



## **2020 - 2021 Parent and Family Guide**

Protocols to support the education, health and well-being of students,  
parents, faculty & staff

Also available in the Parent and Family Handbook

St. Pius X Catholic School is prepared to fulfill our mission within the  
various scenarios related to COVID-19.

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### OVERVIEW

This Guide for Parents has been created to provide the information parents will need to navigate this new learning environment and to explain the protocols in place for the coming year. This guide is subject to updates and changes without notice.

A Parent FAQ is updated regularly and is available [here](#) and on the school website.

The Wednesday Reminder email (weekly newsletter) is the most up to date communication regarding our continued plans for the health and safety of students, families, and staff as well as all current mitigation efforts.

## ATTENDANCE

**Traditional In Person Learning** Daily attendance will be taken in the traditional manner for students attending in person.

**Distance Learning** Daily attendance will be taken for students participating in distance learning by documenting student participation in viewing lessons, submitting work, joining livestream lessons and communication with the teachers. Daily interaction during distance learning is required to be considered present for the day.

**Absent** Students who are unable to attend class physically or virtually will be counted as absent.

**Late Arrival/Early Leave** All late arrivals and early releases will go through the main school office. We would encourage appointments to be made outside of school hours if at all possible.

**Process to Notify School Regarding Absence** We ask that families communicate with the school for all absences by calling the school office at 515-276-1061 and leaving a voicemail when necessary.

**Quarantined Due to Illness** Students who are quarantined and participate in distance learning will be counted as fully present according to the previous attendance description. Those who are sick with any illness and are recovering should focus on a full recovery and will be counted as absent due to illness. Teachers will help students catch up with school work when they are well enough to attend either distance or in person learning. There are no perfect attendance recognitions this year. We are prioritizing health and safety over perfect attendance.

## DROP OFF AND PICK UP

**Morning drop off** will follow the guidelines below:

- **Bus riders** will still be dropped off at the front school doors on 66th Street.
- **Pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, first grade students** and their siblings will enter the building at the East facing door by the Art Room. Only parents with students in pre-kindergarten may enter the school building with their child(ren).
- **All other students in grades 2-8** will enter at the back door by the parish center. Temperatures will be taken inside the building.

**Afternoon pick up** will follow the guidelines below:

- **Pius Pals students** will be dismissed first and move from their classroom to the Parish Center.
- **Bus students** will be dismissed second and exit the building through the front doors on 66th Street to load their assigned bus.
- **Carline students** will be dismissed with their homeroom and their teacher to follow the standard carline procedure. (Each family is assigned a number and will cycle through the line in the back parking lot.)

Due to the implementation of our homeroom model and to maintain physical distance, all students not in Pius Pals or riding the bus will go to carline with their teacher. In order to maintain student safety and supervision, teachers will walk those who remain when the car line is done up the southside of the school to be dismissed to walk home. Not intermingling between grades and classrooms is an important part of our exposure mitigation plan during the school day.

**All visitors and parents will be temperature screened and must wear a mask.** Access to the building will be very limited. Contact the school office for details if you need to be in the school building.

## **CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION**

**Traditional Instruction** The preferred instructional method is in person learning. Traditional learning (PK-5) will follow the homeroom model with students in their “home cohort” throughout the school day. Middle school students will follow a block schedule to limit their transitions throughout the school day. More information will be shared by homeroom teachers.

**Distance Learning - Parent Choice** Families at St. Pius X have the opportunity to select a virtual only option. If there are questions or concerns about the progress a student is making utilizing this option, families will be contacted in order to determine the best course of action. [Please click here for distance learning information.](#)

**Virtual Learning - Campus Closed** In the event that state agencies close the school, all students would transition to distance learning. All students in grades 2-8 will have a school owned device that can go home with them in the event of a school building closure. Any family experiencing internet connectivity issues should contact the school administration.

[Details on both learning options available here.](#)

## **LUNCH AND RECESS**

**Lunch** will be served every day and students can choose to bring a lunch or choose from the lunch menu as in years past. Students will be dismissed from their homeroom on a staggered schedule to avoid waiting in line and congregating in groups. Students will sit with their homeroom class, in assigned tables, at assigned seats which helps ensure physical distancing measures. Students will have the same amount of time to be served and eat as in years past. Tables will be disinfected between usage following a multi-step process prior to the arrival of the next class.

**Serving Protocols** Changes to serving protocols are being implemented to reduce the spread of germs. The cafeteria server will place cutlery and most of the food on the tray before handing it to the student. Some food items will be wrapped or pre-portioned. Condiments will be available as part of the serving line.

**Lunch Recess** Students (PK-5) will move from lunch to a recess break outside at an assigned area. The assigned areas will rotate and students will regularly have access to the blacktop, greenspace, and playground areas. Middle school students will have an extended break as part of their lunch period and teachers will communicate the specifics of the middle school break.

**Additional Recess/Breaks** Teachers will schedule additional breaks and outdoor time for students throughout the school day.

## **ACTIVITIES & ATHLETICS**

**Best practices** are being developed for all activities and will be communicated directly with participants and families. Coaches and the Athletic Director will communicate the specific protocols for each sport. Specific guidelines in regards to use of the Parish Center/Gym will be communicated.

School and parish leadership continue to meet with Diocesan leaders to develop and implement athletic, activity, and programming guidelines.

## **BUILDING & GROUNDS**

**Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning** Proper ventilation is an important part of our plan to reduce the spread of COVID-19. 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. All air filters have been replaced with MERV-13 filters. Classroom windows and doors will be open during the day to promote air flow.

**Positive COVID-19 Case Protocols** Protocols have been developed for cleaning and disinfecting classrooms, regions of the building or the entire building. The protocol selected will be based on case-by-case basis and in conjunction with direction from the appropriate public health official.

**Cleaning Routines** The frequency of daytime cleaning has been increased for this school year, especially in high touch areas such as hallways, door handles and bathrooms. Drinking fountains have also been turned off to help reduce the spread of germs while bottle fillers remain turned on. In the classroom, teachers will apply a disinfectant to desks daily and as needed. Hand sanitizer dispensers have been placed inside each classroom, and students will be asked to apply hand sanitizer at various times.

## **COMMUNICATION**

**Campus Closure** In the event of a campus closure, the emergency alert system will be utilized.

Similar to snow days, we will contact parents via the phone, text and/or email options selected in PowerSchool.

**If a positive case is identified**, all necessary information will be collected and the appropriate health agencies will be notified. Communication with Diocesan Schools Office, Polk County Health Department and the SPX community will be coordinated by the school administrators. Care will be taken to protect the private health information of the individual while also notifying all those who have had close contact (defined by the CDC as being closer than 6 feet for more than 15 minutes) so they may take the appropriate actions.

Public Health may recommend quarantine for all household contacts and will work with the school to determine which staff and students should be quarantined. If a student or family must quarantine they will move to distance learning for the duration of the quarantine.

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## **FAITH**

**Our shared Catholic faith remains at the heart of all we do.** Supporting students in their faith journey will be of utmost importance during these difficult times. Following is an explanation of how we will engage students in the coming school year:

Students will attend Mass twice per month with their homeroom class and will have the opportunity to plan and lead a Mass. When it is safe to do so, all school Mass will resume. Classroom prayer is an important part of the day and all teachers pray daily with their students.

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.

## **STUDENT HEALTH**

**Remaining in school will require a collaborative effort by students, faculty, staff and parents.** While students may have to be home more often, our distance learning program will limit the effects of this time out of the classroom. The following guidelines and recommendations have been established to support the health and wellbeing of all in our community.

**Students will be asked to stay home** if they test positive for COVID-19 or exhibit one or more of the following COVID-19 symptoms based on CDC Guidance:

- Fever of 100.4 degrees or greater
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of smell or taste
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea/vomiting/diarrhea

**A positive COVID-19 test** allows students to return to school after 24 hours with no fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine) and other symptoms have improved and at least 10 days since symptoms started with a doctor's note indicating the positive test result.

**A negative COVID-19 test** allows students to return to school after 24 hours with no fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine) and other symptoms have improved.

**If a student receives an alternative diagnosis from their doctor (strep, flu, etc.)** students may return to school after 24 hours with no fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine), other symptoms have improved and with a doctor's note indicating the diagnosis.

**Siblings or other Students in the Household** If a student is absent from school due to COVID-19 symptoms or a positive COVID-19 test, siblings or other students living in the same household, whether they exhibit symptoms or not, will be required to stay home from school for the same length of time and transition to distance learning. The Polk County Health Department will provide guidance regarding these situations.

**Exposure** Persons who have had close contact (within six feet for 15 minutes or longer) with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 are required to self-quarantine for 14 days.

**Self-Quarantine** If a student has been in close contact with a person diagnosed with or exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms or has recently returned from somewhere considered to be a "hot spot" by the CDC, it will be required that the student self-quarantine for 14 calendar days. We will work with families to navigate this situation and help transition students to distance learning.

**Illness Tracking** The school nurse will track how long the student will need to be out of school based on illness or symptoms. Students who have not completed their quarantine will not be allowed to attend class in person.

**If a student displays symptoms of illness during the school day they will be referred to the school nurse.** While waiting and during the assessment these students will be isolated. Upon completing the assessment, the school nurse will determine if the student should remain at school or go home. Due to COVID-19, students displaying even mild symptoms will be sent home. Parents will be required to pick up children within thirty minutes of being notified

by the school.

**If a student displays symptoms of illness while at home, they should remain home.** Parents are required to call the school office to inform them if the student will participate virtually or if they are too ill, in which case they will be counted as absent. Please note, due to the pandemic the office may be asking follow up questions about the student's condition. These questions allow us to determine when a student should return to class in person.

**Masks** Students will be required to wear masks when entering/exiting the building, when transitioning in the building, when physical distancing is not practical, or at the request of their teacher. Teachers and staff will be required to wear masks/face shields at all times.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

**Chromebooks** All students in grades 4-8 will be provided a school owned and managed Chromebook for use in class or, when the need arises, at home. Students in grades 2-3 will be provided with a school owned and managed iPad for use in class or, when the need arises, at home.

**Technology Agreement** Students and families will sign a technology agreement for each device assigned to students.

**Internet** St. Pius X school and parish has invested in enhanced internet service, increasing our ability to upload and improving connections for online classes. In the event of a school closure, families with internet needs should contact the school administration.

**Learning Systems** Students in grades Pre-kindergarten through third will utilize SeeSaw as their main distance learning platform. SeeSaw is app and web based and can be accessed via iPad or computer. Students in grades 4-8 will utilize Google Classroom as their main distance learning platform. Classroom teachers will teach students how to use the platforms and will communicate with families to provide specific information.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

**St. Pius X continues to collaborate with Durham Bus Services and Urbandale Community Schools** to provide bussing as appropriate. More details will be shared as they become available.

## **TUITION & FINANCIAL AID**

**Tuition, scholarships and financial assistance** remains consistent between in person and online learning.

## **EVENTS**

**School events** will follow mitigation efforts as much as possible. When the current



circumstances prevent an event from taking place in the traditional manner, it may be possible to replace the event with a virtual version or other alternative. Events will be examined on an individual basis to determine the best course of action. Specific information about the event will be communicated via the school website and the Wednesday Reminder.