

Saints Peter and Paul School

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Parents/Guardians Regarding the Reopening of SSPP

We know that parents have many questions about the start of the school year. In this document, we have outlined many of the frequently asked questions (FAQs) from parents about the school 's reopening plans specific to SSPP. These questions are divided up into five sections, each addressing a separate aspect of the reopening process. We will continue to answer questions in an effort to help you as you transition back to school.

The categories are:

1. **Health and Safety:** General health and safety questions, such as social distancing, masks, and facility cleaning.
2. **Infection Protocols:** How we will handle when students or employees become ill.
3. **Academics and Programming:** Questions related to how classes will be taught. This section also includes information on school events (such as Masses or assemblies) and extracurricular activities.
4. **Tuition and Fees:** Questions about tuition payments during the upcoming school year.
5. **Additional Activities and Areas to Address:** Questions that have come up in the past few days that the SJS staff and teachers will be addressing.

Health and Safety

Q: What does “reopening our schools” really mean?

A: Gathering as a school community is an integral part of Catholic education. Our plan is to reopen our school buildings to students this fall. This means that all students are welcome to return to classes for face-to-face instruction. SSPP has developed an in-depth plan that addresses numerous aspects of the reopening process, and how SSPP will function once reopened.

Q: Will students be safe when school is reopened? Has your plan been reviewed by medical professionals?

A: Safety is always our top priority in Catholic education. Schools have closely studied guidance from Bishop Pates, the Illinois Catholic Conference, federal and state authorities, as well as the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH). Each school plan has been reviewed by the Bishop’s Task Force comprised of medical professionals, diocesan facilities, legal and risk management directors and Superintendent Dr. Michael Boyle. We have confidence that our students can return safely in the fall.

Q: Will students need to wear masks at school?

A: Yes. As per directives of the state, all individuals above the age of two will need to wear masks while at school. Masks may be removed for brief periods of time under certain circumstances (such as outdoor play or lunch). However, when masks are removed, students must remain physically distant from one another (at

least six feet). The SSPP teachers will be creating scheduled time for additional recess breaks, outdoor learning, and masks breaks.

Q: Do I need to purchase masks for my child?

A: Yes. We are asking all parents to purchase masks for their child. Parents may opt to buy disposable or reusable masks. For disposable masks, each mask must be thrown away at the end of every school day and parents should send plenty of extra masks to school with their child. For reusable masks, masks should be cleaned after every use and students should have at least one extra reusable mask at school. We would like each child to have an extra mask at school.

Q: Can face shields be used instead of masks?

A: No. Face shields cannot be used instead of masks, as per directives of the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH). In some circumstances and with medical documentation, a face shield may be permitted for a child with sensory and breathing concerns.

Q: Will teachers teach children how to use masks?

A: Yes. We know that students (especially young children) will need training to learn how to properly wear masks. We will spend time at the beginning of the year helping children learn how to safely keep masks in place. We will model and support these changes in the most positive way possible.

Q: Will students be required to physically distance at school?

A: While the CDC and state guidelines suggest 4-6 feet apart for desks, we are working to have classroom desks as close to 6 ft. apart as possible in the classroom setting. We will be removing the teacher desk and/or additional furniture to make this happen.

Q: Will the student's temperature be taken before entering the school building and every day before school?

A: Yes. A high fever is a key symptom of COVID-19. If your child has a fever of 100.4°F, your child will be sent home from school. You should contact your child's doctor. Similarly, you should ask your child if he/she has any of the other symptoms of COVID-19, such as a sore throat, coughing, or nausea. If your child complains of these symptoms, you should keep him/her home and contact your doctor and the school office. Student temperatures will be checked right as they exit the car. Students with a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher will be sent to the front of the Junior High building for retest. If the retest is 100.4 degrees or higher, the student will not be able to enter the school and will be sent home.

Q: How will drop off and pick-up be handled?

A: SSPP staff have carefully developing drop off and pick up procedures, communicated this past week in two different visuals. Students will begin to arrive at **7:20AM and should be in the school by 7:50AM** except for Kindergarten on the first day. Parents will be asked not to congregate near school doors, and to stay in the car at drop off. (Last names and times will be updated) In addition, students will be asked to participate in these tasks. These are:

1. A temperature check administered by an adult (please note that parents should also take temperatures every day before they leave for school).
2. Use of hand sanitizer upon entering the building and classrooms.

If a student has a temperature of 100.4°F or complains of other COVID-19 symptoms at school, he/she will be immediately sent to the nurse's office. Parents will be contacted and asked to pick up the child. Students will wait in our junior High building quarantine location on the first floor and will be escorted by our school nurse to the nearest door. We are waiting to hear about a waiver from the diocese and other tracing measures.

Q: What about safety and cleanliness requirements for school buildings?

A: At SSPP, we have created specific requirements for the ongoing cleaning and sanitizing of school buildings. Designated school staff and our maintenance crew will be responsible for cleaning bathrooms (at 10AM and 12:30AM), railings, door handles, etc. Our after-school cleaning crew will do deep cleaning each evening with a focus on high-touch areas and common surfaces. Windows and/or vents should be opened to maximize air flow. Our school's plan contains instructions for managing shared areas such as hallways, gymnasiums, Zuker Hall, and bathrooms.

Q: How will lunch take place when school reopens?

A: Our students will eat lunch in their classrooms, and students have recess in staggered shifts. Cleaning of the student desks will be done before and after lunch with the assistance of the teacher and our aides.

Q: What about recess?

A: We will have recess, but we must fulfill defined safety requirements. For example, classes will be staggered to have recess, and students must be spread out from one another. If recess is outdoors, masks may be removed, but students should stay at least six feet apart. Our staff has worked hard on a recess plan, adding ideas for safe play. Our PE teachers has purchased spray paint for distancing squares drawn for recess and PE outside.

Q: Can I still volunteer at school?

A: Schools have been asked to minimize the number of volunteers this year to mitigate risk.

Q: Will extended care (before and after care) be available this year?

A: Yes, we will continue to offer extended care with all health and safety guidelines followed as outlined in our plan. Please fill out the survey sent on extended day.

Q: My child and/or another member of my household is in an at-risk group for COVID-19. Should I send my child to school?

A: Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has defined conditions in which certain people may be more at risk for severe illness through COVID-19. If your child or another member of your household is in an at-risk group, we encourage you to speak to your doctor. Ultimately you should decide whether it is safe for your child to attend school.

Q: What do I do if I do not feel safe sending my child back to school?

A: We have taken every step to ensure the safety of students at our schools this fall. However, we understand that some families still may not wish to return. If you feel you do not wish to return for physical instruction this year (or at least at the start of the year), please contact us. This is a personal decision and we understand that not all families will make the same decisions. We respect that!

Infection Protocols

Q: My family has traveled to a state on the restricted list. Do we need to self-isolate for 14 days?

A: No, at this time the isolation guidelines for travel from restricted states only applies to residents of the City of Chicago.

Q: What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

A: The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has identified several [symptoms](#) of COVID-19, including high fever (above 100.4°F), sore throat, coughing, nausea, headache, muscle aches, loss of taste or smell, runny nose, fatigue, diarrhea and difficulty breathing.

Q: What should I do if my child has symptoms of COVID-19?

A: If your child shows [symptoms](#) of COVID-19, you should contact your doctor. Your doctor may ask that your child participate in a COVID-19 test. You should alert your school's main office and not send your child to school. If the symptoms occur during the school day, your child will be immediately sent to the designated area announced to our parents (a photo will be forthcoming) and you will be contacted to pick your child up from school.

Q: My child had COVID-19-like symptoms but tested negative for COVID-19. When can he/she return to school?

A: If your child does not have COVID-19, but has another illness, you should keep your child home until the illness' symptoms disappear. Your school will require you to provide a negative COVID-19 test and/or a doctor's note before your child can return to school.

Q: What should I do if my child tests positive for COVID-19?

A: You should immediately contact your doctor for additional instructions. You should also contact your school's main office. You should not send your child to school.

Q: When can a student return to school after receiving a positive COVID-19 test?

A: If a student tests positive for COVID-19 or does not seek medical attention, students must isolate and not return to school until they have met [CDC's criteria to discontinue home isolation](#).

Q: What should I do if a member of my household (who is not my child) tests positive for COVID-19?

A: You should immediately contact your school's main office. Your school will ask that you keep your child home for at least 14 days. If your family member recovers from COVID-19 (through meeting the criteria in the previous question) AND your child shows no COVID-19 symptoms for the 14-day period, your school may allow your child to return.

Q: What happens if my child's teacher tests positive for COVID-19?

A: Should any employee have COVID-19 symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19, we will follow the same protocols used for students (see above). If your child's teacher becomes sick and is unable to work, we will provide a substitute teacher.

Q: What happens if another student in my child's class tests positive for COVID-19?

A: SSPP school will make all parents aware that a student has tested positive for COVID-19. Those who had contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 or is suspected of having COVID-19 should contact their doctor for next steps or quarantine for 14 days. Close contact means the individual was within 6 feet of the individual with symptoms for more than 15 minutes.

Q: Could my child's school building be closed due to COVID-19 this year?

A: We will do our best to ensure a safe and healthy environment in the coming year. We hope to stay in school in a safe manner for the entire year.

Academics and Programming

Q: Will my child's curriculum be changed this year?

A: We will still deliver high-quality instruction in core subjects (religion, language arts, math, science, and social studies). Additional requirements will be in place for departmentalized classes and special area subjects (see sections below). The implementation of safety and health requirements (outlined earlier in this FAQ) will create new complexities in instruction, but our commitment remains to provide your child the best possible faith-based education.

Q: Will my child's classroom look different?

A: To minimize the risk of any infection in the classroom, we have spread out desks in classrooms to achieve physical distancing to as close to 6 feet as possible. To maximize floorspace, we have asked teachers to remove non-essential furniture and other items. Each room is a little bit different, but all teachers have taken time to make sure guidelines are followed for safely returning to school. There are several other upgrades to the school building such as new white boards in some rooms, new carpet being installed in the elementary school building entry way, teacher lounges have been updated, our gym floor has been resurfaced and our hallways have ample signage for cheerful visuals of important reminders.

Q: Will students still change classes?

A: Our students remain in cohorts when possible. However, they will still change classes to keep with the integrity of the academic program and to meet the various levels of instruction needed for our students proper learning. The changing of classes has been thought through and will be outlined in your child's grade level plan now on our School Speak website.

Q: Will schools still offer classes in special subject areas (e.g., art, music, Spanish PE, etc.)?

A: Yes. Special subject area teachers will travel to each class' homeroom for instruction whenever possible. PE classes will be held outside when possible. Art will be in the art room and adjacent hallway. Music will be taught in the music room or in the parish social hall where there is ample room and a piano. Special classes will go outside when possible. Our Spanish teacher will go to classrooms K to 5 and will remain in a larger junior classroom for grades 6 to 8.

Q: Will tests still be given this year?

A: Yes. It is important that we continue to gauge student academic growth throughout the school year. As such, you should anticipate tests including standardized tests to be administered in your child's class. We

will be conducting additional assessments at the start of the school year as usual to gauge the student's abilities.

Q: Will students participate in field trips?

A: No. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, schools will not participate in in-person field trips during the 2020/21 school year.

Q: I need to meet with a teacher or my school principal. Can these meetings occur?

A: Yes. To minimize visitors in the building, these meeting may take place via the phone or outside when possible. Mrs. Weis will be outside at an outdoor meeting spot for the first two weeks of school to meet parents and to oversee the outside activities and learning.

Q: Can we still have meetings of stakeholder groups, such as the School Board, Home and School, and other organizations and clubs? What about fundraising events, such as the Auction and Fun Fair?

A: Such meetings will be at the discretion of the pastor, principal, and school leaders. Meetings can be held in person with capacity limitations, social distancing, and masks, or can be held virtually. We will host creative ideas for fundraisers as the year progresses.

Q: Will school Masses still take place?

A: The diocese has defined a specific plan for parishes that allows for the celebration of Mass under very specific conditions. Schools will follow this plan, in close coordination with Fr. Brad, in determining how and when Masses may be celebrated. We plan to have two Masses per week for varying grade levels.

Q: How will extracurricular activities be impacted this year?

A: At this time, Athletics has been suspended along with other clubs. As the year progresses, we will work with the Catholic Schools Office to determine our ability to restart these activities in a safe manner. We plan to continue the during the school day Band Program in the previous junior high computer lab. Cross Country will still meet but will be limited. Our athletic director and cross-country leaders will communicate these opportunities.

Tuition and Fees

Q: Will schools still collect tuition this year?

A: Yes. While this school year may look different, our school will continue to provide a rigorous academic experience while supporting the moral and spiritual development of each student. Our Catholic schools depend upon tuition revenue to compensate our employees who do this work and support other school-related expenses.

Q: I am having difficulty paying tuition, what do I do?

A: Some families may have difficulties paying tuition due to the loss of income during workplace closures, and we are ready to support those in need of assistance. Please contact our parish finance office for assistance. We understand your situation and will do our very best to work with you.

Additional Areas to Address

Q: What about Religious Education classes?

A: Currently, our RE program has not committed to returning to the school building this fall. If this were to change, we would make you aware.

Q: What about special days and holiday parties for students?

A: We will have a new set of ideas to make these days special for our students. These will be determined with the support and counsel of our schoolteachers and Mrs. Weis.

Q: Will the school host a Christmas Program?

A: We sure hope so! Music classes may resume in October after further review in September. It is too early to tell, however.

Q: Will the students be able to use the library?

A: We are temporarily pausing Library time. We will review the library usage later in the fall. Our new math and reading support in the elementary building will be in one of the library spaces for now. Speech and OT will be housed in the library as well, attending to our students on different days.

Q: What cleaning supplies do our teachers have?

A: Wipes, sanitizing spray and hand sanitizer is placed in each classroom:

- **Wipes:** 2XL Force antibacterial disinfecting wipes. Eliminates bacteria in 4 minutes. 99.9% effective against bacteria in 15 seconds. EPA Reg. No. 6836-340-82144, EPA Est. No. 8251-WI-0
- **Sanitizing Spray:** Nyco Sani-spritz Spray. One step disinfectant cleaner-fungicide-mildew stat - virucide – deodorizer EPA Reg. 6836-152-8370, EPA Est. No. 8370-IL-Spartan HDQ Neutral. One step disinfectant Germicidal detergent and deodorant
- **Hand Sanitizer:** Envirotech Bac Stop 3A, Instant Hand Sanitizer, E-3 Rated USDA, Alcohol 70% and Germ Attack by Natural Essentials, Hand Sanitizer Alcohol 70%

Q: Why does SSPP and the Diocese feel comfortable returning to school when neighboring public schools are not returning to 5 days of face to face instruction?

A: After careful review and risk mitigation by the Diocesan Review team, Saints Peter and Paul is ready for the return to school. Most Catholic schools are smaller in nature and have no access to busing. Some of the biggest challenges for public schools are the ability to bus children to school and the large number of students to socially distance for the school day. Simply put, they do not have the room or space. At SSPP, our class sizes are small enough to manage with our large classrooms with great windows, with extra nice indoor and outdoor facilities to spread out in. We have a staff who is dedicated to the return to school plan and willing to clean, disinfect, and maintain the highest safety protocols for our children. Our teachers are committed to creating an environment that is creative and engaging through the many challenges that we face. Our parents continue to share that they want their children to return to school, and our students want to get back to in-person learning! Our continued mission will be to bring your children closer to the Lord and live the gospel message. We look forward to your partnership and commitment in prayer to guide our efforts and abilities this year.

Q: Why does it seem to take longer than normal to get answers to questions I have?

A: Our SSPP staff is working overload to respond to questions, communicate new information, move furniture to storage, clean and refresh the school buildings, post signage, respond to academic questions, order resources and materials not usually ordered etc. We are working through a major crisis. Our full-time secretary retired this year and Mrs. Weis began her official positions a very short time ago. Open and honest communication is important to our administrative team and teaching staff. Often times, emails and other communications will be worked on later in the day so the numerous details and prep for next week/meetings on protocol can be accomplished when staff is present. It is also common that there are topics/questions that cannot be communicated until the diocese approves or responds with an answer. If you have a specific need please email Mrs. Weis directly or your child's teacher, after class list go out.

As we begin school next week, we will continue to communicate any changes, updates or additional protocol approved from the diocese. We will celebrate the added joy and accomplishments that will surely evolve with our reopening of school. Your encouragement and support are genuinely appreciated.

“Be still and know that I am God. . .”

Psalm 46:10