



St. Charles Catholic School Welcoming Our Students Back: Restoring Safe Schools September 2020

Welcome back to school! This letter is to inform you of the planning considerations that have taken place for the 2020-2021 school year and COVID-19. Extra information has been attached to this communication letter to provide you with the updated government information, as well as with set protocols and procedures.

Planning Considerations

This plan has been created based on the current information provided by both Public Health, as well as the government. It is subject to change, and must be seen as a *flexible* plan for the 2020-2021 school year. This re-entry plan must follow provincial public health measures, as well as learning and school day structure. In creating this plan, the government document, WELCOMING OUR STUDENTS BACK: RESTORING SAFE SCHOOLS K-12 Guidelines for September 2020 was used as a resource. A plan was also submitted to the government in July outlining three scenarios, and the plans that would be addressed in each of them. At this time, the government has mandated Response Level 1, which is explained in this communication letter, as school re-opens on September 8th.

St. Charles Catholic School will stay up to date and ensure that these planning considerations follow Public Health guidelines, and will monitor staff, students, and parents, to make sure that all guidelines are being complied with.

Please take the time to read this document through carefully, as it includes a lot of information that is necessary for the beginning of a new school year during the pandemic. It is necessary to note that this plan must remain flexible, and is subject to change, as updated information from both the government and Public Health becomes available.

Current information about COVID-19 in Manitoba can be found at <http://www.manitoba.ca/covid19/>

Or Manitoba Education's Latest COVID-19 Education News website at

<https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/index.html> for the latest news and for frequently asked questions.

September 2020-Return to In-Class Learning for All K-12 Students
Kindergarten to Gr. 8 students will return for 5 days of in-class instruction per week.

This is the plan that the government has decided to implement for the start of the 2020-2021 school year, beginning on September 8th for all students in K-8.

Response Level 1

In this plan, screening, enhanced hand hygiene, physical distancing, use of cohorts will be very important to maintain the health and safety of both our students and staff.

- Students would return to classrooms with near normal conditions, and follow all Public Health measures while in-class learning takes place. Staggered recesses, assigned entrances/exits, washrooms, etc. would all be put in place as new protocols. Extra-curricular activities, BASC activities will be offered if they meet the safety guidelines and requirements. Sports activities will be offered according to the guidelines set for sports teams/activities by the MHSAA, the Manitoba High School Athletic Association. The MHSAA's Return to School Support Plan allows school sports to return in a controlled, modified way, which is flexible. More information will follow when school begins.
- Students will work in their classrooms as per usual, in their grade level. However, lunch, Phys. Ed, Music, Computer Lab, and French, will all be structured so that students are not overlapping with each other, but still able to utilize those speciality classrooms according to timetables.
- Recess will be staggered for all grades, as will lunch hour. Recess is important for all students' health, both physical and mental, so recess will be encouraged.
- All students will eat lunch in their classrooms as we begin the new school year. Microwaves will be available in each hallway. Our hot lunch program will also be available to students. All hot lunches will be prepared/wrapped individually to adhere to safety guidelines.
- Staff and students will remain at home if they are not feeling well. There will be no exception to this rule. Staff and students who get sick while at school will be kept isolated until they can be picked up. Immediate pickup will be necessary, and emergency contacts will be contacted if parents cannot be reached, or cannot come to school to pick up their child in a timely manner.
- Both parents and non-essential visitors will be limited from coming into the school. We love to see parents! However, due to the new restrictions, no parents will be allowed access to the school building unless they have made a prior appointment via phone or email with a staff member, or Administration. If parents are picking up their child due to illness or an appointment, you will be buzzed in and must report directly to the office. Office staff may also deliver your child to the doors. Therefore, at drop off and pick up each morning and afternoon, parents will have to leave their children at the doors. Social distancing will be the parents' responsibility. Staff will be on hand at all doors to welcome in students, as well as to see them out of the building

at the end of the day. Fobs will not be working on a regular schedule either to help with this new routine.

- BASC parents: If you are using the early BASC drop off or later pick up, you will have to contact Ms. Furutani, and a staff member will meet your child at the door, or deliver your child to the door.
- Students will not use water fountains, only water bottle re-fills, or water cooler options. Please send a clean water bottle daily with your son/daughter.
- Cleaning of washrooms and high touch surfaces, (ie) stair railings, will become daily protocol, and done consistently.
- Teachers will teach students about personal hygiene practices, as per our standard procedure at the start of every school year. Parents are also expected to discuss these hygiene practices at home too.

For example:

- Discuss good hand washing with your child, and the importance of it. This is also good preparation for our upcoming flu season.
- Discuss the importance of hand sanitizing if your child is not able to hand wash.
- Remind your child that sneezing or coughing into his/her arm is the best option.
- Let them know that it's okay to wear a mask if they feel more comfortable, and some of their classmates and teachers will be too.
- Let them know that school will be different this year, but all of the staff at SCCS will do their very best to keep everyone as safe as possible.
- Remind them that it's okay to ask their teachers or Administration questions for reassurance or clarity.
- Talking with your child prior to school starting will ensure that all expectations are clear and understood. Teachers will also be discussing them with their classes at the beginning of the new school year, and will continue to reinforce the expectations/mandates as time goes on.

Institutional Operations

Pandemic Response Team

St. Charles Catholic School has established a Pandemic Response Team, which includes Administration, Executive Board members, our Maintenance Manager, IT specialist, as well as other key staff members. This team met regularly during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and continues to do so. All recommendations from the Public Health Office are followed, and plans are built around these recommendations. As Principal, I am involved in multiple meetings which involve the latest COVID-19 pandemic information, mandates, planning templates, and discussions.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

- Enhanced cleaning and sanitizing will continue on a daily basis, as well as encouraging all students to wash their hands more frequently. This includes going in and out of their classroom, when visiting the Computer Lab, Music room, etc.
- Daily sanitizing of “high touch” areas will be done. Teachers will also be sanitizing more frequently in their classrooms each day.
- Each classroom has hand sanitizer/cleaning supplies available.
- Our night cleaner will also pay more attention to sanitizing details throughout the school building.
- Our building Maintenance Manager will continue with implementing the daily cleaning and disinfecting.

Hand Hygiene

- As students enter the building, they will be required to hand sanitize.
- Each classroom also has hand sanitizer in it. Students would be encouraged to not only use hand sanitizer, but also to wash their hands frequently and this would be scheduled into their school day at regular intervals.
- If students are moving between classrooms (ie) to the Music room, hand sanitizing would be a requirement.

Screening

- Screening for symptoms of COVID-19 must occur each day prior to coming to school.
- Parents must follow home screening measures according to the government website prior to sending their child to school. The screening tools developed by the Province of Manitoba are to be used as a reference. (Manitoba COVID-19 Screening Tool)
- **An up-to-date list of symptoms can be found at:**

<https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/about/index.html>

[https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool/.](https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool/)

Use the Self-Assessment tool to check if your child should be tested for COVID-19. Call Health Links at 204-788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257 if you notice symptoms or if you need more information.

- Any students who report to school and are unwell will be sent home immediately. If they are already at school, parents will be called, and students will be kept isolated in a quarantine room until they are picked up. The student’s workspace would be disinfected immediately.
- Mandates and information provided by Public Health will be followed diligently.

Physical Distancing In and Around the School

- Signage regarding physical distancing, proper hand hygiene and symptoms of COVID-19 are all around the school, and have been in place since our soft re-opening in June 2020. Signs are also found on all of the main doors of our school.
 - Physical/social distancing will enforced wherever possible. Again, signage has been displayed in multiple areas in the school, and students will be encouraged to move along one side of hallway/staircase, etc., as per usual.
 - Classes will experience staggered flow with regards to recess, classroom breaks, lunch, etc.
 - Staggered drop off and pick up will be implemented.
 - Since physical distancing may be difficult to do all the time in a school setting, cohorts will be established at SCCS. Cohorts involve keeping groups of students together and avoiding interaction with other cohorts.
 - Middle Years students will not be changing classes this year. Instead, teachers will change classes which will help with cohorts in Middle Years.
- **Personal Protective Equipment**
As of August 13th, Dr. Roussin, Manitoba's Chief Health Officer, has strongly recommended masks for children/staff in Grs. 5 and up. Parents who have children in younger grades may choose to have their children wear a mask as well.
 - Since masks have not been made mandatory by Public Health at this time, it will be encouraged at the school level. However, SCCS is strongly encouraging the use of masks for the recommended grades. Masks are now available to order on our uniform website. Masks do not have to be uniform colours.
 - If a staff member or a student chooses to wear a mask to school, it is important that the mask be worn properly. Instruction to staff will be given prior to school starting, and teachers will discuss with students when classes begin.
 - Practicing how to wear a mask at home will be important prior to school beginning. Students will remove their mask when eating or drinking, but for the most part, will wear them for a good part of each school day.

Limiting Non-Essential Visitors

- Although parent involvement in our school community is important and widely accepted, provincial guidelines instruct us to limit the number of non-essential visitors in the school for the time being. As previously mentioned, if possible, parents are asked to conduct school business via email or telephone. Parents may accompany their children to the school doors, but we ask that parents refrain from coming into the school.

Nutrition Program/Food Sharing

- Our school cafeteria prepares hot lunch meals in advance and in-house, and will be pre-packaging all lunches individually. This is already standard procedure at St. Charles Catholic School.

- St. Charles Catholic School has a no share food policy, which are students are well aware of. Please remind your child not to share food when having lunch or snacks.

Field Trips

- Field trips will not be encouraged for the beginning of the school year, and will be brought forward to Administration on a case-by-case basis as the school year progresses.

Learning Preparedness

Music Education

- SCCS Music teachers will follow guidelines set out for best music protocol, as well as do more disinfecting in their perspective classrooms. Unfortunately, singing will not be encouraged this year, due to concerns with transmission.
- Any instruments used in the Kindergarten to Gr. 2 Music classes, (ie) xylophones, will be disinfected between classes.
- Since all of our Grs. 3-8 students have their own instruments, (ie) violins, sharing will not be an issue.

Physical Education

- For Physical Education, SCCS Phys. Ed. specialists will work within the guidelines mandated, and will take Phys. Ed. classes outside whenever possible, as well as encourage social distancing wherever possible.
- Usually our Grs. 4-8 students are required to change for Phys. Ed. classes, but this would not be implemented at the start of this school year.
- Toys/manipulatives/gym equipment, etc. will be used in cohort/classroom groups, and cleaned on a regular basis.
- Students will not be allowed to bring toys from home to play with during Phys. Ed., at recess, or in after school care.

Assemblies/School Masses/School Gatherings

- Large group gatherings such as assemblies and School Masses would not be held as an entire school community. Having smaller group meetings/activities would be implemented where possible.

Extra-curricular Activities/Sports

- At St. Charles Catholic School, we offer a variety of option for our students, and as long as public health orders can be maintained, we will offer extra-curricular activities in small group situations. All sports activities will be reintroduced as we are able, and according to the mandate in place at the given time.

- We have an after school care program (BASC), which offers different extra-curricular programming. The BASC Director has already started planning activities which could easily incorporate social distancing/safety protocols. Also, limiting the number of students involved in these extra-curricular activities will be put into place. At this time, we will follow protocols and guidelines mandated regarding sports programming, (ie) sports teams.
- For the first term, Middle Years students will not be participating in Enrichment or Advisory Groups. Home room periods will be used for Recovery Learning during this scheduled time instead, and will focus on both Literacy and Numeracy outcomes. Enrichment and Advisory Groups may be implemented during Term 2 and 3.

Blended Learning

- There is a great possibility that there will be students who must remain home for short or long periods of time during the pandemic due to illness, isolation, medical concerns. If this does occur, teachers will send and receive assignments electronically, or send learning packages as needed.
- If internet connectivity is a persistent issue, teachers and administration will strategize to find alternatives for families.
- Frequent email and phone communication with students and parents will be in place to ensure engagement during this remote learning. This will be facilitated by the classroom teacher, but may also require involvement from support staff and specialist teachers.

Recovery Learning

- Recovery learning needs have already been identified in student report card comments this past June.
- Teachers have already engaged in discussions with each other regarding recovery learning, especially in the areas of numeracy and literacy.
- Supports will be given to all students who need it. Recovery learning discussions amongst teachers will continue, and both Administration and Resource have been involved in the discussions/planning for the 2020-2021 school year.
- Teachers will take time to assess all of their students at the beginning of the new school year, and see where the needs/gaps are.
- Support will be given to teachers from both Administration and Resource if need be.
- Support staff will also be called upon to help with supporting both teachers and students in the recovery learning process.
- Consistent home/school communication will continue, as per our usual standard.
- Home/school communication is one of our strengths.

School Staff Preparedness

Personal Risk Factors

- Personal risk factors/medical accommodations for staff and teachers will be handled on a case by case basis, as per usual.
- Staff members will have to remain at home if they are ill, have any COVID-19 symptoms, or display any respiratory symptoms. Staff members will participate in a daily self-screening to check for COVID symptoms.
- Staff members may also have to remain at home if a close family member is in isolation, or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.
- If a staff member becomes ill while at school, they will immediately report to the Principal. The staff member's workspace will be cleaned and disinfected immediately. The Principal will arrange coverage and the staff member will be sent home immediately.

STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

Attendance and Participation in Remote Learning

- Students are expected to attend in-class learning unless they are ill or exhibiting symptoms. Families will be required to report any student absences to the school office as per our usual absentee procedure. If remote learning does occur, students will be expected to participate, and school staff will be regularly following up with both students and parents.
- Students would participate in remote learning via packaged work, on-line websites, etc.
- As we did this past spring, teachers continuously reached out to both parents and students during remote learning via emails, phone, Zoom meetings and Microsoft Teams meetings. This protocol will continue if students are not in school, and because our school community is close-knit, this is not an unreasonable or unexpected procedure.
- Both Zoom and Microsoft Team Meetings will be used in the case of remote learning.

Illness at School

- Students who become ill at school will be removed from their classroom, and sent to a quarantine room to wait for their parent or emergency contact to pick them up. Parents will be called immediately, and if parents cannot be reached, the emergency contact will be called.
- The student's workspace will be cleaned and disinfected immediately following their leaving the classroom.
- If a student does test positive for COVID-19, Public Health will become involved and will provide direction for Administration at that time.

Other Important Information

- Desks instead of tables have been ordered for the Grs. 1 & ½ classrooms to help with physical distancing.
- Kindergarten student tables will have shields around their space when they are at their tables.
- Three portable hand washing stations will be set up in each of the main classroom hallways to help with hand washing.
- Each classroom is equipped with hand sanitizer and disinfectant spray bottles.
- Teachers will stagger cubby/locker use for their class to avoid crowds in the hallways.
- Lunch and recess will be staggered. More information will be shared with parents prior to school starting on Sept. 8th.
- BASC will continue this school year, however, parents will not be allowed in the building to drop off or pick up their children.
- Daily sanitization of high touch areas will be implemented .
- Water fountains will be shut down, but water bottle refill stations will be allowed.
- School supplies will be allowed to be brought into school during the first week. (Sept. 8th-Sept. 11th)
- Teachers will incorporate some outdoor learning classes whenever possible.
- All staff will participate in Professional Development regarding new school protocols during the week of Sept. 2-4th.
- All parents/guardians must sign a waiver acknowledging their understanding of the new protocols at SCCS due to COVID-19. This waiver must either be emailed directly to the Principal at tnarynski@stccs.ca or dropped off at the Family Information Day on September 3rd.

Your support, cooperation and understanding of these new protocols are essential for this school year to be successful. We understand that everyone is anxious about the upcoming school year, and so are we. However, at SCCS, we will do our best to make the school the warm, friendly, and the safe environment that it has always been. Being kind to each other and showing patience is much appreciated as we navigate this unknown territory together.

You will find attached information from the government regarding the many protocols and procedures listed above, as well as some frequently asked questions that you may have.

As always, my door is always open.

Sincerely,
Tammy

