

August 27, 2021

Dear Saint Stephen the Martyr Families and Volunteers,

Peace be with you! We are looking forward to having you and your children back in our building next week. Please know that we have been praying for you, and we hope that you have had a restful summer.

With this message are the protocols we have developed to safely welcome our students and volunteer back to in-person religious education classes. We are immensely grateful for the diligence and prayer that our pastor, Father Dave Belt, and our school principal, Julie Perrault, took in developing a plan for the school. We as the Department of Religious Education adopt and uphold the same protocol. Our staff has received guidance from the Douglas County Health Department and local healthcare providers, and heard the plans of Millard Public Schools and other Catholic schools in the city. Please note that these safety protocols will be reviewed on a regular basis and adjusted according to the conditions present in our community and school.

We humbly ask for your continued prayers and patience, and to remember who we are as brothers and sisters in Christ. Let us pray that we may “be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another as God has forgiven you in Christ.” (Ephesians 4:32)

In Christ,

Ms. Chelsey Young  
Director of Religious Education

Mrs. Eileen Smith  
Administrative Assistant

**The following plan will take effect on August 31, 2021**

<b>Instruction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If a student is quarantined/isolated, families/students will work with the teachers to develop a plan for the extended absence. We will follow the Douglas County Health recommendations for quarantine and isolation. Recommendations may differ for students masked and unmasked.</li><li>• Extended absences resulting from Covid will be</li></ul>
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	documented separately from other illness related absences.
<b>Masks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● At the opening of the school year for all grades PREK- 8, students and adults will be required to bring a mask to school regardless of vaccination status.</li> <li>● Staff and catechists will attempt to create learning and interactive environments in which students retain at least 3ft. feet of distance between themselves. Students will maintain 3ft or more distance during most instructional time. During those times masking is recommended but optional.</li> <li>● While our staff aims to keep students socially distanced from each other as much as possible, we cannot ensure that this will be the case one hundred percent of the time. In the event that 3ft or more distance cannot be maintained and exceeds 15 minutes, masks will be worn. This may include during small group activities and mass, when very close contact is inevitable for an extended period of time.</li> <li>● Masking is optional when outdoors, entering and exiting the building (we will continue with different entry points depending upon grade level), traveling in the hallways, and short visits to the church.</li> <li>● Students will not be required to wear masks while outdoors. Students/families may choose to have their children masked when outside.</li> <li>● We will work with staff and volunteers to ensure consistency and understanding of when masking is optional and when it is required.</li> <li>● The requirement for mask and face coverings may change if there is an identified high risk of spread within the community, school building, program, or classroom</li> <li>● We acknowledge that we have students who struggle with anxiety and health issues that could be negatively affected by wearing a mask for an extended period of time. Medical exemptions are accepted with the understanding that quarantine/isolation rules might differ for students not masked.</li> <li>● <b>There will be zero tolerance for bullying or politicizing</b></li> </ul>

	<p><b>the choice to wear a mask or to not wear a mask during optional times.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>All adults in the school building during school hours will be expected to follow the same masking protocols.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Handwashing/ Hand Sanitizing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● We will continue to promote frequent hand washing and the use of hand sanitizer. Hand sanitizer will be available for students, staff, and volunteers to use throughout the day in many areas of the school.</li> </ul>
<b>Water Fountains</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students should bring water bottles to class. Water fill stations are available for use in three areas. No glass bottles.</li> <li>● Water fountains will not be available at the start of the year.</li> </ul>
<b>Sanitation/Ventilation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The school will continue to practice the cleaning and sanitization of surfaces especially on high touch areas. Teachers and maintenance staff along with the nightly cleaning service, will work to maintain a clean and orderly environment that is safe and conducive to optimal learning.</li> <li>● Ventilation will continue to focus on filtration and fresh air practices consistent with ASHRAE (American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers) standards for current equipment.</li> </ul>
<b>Extracurricular Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● After school activities related to St. Stephen the Martyr School will follow the St. Stephen the Martyr School Plan in conjunction with the guidance from the Douglas County Health Department.</li> <li>● Parish activities will follow the St. Stephen the Martyr Parish plan. This also includes PAL sports, RE, and Youth Group activities.</li> <li>● If a student is quarantined/isolated, the student will not be allowed to participate in any athletic practices or games, school events, or activities during the quarantine/isolation</li> </ul>

	<p>period.</p>
<p>Prescreening for students and staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Daily screening processes should continue, Anyone experiencing two or more symptoms should stay home. Please keep the school office informed of absences and if any symptoms are related to COVID.</li> <li>● <b>Keeping sick children home played a key role last year in preventing transmission.</b></li> </ul>
<p>Response to Students/Staff who develop COVID symptoms during the day</p>	<p>St. Stephen the Martyr School and Department of Religious Education will follow guidance from the Douglas County Health Department :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>DCHD COVID School Proposal (updated August 9, 2021):</b> The goal for the 21'-22' school year is to have kids in school as much as possible. To achieve this goal, DCHD has modified their plan for the upcoming school year. This plan has been divided into recommendations for Elementary schools versus Middle and High School settings.</li> <li>● <b>For Elementary schools,</b> DCHD recommends using the "letter system." For an initial case, a letter should be sent to the parents of the children in the classroom notifying them of the exposure. The parents will be asked to monitor their children for symptoms (self monitoring)</li> <li>● Following a subsequent case (within 14 days from the initial exposure in the classroom), a second letter will be sent out to parents. This one will recommend that the classroom continue self monitoring and any unvaccinated students should mask at school and practice social distancing where possible for 14 days from the second exposure.</li> <li>● If a third case should come in the class, DCHD will step in and help make recommendations. Unvaccinated students should stay home and monitor for symptoms.</li> <li>● <b>For Middle school,</b> DCHD recommends performing traditional contact tracing and then notifying the parents of contacts of the exposures. They will recommend close</li> </ul>

	<p>contacts mask and self monitor for 14 days from the exposure. If widespread cases are identified within a specific group, we will notify DCHD.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● If a student has two or more symptoms during the school day, a parent or guardian will be contacted to pick up the child. A child can return to school when he or she no longer shows symptoms related to the COVID virus.</li><li>● Contact tracing, isolation, and exclusion requirements will follow those established by the Douglas County Health Department.</li><li>● St. Stephen the Martyr School will continue to work with the Douglas County Health Department to develop plans for safe school protocols. We will continue to update our plan based on current conditions in our community.</li></ul>
<p>Please see the links regarding COVID19 and the Delta Variant</p>	<p><a href="https://www.douglascounty-ne.gov/covid-19-latest-updates">https://www.douglascounty-ne.gov/covid-19-latest-updates</a> <a href="https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html">https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html</a> <a href="https://dhhs.ne.gov/Documents/COVID-19-Schools-Guidance.pdf">https://dhhs.ne.gov/Documents/COVID-19-Schools-Guidance.pdf</a> <a href="https://www.launchne.com/21-22/">https://www.launchne.com/21-22/</a></p>