



July 30, 2020

Dear St. Pius X Families,

We are less than a month away from the 2020-2021 school year. I know that brings a tremendous amount of excitement to begin a new year, sadness for the end of summer vacation and because of the pandemic, trepidation and hesitance. Please know that our Reopening Committee continues to meet each week to ensure the safety of our students and to think of scenarios that may arise during the upcoming year. Our Health Mitigation plan is currently being reviewed by the Diocese. We will share that with you as soon as we get the approval from Richmond.

A few of the highlights from our mitigation plan:

1. Mitigation Health Plan Team Members

Mark Zafra – Principal; Point of Contact
Gloria Glass – Assistant Principal
Lilliana Hopper - Administrative Assistant
Katy Burfield - Admissions Coordinator
Sharon Pile – School Nurse
Carol Novisk – Faculty Member
Bobbie Tasber – Faculty Member
Shelley Lomogda – Faculty Member
Catherine Duffy – Faculty Member

2. Our faculty and staff know the contact information and procedures for reaching the local health department. The Norfolk Department of Public Health can be reached via email at ndph-info@vdh.virginia.gov or by phone at 757-683-2800.
3. Monitoring Absentees - Our committee / front office staff will investigate reasons for absences and consult with the health department as needed if an increase in student and/or staff absences occurs.
4. Communication - St. Pius X School will communicate regularly with staff, students and parents regarding any updates or changes due to COVID-19.
 - a. St. Pius X School will communicate new policies & procedures with all staff, parents, and students by sending the complete Mitigation Health Plan via email

for individual review. The Mitigation Health Plan will also be posted for families on FACTS SIS / RenWeb.

- b. Printed signs will be posted in appropriate school areas that communicate new procedures.
 - c. If there is a confirmed positive case of COVID-19 within our school, administration will alert staff and families via email and SMS text and the Office of Catholic Schools – Diocese of Richmond via phone.
5. We will maintain typical (non-COVID-19) health services by continuing to:
- a. Provide a clean, sanitized clinic for those feeling ill
 - b. Maintain a number of contactless thermometers
 - c. Enlist MAT certified staff members to dispense routine medications
 - d. The school nurse will be provided with an adequate supply of PPE items to serve the school community and will alert administration when additional items need to be ordered.
6. Social Emotional Support: Our school counselor will be on site weekly to provide additional mental health services to those who may need it. If additional support is needed by a student, the school will communicate with the student's parents and provide contact information for outside resources.
7. All school faculty and staff will receive training on COVID-19 prevention during teacher work week. This training will be led by our school nurse, Sharon Pile. All students will receive training on new school safety protocols and procedures as well as proper hygiene techniques. Information will be sent to parents for review prior to the beginning of school. This information will include:
- a. Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette
 - b. Maintaining social distancing
 - c. Use of facemasks / face coverings
 - d. Staying home when sick
8. St. Pius X School will support healthy hygiene behaviors by providing adequate supplies including soap, hand sanitizer, and other cleaning supplies.
9. St. Pius X School will visibly promote healthy hygiene within the building by:
- a. posting signs in highly visible locations (e.g., school entrances, restrooms) that promote everyday protective measures
 - b. describe how to stop the spread of germs (such as by properly washing hands and properly wearing a cloth face covering

- c. Broadcast regular announcements on reducing the spread of COVID-19 on our online morning announcement system.
 - d. Include messages about behaviors that prevent the spread of COVID-19 when communicating with staff and families (such as on school websites, in emails, and on school social media accounts).
10. St. Pius X School will practice social or physical distancing in the following ways:
- a. Desks in classrooms will be spaced 3ft - 6 ft apart. Extra and unnecessary furniture will be removed from the classroom. When necessary, grade levels will be split into two classrooms to allow for additional space between desks.
 - b. To limit class movement during the day, students will stay in their homeroom to receive instruction.
 - c. We will place signs and markings in the hallways to remind students of physical distancing.
 - d. There will be no cafeteria lunch service and no eating in the cafeteria for at least the first few weeks of school. All students will bring their lunch for the first weeks of school. All students will eat lunch in their classrooms. After administration deems that faculty, staff, and students have become acclimated to new protocols and procedures, we will begin to phase in cafeteria lunch service where students continue to eat lunch in their classrooms.
11. Faculty and staff will have their temperature checked prior to entering the building. If a faculty or staff member presents with a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher, they will not be admitted into the building.
12. Parents and / or guardians will assess their child / children (check temperature, observe symptoms of illness) before reporting to school. Students exhibiting symptoms of illness should not be brought to school.
13. Students will have their temperature checked using non-touch thermometers by staff members and a brief screening will be conducted before allowing students to enter the school building. If a student presents with a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher, they will not be admitted into the building.
14. When feasible, staff members and older children should wear face coverings within the facility. Face mask coverings are to be worn by students in grades 4-8 when they are at a distance of less than 6ft. in the classrooms or in communal spaces such as hallways, restrooms, school Masses, etc. Face mask coverings may be more difficult for our younger students in PK through 3rd grade but they should all have masks with them and will be encouraged to wear them when they are at a distance of less than 6ft. in the classrooms and in communal spaces such as hallways, restrooms, school Masses, etc.

15. Hygiene Practices:

- a. Door knobs, desk surfaces, handrails, light switches, copy machines, and other frequently touched surfaces will be sanitized on a regular basis.
- b. Adequate supplies will be available to minimize sharing of high-touch materials to the extent possible (e.g., assign art supplies or other equipment to a single student), or limited use of supplies and equipment to one group of students at a time and clean and disinfect between use.
- c. Each student's belongings will be kept separate from others' and in individually labeled containers, cubbies, or areas.
- d. Sharing electronic devices, toys, books, and other games or learning aids will be avoided.
- e. Sharing of items that are difficult to clean, sanitize, or disinfect is highly discouraged.
- f. Drinking directly from water fountains is not permitted. Automated touchless water bottle fillers will be available and may be used with a water bottle. These areas will be cleaned and sanitized frequently throughout the day. All staff and students are encouraged to bring their own refillable water bottle.

16. When possible, we will conduct virtual gatherings instead of in-person.

17. We will limit the number of guests / volunteers in the school building. Guests and volunteers will receive a wellness / temperature check before entering the building.

18. There will be no scheduled field trips unless they are virtual field trips.

19. To maintain a continuous and stable learning environment faculty and staff will be trained to step in appropriately when colleagues are absent. This will help ensure the continuity of learning and school operations.

20. We will observe the most recent / up-to-date CDC, VA Department of Health and local health department recommendations regarding best practices (isolation / quarantine, school closure and return to school).

21. When someone gets sick:

- a. The school nurse will do an initial wellness check in the clinic for those presenting symptoms. After the wellness check, those presenting symptoms for COVID-19 will be isolated in a designated location..
- b. For any students showing symptoms, the school will call parents / guardians to pick up their student immediately to bring them home or to a healthcare facility.

If a student shows severe symptoms and a parent or guardian cannot be reached, EMS will be dispatched.

- c. If a staff member is sick, they will be allowed to drive themselves home or to their healthcare provider if able, depending on the severity of their symptoms. If the staff member is not able, a family member or ambulance will be called.
 - d. Areas that come in contact with or are used by sick individuals will be cleaned and disinfected.
 - e. The school will communicate with the local health department to initiate public health investigation, contact tracing and consultation on next steps.
 - f. Communication to all staff, students and parents regarding new COVID-19 procedures is essential to preventing the spread within our facility. If you become sick with COVID-19 symptoms, test positive for COVID-19, or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 symptoms or a confirmed or suspected case, please stay home and notify the school immediately.
 - g. ST. PIUS X SCHOOL has developed a communications plan with the local health department to initiate public health investigation, contact tracing and consultation on next steps when necessary. This includes contacting Michelle Burnette, MPH district epidemiologist of the Norfolk Department of Public Health at michelle.burnette@vdh.virginia.gov for any questions or consultation needs.
22. The school will work with the Diocese of Richmond and local health authorities if severe conditions occur. The school will decide whether to shut down the entire school or isolate certain grades.
23. The health and safety of our staff and students is of the utmost importance. We have created a detailed plan to keep all parties as safe as possible, however there are elements that are out of our control. These elements could cause ST. PIUS X SCHOOL to decrease available options for in-person instruction, or even close the facility all together. Examples of what could trigger each of these scenarios to occur include but are not limited to an executive order from the governor or positive COVID-19 cases within the school.

I do want to mention a number of items in particular:

Virtual / Distance Learning - We are offering a Virtual / Distance Learning option to those families whose student or family member at home is higher risk or who have concerns about the start of in-school instruction.. In essence, this option would allow for real time logging in with the student's class during the day and a goal of a week's planned activities in advance so the student could work independently as needed. We are also hoping to record the lesson so the student at home and all the students in the class can review the video for clarification if needed. If this option interests you, please email me at mzafra@piusxparish.org so we can discuss.

Facemasks - It will be a learning process for everyone in the building to remember to have their facemasks on their person during the school day. We have ordered clips for the students and staff to hold their facemask on their clothing when not wearing it. At this time, students and staff can wear any style mask (excluding handkerchief or bandana) that covers and seals around their nose and mouth properly as long as the mask / print is not offensive, inappropriate, suggestive, graphic, political in nature or a distraction to those in class. Faculty, staff and students should come to school with a clean mask every day.

School Mass - After discussion with our pastor, Father Nixon, we have decided that students and staff will attend Mass on Thursdays virtually to begin the school year. Those at home can livestream the service by going to the parish website - www.piusxparish.org. We will continue to monitor guidelines on large gatherings and will inform you if we make any further decisions regarding Mass.

Touchless Water Bottle Filling Stations - We are in the process of ordering retrofit attachments to our existing water fountains. This will allow our students to refill their water bottles during the day as well as limiting germ exposure. We hope these will be installed prior to the start of school. Please remember that students will not use the water fountains and are allowed to bring a refillable water bottle.

Touchless Hand Sanitizing Stations - We have ordered touchless hand sanitizer dispensers to be positioned throughout the school to help promote cleanliness and to mitigate the spread of any germs.

Thank you for your continued support and faith in St. Pius X Catholic School. Please continue to pray for our school community and pray for a smooth school year despite the new protocols and procedures that we face.

God bless you and your family.

Sincerely,

Mark Zafra

Principal