



# St. Mary Our Mother School

In late July, St. Mary Our Mother School was required to submit a Reopening Plan with the New York State Department of Health (DOH) and the New York State Education Department (NYSED). This plan was designed to help our school, our staff, and our parents successfully and safely reopen our school to students this fall. The plan was developed over several weeks during the summer by a Task Force whose members represented our stakeholders and integrated feedback from staff, educators, parents and medical health professionals. The plan also reflects important guidance from the DOH and NYSED, as well as the Diocese of Rochester. Parents/guardians will receive a copy of the plan via email and a copy of the plan will be housed on our school website.

We know that parents have many questions about the start of the school year, so we have created this document that outlines many of the frequently asked questions (FAQ) from parents about our reopening plan. These questions are divided up into three sections, each addressing a separate aspect of the reopening process. The categories are:

1. Health and Safety: General health and safety questions, such as social distancing, face coverings, and facility cleaning.
2. Infection Protocols: How we will handle instances where 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.

Please note that the St. Mary Our Mother School Reopening Plan submitted to the State contains general guidance for our school. Based on our submitted plan, we are providing parents with the following description of how these guidelines will be reflected in our unique school setting.

St. Mary Our Mother School has a long history of providing a top-quality Catholic education. We look forward to continuing that education in the school year to come. If you have additional questions, we urge you to contact the Principal ([jean.yorio@dor.org](mailto:jean.yorio@dor.org)) or email our school's general email account ([h.smoms@dor.org](mailto:h.smoms@dor.org)).

## Health and Safety

### Will my child be required to wear a face covering?

>Yes– all students and staff will be required to wear an approved face covering, per state and health department guidelines, in our effort to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Staff and students are required to wear facial coverings whenever social distancing cannot be maintained, when moving around the classrooms or the building and in all common spaces. Face coverings must cover both nose and the mouth and may be cloth or disposable. St. Mary Our Mother School will provide face coverings for those students and staff who are unable to provide their own. Mask break opportunities will be provided during the school day as much as possible in accordance with state requirements. Students may remove their masks when eating, during instruction and when exerting themselves i.e. physical education class, but the appropriate social distancing will be required.

## What if a child cannot wear a mask for health or other reasons?

>If there is a medical or emotional health concern and the student cannot wear a mask, a written note is required from the child's medical provider stating the concern and their recommendation. The written notice must be received by the school before the student will be permitted to not wear a mask within the school building or on campus. (Please note: Students that utilize the transportation departments of our local public school districts will be required to follow all health and safety protocol from that district while riding on their school buses. Please contact those transportation departments to discuss their requirements.)

## Will classrooms be socially distant? (cohort, 6 ft., staggered arrival/dismissal)

>Yes— classrooms will be set-up in a way so that student desks are **6 feet apart** in all directions. Classrooms with tables (PreK and Kdg.) will have physical barriers separating students at tables. In addition, all hallway movement will be 1-way foot traffic and there will be markings throughout all hallways and through most common spaces that indicate the appropriate 6 foot distance.

>As an added measure of health and safety, St. Mary Our Mother School will follow a **cohort model** that will ensure that student groups are fixed and limits potential exposure to the COVID-19 public health emergency. All content and special area instruction will be received within the grade-level class group, but cohorts will share recess, lunch and other special congregate times (i.e. Mass, virtual field trips). The cohort model is very familiar to students that have been at SMOMS, and are as follows:

COHORT 1: PreK 3

COHORT 2: PreK-4 and Kindergarten

COHORT 3: Grades 1 and 2

COHORT 4: Grades 3 and 4

COHORT 5: Grade 5 and 6

>**Arrival and dismissal** will be conducted using a staggered method, as much as possible. Arrival will be described later in this document, in the section describing our required daily AM health screenings .

**Dismissal** will follow a slightly different schedule and procedure than our students have followed in the past.

PreK-3 and PreK-4 will dismiss at **2:30pm**. PreK-3 parents will pick-up their children directly from St. Joseph's House. PreK-4 parents will pick-up their children from the southeast doors (by the playground) of the main school building.

\*\*PreK-3 parents should park on Westlake Street, and walk to the entrance of St. Joseph's House at dismissal to pick-up their child. PreK-4 parents should park in the southeast parking lot of the main school building and are asked to wait in their cars until their child's class is brought out for dismissal. Teachers will dismiss their students directly to parents as they walk up to the school building.\*\*

Kindergarten through grade 2 will dismiss at **2:45pm**, from the southeast doors (by the playground) of the main school building.

Grades 3-6 will dismiss at **3:00pm**, from the southeast doors of the main school building.

\*\*Parents are asked to park in the southeast parking lot and wait in their cars until their child's class is brought out for dismissal. Teachers will dismiss their students to parents when parents walk up to the school building.\*\*\*

\*\*We ask that parents and students refrain from congregating outside the school, and return to their cars to exit the school campus as soon as possible. For parents with multiple children in various grade-levels, we ask that you follow the same procedure (wait in car until your child's class comes outside) for the dismissal of each of your children. The school playground will not be available for play after school dismisses. Our custodial/maintenance staff will sanitize the playground equipment each afternoon, prior to Stay and Play. We are sorry for this inconvenience, but we hope you understand that we must follow this protocol to ensure the safety and health of all of our children.\*\*

## Will my child be screened before being allowed in school?

>Every student will participate in a **temperature and health screening** before they can enter the school each day. This screening must include a temperature check, as well as answers to the following questions:

- ⇒ Have you been in close or proximate contact in the past 14 days with anyone who has tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 or who has had symptoms of COVID-19?
- ⇒ Have you tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 in the past 14 days?
- ⇒ Have you experienced any symptoms of COVID-19, including a temperature of greater than 100.0°F in the past 14 days?
- ⇒ Have you travelled internationally or from a state with widespread community transmission of COVID-19 and is restricted per the New York State Travel Advisory in the past 14 days?

For PreK-4 through grade 6 students, there will be 2 staff members, including the School Nurse on days she is assigned to SMOMS, that will ensure this screening takes place prior to any student entering the building. We are designing an arrival procedure that will be slightly different than in the past, and will have parents driving into the southeast parking lot (near the playground) for drop-off in the AM.

PreK-3 parents should park their cars on Westlake Street and should take their child directly to the door of St. Joseph's House, where a member of the PreK-3 staff will greet students/parents and will conduct the temperature and health screening procedure.

Students arriving by bus will take part in the temperature and health screening at the Main Entrance of the school, where their bus will drop them off each morning.

>In order to make sure our schools are as safe as possible, we need the assistance of all parents and guardians of our students. If your child is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, who have a temperature, or who would answer affirmatively to any of the four health screening questions mentioned above, we ask that you keep them at home. If your child develops any of the COVID-19 symptoms during the school day, which could include a fever, we will call you and ask that you pick your child up from school immediately, with a referral to get them tested for the COVID-19 virus.

## Will staff be screened before coming to school?

>Yes– staff will be subject to the same screening procedures as students.

## What about visitors to school?

>Visitor access to the school will be limited to essential visits only. This means that we will not utilize parent volunteers during the school day, and all use of the school building outside of our school population will not be permitted by any organization (including Soccer Shots and parish faith formation classes). Essential visits might include mandated inspections and/or service repairs, and will be by appointment only and every attempt will be made to arrange these visits for after school hours.

## Will the school be cleaned and disinfected?

>Our school maintenance/custodial staff will continue to clean and disinfect our school building and playground in accordance with CDC guidance. All spaces will be cleaned regularly, frequently, and thoroughly in order to prevent the spread of infection.

## Infection Protocols

### What if a student or staff member begins to exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 during the school day?

>Any student or staff member that exhibits symptoms of COVID-19, or any illness, during the school day will go directly to the Nurse's Office, where they will remain in "isolation" until they can be picked up. Symptoms of COVID-19 will result in a referral for diagnostic testing. Anyone sent home with COVID symptoms is expected to follow-through with diagnostic testing as directed by their health care provider in a timely manner and proof of testing must be provided to the school. A thorough cleaning and sanitization will follow each isolation.

### What if a student or staff member is diagnosed with COVID-19?

>Proof of testing, verification of quarantine and lack of symptoms for those confirmed with COVID-19 must be provided to the school before a student or staff member can return to the in-person learning environment.

### How will St. Mary Our Mother School determine when/if there is a need for cohort or school closure due to a positive case of COVID-19?

>The St. Mary Our Mother School nurse and Principal will work with the Chemung County Health Department and the Diocese of Rochester in the event of a positive case within our school. Communication with parents will be immediate and will be delivered through our My Student's Progress all-call/text message system, as well as the email system. Parents are asked to ensure that the school has current email addresses and telephone numbers that will be used for such communications.

## Academics and Programming

### Are there options for instruction during the 2020-2021 school year?

>We are pleased to be able to provide **in-person instruction** starting in September for all St. Mary Our Mother School students. Since we cannot know the future challenges of the current health emergency, our teachers are prepared to move into a distance learning model if it is determined that a school closure is necessary.

>If parents believe that their child is not able to participate in, or they are not comfortable with, an in-person instructional model, they have the option of having their child participate in their instruction/learning following a remote learning model, however this may not include direct daily instruction by their classroom teachers. Parents choosing for remote learning for their child will need to take on a higher level of responsibility for the facilitation of their child's instruction. Classroom and special area teachers will provide materials that each child would need for the remote lessons, and parents would be responsible to ensure that the students participate in the learning activities at home by facilitating lessons through the materials sent home. The planning process continues as our faculty and staff work to find an effective method that will assist students that are not attending in-person instruction. Any parent that feels that this is the best option for their child(ren) will need to set-up a meeting with the Principal to further discuss the implications of this model.

### **Will students participate in specials (art, music, phys. Ed., technology, music)?**

>Students in Kindergarten through grade 6 will participate in special area classes, just as they have in the past. Depending on class size, some classes may need to split into smaller groups to attend these classes so that we are maintaining the appropriate social distancing (6 ft).

>Every attempt will be made so that PreK students will benefit from (at least) some of our special area classes. A true challenge for the 2020-2021 school year will be our scheduling of special area classes because we must limit the number of students within those classroom spaces to allow for the appropriate social distancing. But remember. . .students in PreK receive their daily program filled with music, art and physical activity, provided by their classroom teachers. That's one of the beautiful aspects of an early childhood program. We are working hard to find creative ways to help all students benefit from the best, well-rounded educational program as much as possible within the constraints of our current health guidance.

### **How will my child's social-emotional wellness be addressed?**

>The current pandemic, and the limitations that have created a "distant" setting for education and life in general, may have created many challenges to our student's social-emotional wellness. We also know that social-emotional wellness is the necessary foundation for all learning. Our teachers will be working throughout the school year to ensure that our students are recognizing their emotions, and finding supports for challenges that may cause them to struggle. Intentional planning of lessons and attitudes that support positive social-emotional wellness will include topics such as empathy, resilience, healing, building relationships in a "distant" setting, and open-mindedness.

### **If distance learning is mandated at some point during the school year, how will that look for my child(ren)?**

>Our teachers learned a lot about distance learning over the past 6 months, and are ready to move back into that model if it is determined to be necessary. If we go into a distance learning model, parents/students can expect a few changes from their experience from this past spring:

1. Attendance will be taken, and consistent attendance will be expected every day.
2. Grades will be assigned to student work in a similar manner as is done during in-person instruction.
3. Assessments will be given and grades assigned regularly. Assessment can take on a variety of formats, and could include formative, summative, project-based, and presentation-style.
3. Teachers will work daily with students with direct instruction—high quality student/teacher engagement will be expected every day.
4. Students will participate in special area instruction and work will be expected in each of these areas.

### **If my family does not have access to technology (in the event that my child is required to do remote learning at some point during the school year), will there be the opportunity to have a device provided to my child by the school?**

>Yes—our school will work with any family that does not have sufficient technology devices at home to ensure that their child will be able to fully participate in their educational plan, in the event we are forced into a distance learning model.

### Will there be before and/or after-school care?

>Early arrival for students can begin as early as 7:30am. Once students have successfully completed their daily temperature/health screening, they will enter the building and proceed directly to their classrooms. Parents will not be allowed to walk their children into the school for the 2020-2021 school year.

>Stay and Play (after-school care) will begin as soon as students dismiss from their classrooms. Some important points to understand are:

- ... Students will follow the same cohort model during Stay and Play that they follow during the school day.
- ... Stay and Play ends at 6:00pm, but parents have the option of picking their child(ren) up anytime after 3:00pm.
- ... Families will be charged \$15/day for SNP, regardless of the amount of time at SNP (billing begins at 3:00pm)
- ... When parents come to pick-up their child, they need to call the SNP phone (607-481-9840) to notify SNP staff. SNP staff will bring students to their parents at the Main Entrance. Fobs will not be activated during the 2020-2021 school year.

### Will there be a Parent Association facilitated lunch each week, as we have done in the past?

>No, at least for the start of the school year, there will be no Parent Association sponsored lunch served. Students will need to bring their own lunch to school (as well as a snack) each day. Food cannot be shared.

**COMMUNICATION** has always been an essential element of effectiveness in any setting...school, work, family, community...

With all the uncertainty surrounding the COVID-19 virus and its impact on all of our lives, communication and family engagement will be more important than ever during the 2020-2021 school year. By working together and communicating effectively, our students will be more successful and everyone will benefit. St. Mary Our Mother School is committed to maintaining regular, frequent and transparent two-way communication throughout the school year. Our communications need to be clear and consistent, and mutual engagement is encouraged for all families in the process.

Our staff has committed to the following methods of communication:

- ◇ Classroom newsletters (weekly)
- ◇ School-wide newsletters (monthly)
- ◇ Student-Parent Handbooks (sent home electronically in September)
- ◇ School website ([www.stmaryourmotherschool.org](http://www.stmaryourmotherschool.org))
- ◇ Facebook page
- ◇ Signs (hallways, classroom, restrooms, O'Brien Hall, entranceways, driveways/parking lots)
- ◇ Surveys (parents, students, staff)
- ◇ Emails
- ◇ MSP texts/all calls

Thank you for your commitment to St. Mary Our Mother School and the safety and health of all students and staff. We all need to do our part by following these guidelines so that we can focus on the goal of providing the best Catholic school education for all of our students. May God Bless St. Mary Our Mother School!