



**ST. JOSEPH  
SCHOOL  
COCKEYSVILLE  
REOPENING PLAN**

***2020-2021***

## OVERVIEW

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St. Joseph School is committed to the education of young people which comes to life through academics, faith, community, service, and activities that happen in a community that values each person as a part of a larger global community. We remain dedicated to this promise, even though it may look different due to external factors that have changed the normal campus proceedings.

The St. Joseph School Reopening Plan outlines our plan of continued operation of the school during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our preference is to be able to open the 2020-2021 school year on time and on campus, and we are committed to doing so, as long as we can do so in a manner that is safe and healthy and with the consideration of the guidance of health care professionals, those advising on COVID-19, and governing regulations. With that being said, we are aware that medical circumstances are subject to change through the summer and fall, and we know that we must be able to adapt efficiently.

This plan is subject to change and it is designed to be flexible, in order to address new public health concerns if and when they emerge. Above all our goal is to provide an exceptional St. Joseph experience for your child, while also working to create and maintain a safe and healthy learning environment.

As the following pages will indicate, we plan to take precautions to protect our students, faculty, and staff with the guidance of the Archdiocese of Baltimore and in consideration of the guidance provided by other resources, including state and local health and education agencies and the CDC. We cannot eliminate all health risks in the midst of the pandemic. \*

*\*COVID-19 is extremely contagious and is believed to spread by person-to-person contact; as a result, federal and state health agencies recommend social distancing and other methods to mitigate the risk of contracting the virus. St. Joseph will be implementing preventive protocols, policies, and procedures designed to slow the spread of COVID-19 on the SJS campus for the 2020-2021 school year, and they will be updated in response to new information. Despite protocols and procedures in place to mitigate the transmission of COVID-19 on campus, there are inherent risks associated with returning to campus. Those who return to campus acknowledge and voluntarily assume these risks.*

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

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### ***Honoring Our Mission***

Our Program must stay true to our mission that St. Joseph School is an authentically Catholic community of diverse learners, prepares students to think critically, to work purposefully, and to live faithfully.

### ***Prioritizing Health and Safety***

The health and safety of students, faculty, and staff remain at the forefront of all discussions and decisions. Our Re-Opening team is collaborating with the Archdiocese of Baltimore Planning Ahead Task Force in helping us consider how we can re-open campus in the fall and a strategy for responding to potential spikes and/or new outbreaks. While much attention will be focused on guarding against COVID-19 itself, we are also mindful of the mental health and social-emotional state of our students, faculty, and staff.

### ***Ensuring Community, Inclusion, and Equity***

Whether online or on a modified open campus, our goal is to enable all students to participate meaningfully in the St. Joseph School program, and we will continue to foster a community that is inclusive and equitable.

### ***Practicing Responsible Stewardship***

While our commitment to delivering an exceptional educational experience is firm, we must do so in a manner that manages our resources responsibly, ensures financial sustainability, and mitigates risk. In order to provide a full and equitable experience in the midst of uncertainty, we are investing substantially in enhanced technology capabilities, continual professional development, new schedules and routines, and increased industrial hygiene protocols. As you can imagine, these necessary investments create added, and non-budgeted costs. Know that we do not take lightly your commitment to your child's education and rest assured that we will continue to invest responsibly in it.

## **EXPRESSION OF APPRECIATION**

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As we all continue to navigate uncharted territory, we know that this fall will be different than anything we have experienced. We will stand on the mission statement of SJS and the strong community to be able to walk this journey together. Last spring, we were able to successfully transition to distance learning. This would not have been possible without the commitment of the faculty, staff, parents, students, and extended family. We want to thank everyone for their partnership and collaboration to make this happen. This year as we prepare to re-open for in-person learning, we will rely on your flexibility and patience as we continue to work together to meet the challenges before us.

## **LEARNING EXPERIENCE**

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Every effort will be made to ensure that students at all grade levels have continuity of learning, should they be required to quarantine or if they miss a significant amount of instruction due to illness.

In order to adhere to CDC guidelines and best practices, our physical learning environment will be modified. Ensuring social distancing is critical to avoiding community spread. Therefore, we will open the school year on August 31<sup>st</sup> for five day a week in-person instruction under the following conditions, which remain open to change depending on the state of the virus in our region and the status of any state or local orders.

### **Pre-K 4 – Grade 8**

Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Baltimore will open for faculty on August 24<sup>th</sup> and for students on August 31<sup>st</sup>. We are receiving technical assistance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to help to form our plans for a safe return to five day, in-person instruction for the start of the 2020-21 school year. Families who do not feel comfortable returning their children to in-person instruction will have a remote learning option and will take part in synchronous instruction from home. Parents/guardians will indicate their intent to SJS by completing an intent form when disseminated. If a family selects remote learning, they will only be permitted to switch to in-person learning at the end of the first or second trimester (specific dates will be provided by the school).

If SJS needs to switch to distance learning, the schedule for distance learning will be the same as it is for in-person instruction. This will ensure the continued academic progress for the students.

As part of our ability to support synchronous learning at school, we have purchased IP cameras for all classrooms. The product we have purchased was recommended by the Archdiocese of Baltimore to best support our learning platforms. Teachers will have the opportunity to be trained in the use of this device as well as ongoing professional development to support the ongoing learning of all of the SJS students. These cameras will facilitate the access of students participating in learning from home with the class in-person.

The Health & Safety of the entire SJS community is of paramount importance and therefore we continue to analyze and adjust our daily procedures and practices. Our team is working diligently to develop a plan that puts the wellbeing of the SJS community first. We are focusing on three protocols for the school community throughout their time on campus - masks worn at all times while indoors and outdoors when social distancing is not possible, handwashing/sanitization and cleaning of surfaces, and social distancing.

We recognize that for every decision we make in our best judgement, there may be many alternatives that we could have selected and that there is support for all of them. Please know that we do not make any of these decisions lightly or without consideration. We hope that you will be confident in the choices we make as part of a plan to mitigate risk and to reasonably protect the health and safety of our entire school community while offering the strong academic program you have come to expect from SJS.

### **Adjustment to the Uniform Policy**

Students will be required to wear a fabric or disposable mask each day that covers the mouth and nose at all times when indoors. Gators and bandanas or other non-mask face coverings are NOT permitted. When outside, masks must be worn when social distancing is not possible. Students should put their mask on prior to exiting their car each day. In addition, students will need to have a second mask in a sealed zip lock bag in case it is needed. Masks will need to be laundered regularly. All masks need to be labeled. The masks need to be appropriate for school. If the pattern/design of the mask is appropriate for clothing on an out of uniform day, it should be acceptable. We ask that you begin having your child wear a mask for periods of time over the summer so this will not be a new experience when school reopens.

## **Health and Safety**

**Health Suite:** The Nurse's Office has undergone significant renovations and enhancements in order to optimize the use of the space and provide room for potential isolation.

**Daily Screenings:** Students, faculty, and staff must adhere to a daily symptom checker every morning before coming to campus through the protocol developed by the Archdiocese (more details regarding this process to come). Anyone with a temperature above 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit will not be permitted to attend school.

- Students attending Before Care will need to be temperature checked by the parent (or adult dropping off) prior to entering the building and in the presence of the staff member present.
- PK4 and Kindergarten students will also be temperature checked by a parent or guardian prior to entering the school building and in the presence of a staff member.
- Parents of students in grades 1-8 will need to complete the Wellness Check at home prior to drop-off at SJS.

**Mental Health:** We understand the impact that last spring and the return to school may have on students and staff. Our school counselor will coordinate our efforts to support the entire SJS community this year. Specific planning is also being developed by the Archdiocese of Baltimore to support schools with this important endeavor.

**Hygiene:** We will provide time, education, signage, and resources to promote optimal daily hygiene, adhere to social distancing, and other best practices. Hand sanitizer stations have been installed throughout campus and classrooms will also have hand sanitizer. Students may bring small non-scented personal hand sanitizer to school to keep in their pencil case as long as it has his/her name on it.

**Social Distancing:** Classrooms are being set up to ensure social distancing. Markers on the hallway floors have been ordered to indicate directional traffic and social distancing.

**Cleaning:** Prior to school re-opening the entire school will be deep cleaned and then treated with Antimicrobial Surface Coating Technology. This barrier coating will add an additional layer of protection from surfaces harboring potentially harmful microbes. This is a significant, proven environmental risk mitigation strategy. Staff will also be wiping down high touch surfaces throughout the day. The school buildings will also be thoroughly cleaned each evening. We continue to work with our contracted cleaning company to ensure the facility is ready for use each day.

**Restrooms:** Adjustments have been made to lower the capacity in the restrooms. Signage and partitions are being installed to aid in distancing in the restrooms.

**Reporting and Contact Training:** In the case of a positive COVID-19 test within our community, the Baltimore County Health Department will work with the school to lead the efforts to perform outreach and guide the contact tracing process. This may result in faculty,

staff, and students quarantining for a defined period of time. As guidelines evolve, we will adjust accordingly.

**Visitor Policy:** Campus will be limited to faculty, staff, students, and essential guests (deliveries, service vendors, etc.). All visitors are required to wear a mask while on campus. Parents should contact the Main Office for any specific needs during the school day.

**Water Bottles:** All students are to bring their own reusable water bottle to school each day. The water fountains have been converted to bottle filling stations. Due to the configuration of the new water filling stations, students will not be able to use them without a water bottle. Students remaining hydrated is important so please send all students with a labeled water bottle each day.

**Individual Student Learning Equipment:** Students are not to share any school supplies, books, equipment, or devices with others. For this reason, it will be essential for all students to have the necessary materials and supplies each day for their optimal learning experience.

**Facilities:** SJS conducts assessments of all facilities and equipment to ensure proper operations whether performed by school maintenance staff or contracted services, including mechanical operations and HVAC related equipment. In addition, the Director of Operations oversees the regular maintenance of all equipment and identifies services that should be increased as needed to curtail the spread of COVID-19 including for example the frequency of filter changes.

**Annual Physicals:** We are working hard to ensure a safe return for all students this coming school year. All students, both new and returning, must have a completed physical and updated immunizations for the upcoming school year. This year in particular because of Covid-19, we will not be able to extend these physicals into the start of the school year. If your child is scheduled for their yearly physical after the start of school, then you will have to have a school physical and updated immunizations completed at a walk-in urgent care facility (for ex. minute clinic or similar) prior to the start of school.

**Immunizations:** St. Joseph School will continue to apply the Archdiocese of Baltimore Vaccination and Immunization Policy. In addition, we are strongly recommending that everyone receive a flu vaccine when it becomes available, in part to lessen the coincidences of the flu with the coronavirus. A strong incentive to get the flu vaccine is that otherwise any flu-like symptoms will likely result in the student or staff member not being able to come to school, being sent home and being treated as if they have COVID-19 unless he/she test negative. The individual would need to adhere to the quarantine guidelines even if the student recovers from the flu symptoms quickly. When an approved COVID-19 vaccine becomes available we will provide direction related to the mandating receipt of the vaccine based on guidance from the Archdiocese.

**Stay Home if Sick or Exposed:** If your child is sick (COVID-19 symptoms or other), please keep him/her home from school. If your child or anyone in your home has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or has been notified by the Maryland Department of Health that they were in contact

with an individual infected with COVID-19, you must notify the School Nurse as soon as possible. The School Nurse in consultation with the School's health team will provide the family with directions about the student's return to school.

**Have a Back-up Plan:** Families are encouraged to have a plan for childcare. While the goal is to provide our educational program on campus, the need to respond to the impact of the pandemic will require flexibility by the School and our families. Many factors may impact the ability of a student to come to campus. On-campus learning may need to transition to online learning, students with COVID-19 or quarantined students will need to stay home, and the ever-present changes in this environment may require changes to our plans.

**Report a Positive COVID-19 Test:** If your child or someone in your household tests positive for COVID-19, you must notify the School Nurse as soon as possible.

**Travel:** SJS will require families to notify the school if your student has traveled out of state after August 15<sup>th</sup>. If so, we may advise your child to be quarantined and participate in remote learning for 14 days depending on the guidance of the Archdiocese and local agencies. Please report such travel to the School Nurse.

## Academics

Students will be placed in grade level cohorts based by grade and receive academic instruction in their cohort. Special areas teachers will travel to the classroom to limit the movement of the students. Protocols and criteria for participation in remediation and enrichment will be provided after school begins. These supports will be scheduled to begin after trimester one interims and fall standardized testing. More details about class schedules will be provided when school begins.

## Arrival/Dismissal

Students may arrive beginning at 7:50 a.m. having been dropped off at either Southside or Quarry Lots. All PK and Kindergarten students must be dropped in the special Wellness Check Lane on Southside. Vehicles are to pull in and while the student and parent remain in the car, the parent must take the child's temperature. This temperature must be shown (preferably through the closed window) to the staff member, who will record the temperature each day. If the student's temperature is greater than 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit, the child will not be permitted to attend school. The nurse must be notified of the temperature and will advise when the student may return to school.

Students in first through eighth grade will proceed to the school entry door where the completion of the at-home Wellness Check will be verified by a staff member. If the Wellness Check is verified the student will proceed directly to their homeroom. If the Wellness Check

has not been completed the student will NOT be permitted to enter the building. The parent will be contacted to complete the Wellness Check prior to admittance.

Students will report directly to homeroom instead of gathering in the courtyard. This will help with social distancing. If a student is not in their homeroom by 8:10 a.m., they are late. When a student arrives late, they are to walk into the office to receive their late slip. Only one student/family will be able to come into the office at a time to receive their admission slip for class. Students waiting to receive their admission slip will line up using the social distancing markers in the lobby and outside.

Dismissal procedures have been adjusted to limit student interaction with those outside their cohort. Based on this, families will be assigned a dismissal lot based on the grade of the youngest student in the family (the carrier). This will allow the same dismissal timing as it has been in previous years.

Primary carriers (PK, K, 1<sup>st</sup>, & 2<sup>nd</sup>) – dismiss to Southside  
Intermediate carriers (3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, & 5<sup>th</sup>) – dismiss to Quarry  
Middle School carriers (6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, & 8<sup>th</sup>) – dismiss to Flagpole

### **Information Regarding Lunch/Snacks/Birthdays**

Students will be eating lunch in the classroom. On days that there is Graul's food service, students who have purchased lunch will receive their lunch in the classroom. If students do not purchase lunch, each student should pack a lunch from home. Snacks for elementary students should be a dry working snack brought from home.

Students in Kindergarten – Grade 8 will need to provide a drink for lunch as we will not be participating the milk program at least for the fall. This will be re-evaluated in December and any changes will be communicated. Per Child Care Guidelines, students in PK will continue to receive milk daily for lunch.

Allergy information will be shared by the School Nurse as needed. The entire school is seafood-free (except tuna) due to a severe airborne allergy.

Students will not be permitted to bring food or any other items to share with the class for his/her birthday or any other occasions. We will have a special way to celebrate the students during school and look forward to celebrating birthdays!

Information regarding water bottles is found in the Health & Safety (above) section.

## **Recess**

To maintain the cohorts that students will be in for class, students will have recess in cohorts as well. In order to accommodate recess for all the students, a modified recess schedule will be developed. Recess will happen throughout the day. This will allow students the opportunity to be outside, weather permitting. Due to limiting visitors, we will not have parent recess volunteers at the beginning of the year. We will resume these important volunteers as soon as we are able to do so. More information about the protocols for recess will be provided when school begins. Students will also have brain breaks throughout the day to allow them to move safely, out of their seats

## **Aftercare**

In addition to the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the Before and After Care program receives guidance from the Maryland State Department of Education Office of Child Care. Specific guidance and directives for Before and After Care will be provided by Mrs. Cherry.

## **Athletics**

St. Joseph School Lacrosse program has been suspended for the time being. The decision to resume lacrosse will be made by the school administration. St. Joseph participates in soccer and basketball programs under the auspice the Archdiocese of Baltimore and managed by St. Joseph Parish. Information regarding these programs will be provided by the SJP Office of Youth Ministry as it becomes available. Please check the parish website for more information.

## **Thursday morning Sandwich Making**

We are going to ask families to continue to make peanut butter and jelly or cheese sandwiches at home during this time. We will arrange collection during morning drop off so we can continue to support Our Daily Bread. Many families continued to do this when school was closed and even now into the summer. We are looking to continue this and hopefully have more families participate. This is a great way for the whole family to engage in service and to continue to live faithfully. Details about the collection will be shared as it is finalized.

## **Clubs and Activities**

Once the school year begins clubs and activities will be evaluated. Evaluation will be based on potential risk, availability of space, and the size of the activity. We will be examining the possibility of resuming clubs and activities in the second trimester. We will not be allowing in person band lessons or rehearsal.

## **Field Trips**

When school returns, we are going to hold off on scheduling any in person field trips for the immediate future as we continue to work together to ensure the safety of all. There are many opportunities for virtual field trips that we can utilize even if we are in school.

## **Gatherings**

In-person schoolwide gatherings, assemblies, prayer services, and masses will be suspended for the fall. We will have an Opening School Mass for smaller groups based on our procedures and those of the parish. We are also working on developing a plan for students to attend mass by class.

## **Calendar**

Faculty will return to campus on August 24<sup>th</sup> to finalize plans for the students to return on August 31<sup>st</sup>. We are working on plans for our Orientations, Meet with Teacher, and Back to School Night events as they will not be able to happen in the same format as they have in previous years for the safety of all. These events will all happen virtually, and more details will be provided in the coming weeks. Please keep the dates as listed on the calendar and we will update you regarding the format/platform in the coming weeks. If we are able to have in person orientations, attendance will be limited to the student and one parent only per family. For the middle school orientation, if held in person, would be for new students to SJS.

We are hopeful that the entire SJS community will adhere to all safety protocols and continue to do anything possible to be safe. In the spring our amazing team demonstrated their capacity to continue teaching and to maintain strong relationships with you and your child even remotely. If we do have to transition to distance learning at some point this fall, it would look different than it did in the spring. Our teachers have had much more time to plan and learn from the spring and our planning for different teaching and learning scenarios. We look forward to seeing your children soon.

## THANK YOU!

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Planning for the 2020-2021 school year is an immensely complex process. The pandemic and its impact on everyone are constantly shifting, creating uncertainty and unknown conditions. It is likely that we will continue to face uncertainty and change throughout the summer and well into the school year. While these may be challenging times, we look to you, our families, to work collaboratively with us as we chart the course for the school year. Most importantly, we want to make certain that all our students are being taken care of and their health and well-being, both physical and emotional, are addressed.

Communicating with your child about how he/she is feeling is essential during this unprecedented time, as this pandemic has created additional stress and anxiety. We encourage you to keep the lines of communication open between home and school.

We realize that you may have additional questions or concerns. Please feel free to reach out to the school office for additional information. We will be hosting a Zoom town hall in the coming weeks to provide clarifications and answer questions. Thank you for your continued trust as, together, we navigate these uncharted waters. Above all, we are committed to continuing to deliver the very best educational experience for your child.

