

August 4, 2020

Good Evening SWS Parents,

The long-anticipated day has arrived - St. Walter School proudly presents Our ReOpening Plan Options for the 2020-2021 school year!

As stated in my email on Saturday, our reopening plan was approved by the Diocese of Joliet, pending a requirement of six feet of social distancing at all times. With the talented minds of a few staff members, classrooms have been restructured to accommodate the social distancing requirement.

In the information below, there are five sections of details. At the end of the email, there is a link for an enrollment form. With the start of the school year only three weeks away and a multitude of changes occurring in many school districts' plans weekly, we ask for EACH FAMILY to complete the enrollment form. The data from the enrollment form will be used to finalize details that had to be adjusted due to the Diocese of Joliet's requirement for social distancing.

Before you begin reading through the five sections of information, I would like to thank our families for the continued patience, support, and understanding as St. Walter School navigates this unprecedented time. During this process, many decisions have been made without the use of a crystal ball. Please know that many hours have been spent deliberating through scenarios, weighing options, and making tough decisions all while keeping the health and safety of our students, teachers, and staff as the main priority. I am grateful to our Reopening Team for their time, expertise, and dedication to ensuring students' success while enrolled at SWS. I would like to acknowledge Mrs. Volk for her hours of time, support, and willingness to go over scenarios multiple times until we found the best results. SWS is blessed to have faculty and staff that are completely dedicated to our mission of providing excellent education rooted in faith.

Section 1: Things to remember

Section 2: Approved Plan

Section 3: Meeting the Guidelines

Section 4: Updated Details

Section 5: Planning for Possible Scenarios

Section 1: Things to consider

Flexibility - After my latest Update email last week, many parents responded positively. Thank you! I was grateful that those with personal concerns spoke up and did so with such respect and understanding. I realize many of us are frustrated with present circumstances, and I ask you to please continue to be patient. Please remember everything we do right now requires great detail and has never been done before. Each and every aspect of our school and the children's experience requires review, planning, evaluating that plan, measuring and testing that

plan, then making necessary modifications (and sometimes repeating the process). We hope to be as specific as possible and have as few changes as possible after articulating the plans to you and your children, so as to be clear and limit confusion. I assure you our primary goal is safety, care, and wellness for the entire school community while providing our excellent Catholic education. As we navigate through the next three weeks and begin the year, we will stay limber so as to improve and create the best possible environment for your children and the staff during this time.

Positivity - As parents, teachers, and school administrators, our attitudes will greatly determine our outcomes. Even if we find some of this frustrating or difficult if we are enthusiastic, hopeful, and willing to try new things being asked of us, and if we encourage such positivity in our kids. I believe we can make this a GREAT school year. I know I speak for myself and many others that the rallying spirit of St. Walter School last spring lifted us when we felt the chaos swelling. It made a huge difference in how we powered through. You or your child may not particularly love some aspects of the plan for this fall, but I hope you will encourage the children and each other to give it our best effort. The teachers and I are listening, balancing requirements and needs, while also adapting to ever-changing information from multiple sources. Our teachers are working hours on end to prepare in advance of any possible development. Your children mean the world to them, to me, and our community. Please help reinforce at home how loved, cared for, and supported your children are here at SWS. Please help support the changes with positivity. Please present feedback or submit ideas and needs with understanding. Please encourage students to try their best and ask for help when they need it. We are working very hard to ensure students will return to as many familiar elements of school as possible. In more creative ways than ever, we will rise to the challenge to inject humor, joy, grace, goodness, faith, and positivity in our school day. We will make the most of this learning time together!

“Positive thinking is more than just a tagline. It changes the way we behave. And I firmly believe that when I am positive, it not only makes me better, but it also makes those around me better.” — [Harvey Mackay](#)

Responsibility - When you read through the options below, please understand that St. Walter School has responsibilities to many stakeholders.

We have a responsibility to our students to provide a safe, nurturing, and healthy learning environment.

We have a responsibility to our faculty and staff to uphold a signed contract.

We have a responsibility to our families and parishioners to make financial decisions with integrity and fidelity.

Section 2: Approved Plan

St. Walter School is committed to providing educational opportunities to all of our students. We recognize that every family has factors that affect how to educate their children this school year. With respect to varying viewpoints, the following three options are being presented to our school families. Two of the options are entirely approved and will be offered. The third option of remote learning will be available as long as SWS can provide staff and financial resources to support remote learning.

As you read through the options presented, I ask that you review all components of the options while keeping in mind some “what ifs.”

“What ifs” To Consider.

- If the State of Illinois mandates Remote Learning for all schools, SWS expects that any family choosing Face-to-Face instruction (full days or hybrid) will continue to honor their tuition contract and stay enrolled at St. Walter School.
- If a family enrolls and then drops out right before or after the school year begins, SWS will be in a challenging financial position. Our enrollment data directly supports the hiring of faculty/staff, purchasing of devices, and curriculum.
- If you enroll in Remote Learning and it is offered, your spot for face to face will be given to the first person on the waitlist for the respective grade. This holds true for any family that chooses to withdraw their enrollment.

As mentioned, at the end of this email, there is a link for an enrollment form. **SWS request one submission per family to be completed by Friday August 7, 2020.**

APPROVED: Face to Face - 5 full days	APPROVED: Hybrid	PENDING: Remote Learning
Core Curriculum taught in class at SWS	Core Curriculum taught in class at SWS	Core Curriculum taught by a staff member of SWS
Religion Class taught at school by a SWS teacher	Religion class taught virtually by a SWS teacher. Combination of live ZOOM and recorded lessons	Religion class taught virtually by a SWS teacher. Combination of live ZOOM and recorded lessons
Optional Snack	Optional Snack	N/A
Lunch in Classrooms	Lunch at home	N/A
Specials in person at SWS	NO SPECIALS	N/A
Enrichment opportunities offered daily at SWS	Some opportunities for enrichment through virtual learning	Some opportunities for enrichment through virtual learning
Enrollment Term - Trimester	Enrollment Term -Trimester (Possible enrollment change will be based on space availability)	Enrollment Term - Annual (Possible enrollment change will be based on space availability)

Section 3: Meeting the Guidelines

This section of our reopening plan directly relates to the ISBE & IDPH Guidelines Document, which maintains that all public and non-public schools must follow the guidelines. That Guidelines Document specifies five bullet points that schools must follow to reopen during this phase, for which we have outlined specific SWS protocols below.

1 - Face Coverings

- All students and staff will be required to wear a face mask at all times when inside the school building.
- Students will be permitted to take off their face covering during snack and lunch, and when outside if six feet apart from others.

- The requirements for masks are that they cover the nose and mouth, and fit securely (without constant adjustment or slipping).
- Students should be able to maneuver their face coverings independently.
- As long as the coverings' designs are school appropriate, there are no specific requirements for mask designs.
- Either cloth face coverings or disposable masks are acceptable. Face coverings may have ear loops, wrap around the back of the head, or lift up from the neck over the nose and mouth (gaiter-type).
- Plastic "face shields" are not an approved face-covering per the guidelines at this time but can be used in conjunction with an approved face mask.
- **Parent tip:** *if your child has not worn a face-covering much, practice wearing it at home a little each day to make using it at school more comfortable.*
- **Staff note:** *please know that we teachers and staff will model wearing the face coverings without complaint. We realize this may be a challenge at first for students, and we will be encouraging and positive.*

2 - Spacing & Movement

- We will prohibit more than 50 individuals from gathering in one space.
- To limit movement through the school, students in Preschool through Grade 5 will remain in their homerooms with specials teachers moving to each homeroom for instruction.
 - Students/Teachers in Grades 6-8 will continue to move classes to support academic-based groupings and specialized instruction in ELA and Math. We have adjusted the location of classrooms to accommodate the junior high staying on the second floor for all their classes.
- Stairwells will be designated as "up only" or "down only" to lessen face to face passing.
- Students will eat lunch in their classrooms (or outside when possible).
- Recess will be scheduled for students to play in the parking lot with their grade level only.
- Bathroom breaks will be scheduled and supervised (from the hallway) except for emergency use.
- **Parent tip:** *your child may or may not react much to these changes. Encouraging your child to be open-minded and take them seriously will help the student and staff community work together for our collective health. If your child experiences a strong emotional reaction to changes at school, please let us know. In addition to your child's teachers, our excellent Social Worker Mrs. Tara is here to help.*
- **Staff note:** *we will have visual posters and give regular verbal reminders of safety expectations. It is a lot to remember, but on the whole, our students are respectful and responsive to school structures. With a little practice, we anticipate the new expectations to simply become part of the routine this fall.*

3 - Physical Distancing

- We will provide 6 feet of physical distancing in hallways and classrooms.
- Signage will be posted throughout to the hallways to help students maintain distance.
- Markings on the floor and walls will assist with keeping 6 feet apart.
- Teachers will monitor hallways.
- We will utilize two nurses stations: one for routine wellness needs and one for students presenting or complaining of illness symptoms.
- Dismissal times will be staggered and students will observe social distance rules throughout dismissal.
- For the time being, parents may not gather for pick up, but rather, students dismissed should walk to their car.

- **Parent tip:** *have your child stand and stretch out his or her arms (airplane-style), then slowly turn in a circle. Have your child observe how much space is around him or her. This gives a great mental and physical reference for your child of a good amount of safe distancing space.*
- **Staff note:** *don't be surprised if your child talks about how the classrooms look a little different in order to maintain distance, perimeter furniture may be removed, desks will be spread out, and "extras" will be minimal. Where relevant, classrooms will still utilize standing desks or designated spaces with ample supports for student learning.*

4 - Symptom Screenings

- Daily no-contact temperature checks
 - Before entering St.Walter School, every individual (staff, teachers, students, and visitors) will have his or her temperature checked with a no-contact thermometer. Temperature checks will take place before exiting a vehicle and recorded as pass/fail.
 - Any person with a temperature over 100.0 should remain in the car and be taken back home.
 - Any family member of a person with a temperature over 100.0 should remain in the car and be taken back home.
 - Any student (and sibling) sent home due to a temperature over 100.0 must remain home until fever-free for 48-hours without fever-reducing medication.
 - Students riding the bus will have their temperature checked when they arrive on-site and in the event of a temperature reading of 100.0 at their on-site reading, we will contact the parent to pick up the student
- **Parent tip:** *routinely checking your child's temperature at home before leaving the house should make for an easy arrival at school. If your child's temperature is elevated (100.0 or higher) please keep your child home, as well as siblings, then notify the school office as usual. (In no instance is it acceptable to administer fever-reducing medication to a child with a 100.0+ temperature and then send him or her to school.)*
- **Staff note:** *each teacher is working on how they will handle missed classroom time due to illness or need to quarantine, and this plan will be clearly communicated this week. We will work together to make sure your child stays on track.*

5 - Cleaning

- Personal Hygiene
 - Once a student or staff member passes the temperature check, wearing a mask, s/he will enter the building and proceed directly to their homeroom and sanitize their hands.
 - Hand sanitizing stations are in place in every classroom near the doorway. Students and staff will utilize it when entering and exiting a classroom.
 - All students who eat a snack during the day will wash/sanitize their hands before removing their face covering and eating their snack. As soon as they finish eating, they will put on their face covering and again wash/sanitize their hands.
 - All students will wash/sanitize their hands before and after recess.
 - All students will wash/sanitize their hands before and after lunch.
- Classroom Hygiene
 - All grade levels will use a sanitizing wipe/cleaner to wipe their desks before and after eating.
 - Resources or equipment in a classroom that are shared will be limited as much as possible. When shared resources or equipment are used, each item will be sanitized after each student's use.

- School Cleaning & Protections
 - Common doors will have doorstops to limit students' need to touch or hold doors.
 - In grades 4-8, students will wipe down desks and chairs before they leave each classroom.
 - Bathrooms will be cleaned after each class's scheduled bathroom use.
 - Any shared space used for a specials class will be cleaned after each use
 - **The entire school (classrooms, communal spaces, bathrooms, hallways, etc.) will be disinfected daily using a Power Mister 130 Atomization Sprayer.**
 - Ventilation and airflow throughout the buildings will be monitored.
- *Parent tip: the increased handwashing and use of hand sanitizer may lead to dry hands. It might be helpful for your child to use a moisturizer at home to prevent dry hands.*
- *Staff note: we will review expectations and provide reminders and time for hand washing and cleaning surfaces at school. As well, we will have clearly marked areas for any shared items (which will be very limited) to be set aside or immediately cleaned after use, including classroom references or books.*

Section 4: Updated Details

Many details go into managing our school day. As you can imagine, to accommodate all of the safety requirements, other aspects of the school day are affected. Below are outlined updates for many of the areas critical to our daily operation.

Before- and After- School Care

- The school will open in the morning at 6:45 AM for before care.
- Students not utilizing before care will be able to enter the building at 7:15 AM
- Students will go directly to their classrooms upon arrival
- Teachers will be in their classrooms upon student arrival, beginning at 7:15 AM.
- After-School Care will be provided and all outlined protocols for the school day will apply
- Students will practice social distancing during BASIC, utilizing additional staff members and additional designated spaces as necessary.
- Any toys, games, and equipment in B.A.S.I.C. will be made of a material that can be disinfected with spray (no cloth or fabric). Sanitizing shared items will occur between uses and at the end of each day.
- Students attending BASIC will be outside as often as possible as weather permits.

Bussing

- At this time the bus company intends to offer a bussing option to those families that are eligible. We expect protocols to be shared soon which we will share ASAP.

Community Activities

- School-sponsored community activities and gatherings will be temporarily suspended.
- If a safe format can be determined for a school activity, it may be led with approval from SWS administration and will be communicated to the community.

Curriculum Night

- To protect our parents as well as our students and teachers, Curriculum Night will be presented through video via your child's teacher.

- Mrs. Warco will provide a video with a welcome and updates that pertain to the full school.

Lunch, Snacks, & Recess

- Students will be encouraged to bring a reusable, washable placemat with their lunch.
- Milk will be delivered to each homeroom by the lunch staff.
- Feasibility and details for Hot Lunch, Fun Food, and Sunset Slush options are under careful review and will be made and communicated ASAP.
- Water fountains will be closed. Due to water fountain closures, teachers will explain specific classroom procedures for students' personal water bottles, which will be allowed.
- Any student who has forgotten their lunch and recognizes it prior to their lunchtime can alert their teacher. The teacher will alert the office, and an office staff member will contact the parent to see if a lunch can be brought.
- Our office will have a ready supply of pre-packaged items for students who forget lunch.
- Restaurant delivery of lunches will not be accepted by the office.

Mass

- As a Catholic school, it is important that students still participate in Mass.
- Grade levels will be assigned to a Mass schedule, limiting the total attendance to comply with current church regulations.
- We are looking into Live-Streaming the weekly school masses for those classes that will not physically be in attendance in the Church, as well as for the parents and families at home.
- During weeks when a grade level is not attending Mass in the Church, if Live-Stream is not available, teachers will arrange a prayer service in their classroom that incorporates that week's readings and Gospel.

Office, Volunteer, & Guest Procedures

- We will work with parents to do as much as possible without contact. Please call us before coming to the office to see if we can address your needs without necessitating an on-site visit.
- When visiting the school, please call upon your arrival from your car for instructions. Depending on any persons already in the office area, you may be asked to wait or maybe met by a staff member at the front doors to help you.
- Volunteers and guests will be very limited during this time.

Outside Activities & Travel

- There are state guidelines regarding activity and travel right now, which continue to evolve and change. We urge families to regard these guidelines and exercise appropriate caution in an effort to protect all in our school community.
- If state parameters require a student to quarantine due to travel, activity, or exposure, please follow the procedures for reporting an absence for illness, alerting the nurse through a message on the nurse's line, and alerting your child's teacher of the need for quarantine. Then follow your teacher's instructions from Curriculum Night for how she has outlined learning during quarantine or extended absence due to illness.

Service

- Service to the greater community is critically important to us as a Catholic school. SMPS will continue to serve through projects carried out in our classrooms that directly impact and benefit our local community.
- The Faith Families and Buddies programs will continue, whereby students are in service to one another through faith leadership, though in-person gatherings for these programs will not occur during this time.

Sports & Extracurriculars

- All fall sports in the Diocese through both the Suburban Parochial League and DuPage Parochial League have been suspended.
- Information about sports beyond the fall season will be communicated as soon as available.
- At this time, all after school activities and extracurriculars will be canceled until further notice.

Staff Support

- We have hired a part-time school nurse during this time to cover the new needs of our students, faculty, and staff.
- We will continue to employ lunch supervisors. In addition, faculty and staff will help with lunch and recess to increase monitoring and support.
- Additional monitoring and support of new protocols will be taken on by administration, staff, and teachers.

Section 5: COVID PROCEDURES

In the Event of Illness

If any student, faculty, or staff member feels ill, they should stay home from school until symptom free for 48 hours.

- A student, faculty, or staff member with a temperature of 100.0 or higher must stay home from school and be fever-free for 48 hours without fever-reducing medication.
- Any sibling of a student with a temperature of 100.0 or higher must stay home until the household is fever free for 48 hours without fever-reducing medication.
- If a student, faculty, or staff member experiences four consecutive days of illness (weekends included), a doctor's note is required to return to school.
 - Without a doctor's note, if the person's symptoms are aligned with COVID, they will be sent home, and will be able to return with the required doctor's note.

If any student, faculty, or staff member exhibits COVID symptoms while at school, the following will occur

- The student, faculty, or staff member will be ushered to and stay contained in the nurse's office.
- Any student, faculty, or staff member who states they do not feel well will have their temperature checked.
- Any student, faculty, or staff member exhibiting symptoms of illness may be sent to the nurse to have their temperature checked.
- If illness symptoms are identified in a student, parents will be called to pick up their child.
- If illness symptoms include a temperature of 100.0 or higher, parents will be called to pick up their child and any siblings.

- The classmates and staff members of the classroom from where the ill person came will be relocated to a clean area until the previous space is cleaned.

The information above is extremely important and will become regular practice at St. Walter School. As requirements, protocols, or procedures change, we will amend the policies at our school. St. Walter School works in conjunction with the Diocese of Joliet, Catholic Schools Office, CDC, Office of the Governor, Illinois State Board of Education, DuPage County Regional Office of Education, and the Dupage County Health Department.

Please use this link to complete the ENROLLMENT FORM: <https://forms.gle/WA1TGPy19MBD4N7R9>

The enrollment form is due on Friday, August 7, 2020

If you have questions about the information above, please contact the school office. Mrs. Volk and Mrs. Warco will be attending a mandatory Catholic Schools Office administrators meeting tomorrow, Wednesday, 8/5/2020. Please email us with any questions, or if you prefer a phone call, we will be available on Thursday, 8/6/2020.

Respectfully exhausted, but excited for the school year,

Mrs. Warco