**

 *“****Nothing great is ever achieved without enduring much.”***

St. Catherine of Siena

As many of you know, St. William of York successfully completed the 2020-2021 school year with minimal disruption from COVID. All of our families and faculty worked together to ensure that our students remained safe and healthy. Everyone contributed to our success. This year, we are asking the same thing from our parents. We know that studies have found that all students need to be in school in person and we were successful doing just that during our 2020-2021 school year. With similar mitigation techniques (and some different), we will do the same during this 2021-2022 school year.

The COVID Re-Opening plan for the 2021-2022 school year was formed using a myriad of resources to include the recommendations from the Virginia Department of Health, the Diocese of Arlington Office of Catholic schools, and the views of our stakeholders, our parents. Responses from the survey that was sent to all families were considered in making several of the decisions. Additionally, the Virginia Department of Health statistics helped inform the layered strategies that St. William of York will use during the 2021-2022 school year.

**St. William of York Catholic School reserves the right to CHANGE any policy should the metrics deem necessary throughout the school year.**

In a short survey about COVID mitigation strategies, our families responded the following ways about masking (4 options were listed, families chose 1):

***I think all students should wear masks at all times (inside the building) – 30%***

***I think that students should wear masks ONLY when they are unable to be socially distant (inside the building) – 28%***

***I think that only non – vaccinated students should wear masks (inside the building) – 1%***

***I think that parents should have the option of choosing whether or not their child wears a mask – 41%***

As we move throughout the school year, there are three things that will regularly be looked at as we change and update our mitigation strategies.

1. **Virginia Department of Health School Metrics** – The Virginia Department of health website maintains a dashboard that helps us to understand the number of positive cases in our community.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Indicator | Low Transmission | Moderate Transmission | Substantial Transmission | High Transmission |
| Total new cases per 100,000 persons in past 7 days | 0-9 | 10-49 | 50-99 | >=100 |
| Percentage of NAAT’s that are positive in past 7 days | <5.0% | 5.0% - 7.9% | 8.0% - 9.9% | >10.0% |

1. **Vaccination Data** – Using the Virginia Department of Health information, we will evaluate the vaccination rate of those who are able to receive the vaccine.
2. **School Impact Data** – Virginia Department of Health

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| --- | --- |
| **Criteria to Consider** | **Level of School Impact** |
| Low | Medium | High |
| **Transmission within school** | Zero or sporadic cases with no evidence of transmission in school | Two outbreaks within a short time period or sporadic outbreaks in school. Size of outbreaks remain small. | Several outbreaks in school within short time period; size of outbreaks is large or scope of outbreaks is significant. |
| **Student Absenteeism** | At baseline / low | Slightly above baseline | High |
| **Staff Capacity** | Normal | Strained | Critical |

All of these are evaluated as the decisions are made for the safety of our students and our faculty for the 2021-2022 school year. The following is a summary of mitigation strategies for St. William of York. It is important to note that the plan will be updated as the statistics for Stafford County change throughout the year. A biweekly evaluation of all metrics will take place to ensure that a change in policy is not necessary.

***Wellness Check***

We will not be doing temperature checks this year. We are asking all parents to be very mindful of the health of their child (ren) and their school attendance. If your child is experiencing any symptoms at all that cannot be attributed to another condition (i.e. allergies), we ask that you keep your child home. If your child has a fever, they are not allowed to be in school.

***Face Masks***

Effective August 12, 2021, Governor Northam issued a Public Health Order that requires all individuals in K-12 schools to wear masks regardless of their vaccination status. Our students and faculty will wear masks while in the school in their classrooms and in the halls. All students and faculty will also wear masks while attending Mass each week. Masks will be optional outside and while actively participating in P.E. class.

***Handwashing / Hand Sanitizing***

All students/visitors/faculty will wash their hands prior to entering the building. Hand sanitizing stations will be at each classroom and students will wash / sanitize frequently throughout the day.

***Vaccines***

Parents may voluntarily provide COVID vaccination information to Nurse Connolly. Although this information is not mandatory, it will help make decisions for mitigation as the school year progresses. Your child’s medical information will continue to remain confidential.

***COVID Symptoms & Illness***

Parents/guardians must notify the school if a student (or family members) tests positive for COVID. During the day, a student who exhibits COVID symptoms will be placed in the COVID isolation room and parents/guardians are expected to pick up the child immediately. ***Prior to returning to school, contact Nurse Connolly for specific guidelines.***

***Quarantine and Isolation***

Students who need to quarantine will be provided with classwork during their quarantine time. We will work with the Department of Health to contact trace if the COVID event happened while at school. If a student tests positive for COVID, the Virginia Department of Health will contact families that have been identified by the students as close contacts. Any person testing positive must follow the most up to date guidelines provided by the Virginia Department of Health for isolation***. If individuals have been identified as a close contact by the Virginia Department of Health of someone that has tested positive for COVID, they will be required to observe the safest most up to date recommended quarantine period if they are not vaccinated.*** This could change frequently depending on the metrics in our locality. Vaccinated students are not required to quarantine if they are not exhibiting symptoms.

***Volunteers / Visitors***

All volunteers and visitors will follow all school policies listed in the COVID mitigation plan.

***Post International Travel / Quarantine***

All families who travel internationally are asked to contact Nurse Connolly prior to returning to school. Nurse Connolly will use information from the Department of Health to determine safe return of families back to school.

**Managing Distance and Movement**

***Arrival / Dismissal***

We ask that if your child is sick, please keep them home. If your child is exhibiting any symptoms of COVID or any other contagious illness, please keep them home. It will take our entire school community to work together to keep all of our students healthy. Drop off will work the same as it has in the past. During afternoon dismissal, we will limit the number of students outside waiting for their cars. We ask that as parents, unless it is necessary to walk your children into the building (during normal drop off time), we ask that you use the carline. Prior to entering the school, students will use the portable handwashing stations to wash their hands before entering the building. Please do not hand off student medication in the carpool line. All medications are to be brought into the school office by a parent or guardian.

***Changing Classes***

Students will change classes. Middle school students will move from room to room and all students will have their special classes (Art, Music and PE), in the assigned classrooms. Seating charts will be kept allowing for contact tracing should the situation arise.

***Cleaning***

Throughout the day, cleaning continues to happen. Classrooms will be cleaned and sanitized daily with more frequent cleaning in classrooms that have more than one class in them during the day. Prior to a new class entering a classroom (i.e. the Art room), all surfaces will be wiped down.

***Lockers***

Middle school students will use lockers. Lockers are assigned to an individual student.

***Distancing***

All students when seated at their desks in their classrooms will be seated three feet apart.

***Bathroom Policies***

As part of our regular policy, the number of students is limited in each of the bathrooms.

***Lunch***

Students will eat lunch in the cafeteria. Groups will be smaller to limit the number of students in the cafeteria as well as to allow for greater distancing between students. Students will sit at tables with their class.

***Mass***

Students will attend Mass weekly. Students and faculty will wear masks at Mass.

***Recess / Physical Education***

For outdoor recess, masks will be optional for all students as students will be outside and maintaining social distancing. During P.E. class, while students are actively exercising, masks will be optional.

***Preschool / Extended Care***

Extended care will follow the same policies and procedures that are followed by the school community.

***Athletics / After School Clubs***

We are excited to be able to reestablish our sports and other extracurricular activities as the school year resumes. At this time, it is our intent to start fall sports.

***Field Trips***

At this time, field trips are pending. We will update parents as needed.

***Communication***

Any time that any of these policies or procedures change, parents will be notified in writing by Mrs. Schiller.