



STM PRESCHOOL  
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# **St. Thomas More Preschool COVID-19 Opening Plan School Year 2021-2022 Procedures and Operations**

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## **Section 1: Letter from the Director**

**At St. Thomas More Preschool, the safety, health and well-being of our community is our top priority.** In light of the current Delta Virus of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Governor mandates, the Texas Licensing Department, and the Diocese of Austin, we are taking the following precautionary measures to ensure the safety of the students, and staff on our campus for the 2021-22 academic year. Our plans to meet these guidelines are based around four foundations: monitoring and responding to student and staff health; limiting and eliminating unnecessary or risky activities and visits to the preschool; continuing cleaning and disinfection protocols; and finally, providing a safe and happy learning environment for children.

It is important to note that the information below is based on the public health situation as we understand it today and is intended to support planning for school year 2021- 2022 activities and instruction beginning September 7, 2021. We will continue to respond to guidance from the Bishop, the Governor and State and local governments; including the licensing department. Our goal is to re-evaluate all policy and procedures as necessary for changes and modifications. We will keep you informed of changes via the weekly e-newsletter and additional emails, as needed.

### **Section 1:1 Catholic Identity**

**Preschool monthly Chapel is still under review and a decision will be made by the end of September as to whether the children will attend monthly Chapel in the Church or follow the guideline below:**

Worship instruction will take place within the classroom curriculum and the Chapel prayers, practices and songs will take place in each classroom and directed by the worship teacher via video.

## Section 2: On Campus Activities & Instruction

### Section 2:1 Safety Protocols

Important note: While it is not possible to eliminate all risk of furthering the spread of COVID-19, the current science suggests there are many steps schools can take to reduce the risks to students, staff, and their families significantly. This guidance is based on what is currently known about the transmission and severity of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) from CDC, Governor Mandates, Licensing department, and the Diocese of Austin. **Changes to the public health situation over the course of the fall or during the school year may necessitate changes to this guidance, including additional restrictions.**

Please contact Ms. Cindy, Preschool Director, to address issues regarding COVID-19 concerns. Her first day is August 3, and she can respond to concerns and communicate to staff and families after that date. She may be contacted via email at [cindy1@stmaustin.org](mailto:cindy1@stmaustin.org) or via telephone at 512-258-1721 ext. 218.

Face coverings will be optional for all children. If you choose for your child to wear a face covering, the staff will work diligently to assure that the covering is on the child for the entire duration that they are in attendance at the preschool.

**\*ALL STMPS STAFF MEMBERS ARE FULLY VACCINATED!\* Face coverings for staff members WILL BE REQUIRED during drop off and pick up times as well as transitions or events where there are larger numbers of people.**

### Section 2:2 Training

- All teachers and staff will receive training on COVID-19 protocols and specific practices for our school prior to the start of school.
- Beginning on the first day of school, students will receive instruction appropriate to their age on hygiene practices and will continue with regular training.

### Section 2:3 Screening Protocol

- Daily screening will be required for each student and staff member. Student screening will be completed during morning drop off as each student is unloaded from their vehicle.

Staff screening will be completed in the preschool office as staff members arrive. **A screening must be completed before any student, staff member, visitor or volunteer is admitted into the school building.** See list of COVID-19 symptoms for screening.

- Children and Staff will have their temperature taken and will assure that they are in compliance with the two statements listed below before coming to school each day. They will contact the school and will not come to school if
  - ✓ They have come into close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19 or presumptive COVID-19.
  - ✓ They have COVID-19 symptoms or fever
- Families and students should ask yourself these self-screening questions daily and check temperature before coming to school:
  - ✓ Do I have a fever or any of the symptoms listed below?
  - ✓ Have I or anyone in my household tested positive for COVID-19?
  - ✓ Have I had any known contact with someone who tested positive for COVID - 19?
  - ✓ If you answered yes to any of these questions, then **DO NOT** come to school. Please contact the Preschool Director if you do not come to school so we can track possible cases.
- COVID-19 Symptoms Screening
  - ✓ Cough
  - ✓ Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - ✓ Chills
  - ✓ Shaking or exaggerated shivering
  - ✓ Significant Muscle pain or ache
  - ✓ Headache
  - ✓ Sore throat
  - ✓ Loss of taste or smell
  - ✓ Diarrhea
  - ✓ Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit
  - ✓ Have had close contact with person who is confirmed or suspected of having COVID-19

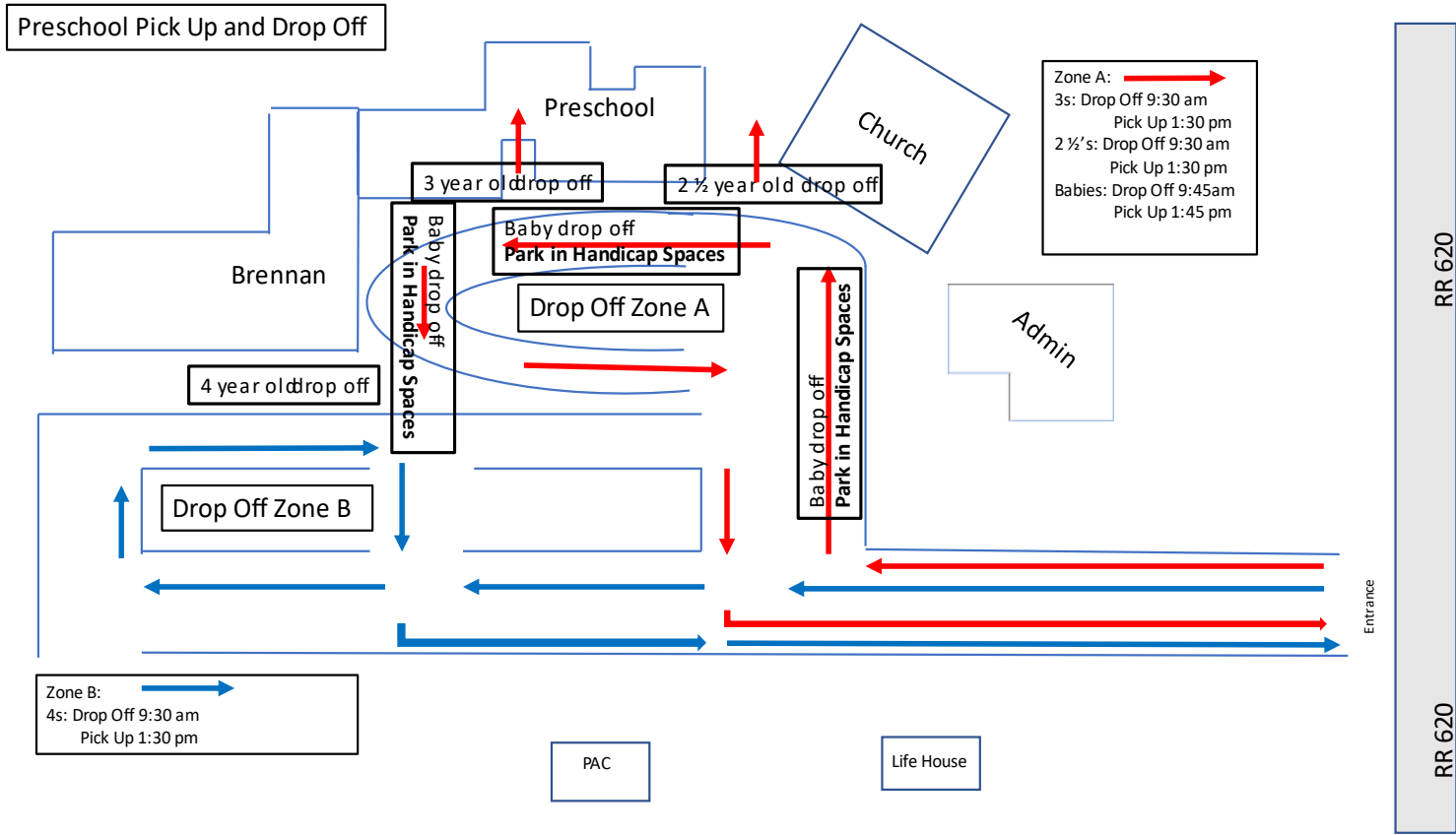
\*\*\*Close Contact is defined as: 1) being directly exposed to infectious secretions (e.g., being coughed on while not wearing a mask or face shield); or 2) being within 6 feet for a cumulative duration of 15 minutes, while not wearing a mask or face shield; if either occurred at any time in the last 14 days at the same time the individual was infectious. Individuals are presumed infectious at least two days prior to symptom onset or, in the case of asymptomatic individuals who are lab-confirmed with COVID-19, two days prior to the confirming lab test.

## Section 2:4 Communication

- Signs will be placed at all entrances to state when to stay home and if entering you consent to being healthy.
- Signs regarding current Face covering requirements will be placed at all entrances.
- Regular emails with updated information to keep staff and parents updated.

## Section 2:5 Arrival Protocols

- A screening of students by a staff member wearing a face covering will occur before students can enter the school building. Parents are to stay in their cars during drop-off. We DO NOT REQUIRE parents and any other person in the vehicle to wear a face covering while the child is being unloaded.
- ALL students (or their parent) will answer screening questions.
- If the health screening is approved, students will be unloaded from the vehicle and escorted to their classroom. At this time, parents are not able to walk students to class to reduce the number of adult-to-adult interactions. We will remove this restriction as soon as it is safe to do so.
- If the health screening is not approved, the student must return home.
- **There will be two designated drop off zones for the preschool students. Drop off zone A will be utilized by the 3 year old classes, the 2 ½ year old classes and the Baby classes. Drop off zone B will be utilized by the 4 year old classes. Please see map attachment of the drop off zones.**
- **Drop off times will be staggered to provide traffic control and allow for social distancing as the students are being unloaded and escorted to their classrooms.**
  - **Drop off time for the 3 year old classes in Zone A is 9:30 a.m.**
  - **Drop off time for the 2 ½ year old classes in Zone A is 9:30 a.m.**
  - **Drop off time for the 4 year olds in Zone B is 9:30 a.m.**
  - **Drop off time for Baby classes in Zone A is 9:45 a.m.**
  - **Drop off for families with multiple children will be arranged to accommodate you only dropping off at one time. Please contact Ms. Cindy, Preschool Director if this applies to your family.**
  - **\*See next page for map.**



## Section 2:6 Classrooms Protocols

- **Students WILL NOT be required to wear face coverings. Parents may choose to have their child wear a face covering and the STMPs staff will work diligently to assure that the face covering is worn while they are at the preschool; please advise your child's teacher.**
- Students will only interact with their assigned teacher and teacher assistant as well as the assigned children to that class. THERE WILL BE LITTLE INTERACTION WITH OTHER CHILDREN OR OTHER ADULTS IN THE PRESCHOOL. Social distancing will be practiced as much as possible while in the preschool building.
- Snack time will take place in the classroom or outside with their assigned group and social distancing will be practiced.
- Lunch will be staggered with only every other table used by a class and then tables will be sanitized before the next group enters.
- Playground time will include ONLY ONE AGE GROUP AT A TIME. Playground equipment will be cleaned on a regular basis.
- Student's belongings will be stored separately.
- Students will bring in their own filled water bottle; if possible, please send two water bottles and please assure that they are labeled with your child's name. Water bottle refills will be done by the teachers/assistants as needed. NO water fountains located in the preschool can be used as per CDC guidelines.
- The number of different teacher(s) and educational assistant(s) that interact with groups of students throughout the day will be kept to an extreme minimum.
- Individual activities in the classroom or activities that encourage more space between students and staff will be incorporated into the instructional day. For younger students, group activities will be adapted to minimize physical contact and reduce shared items.
- Desks, doorknobs, and restrooms will be cleaned daily.
- Physical education will take place outside when weather permits and will be taught by the physical education teacher. One class at a time will go to P.E. to minimize contact with other children and/or staff members.
- Worship and music will take place in the worship/music room and will be taught by the worship/music teacher. One class at a time will go to worship and music to minimize contact with other children and/or other staff members.



- ALL large, schoolwide events (such as programs, meetings, carnivals, parades, etc.) are planned to take place as scheduled. Volunteers and guests must be screened prior to entering the building and are encouraged to wear a face covering but not required to; especially those who have not been vaccinated.

## **Section 2:7 Hallway Protocols**

- Walking through hallways will be minimized and maintaining social distancing (6 ft. apart from each other) will be strictly enforced.

## **Section 2:8 Lunch/Snack Protocols**

- Students will wipe down their desks before eating.
- After wiping down desks, students will wash their hands before eating.
- Students will eat snacks in their classrooms or outside if weather permits and at the teacher's discretion.
- Students will eat lunch in the Family Center with social distancing used; 50% capacity. Tables will be sanitized between classes.
- Students must bring their own individually packaged snack each day.
- Students will not share food.
- Students will bring their own individually packaged lunch each day.
- Use disposable food service items when possible (e.g., utensils, dishes). If disposable items are not feasible, ensure that all non-disposable food service items are handled by the student only and returned to the lunchbox to be sanitized at home. Disposable lunch bags are encouraged.
- At this time, we are not able to allow parents to visit for lunch or a child's birthday. Parents and teachers are encouraged to come up with alternative plans for celebrating birthdays; we will strongly encourage prewrapped treats for these celebrations. Please check with your child's teacher for approved treats.

## **Section 2:9 Hand Washing Protocols**

- Each teacher must teach proper handwashing skills that include 20 seconds of washing hands with soap and running water. All sinks on the campus will be utilized and sanitized throughout the day with social distancing required.
- Each teacher needs to schedule a minimum of 4 handwashing times

throughout the day.

- Suggested times to wash hands: before and after eating snack and lunch, after recess, before leaving for the end of the day. (Students will sanitize immediately upon entering school in the morning.)
- Hand sanitizer will be available in each classroom and work space as well as hallways and entry ways.
- Classroom restrooms will be used for all potty needs. No more than 1 student in the restroom at one time
- Tissues will be provided in classrooms and common areas to encourage students and staff to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, and if not available, to cover with their elbows. Used tissues will be thrown in the trash and hands washed immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or hand sanitizer will be used.

## **Section 2:10 Recess**

### **General Protocols for all Grade Levels**

Safety Protocols in Place:

- 1) Face Shields or face coverings are not required during playground time but students and/or staff may choose to wear them.
- 2) Hand sanitizer will be available for students, teachers, and monitors near the recess play area.
- 3) Hand washing will be done before recess, during recess (if needed), and after recess.
- 4) Maintain one age group of students at a time when playing in each designated recess area.
- 5) Shared Objects
  - a) Discourage sharing of items that are difficult to clean or disinfect.
  - b) Keep each child's belongings separated from others' and in individually labeled containers, cubbies, or areas.

## **Section 2:11 Specials Classes**

Specials will be included in student's schedules. Students receive music, physical education and worship instruction from a teacher other than their classroom teacher and in a different location other than their classroom (P.E. room and music/worship room).

## Section 2:12 Dismissal Protocols

- Wash hands before leaving
- Students will be dismissed outside and will be loaded into their vehicles by staff who will be wearing face coverings.
- Parents are to remain in their cars during dismissal.
- **We will have staggered dismissal times to allow students to maintain social distance.**
  - **Dismissal for 2 ½ year old classes will be at 1:30 p.m. and students will be loaded in Zone A.**
  - **Dismissal for 3 year old classes will be at 1:30 p.m. and students will be loaded into their vehicles in Zone A.**
  - **Dismissal for 4 year old classes will be at 1:30 p.m. and students will be loaded into their vehicles in Zone B.**
  - **Dismissal for Baby classes will at 1:45 p.m. and babies will be picked up by their parents in Zone A. Parents may park in the handicap spaces to walk up and collect their child by the main doors.**
- **Walking into the building to pick up children has been suspended.** The only exceptions are for parents picking up children from the office who are ill. If a parent must enter the building for ANY reason, they will have to follow the screening procedures.

## Section 3: Illness Protocol

When to stay home (self-isolate)

- If you have symptoms of COVID-19
- If you have tested positive for COVID-19 or you were exposed to someone with COVID-19 within the last 14 days
- Notify the Preschool Director at your earliest opportunity so cases can be tracked.

When a staff/faculty or student should be sent home:

- If fever is above 100
- If fever is 99.0 - 99.9, check fever every 30 minutes. If fever increases, send home
- If unresolved coughing, fatigue, headache, new onset diarrhea, or other COVID-19 symptoms are present

Any student who reports feeling feverish should have temperature checked immediately.

Students will be immediately separated when they show COVID-19 symptoms while at school until the student can be picked up by a parent or guardian. The school will plan to separate ill students with COVID symptoms from students with non-COVID symptoms.

Any individuals—including teachers, staff, students, or other campus visitors— who themselves either: (a) are lab-confirmed to have COVID-19; or (b) experience the symptoms of COVID-19 (listed below) must stay at home throughout the infection period, and cannot return to campus until the school system screens the individual to determine any of the below conditions for campus re-entry have been met:

In the case of an individual who was diagnosed with COVID-19, the individual may return to school when all three of the following criteria are met:

1. At least three days (72 hours) have passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever reducing medications); and
2. the individual has complete resolution in symptoms (e.g., cough, congestion, etc); and
3. at least ten days have passed since symptoms first appeared

In the case of an individual who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and who is not evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19 is assumed to have COVID-19, and the individual may not return to the campus until the individual has completed the same three-step set of criteria listed above.

If the individual has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to school before completing the above stay at home period, the individual must either (a) obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis or (b) receive a confirmation that they are free of COVID via acute infection tests at an approved COVID-19 testing location found at <https://tdem.texas.gov/covid-19/>.

If there is a positive case for COVID whether teacher, staff, or student, the school must identify any individuals who had regular or close contact with the affected participant. This will include the entire class (students, teachers and staff) and potentially other teachers and staff (if multiple teachers work regularly with the student or staff member). If those teachers and/or the students interacted with other students or staff on a regular basis or came in close contact with them, those students and staff should be considered potentially exposed as well and should be screened for symptoms and should self-isolate for the recommended period of time given by the Williamson County Health District.

Written notification will be sent if a positive COVID-19 case is identified among school participants (teachers, staff, or students). For students, such written notification is to be

provided to the parents or guardians of the students. The school must also notify the Travis County Health District and the Licensing department within 24 hours of receiving information about a positive case on campus.

Any student, teacher, or staff member who has had close contact with someone, to include family members or anyone in the community, who is lab confirmed to have COVID-19 (or experienced any of the symptoms of COVID-19) should self-isolate for the 10 day incubation period and will not be allowed on campus. They should be screened at the end of the 10 days, if they do not experience any COVID-19 symptoms during that period, they can return to school. If they experience symptoms, they must self-isolate until the conditions outlined above have been met.

The school community will be informed when a student, staff member, or visitor has a confirmed case of COVID-19. To respect the privacy of our community members, only required information will be shared which WILL NOT include names of ill persons.

## **Section 4: Visitor/ Volunteer Procedures**

**At this time, only adults essential to school operation will be allowed into the school building to reduce the number of adult-to-adult interactions.** We will lift these restrictions as soon as it is safe to do so. All adults will be required to be screened with a temperature check upon entering the preschool.

The preschool staff deeply appreciates your volunteer support! However, volunteer opportunities will be somewhat limited. The preschool will work with the Booster Club to provide alternative and/or modified opportunities. All adults essential to the operation of the school will be screened to determine

1- If they have any of the symptoms below

- COVID-19 Symptoms
  - ☐ Cough
  - ☐ Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - ☐ Chills
  - ☐ Repeated shaking with chills
  - ☐ Significant Muscle pain or ache
  - ☐ Headache
  - ☐ Sore throat
  - ☐ Shaking or exaggerated shivering
  - ☐ Loss of taste or smell
  - ☐ Diarrhea
  - ☐ Feverish or a temperature greater than or equal to 100 degrees

2- They have been in close contact with an individual who is lab confirmed with COVID 19.

All adults will have their temperature checked. Any individual who fails these screening criteria will not be allowed to enter the school building.

## **Section 5: Cleaning of facilities**

- School areas will be cleaned once during the school day and once after the school day. A set time with the cleaning crew will be established.
- Daily cleaning will consist of both routine cleaning and disinfecting.  
Routine cleaning with soap and water removes germs and dirt from surfaces and should be done daily and if any surfaces are visibly dirty.
- Cleaning crew will disinfect the following frequently touched surfaces daily:  
Bathroom counters, sinks, toilets, faucets, handles, phones, laptops, keyboards, entrance and exit doors, classroom desks and tables
- Teacher/Students will wipe desks, tables, individual laptops, door knobs, light switches and phones as well as shared items used in the classroom twice a day with wipes.
- Custodians will clean common surfaces throughout the school day to include school door knobs, bathroom sinks and faucets, light switches, entrance and exit doors.
- P.E. equipment will be cleaned and sanitized between each class.

## **Section 6: Closure**

**Thank you for your support and understanding of these protocols!** We continue to prioritize the health and safety of the children, families, and our staff at St. Thomas More Catholic Preschool. With this in mind, we are reopening on Tuesday, September 7, 2021.

We will continue to monitor COVID-19 closely, utilizing CDC and childcare industry expert guidance as well as guidance from our Pastor and the Austin Diocese. We will make EVERY effort possible to assure that our school is a safe, healthy, happy, fun, loving learning environment! 😊

Please do not hesitate to reach out to Ms. Cindy with any questions you may have or if additional information is needed. The preschool office number is 512-258-1721 ext. 218. The Director can be reached at [cindy1@stmaustin.org](mailto:cindy1@stmaustin.org).