



THE FRANCISCAN SCHOOL

— FAITH - ACADEMICS - SERVICE —

The Franciscan
School COVID-19
Academic Plan
2021 – 2022

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Introduction

The information in this document outlines the general plan for starting our new school year at The Franciscan School for the 2021-2022 school year. This plan was developed in conjunction with the TFS school administration, the St. Francis of Assisi Parish administration, and with the guidance and recommendations from the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), The NC Governor's Office, and the Diocese of Raleigh Catholic Schools Office.

The State of North Carolina has offered guidance through their [Strong Schools Toolkit](#) and it is updated as of August 18,2021.

As we consider which of these well thought-out plans will be implemented in August, the school administration will communicate with parents to clarify expectations, answer any questions, and provide guidance as to how your children will continue to receive the excellent Catholic education you have come to expect at The Franciscan School. The main goal of this plan is to assure the safety and well-being of all of our students, faculty, staff and families as much as is possible to maintain their social, emotional, and physical health, while providing the necessary and excellent academic programs designed to guarantee the future success of our students.

Changes and Updates for The Franciscan School 2021 - 2022 School Year Amid the COVID-19 Health Concerns

Classroom Procedures

- Students and adults will be required to wear masks, regardless of vaccination status, while in buildings on campus.
- Desks and all common classroom furniture will be arranged to provide as much distance between each student as possible with current class sizes, while ensuring each person will still be able to see and hear the teacher, and view the instructional materials and tools (i.e., SMARTboards, Promethean boards, white boards, etc) .
- Specials classes will be taught in specials classroom, with PE in the gym or on the field.
- We will not provide Distance Learning this year for students. In person instruction is the best way to ensure student success and provide a quality education.
- Teachers will provide materials and homework through Google Classroom or on Renweb as in a typical year. We will ensure consistent use of platforms across the school.
- Utilize all Instructional Technology resources available

Movement Within the Campus Buildings

- We ask that everyone maintain 6 foot distancing in common indoor areas of the campus. This includes hallways, restrooms, and media and technology spaces.
- The school will require a cloth mask or other option to every student and faculty/staff member. All persons moving through common spaces in the buildings (hallways, office spaces, stairwells) will be required to wear cloth masks until they get outside of the buildings. Hand sanitizer or washing of hands need to be done after putting on or after removing masks. All masks should remain on the person and not left in common areas.

Lockers

- We will be restarting the use of lockers in the hallways but spacing should be done as much as possible.

Bathroom and Water Breaks

- Students will be required to bring a personally labeled water bottle to minimize the number of trips to the water dispenser and to allow the water fountains to be used in a more sanitary way.

Lunch/Recess

- Lunch will be held in homerooms at times, but we will also utilize the cafeteria on a rotating basis. Those with hot lunch will have it brought to the classrooms when they are there in a touch-less and safe manner.
- We will have the availability of the traditional milk option during lunches
- Children need breaks throughout the day and the opportunity to decompress and move around freely. As usual, recess will be held each day as one of those breaks from their homeroom, weather permitting, and we will utilize the blacktop, the athletic fields, the playground and the labyrinth areas of campus. Masks are NOT required outside of the indoor spaces. Exceptions will be during Morning Prayer and afternoon Car Pool.

Visitors & Front Office Procedures

- We will be allowing non-essential visitors to the buildings, including parent volunteers. We value our volunteers and all they bring to our community but indoor masking makes our facilities safer and reduces the potential for exposure for all our students and especially for the volunteers. Masks are required of all adults regardless of vaccination status.
- The front office reception desk area will be restructured physically to limit potential exposures. All business should be conducted as socially distant as possible. Our front office is open, but we strongly encourage to use those spaces sparingly and only for quick transfers of materials, check-in for volunteering, appointment pickup of students and late or appointment drop-off. Front office staff will be closely monitoring access to the building as we always do in line with our security and safety protocols.

Health & Hygiene

Cloth Face Coverings

- Wearing a cloth face covering is strongly recommended but is required while inside buildings at TFS. The school administration reserves the right to provide requirements and recommendations for use of cloth masks, face shields or gaiters at school within our facilities. These requirements and recommendations will be age-appropriate and well-communicated to all impacted.
- Faculty and students, will all receive training on how to properly use, wear, and remove cloth face coverings. Teachers will reinforce the expectations to students as necessary and in consideration of age-appropriateness of the recommendations.
- Students will wear face coverings at all times inside the school buildings because others are in close proximity, and they will need to wear them while working at their desks. Faculty members will wear face coverings during instruction as much as possible and always when within 6 feet of students. Parents may set higher standards for their individual students by communicating those to their teacher(s). Procedures are subject to change as per guidance from public health officials, as well as leadership from our Diocese, Parish, and School.

Cleaning & Hygiene

- The Franciscan School administration has leveraged all available resources, to include federal CARES Act funding as well as local budgeting options, to assure we have the highest possible standards for cleaning and hygiene. This will allow for additional cleaning staff and purchasing additional approved cleaning products.
- The school has a dedicated and efficient cleaning staff through Service Master. We will evaluate whether schedules need to be adjusted or additional personnel contracted to ensure proper cleaning and sanitation. These personnel will perform routine cleaning with increased frequency throughout the day. Each classroom will be cleaned after students eat their lunch.
- Cleaning staff will establish a schedule to clean and disinfect high-touch areas, such as door handles, stair rails, desks, and light switches.
- Our cleaning products, hand sanitizer bottles, and Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) have been either purchased or generously donated by our supporters in the community to ensure TFS has the materials needed to mitigate the spread of germs.
- Sanitation Stations will be placed at each entrance for anybody who enters the building.
- Time will be built into the day to allow for frequent and thorough hand washing.
- Hand sanitizer will be available in each classroom and use requirements will be posted and reinforced.
- Teachers will educate students on best practices for mask wearing (as necessary), washing hands, and covering their face while sneezing or coughing.

Classroom Cleaning and Hygiene

- Each student will be asked to provide their own “typically shared “ items such as pencils, glue sticks, rulers, etc. and this does include any playground and recess equipment. Shared items at recess (balls, jump ropes, etc.) will be limited. The school is supplying all other materials necessary for successful instruction.
- Only plastic and other easily sterilized desks and chairs will be utilized within classroom spaces. This means our flexible seating options will be limited this year.

COVID-19 Monitoring and Procedures

Monitoring for Symptoms

- There will be an “at-home” screening process that all faculty members and students must adhere to before entering the building. This includes an attestation form requirement, details to be provided before school starts.

- Any student with a fever of 100.0 or higher will be required to leave the facilities and not return until determination is made that they do not have COVID-19 or are not infectious. The use of Ibuprofen or other fever reducers to bypass this requirement will result in severe consequences.

Handling Suspected, Presumptive or Confirmed Positive Cases of COVID-19

- We will be posting signage and educating faculty and staff, students and families about the symptoms of COVID-19, and when they should stay home and when they can return to school.
- We will add to the space available to our full-time school nurses, allowing them to properly distance any student who may be feeling sick or symptomatic.
- If a person appears to be symptomatic, we will follow the recommendations and guidelines as outlined in the [Strong Schools NC Public Health Toolkit](#). The school will follow all reporting guidelines and tracing protocols as outlined by the CDC and NCDHHS.

A COVID-19 positive test

- 10 days of quarantine have been completed and no symptoms have been reported during daily at home monitoring;
- 7 days of quarantine have been completed, no symptoms have been reported during daily at home monitoring, and the individual has received results of a negative antigen or PCR/molecular test on a test taken no earlier than day 5 of quarantine
- If a student or their parent/family member living in the same household has been determined to have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, they must stay home for 10 days from the last date of exposure unless they test positive. Then the criteria defined above apply.

Please see page 16 in the [Strong School NC Public Health Toolkit Document](#) for more information.

Contact tracing and notification

- It is expected that public health authorities, who are experts in this matter, will conduct any formal contact tracing following a positive report of COVID-19. School officials will then coordinate with local health officials to notify staff and families immediately, within reasonable guidelines maintaining confidentiality in accordance with state and federal laws.

Impact on School

- The school will take guidance from local health authorities on the proper and appropriate steps following a positive COVID-19 diagnosis on campus. This could include closing campus for a few days to clean and coordinate assuring our facilities are able to be used again, which would affect the published school schedule.

Communication

- As has always been the case, TFS administration will clearly communicate with all interested parties as to our procedures, plans, and guidelines.

- Families will be informed about any COVID-19 related updates through emergency communication channels, if necessary, or through our normal communication tools for updates of a simply informative or non-emergency nature including: Weekly Tidbits Newsletter, Principal Forums, website, social media, and the RenWeb Alert system. We will continually evaluate our communications to ensure we are able to provide information in the timeliest and efficient way possible.

Water & Ventilation Systems

We do not foresee any concerns with these systems in our facilities, and we had no issues with these systems in the past school year during more severe COVID restrictions. We will continue normal maintenance and upkeep protocols, with the addition that air system filters will be changed to HEPA filters, unless there is a need to have more stringent protocols due to a positive COVID-19 case on campus.

Morning & Afternoon Carpool

- We encourage families NOT to carpool with other families.
- Currently, our procedure is a return to normal car pool conditions. We will begin no earlier than 7:35 a.m. for normal drop off, but this could change.
- At home screening should be conducted as part of normal family health concerns. As above, for those that register a temperature over 100:
 - Students are required to NOT return to school until they have been fever-free WITHOUT fever reducing medications, AND meet the requirements outlined above in the section entitled: **“COVID-19 Monitoring and Procedures”**
- Afternoon Car Pool and dismissal will return to normal procedures as defined in the Community Handbook.

Field Trips

- Field trips are an important aspect of the educational richness of the academic program at TFS.
- We are evaluating health procedures and status of the COVID-19 cases locally before we finalize any field trips for this year.

Mental Health and Change Management

- In addition to our Mrs. Wacenske, our school counselor, we will have resources available for social and emotional support as needed. Please contact Mrs. Wacenske for more information at (919)534-4837 X314
- If more robust support is needed, all community members are encouraged to seek that assistance through available community resources or through our Parish by contacting Mrs. Kathleen Owen at (919) 847-8205, ext. 241.

Before & After School Care

- We will have our Bridges After-School and Before-School Care program. All indoor and outdoor masking procedures will also be enforced at the Bridges Program.

Athletics

Middle School Athletics will take place this year. Middle School Fall athletics through the Triangle Catholic Schools Athletic Conference (TCSAC) will follow guidelines of the Center for Disease Control, NC High School Athletic Association, and the TCSAC Athletic Directors and Commissioner. The following rules will be enforced:

- Appropriate sanitization of all equipment after every practice and game will take place.
- No high fives, fist or elbow bumps, and no hand holding during the prayer.
- Social distancing will be used on sideline benches during practices and games.
- We will determine if any team study halls can take place before practices or games.
- No shared team water sources, each player must bring their own water bottle.
- Only individually packaged team snacks
- Specific rules for each sport will be shared when established.

Resources

The Franciscan School Administration and Faculty
St. Francis of Assisi Parish Administration
Diocese of Raleigh Catholic Schools Office
NC Department of Health and Human Services Toolkit
NC Governor's Office