered Schedules:**
  - Schedules have been adapted to allow for staggered passing times to recess, special classes and lunch.
  - Individual classes will move within the building with little contact with other classes.
- **Social Distancing:**
  - When conditions allow, the recommended 4-6 feet social distancing will be used
  - This will be applied to classroom seating (as best possible), Mass seating and cafeteria Seating.
  - Students will be encouraged to play games that keep this distancing as well.
  - Walking patterns within the building will help to maintain social distancing.
- **Large Assemblies:**
  - Nebraska and Panhandle Public Health orders limit the size of group gatherings.
  - Whole school assemblies will be held virtually including Golden Rule Ceremonies and Quarterly Awards (We will Zoom individual classroom awards for parent viewing.)
  - Christmas Programs: We currently have 2 dates listed for Christmas programs to accommodate the potential for needing to perform in smaller groups. Further information will come later.
- **Mass:**
  - Mass will take place on Wednesday mornings @ 8:15.
  - Cohorted classes will be socially distanced in a seating arrangement that includes 4-5 students per row (normally 10 students).
  - Individual classes will be distanced from each other.
  - Students will take up the main floor seating.
  - Fr. Vince will live stream Wednesday morning Mass for parents who want to join us in that fashion.
- **Hand Washing & Sanitizing:**
  - Staff will place major emphasis on handwashing and sanitizing multiple times per day to help with the spread of germs.
  - Sanitizing stations will be located at all entrances.
  - Sinks are available in all classrooms for hand washing and sanitizer will also be available.
- **Masks:**
  - Masks will be required for all people inside St. Agnes School.
  - Appropriate breaks will be given to students to allow them to remove the mask.
  - Masks will be worn when entering and exiting building, when traveling within the building, when 4-6 foot social distancing cannot be maintained, and whenever the adult in charge suggests the necessity of masks.

- Students will be taught the appropriate use of the face covering and this will be reinforced multiple times a day.
- Staff will discuss that the wearing of the mask not only provides us protection for ourselves but is an act of kindness toward our neighbor as we protect them when we wear a mask.
- Kerri Schaff will be making 2 masks for each student to use at school.
- Masks will be kept at school to affirm that each child has a unique/identifiable mask that is well-fitted and meets CDC recommendations.
- Each student will be given a lanyard where the mask can be attached when not be worn (ex – lunch).
- Each student must come to school wearing a mask from home. They will place this mask into a paper bag during the day, while wearing their “school mask” and will depart the building wearing their “home” mask each day.
- School masks will be laundered on a regular basis.
- **Bottle Filler Fountains:**
  - All water fountains have been adapted to bottle filler fountains.
  - The bubbler/drinking portion of the fountains will be turned off at this time with only the bottle filler portion functioning.
  - **Each student is asked to bring a personal water bottle labeled with their name to be left at school.**
  - **Bottles will be cleaned at the end of each week.**
- **Visitors:**
  - We will limit visitors in the building at this time.
  - Only essential visitors will be allowed or people who have previously scheduled meetings with school staff.
  - We will limit volunteers to those who are certified to sub within our building, and those who come on a routine basis.
  - Limiting visitors helps with contact tracing issues should we have an issue with a COVID outbreak.
  - St. Agnes School will not be renting their facilities for outside use at this time.

## **Maintaining a Healthy Environment**

### **Parent Responsibilities:**

- Parents are asked to do their part to help maintain the health and safety of all students and staff by considering the following things before sending their child to school:
  1. Has your child has a fever (>100.4) during the past 24 hours?
  2. Does your child have a new or unexpected cough, a sore throat, loss of taste/smell, shortness of breath?
  3. Has your child been around anyone exhibiting these symptoms within the past 14 days?
  4. Are you living with anyone who has been sick, has exhibited symptoms of COVID-19, or is currently under quarantine for exposure to COVID-19?

**Please keep your child at home if your child has been exposed to someone testing positive for COVID-19 or if you suspect anyone in your household may have symptoms. Other additional protocols to consider:**

5. Please have your children wash their hands with soap and/or use sanitizer before entering the building. We will have sanitizing stations at all entrances.
6. PLEASE do not give your child Ibuprofen or Tylenol to mask fevers. St. Agnes will always err on the side of caution, therefore if your child is complaining of not feeling well, is running a low-grade fever or is showing signs of illness, a parent will be called immediately. The child will need to be picked up within the hour.
7. We ask that if your child has been exposed to someone testing positive for COVID-19, you communicate this to the school office as soon as possible. Let them know you are keeping your child home because of known or suspected COVID-19 exposure.

- **Building Screening:**

- All students, staff, visitors and volunteers will be screened upon entering the building.
- Temperatures will be taken and questions asked regarding general health and potential symptoms of COVID.
- Students with two of the following: fever (measured or subjective), chills, cold/shivering, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea

**OR:**

At least one of the following: new cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, loss of taste or smell

**OR:**

Has at least one symptom and answers yes to: Is there someone in your household who is currently in quarantine or currently positive for COVID-19?

Will immediately isolate in the designated area and be sent home as soon as possible.

**While attendance at school is very important, we ask that you be diligent in assessing whether your child is well and should be at school. Please keep sick children at home. State mandates for absences have been lifted for the year, so if a student is required to quarantine, it will not pose a problem for absenteeism. We will not be awarding perfect attendance this year in an attempt to keep students from wanting to come to school sick just so they can achieve this award.**

- **Cleaning:**

- Extra cleaning will occur daily to help maintain a clean and safe environment.
- Frequently touched surfaces (door-knobs, hand-rails, counters, desks, faucets, etc.) will be cleaned and disinfected multiple times per day.
- Additional janitorial help will be hired to help maintain the cleanliness of the building.
- Shared equipment such as PE equipment, classroom centers, toys, etc. will be sanitized between classes/student use.
- We will limit the sharing of all supplies, devices, learning materials etc. When materials have been shared, we will clean the materials between individual uses.

## Shared spaces:

- **Classrooms:**
  - Desks will be distanced 4 feet apart or as far apart as space will allow. All desks will face the same direction.
  - Shared supplies will not be allowed. A student's individual school supplies will be kept in their desk or designated cubby assigned to the individual student.
  - All curriculum materials will be assigned and only used by individual students.
  - All pillows, cushions, and soft material toys have been removed from the rooms.
  - Coat areas will be monitored to avoid multiple students in the area at one time. When coats become a necessity, they will be placed inside the student's backpack to avoid contact with each other's personal items. Regular washing of coats and backpacks can help with the spread of germs.
  - Teachers will monitor students leaving the room individually so as to avoid contact with students from other grades while in the bathroom or hallway.
- **Bathrooms:**
  - Masks must be worn in this zone at all times.
  - Students will have access to restrooms throughout the day. Teachers will do their best to limit students out of the room at one time.
  - Students will be directed to specific bathrooms.
  - Bathrooms will be cleaned routinely.
- **Fountains**
  - Individual classes will use the bottle fillers when time is designated by the teacher.
  - Fountains will be cleaned and maintained routinely.
  - Drinking portion of fountain will not be functional.
- **Hallways**
  - Staff will be present in hallways to prompt students to head directly to their classrooms.
  - Students and staff will walk single file on the right side of every hallway.
  - Students and staff will maintain physical distance when possible while in the hallway. (arms-length away while in line)
- **Gym Class**
  - Masks will not be worn during P.E. class. They will be hung on individual hooks during class time.
  - Class will be held outside when weather permits.
  - Six foot spacing will be marked for exercise time and games that allow for distancing will be played.
  - When common equipment is used, (balls, bats, etc) it will be sanitized between each class.
  - Students will sanitize hands when entering and leaving class.
- **Music Class**
  - Student chairs will be distanced within the music room.
  - Students will wear masks when singing.
  - Chairs will be sanitized between each class.
  - Commonly used materials such as rhythm instruments will be sanitized between individual and class use.



- **Library Class**
  - Library class will be held in grade level classrooms.
  - Students will come to library in small groups (10 or less students) to check out books.
  - Students will sanitize hands upon entering and leaving the library.
  - Books will be quarantined for 72 hours before being re-shelved.
- **Recess**
  - Face coverings will not be worn during recess times, however physical distancing (arms-length) and non-contact activities will be a priority
  - Individual classes will have their own recess equipment which will be sanitized daily

## **Sanitizing/ Hygiene Practices:**

- Signs will be posted throughout the building encouraging appropriate hygiene practices.
- All students and staff will sanitize their hands upon entering the building and in classrooms, hallways and common spaces throughout the day.
- Students will be instructed on proper hygiene including: handwashing techniques, appropriate techniques for covering coughs and sneezes, acceptable ways to greet others without making physical contact with them.
- Gloves are required for all staff who are sanitizing an item or surfaces and for those serving food in the cafeteria.

## **Food Service**

- The Meat Shoppe will provide hot lunch.
- Students will come in waves to the cafeteria with not more than 35-40 students in the gym at one time. Two classes will eat in the cafeteria, with one cohort on the north end and the other on the south. The 3<sup>rd</sup> class will eat outside while weather permits and will move into their classroom when weather conditions are poor.
  - **Lunch #1**- 11:00-11:25 – Pre-K, 3<sup>rd</sup>, K
  - **Lunch #2** – 11:30-11:55 – 1<sup>st</sup>
  - **Lunch #3** – 11:55-12:25 – 2<sup>nd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>
- Students will sit 4 to a table (typically 16 sit at a table) all facing the same direction
- Sharing of food will not be allowed.
- The cafeteria will be cleaned and tables disinfected between each lunch period.
- Snacks and birthday treats will be allowed but should be individually, pre-packaged items. It is not recommended that homemade treats be served at this time.
- Parents / visitors will not be allowed to eat with their children at this time.
- Lunch help **will be needed** this year.
- We ask that each family serve 5 days.
- PPHD recommends that these 5 days be served consecutively if possible.
- Gloves and a mask **MUST** be worn while serving lunch.
- We ask that parents enter through the back playground door. Please ring the bell and announce that you are here to serve lunch. The sign-in sheet and visitor badges will be located in the kitchen.

- Due to the elongated lunch hour, we will have staggered lunch help times.

## Promoting Behaviors to Reduce Spread

- **Symptomatic Staff and Students**

- An area will be designated as an infirmary so that students and staff who are ill or show symptoms can be separated from the high traffic areas. We will have specific protocols for the person monitoring that space to prevent further spread and ensure their safety. All areas used by this person will be deep cleaned.
- St. Agnes School will communicate with the health department immediately regarding suspected or confirmed cases. **The health department will determine the course of action.** This may include the dismissal of students and some staff for a short-term period. It may also include dismissal of particular cohorts that came in contact with the exposed and/or confirmed case. However, the PPHD has told us that if we are masking, the potential for sending home whole classes is greatly diminished and most likely would not occur.

- **Communication**

- Staff / Parents have a responsibility to self-report to school if they or their student has symptoms of the COVID virus, a positive test for COVID-19 or were exposed to someone with the COVID-19 virus within the last 14 days.
- Change in risk level or requirements will be communicated to parents with sufficient notice and explanation.
- Given the health-related nature of many decisions, student privacy must always be an important factor with HIPAA compliance and personal sensitivity to child and adult being key priorities.
- If a student or staff tests positive, PPHD will provide quarantining guidelines.

- **Stay Home When Appropriate**

- Anyone who has close contact with someone with COVID-19 should stay home
  - for 14 days after exposure based on time it takes to develop illness.
- If you or your child is experiencing COVID symptoms –Please stay home!
- While we recognize that not all respiratory viruses will be COVID, we will expect
  - that ill students stay home until they are fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications, symptoms have subsided, they have been prescribed medication for an existing condition (ex. Strep throat), or have been seen by a medical provider who has released the child to return to school
- If a staff member or student tests positive for COVID, they must stay home and
  - follow the guidelines established by their healthcare provider or PPHD.

- **Re-Admittance to School**

- **Symptomatic staff/student who test positive**
  - Will be excluded from school for at least 10 days from onset of symptoms
  - At least 24 hours with no fever without the use of fever reducing medication
  - Symptoms have improved

- **Symptomatic staff/student not tested**
  - At least 10 days since onset of symptoms
  - At least 24 hours with no fever without the use of fever reducing medications
  - Symptoms have improved
  - May return to school if alternative diagnosis is established with a health care provider's note.
- **Symptomatic staff / student who tests negative**
  - Exclude until fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication
  - Improved symptoms

With the ever changing conditions related to this virus, we know that our plan will also be changing. We will be committed to keeping you informed of any changes that may arise and will give you adequate notice for these changes.