


# St. Matthew's Schoolwide COVID-19 Plan

Dear Parents,

**Back to School Plan for the 2020-2021 School year (*Working Draft*) (All plans will need to be fluid and flexible and may change throughout the school year.)**

St. Matthew's Lutheran School is committed to protecting the health of our children, families, staff, and community. The following policies were designed in response to guidance from the Minnesota Department of Health and Human Services, in accordance with best practices from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and with everyone's well-being in mind. To limit the potential spread of COVID-19, we will be making some temporary changes to our school that include robust cleaning and disinfecting procedures and minimizing opportunities for person-to-person exposure (e.g., an infected person spreading respiratory droplets through actions such as coughing, sneezing, or talking). The following plan outlines the recommended practices and strategies that will be used to protect the health of our children, staff, and families while at the same time ensuring that children are experiencing developmentally appropriate and responsive interactions and environments.

## **1. We commit to supporting our children spiritually and mentally in the following ways:**

- a. Remind the children of the unalterable, divine truth of God's Word
- b. Tell the children stories of when God helped people who were scared -- Jesus Calms the Storm -- Jesus Walks on the Water -- Daniel in the Lions' Den -- Jesus Appears Alive to His Disciples
- c. Tell the children stories of Jesus power over sickness -- Jesus Heals 10 Men With Leprosy -- Jesus Heals a Centurion's Servant -- Jesus Raises a Young Girl from the Dead -- Jesus Rises From the Dead
- d. Praying with the children 

## **2. Changes to Our Physical Spaces**

- a. Where possible, limiting or eliminating use of common spaces in the classrooms/facility. When common spaces must be used, we will rotate use of the space and clean between groups.
- b. Rearranging classroom areas to seat children as far apart as reasonably possible and limiting the number of children sitting together.
- c. All drinking fountains will be off limits except for the water bottle filler near the gym entrance.
- d. To increase the circulation of outdoor air as much as possible we will keep windows and classroom doors open as often as reasonably possible.

## **3. Availability of Classroom Materials**

- a. Classroom materials will be sanitized before being moved from one classroom to another.

- b. We will remove toys and objects which cannot be easily cleaned or sanitized between use.
- c. Paper-based children's books are not considered high risk for transmission by the CDC and do not need additional cleaning or disinfection procedures.
- d. Each child will have frequently used classroom materials in their desk for their own use.

#### **4. Mealtimes**

- a. Staff and children will wash hands before and immediately after children have eaten.
- b. We will space seating as far apart as possible (ideally 6 feet apart) by limiting the number of children sitting together and rearranging seating.
- c. Hot lunch will be plated by the staff so that multiple children are not using the same serving utensils.
- d. The staff will be serving behind a plexi-glass barrier.
- e. The staff will be wearing masks.
- f. The staff will follow CDC protocols for cleaning before and after lunch times.

#### **5. Screening Families & Staff for COVID-19 Symptoms and Exposure**

- a. Upon arrival at the school, staff and families are required to report if they or anyone in their household have received a positive COVID-19 results; been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19; and/or have experienced symptoms such as persistent cough, fever, difficulty breathing, chills, change in smell or taste, diarrhea, and/or vomiting.
- b. Staff will record high temperatures (100.4)
- c. If families or staff are absent or otherwise off-site but experience exposure or symptoms, they should contact: Amanda Benter, School secretary

#### **6. Daily Temperature Checks:**

- a. As fever is the key indicator of COVID-19 in children, we will check each child's temperature upon daily arrival at the school.
- b. Staff will also be asked to take their own temperatures upon arrival to work.
- c. Staff will recheck children's temperatures throughout the day if they appear ill or "not themselves" (e.g., flushed cheeks, rapid or difficulty breathing without recent physical activity, fatigue, or extreme fussiness).
- d. When children arrive at the school, temperature checks will occur before they enter the building.
- e. All high temperatures (100.4) will be double-checked.
- f. If a second test comes back high the student will be sent home.
  - i. Parents will be asked to go through a screening of their family.
  - ii. A checklist of questions will be provided by the school for families.
  - iii. Parents will then need to notify the school if they fail to comply with any of the items on the checklist.

- g. The following staff members will be responsible for temperature checks: School Staff
- h. To minimize potential spread of illness, while taking the children's temperature staff will:
  - i. Wear a face mask
  - ii. Normally, temperatures will be taken with a contactless thermometer. If a contact thermometer is used it will be disinfected between uses (e.g., cleaned with an alcohol wipe or isopropyl alcohol on a cotton swab).
  - iii. Wear disposable gloves, which will be changed before the next check if physical contact with the child occurred.

## **7. Responding to Symptoms and Confirmed Cases of COVID-19:**

- a. Responding to COVID-19 Symptoms On-Site
  - i. If a child or staff member has a temperature above 100.4 degrees and/or symptoms such as persistent cough, difficulty breathing, chills, diarrhea, or vomiting, they will be sent home immediately with the recommendation to contact their primary care physician/medical provider. If anyone shows emergency warning signs (e.g., trouble breathing, persistent pain/pressure in the chest, new confusion, inability to wake or stay awake, or bluish lips or face), we will seek medical care immediately.
- b. If a child develops symptoms during care hours:
  - i. Parents will be contacted for prompt pick-up.
  - ii. The child will be isolated from other children and as many staff as possible (the child will not be left alone).
  - iii. All areas used by ill persons will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.
- c. If a staff member develops symptoms during care hours:
  - i. They will be asked to go home immediately.
  - ii. If no other caregiver is immediately available to be with children, the staff member will put on a face mask (if not already on) and limit close interactions with children until they can be relieved by another staff member. Other procedures include: All areas used by ill persons will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.

## **8. Reporting Exposure**

- a. If a child, staff member, family member, or visitor at our school shows COVID-19 symptoms or tests positive for the virus, we will contact our local health department. Based on the guidance of the local health department, we will determine whether to close individual classrooms or our facility, the duration of the closure, and other next steps. When communicating with families and staff about any COVID-19 cases, we will respect the privacy of individuals and not share health information of a specific person.

## **9. Returning to school After Experiencing Symptoms and/or a Positive COVID Test**

- a. If a staff member or child is experiencing any of these symptoms, they will not able

to enter the school building:

- had close contact (within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes) with a confirmed case of COVID-19?
- fever of 100.4 or greater
- vomiting or is experiencing nausea
- new shortness of breath
- diarrhea

**Strongly consider these symptoms when you are deciding whether to keep your child home:**

Does your child have a new or worsening cough?

Does your child have a new loss of taste or smell without other symptoms?

Does your child have a sore throat?

Does your child have a headache (not related to a known health condition i.e. migraines)?

Does your child have the chills?

Does your child have unexplained muscle pain?

Does your child feel fatigued for an unknown reason?

- b. If a staff member or child exhibits multiple symptoms of COVID-19, possible exposure is expected, OR an individual tests positive for COVID-19, the individual must stay home until they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours **without the use of medicine** that reduces fevers AND other symptoms have improved AND at least 10 days have passed or a negative COVID-19 test result since their symptoms first appeared. Any siblings or household members need to stay home for 14 days.
- c. If staff or their close contacts have possible or confirmed cases of COVID-19, staff will be allowed to remain home without penalty of discharge, discipline, or other retaliation.
- d. To accommodate for the potential need to quarantine staff or allow for longer absences from work than normal, St. Matthew's School principal will work with the staff to ensure adequate staffing needs are met.

## **10. Maintaining Consistent Groups**

- a. To minimize potential spread of COVID-19, we will engage in the following best practices:
  - i. We will limit the mixing of children across cohorts by staggering times for outdoor play and other activities where children from multiple classrooms are typically combined.
  - ii. To the extent possible, classrooms will include the same group of children and providers each day.
  - iii. On the K-4 floor, from 7:45- 12:45, first and second will be together in their classroom. At 12:45 p.m., the first grade will join the kindergarten classroom and the second grade will join the third and fourth-grade classroom until the end of the day.
  - iv. Limiting non-essential visitors, volunteers, and activities including groups of children or adults.

- v. Any in-person staff meetings will be limited to 10 people and social distancing requirements will be followed as much as possible.
- vi. Canceling or postponing field trips and special events that convene larger groups of children and families.

### **11. School Day Drop-Off Procedures (K-8)**

- a. Car drop-off (All drop-offs will be done in the parking lot)
  - i. Parents / caregivers of children in grades 1-8 may not enter the building at this time.
  - ii. For Kindergarten, only one adult per family should be present at drop-off/pick-up. Ideally, this would be the same parent or designated person every day, though we recognize this is not always possible. One parent may walk into the building with a kindergartener after being cleared.
  - iii. Students wait in the queue (sidewalk from the building to High Street) until the checker motions them forward.
  - iv. Parents should NOT leave until their child has been cleared and enters the building.
  - v. If a child has not cleared the temperature check, they will be sent back to the car.
- b. Bus drop-off
  - i. Students will arrive at the Wabasha entrance.
  - ii. Students will have a temperature check at that time.
  - iii. If a student records a high temperature, they will be sent to the office and parents will be contacted to pick up the student.

### **12. School Day Pick-Up Procedures (K-8)**

- a. Car Pick-Up (All pick-ups will be done in the parking lot)
  - i. Parents are asked to be ready to pick-up their child(ren) at 2:15 pm in the parking lot.
  - ii. Cohorts will be dismissed at staggered times.
  - iii. Students still waiting as the next cohort arrives will wait at least 6 feet apart from non-family members.
- b. Bus Pick-up
  - i. Bussing dismissal TBD on the bus schedule.
  - ii. Cohorts will be dismissed at staggered times.
  - iii. Cohorts will wait at least 6 feet apart from other cohorts.

### **13. During the school day pick up/drop off**

- a. All drop-offs done during the school day will be done in the parking lot at the High Street entrance.
- b. Parents should ring the buzzer and identify themselves and who they are here to pick up. Amanda Benter, school administrative assistant, will get the student and bring them to the door.

#### **14. Hand Washing**

- a. Staff and children will wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- b. Soap and water are the best option, especially if hands are visibly dirty. If hands are not visibly dirty, alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol can be used if soap and water are not readily available. Staff and children should cover all surfaces of their hands with hand sanitizer, rubbing them together until they feel dry.
- c. Staff and children (with frequent reminders and support) will cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve and wash/sanitize hands immediately after.
- d. Hand hygiene is especially important after blowing one's nose, going to the bathroom, before eating or preparing food (or helping children do any of these actions).
- e. Staff and children will wash/sanitize their hands upon entrance into the classroom.

#### **15. Cleaning and Disinfecting**

- a. Daily cleaning/disinfecting of high-touch surfaces (e.g., sinks, toilets, light switches, door knobs, counter and tabletops, chairs).
- b. Use of a schedule for regular cleaning and disinfecting tasks.
- c. Cleaning dirty surfaces using detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- d. Use of CDC-recommended disinfectants such as EPA-registered household disinfectants, diluted bleach solution, and/or alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol
- e. Keeping cleaning products secure and out of reach of children, avoiding use near children.
- f. Regular cleaning of electronics (e.g., keyboards, parent/staff check-in kiosks) according to manufacturer's instructions.

#### **16. Safety Equipment**

- a. Staff will be wearing a mask unless it impedes on the education of a child. Then a clear shield will be used.
- b. Staff will wear gloves in a manner consistent with best practices (for example, gloves should be worn when handling contaminants or when serving food). Staff members should wash hands before putting gloves on and immediately after gloves are removed. Gloves are not recommended for broader use and do not replace hand washing.
- c. Children (5 years and older) are expected to wear masks while in care.
- d. All face coverings need to be in compliance with the school dress code, as far as what is printed on them.
- e. If a child is in need of a face covering while at school, one will be provided for them.