



# Office of Catholic Schools Reopening Schools 2020-2021



FAITH IN OUR FUTURE

# What is COVID19?

Coronaviruses are a family of viruses named after the crown-like outer structure of the virus.

They have caused the following recent epidemics:

- Severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS): 2002–2003
- Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS): 2012, 2015, 2018
- Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19): December 2019 to present

# Signs and Symptoms of COVID19

- Reported symptoms of COVID-19 range from mild to severe.
- Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus and include:
  - o Fever or chills
  - o Cough
  - o Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - o Fatigue
    - o Muscle or body aches
    - o Headache
  - o New loss of taste or smell
  - o Sore throat
  - o Congestion or runny nose
  - o Nausea or vomiting
  - o Diarrhea

# Key Considerations for a Safe Return to School for 2020-2021

1. Practice preventive behaviors. These are the most important actions that will support schools' safe reopening and will help them stay open.
2. Implement mitigation strategies of social distancing, face coverings, hand hygiene, and use of cohorting in schools.
3. Integrate these strategies into co-curricular and extracurricular activities (e.g., limiting or cancelling participation in activities where social distancing is not feasible).
4. Maintain healthy environments (e.g., cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces).
5. Make decisions that take into account the level of community transmission.
6. Develop a proactive plan for when a student or faculty/staff member tests positive for COVID19.
7. Educate parents and caregivers on the importance of monitoring for and responding to the symptoms and signs of COVID19 at home.
8. Develop lines of communication with state and local health departments to stay updated on COVID19 transmission and response in the local area where school is located.
9. Communicate with diocesan Office of Catholic Schools when a student or faculty/staff member tests positive or whenever there are any other questions in reference to COVID19.

*\*Preparing K-12 School Administrators for a Safe Return to School in Fall 2020. (www.cdc.gov)*

# What is known about the transmission of COVID19 among children?

Children appear to be a lower risk for contracting COVID19 compared to adults.

While children have been sick with COVID19, adults make up nearly 95% of reported COVID19 cases.

Early reports suggest that when children do get COVID19, they generally have a less serious illness.

Data on transmission among children from other countries suggests that the majority of children with COVID19 were infected by a family member.

*\*Preparing K-12 School Administrators for a Safe Return to School in Fall 2020. ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov))*

# How can our PK-12 schools prepare for going back to in-person and remote learning instruction?

Expect cases of COVID19 in communities. International experiences have demonstrated that even when a school carefully coordinates, plans, and prepares, cases may still occur.

1. Coordinate. Plan. Prepare. To safely reopen schools, mitigation strategies (social distancing, healthy hygiene habits, cleaning and disinfecting, use of masks, cohorting, changing and staggering student schedules, and planning for faculty/staff absences should be reviewed and included in the school's reopening plan.
2. Making decisions about school operations. Communicate with the Office of Catholic Schools and local and state health agencies to review the level of community transmission. Reinforcing preventive actions, ensuring proper ventilation, and maintaining cleaning and disinfection practices are all important. If positive tests for COVID19 are reported in the school environment, staying home, self-isolating and monitoring symptoms will contribute to a healthier school. Cohorting grade levels in order to minimize the risk of cross contamination is recommended. If community transmission levels cannot be decreased, school closure would need to be discussed with the Superintendent of Schools. Remote learning would then be offered to all students.
3. Communication *cannot be stressed enough*. Updates on instruction, meal programs, community positive rates, and discussions on importance of social distancing, wearing face coverings, and temperature scanning at arrival and throughout the school day should be ongoing between the home and school.
4. Have trust and patience. Pastors, chaplains, principals, teachers, and staff have been working 24/7 to prepare for reopening schools with face-to-face instruction while also preparing remote learning plans, knowing that the pandemic landscape could change at a moment's notice. Working with one another *for the common good* will be very important!

# Read the OCS Diocesan Plan and Your School's Reopening Plan

- ❑ Individual school's reopening plan should be posted on the school's website.
- ❑ OCS Reopening Plan is published on the diocesan website at [www.cdop.org](http://www.cdop.org)
- ❑ Main areas addressed in the plans include: health and safety; infection protocol; virtual learning; and resources.





“These past few months have certainly shown us, as a faith community, that we may not know what the future holds, but what we DO know is that it rests in Jesus Christ:

For I know Him in whom I have believed and am confident that He is able to guard what has been entrusted to me until that day. (2 Timothy 1:12)

As we prepare to re-open our Catholic schools in August 2020 after an unprecedented pandemic, let us again look to the One in Whom we do believe, and let us go forth confidently with *faith in our future* as He promises to guard and protect. Amen!”

*Dr. Sharon Weiss*  
Superintendent of Schools

