

The following FAQ addresses some common parent questions regarding the 2020-2021 school year. We will update this document frequently.

Version July 29, 2020

What will student drop off and pick up procedures be?

- Parents should screen students before leaving for school. Students should stay home if they are unwell for any reason.
- We will screen staff, students and visitors for temperatures at the start of each day using contactless thermometers. Many parents who have returned to work are familiar with this protocol as it is in place in many offices.
- In order to maintain physical distance in hallways, K-8 parents will be asked not to enter the building with their children. Pre-Kindergarten parents are required to walk their student to their classroom and will have their temperature checked upon entry into the building.
- Traditional car line procedures allow for physical distancing outside and students will be required to wear masks until they are in their family vehicle.
- We continue to be in communication with Urbandale regarding daily bus schedules.

Will Pius Pals be open?

- Yes.
- Pius Pals will be open when school is in session, much like a “normal” year. Pius Pals is licenced through the Department of Human Services and we will continue to follow all health and safety guidelines to maintain that licensure. Extra cleaning measures, distancing and staffing all support the health and safety of our students in Pius Pals.

How can we move between in person and distance learning throughout the school year?

- At the end of each trimester you will be able to evaluate your choice and visit with the school administration if you need to make a change.
- The school administration also reserves the right to evaluate the distance learning option and visit with you if it is not effective for some reason.
- Additionally, if your family health circumstances require quarantine or recovery from illness, you will be able to move to distance learning.

What is being done in the building to promote health and safety?

- Access to the school building will be limited to students, staff, and authorized guests. All rooms in the middle school wing, east wing upper, and lower have individual rooftop units. 1 air handler serves the office, library areas and 2 air handlers serve the elementary wing providing the advantage of air that is not circulated throughout one big unit through the whole school but rather through individual units pulling in fresh outside air.
- Plans are in place to replace all air filters with MERV-13 filters.
- Classroom windows and doors will be open during the day to promote air flow.

How will student health needs be addressed during the school day?

- A school nurse will be in the building part-time daily (Monday-Friday).
- A dedicated and private student health office has been created and will be used throughout the school year.
- Classrooms will be stocked and equipped with basic student health needs like band-aids, ice packs and other first aid items.

What are the new cleaning protocols?

- Daily deep cleaning of the school building will continue as normal.
- Additional cleaning and disinfecting materials will be available for use throughout the school day in classrooms and other shared spaces.

What happens when someone (student or staff) tests positive for COVID-19?

- Parent communication is important and we will be transparent and communicate to families when we are made aware of a COVID positive situation. This will be done while respecting the privacy of the student or staff member.
- We will rely on all families to communicate with us about any ongoing health issues, including COVID-19 and other illnesses like flu and colds.
- Closing and cleaning of the school depends on many factors including the severity of any outbreaks. We will communicate clearly what follow up is being taken when we have a positive case.
- The Iowa Department of Public Health is currently working with the Iowa Department of Education to develop specific guidelines regarding a positive case among staff or students.
- We will follow this guidance and work closely with local health departments, the Catholic Schools Office and our school nurse to inform parents of any closures, cleaning protocols related to a COVID-19 case.

What are the requirements for masks and other protective equipment?

- Students will be required to wear face masks when entering/exiting the building, at other times when distancing is not feasible, and at the request of their teacher.
- Physical barriers have been installed throughout the building where appropriate.
- Staff will be wearing face masks or face shields when they are teaching.
- You may provide the face covering for your students that you are most comfortable with and we will also have a supply of masks and shields available for students, staff and visitors who need one.
- Students may opt to wear neck gaiters or clear protective face shields.
- Any logo, print or wording on masks that is disruptive, disrespectful or political will be banned. This is our standard policy for any clothing, backpacks, materials, etc. that come to school.
- Students may remove face coverings in the classroom, on the playground and while eating.

How will physically distancing be addressed in various spaces?

- Physical constraints of the building will not allow for 6 ft. of physical distance between students at all times. Every effort is being made to maximize physical distancing.
- Classrooms are being cleaned and rearranged to provide as much physical space for students as possible.
- Movement through the building will be limited throughout the school day in order to maintain physical distance.
- The Iowa Department of Education guidance, developed in conjunction with the Iowa Department of Public Health, doesn't require 6 ft of space, knowing that it is nearly impossible in schools.

What extra health precautions are being taken?

- Hand sanitizer stations have been installed throughout the building and in classrooms.
- Schedules and routines for handwashing and other general health best practices are being developed.
- Assistance at home in daily cleaning of masks, backpacks, lunchboxes and other items that might travel between home and school.

What will a typical week of distance learning look like?

- Students will receive direct instruction, specific lessons, and learning activities designed by their teachers.
- Teachers will be providing video lessons, direct instruction, specially designed learning activities, and feedback on assignments and assessments.
- Students will be expected to be online daily, but not for six hours in a row. Attendance will be recorded for all students who are enrolled in distance learning and may be taken in a number of ways including logging on, submitting work, or engaging directly with the teacher.
- In addition to the instruction provided directly from their classroom teachers, students will have homework and learning assignments to complete on their own time.
- Specials teachers (art, music, PE, spanish, guidance, technology, and library) will be providing direct instruction, learning activities, and student feedback.
- Students will need access to an internet connected device (laptop, iPad) and reliable internet access.
- If your family needs assistance with at home technology, please contact the school office.

What differences can we expect in distance learning from last spring?

- St. Pius X teachers have been involved in professional development before the start of the school year in order to offer the highest quality education.
- Dedicated learning platforms will allow teachers to provide instruction and assignments directly to students throughout the school day and week.
- There will be a stronger emphasis on direct instruction from the teacher via recorded lessons, possible live streaming lessons, assignments, specific feedback for students and frequent contact with families and students.

What will in person learning look like?

- Homeroom Model for students in PK-5 will limit the number of student exposures in a normal day.
- Students will have their own personal school supplies and sharing will be limited.
- Frequent breaks will be provided for handwashing and other cleaning procedures.
- Teachers will have bandaids, ice packs and access to a thermometer in order to meet minor student health needs.
- Students are encouraged to bring water in their own reusable, plastic, container that can be refilled throughout the day.

Who will be teaching online and in person?

- The St. Pius X teachers you know and love will be teaching in person and online.
- Grade level teachers will collaborate on the online education development and implementation including video lessons, direct instruction, and student assignments.
- Online students will still have their homeroom teacher and are full members of their homeroom class.
- Our strong community of teachers will collaborate and share the work; no one will be working in isolation as the “online teacher” only.

What will PE, art, and music look like in person?

- All students in grades K-8 will have the opportunity to participate in their traditional specials classes (art, music, PE, library, guidance, Spanish, and technology)
- Whenever appropriate, classes will be held outside or in the homeroom classroom.
- Teachers will move between homeroom classrooms to help limit the students exposure to other parts of the building throughout the school day.

Will students still have recess? What will lunch look like?

- Social interaction and a break in the day is important!
- Lunch will be offered as part of the normal school day. Specifics about where and how lunch is served is still being determined and may change throughout the year as necessary.
- Good nutrition is essential for good health and our lunch program will continue to provide nutritious and appealing lunches for students.
- Recess and other outside breaks will be scheduled to avoid crowded playgrounds and ensure healthy movement throughout the school day.

What extracurricular activities and sports are available?

- Student involvement in activities outside the classroom enhances their school success and promotes healthy development.
- All student activities, clubs, and athletics will be evaluated and offered when it is appropriate and safe for students while following safety protocols and recommendations from governing groups.
- The benefit of learning via field trip or other hands on experiences are vital to the school experience and field trips and off-site learning opportunities will be evaluated and permitted when safe to do so.

- Bus transportation is coordinated through Urbandale Public Schools and we remain in communication with them about plans for the new school year.

What will students' faith life look like this school year?

- Specific Mass schedules will be developed by school and parish leadership and will be shared by your child's homeroom teachers.
- Students will still be able to plan a Mass with their homeroom class throughout the school year.
- Regular participation in the sacrament of Reconciliation remains a priority and a schedule with protocols for the safe practice of this sacrament will be developed and shared.
- Sacramental preparation (First Communion and First Reconciliation) will follow the plans being developed in collaboration with the parish.

We rely on “real time” data when making plans and thus realize that plans may need to be updated as public health information changes. We also commit to regular communication that will detail specifics about various aspects of this plan as they become available.