

Park Christian School Re-Start Planning Guide

From the President

Park Christian School Family,

We know that these have been difficult times. Thank you for your patience and commitment with us as we confidently bring PCS students back to school. Following the guidelines provided by Governor Walz on July 30, we fully anticipate starting school on Monday, August 31st, we ask that you continue to cover our school in prayer and that we collectively seek God to heal our land. We do not have a roadmap that shows the exact way in how to navigate COVID-19 and all associated with it, thank you for your grace and cooperation through this spring and summer, and in the days ahead.

In these unprecedented times, we do not lose sight that we serve an all-powerful, sovereign God. He is in control. We can rest in Him. We can confidently live in the sure hope of God's promises. We serve a mighty God, and we can live in joy and peace as we move into the 2020-21 school year! God is still on the throne.

- **Romans 8:37-39** *"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*
- **1 Chronicles 29:11-12** *"Yours, Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, Lord, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all."*
- **Psalms 103:19** *"The Lord has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all."*

With the many moving parts as we come back to school, please know that this document is a 'living' document. It can change in the days and weeks ahead. We recognize that we will need to be nimble, adaptive, and be able to pivot continually to changing information. As we learn more information, we hope that this document provides a reasonable and responsive plan for providing ongoing in-school instruction. We look forward to collaborating with you to provide education that is focused on Jesus Christ and that is academically second to none.

One of our core values at PCS is to partner with the Christian home. Park Christian School embraces the biblical responsibility entrusted to parents to nurture and educate their children and supports the partnership between families and their local church (Eph. 6:14). As we partner with your home we are asking you to assist us in maintaining the health of our student body. We are asking you to daily assess the health of your child(ren), including COVID symptoms and a temperature check. If your child has a temperature (100.4° or higher) or has several symptoms indicating an illness, we need you to keep your son or daughter home. Reducing the spread of COVID-19 is paramount in maintaining the academic setting at PCS. Thank you for partnering with us daily as we open up our school.

We recognize there may be days when a daily wellness check can't or doesn't get done at home. In those situations, a backup plan is in place to assist you. We ask that in these situations, students enter door #1, where a staff person or volunteer will be available to check your son or daughter's temperature and assess general health. All other students, with an at-home assessment, will enter door #4, and go to their classrooms each morning. Thank you for partnering with us as we establish this routine!

As you see in our re-entry guide, the physical health, wellness, and safety of our students is so important. Yet, equally important is the mental, social, emotional, spiritual, and developmental health of our students. The American Academy of Pediatrics, Center for Disease Control, and local professionals affirm this. Being in school is critical for the mental health of our students. As expressed by one of our task force members we need to get our students back into the classrooms at PCS:

God created us not just as physical beings, but emotional and spiritual as well. Think of it like the Trinity - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - three equally important components. Removing or reducing one harms the others and the whole. As we look at the critical factors regarding opening school this fall, we must take into consideration the ingredients required for mentally healthy students and families.

The first is connection: we are hard-wired to connect, face to face. Without healthy connection, we are susceptible to depression and anxiety, and if prolonged, physical disease as well. The second is community: knowing we belong to something bigger than ourselves and being personally invested in that community is vital to our well-being. The third is communication: we need to be able to speak to one another, see each other's facial expressions, hear the tone of someone's voice, and exchange ideas and feelings. Lastly, stability and consistency are essential mental health components, especially for students.

If there is one concern that students struggle with at large, it would be anxiety. With a massive disruption in the daily routine of all students this spring, and canceled activities this summer, there is no doubt that questions, worries, and concerns are circling in our students' minds. It's suspected that we have not yet seen the full impact of the springtime quarantine on our mental health and may not for several more months. (Heather Bjur)

Establishing routines and being back in school is important for our students academically, mentally, emotionally, socially, and spiritually.

Our second core value is academic excellence. We believe and professionals around us confirm over and over again that the students belong in school. That learning takes place best in-person, with their classmates, in collaboration, and with their teacher. Academic excellence is greatly enhanced by in-person instruction. The CDC recognizes this importance, "Aside from a child's home, no other setting has more influence on a child's health and well-being than their school." We are confident that PCS is unique in our region in providing Christ-centered education as we equip students in our other core values of integrating a biblical worldview, equipping in Christ-like influence, and character development. PCS is excited to bring routine back to the educational setting reflecting Jesus Christ in everything we do.

As the Re-entry task force has met throughout the summer, many experts and resources have been used to develop this guide by processing and implementing best practices from local, regional, and national professionals and experts. Primary sources include:

- Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) <https://acsi.org>
- MN Independent Schools Forum (MISF) <https://misf.org/>
- MN Department of Health (MDH) <https://www.health.state.mn.us/>
- Centers for Disease Control (CDC) <https://www.cdc.gov/#>
- MN Department of Education (MDE) <https://education.mn.gov/mde/index.html>
- American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) <https://www.aap.org/en-us/Pages/Default.aspx>

While this guide focuses on in-person, on-site instruction, we also recognize that we need to actively prepare alternative mobile educational plans. Our technology committee is reviewing, adapting, and considering windows of time that we may need to provide technological support for learning opportunities outside of the classroom. In the event that there is a need for a short-term distance education model, live streaming, Microsoft Teams, SeeSaw and Zoom classrooms would be utilized.

Health and Wellness Checks

Daily monitoring your child's health is important and keeping your ill child home is even more urgent as we return to the routine of school. PCS asks that you monitor your child's health, being aware of symptoms associated with COVID-19 including:

- Fever (temp of 100.4 or higher) or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore Throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

PCS understands that some of these symptoms may be a normal part of your child's life. You know your child the best, so please monitor appropriately. If your child is exhibiting abnormal symptoms keep them home from school. Additionally, all families must enforce a 72-hour symptom-free rule before a student returns to school unless they have a documented negative COVID test.

We will continue to communicate with you weekly over the next month(s) and our task force will continue to adjust our planning as needed. If you have questions or comments, please direct them to info@parkchristianschool.org.

We are grateful for you!

In Christ Alone,

Chris Nellerhoe