



THE FRANCISCAN SCHOOL

— FAITH - ACADEMICS - SERVICE —

COVID-19
Academic Plan
2020 – 2021

Table of Contents

[Introduction](#)

[Plan A – Minimal Social Distancing](#)

[Classroom Procedures](#)

[Movement Within the Campus Buildings](#)

[Lockers](#)

[Bathroom and Water Breaks](#)

[Lunch/Recess](#)

[Visitors & Front Office Procedures](#)

[Plan B – Moderate Social Distancing](#)

[Plan C - Distance Learning](#)

[Health & Hygiene](#)

[Cloth Face Coverings](#)

[Cleaning & Hygiene](#)

[Classroom Cleaning and Hygiene](#)

[COVID-19 Monitoring and Procedures](#)

[Monitoring for Symptoms](#)

[Handling Suspected, Presumptive or Confirmed Positive Cases of COVID-19](#)

[A COVID-19 positive test](#)

[Contact tracing and notification](#)

[Impact on School](#)

[Communication](#)

[Water & Ventilation Systems](#)

[Morning & Afternoon Carpool](#)

[Field Trips](#)

[Mental Health and Change Management](#)

[Before & After School Care](#)

[Athletics](#)

[Resources](#)

Introduction

The information in this document outlines the general plan for starting our new school year at The Franciscan School for the 2020-2021 school year. This plan was developed in conjunction with the TFS school administration, the St. Francis of Assisi Parish administration, and the Re-Opening Task Force along 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 School NC Public Health Toolkit Document](#) and it is recommended that three "levels" of general plans be developed.

Plan A-Minimal Social Distancing. This is the least restrictive of these plans and all of the criteria below apply to this plan.

Plan B-Moderate Social Distancing. We are currently seeing an increase in COVID-19 cases in the State, especially among younger populations. Plan B is implemented if these metrics continue to worsen and additional restrictions become necessary. All the requirements below are necessary plus additional restrictions listed under the various Plan B scenarios presented below.

Plan C-Remote Learning. This plan requires the most severe requirements and would mean we are suspending in-person instruction and would move to remote learning for the entire school week. The instructions and restrictions below would not apply as the students would not be in the school buildings or on school property during the day.

Special Considerations for All Plans Above. We do know that for various personal, medical and safety reasons, there will be students who will not be able to attend in-person classes at The Franciscan School. We will always have a distance learning option and that has always been in our planning. There will be a distance learning component, even under the Plan A and Plan B options, because there will be students, as mentioned above, who may be required to be in quarantine because of exposure of the students or a family member, may not be able to attend due to concerns involving their family members, those students whose families are uncomfortable with coming back in-person, and there will be those who have a temperature, for a variety of reasons, including our normal flu seasons), who will need to stay home until the illness can be diagnosed.

As we consider which of these well thought-out plans will be implemented in August, the school administration will host several Principal Forums, scheduled for July 15th, July 31st, and August 11th, 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.

Plan to Start The Franciscan School for the 2020 - 2021 School Year Amid the COVID-19 Health Concerns

Plan A – Minimal Social Distancing

Classroom Procedures

- Class schedules will be carefully structured to minimize the movement of students within the buildings and to utilize extra spaces to assure we can achieve distance for all students and faculty/staff.
- Desks and all common classroom furniture will be arranged to maximize the amount of distance between each student, 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 each homeroom classroom, either in-person or via distance learning, except for PE. This will ensure that shared classrooms and movement throughout the school day in common spaces are minimized.
- Students who are at home and utilizing the distance learning option will be able to view classes live with one of their grade’s teachers or the teacher for that subject in older grades (live streaming). The details of this option are still being determined.
- All students will have access to classroom instructional materials (Including audio and/or video and all documents) to view on their own time as provided through Google Classroom or on Renweb. Details will be provided when protocols are finalized. We will ensure consistent use of platforms across the school.
- Utilize all Instructional Technology resources available

Movement Within the Campus Buildings

- There will be distance markings on the floors in all inside areas of buildings on campus (reception offices, hallways, classrooms, bathrooms, etc.) that are 6 feet apart. This will ensure that students have a visual reminder of not only the requirements but a useful guide as to what this distance actually looks like. While we do not
- Traffic patterns will be established within the hallways and stairwells.
- The school will provide 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 or to their regular classrooms. 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 eliminating the use of lockers in the hallways as this requires crowded conditions and a lack of unidirectional flow through the hallways. Additionally, use of new spaces within the school and parish buildings makes the current locker locations inefficient and too distant to use effectively.
- Students should plan to use their classroom spaces and backpacks for their materials.

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.
- Water fountains will be used only for refilling bottles.

Lunch/Recess

- Lunch will be held in homerooms. Those with hot lunch will have it brought to the classrooms in a touch-less and safe manner.
- At this point we are unsure about the availability of the traditional milk option during lunches
- Children need breaks throughout the day and the opportunity to decompress and move around freely. To this end, 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.

Visitors & Front Office Procedures

- We will be not allowing non-essential visitors to the buildings, including parent volunteers. We value our volunteers and all they bring to our community but limiting access makes our facilities safer and reduces the potential for exposure for all our students and especially for the volunteers.
- The front office reception desk area will be restructured physically to limit potential exposures. All business should be conducted as socially distant as possible. While our front office is open, we strongly encourage it to be used for emergency or appointment pickup of students and late or appointment drop-off exclusively. Front office staff will be closely monitoring access to the building as we always do in line with our security and safety protocols.

Plan B – Moderate Social Distancing

Plan B will include all of the points for Plan A, in addition to the following items:

- Classrooms will be restricted to 50% maximum occupancy to promote additional social distancing requirements from the Diocese of Raleigh or local leadership. The different forms this could take could include models currently being considered where classes or grades would attend school on alternating schedules, i.e. different days and/or week schedules. These changes will be clearly communicated to all families, but we are committed to providing in-class instruction as much as possible for our families. This will be done while thoughtfully considering the availability to properly staff the available facilities we have available.
- As described in Plan A above, all teachers will also have distance learning lessons available, whether a student is home for individual reasons or because their group's schedule doesn't allow them to be physically in the school building.
- Social distancing will be enforced more rigidly, including how it applies to movement within our facilities and could include modifications in schedules, facilities used for instruction, daily or weekly education procedures, and classroom and other equipment use.
- Movement in the building during the school day will be more limited and purposeful, including the ability to continue the lunch program at school because of scheduling.
- The use of masks or similar measures, especially for older students, will be more extensive and the requirements for their use will be more rigidly enforced.

Plan C - Distance Learning

If North Carolina's COVID-19 metrics worsen significantly, the State and Diocese of Raleigh leadership, as well as the St. Francis Parish and TFS School Administrations, may require transition back to full-time distance learning. We realize this would be a dramatic change to the educational experience and a burden on family schedules and adult work requirements, but would be necessary to protect the health of all students, faculty and staff members, and our families.

- Distance learning would be similar to the Third Trimester of the 2019- 2020 year at TFS, with a more streamlined, organized, and consistent online experience.
- Technology expectations and scheduling would be more consistent across grade levels than during the emergency changes implemented the last trimester of the 2019-20 school year.
- Google Classroom will be fully integrated with RenWeb, which will make posting assignments and viewing the grade for one's assignment more seamless and connected.
- More online apps and tools will be utilized to streamline online, distance learning procedures and allow for a more consistent experience across grade levels.
- Valuable parent feedback from Principal Forums, online school-wide surveys, and specific class or classroom surveys, as well as information from our teachers and staff, would be utilized to assure we adjust and refine our procedures to assure an excellent and individually beneficial academic experience for all students. This would include specific feedback on all interactions within the classroom and how lessons are taught and communicated to effectively educate your students.

Health & Hygiene

Cloth Face Coverings

- While currently wearing a cloth face covering is strongly recommended but not required by State officials, 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. The school will provide a washable cloth face covering for all faculty, staff, other school personnel, and all students.
- 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 during times of transition or interaction with others in closer proximity, however they will not need to wear them while working at their desks. Faculty members will wear face coverings during instruction. 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, School and Re-Opening Task Force recommendations, and medical exemptions from face covering rules will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

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.
- The school buildings and additional parish spaces utilized by the school will not be used in the evenings during the week to allow time for the spaces to be cleaned thoroughly.
- Our cleaning products, hand sanitizer bottles, and Personal Protection Equipment 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 a 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.
- We will conduct daily temperature screenings for all people, including students, entering the school building. This will affect car pool times, so please see [Morning and Afternoon CarPool Procedures](#) below. Any student with a fever of 100.4 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 Joanne Sullivan, our full-time school nurse, allowing her 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 School NC Public Health Toolkit Document](#). The school will follow all reporting guidelines and tracing protocols as outlined by the CDC and NCDHHS.

A COVID-19 positive test

- If a student or employee has been diagnosed with COVID-19 and does not have symptoms they must remain out of school until 10 days have passed since the date of their test.
- If they test positive and have symptoms, they must stay home for 10 days since the onset of symptoms and have been fever and symptom free for at least three days.
- 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 14 days from the last date of exposure unless they test positive. Then the criteria defined above apply.

Please see page 10 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 schedule and include the possibility of moving temporarily to Plan C for all.

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. 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.
- Arrival in the morning will be evaluated to determine the optimal time to allow for screening procedures to occur. Currently, our procedure is that we begin no earlier than 7:35 a.m. for normal drop off, but this could change.
- An Attestation Questionnaire will be required of the adult dropping off the student(s) to certify the health of children, and determine if anyone in the family has expressed any symptoms of COVID-19. Examples of those forms can be found in [Strong School NC Public Health Toolkit Document](#) on pages 15-17.
- As above, a temperature screening will take place for each individual entering the building each morning.
 - A fever is determined by registering a 100 degree temperature.
 - High temperatures will be recorded by school staff.
 - After passing the screening, students will report directly to their homeroom.

For those that register a temperature over 100:

- A retest will be done after failing the initial screening
- A second high temperature reading will require the student to be removed from campus.
- 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 be adjusted to consider social distancing protocols. More information will follow
- During carpool times, in both morning and afternoon, we ask for the famous patience of our families and guardians as the process will look and feel different.
- We are looking into ways to most efficiently move through the process of both arrival and dismissal to make it quicker, without sacrificing the efficacy of the screening process or health of individuals in the mornings. We always want to consider time and schedules, but only after considering the health and safety of all on our campus as our highest priority.

Field Trips

- Field trips are an important aspect of the educational richness of the academic program at TFS.
- However, at the current time, there will be no off-campus field trips in 2020-21. This will be re-evaluated as conditions change throughout the 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 are attempting to determine if After-School and Before-School Care through our Bridges program will be possible. We will gauge interest and determine that well before school starts and before any fees are collected, but registration will still take place

Athletics

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. At this time, no decision has been made as to the availability of after school athletics. If practices and games do take place, the following rules will be enforced:

- Temperature checks before each practice and game
- Locker rooms in the gym are closed and unavailable for use.
- Separate entrance and exits to the Gym and field facilities for spectators, if allowed, and players. Hand sanitizer stations' will be available at each entrance and exit.
- Sanitization of all equipment after every practice and game.
- No high fives, fist or elbow bumps, and no hand holding during the prayer.
- The gym and bathrooms will be cleaned every day and indoor gym bleachers and benches after each game.
- Social distancing will be used on sideline benches during practices and games.
- There will not be any team study halls 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

The Franciscan School Re-Opening Task Force

Diocese of Raleigh Catholic Schools Office

NC Department of Health and Human Services Toolkit

NC Governor's Office