

Father Andrew White, SJ School Crusaders Q & A



Father Andrew White, S.J. School

The responses in this document are based on current CDC guidelines, information provided by the state of Maryland and St. Mary's County Health Departments, and from the Reopening Plan and Guidelines of the Archdiocese of Washington (ADW).

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Regarding the Reopening of Father Andrew White, SJ School

This document outlines many of the frequently asked questions (FAQ) from parents about the FAW Safe Return and Reopening Plan. The questions are divided into three sections, each addressing a separate aspect of the reopening process.

1. **Health and Safety:** General health and safety questions, such as social distancing, masks, and facility cleaning
2. **Infection Protocols:** How we will handle instances where students or employees become ill
3. **Academics:** Questions related to how classes will be taught

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Q: Will students be safe when school is reopened?

A: Safety is our top priority. In developing the reopening plan, we have studied and implemented guidance from federal and state authorities, including the Maryland Department of Health (MDH). We have confidence that our students can return safely.

Q: Will students need to wear masks at school?

A: Yes. All children will be required to wear face masks while in school. Grades 1-8 are required to wear masks throughout the day with exception of lunch and outside recess. Staff will monitor student spacing to ensure physical distancing requirements are met. Pre-K and Kindergarten students are **not required** to wear face masks in their classrooms. However, all students in grades Pre-K through 8th grade will need to wear masks while walking through the hallways and in common areas.

This may change at a future time according to state and federal regulations.

If a student has a health condition that prevents mask usage, please contact the principal and school nurse to determine if an exemption may be granted or an approved alternative identified.

Q: How will mask breaks be safely executed (especially if inclement weather exists)? How often will the breaks occur?

Mask breaks will take place outside when weather permits. Teachers will be given the latitude to determine when a mask break is needed and how long it will last. Younger students may need them more frequently. Older students will have at least one break in the morning on days when they are not scheduled for PE and another at the teachers' discretion. A plan is being developed for how to conduct mask breaks in the event of inclement weather.

Q: Do I need to purchase masks for my child? What are acceptable face coverings?

A: Yes. We are asking all parents to purchase masks for their child(ren). Acceptable face coverings include cloth masks, disposable masks or a face shields in combination with a mask. Face masks in a solid color with no design or lettering are preferred. Neck gaiters are an acceptable face covering.

Face masks should fit snugly against the sides of the face while completely covering the nose and mouth and secure under the chin. Make sure your child can breathe easily while wearing a mask.

Disposable masks are only effective for daily use. They must be discarded at the end of the day when your child arrives home. Parents should send extra masks to school with their child (in the event one gets damaged or dirty during the day).

Cloth masks should be washed daily and inspected for the integrity of the material. Students should keep at least one extra reusable cloth mask at school in their belongings.

The school will also have a supply of sterile disposable face masks in each classroom and throughout designated areas of the school. In the event your child's mask is deemed ineffective, the school will provide your child with a new, sterile disposable mask.

Q: Will teachers teach children how to use masks?

A: Teachers will use age appropriate CDC videos provided by the ADW, to demonstrate to children how to properly wear a face covering. However, education on proper use of a mask should begin at home. Please take the time to introduce your child to a face mask so they feel comfortable when using them in school.

Q: Will students be required to physically distance at school?

A: Yes. Staff will monitor student spacing throughout the day and instruct students when necessary to ensure physical distancing requirements are met.

Q: What is the plan for discipline for students who do not cooperate with required health and safety measures?

A: There will be zero tolerance for students who are not following the rules established to protect the health and safety of the members of our school community. In accordance with the School Behavior Policy outlined in the Parent/Student Handbook, students who do not cooperate/follow the rules, place the health and safety of others in danger will be given a Level 2 infraction and assigned level two consequences.

Q: Will students need to bring their own water bottles to school?

A: Yes. Please make sure your child(ren)'s water bottle(s) are labeled with their name(s). Water fountains will be off limits for use so refilling bottles will be temporarily suspended. Extra bottles of water will be kept in the office and in classrooms for use in the event one is needed.

Q: Should I take my child's temperature every day before school?

A: Yes. Preventing the spread of COVID-19 and other illnesses starts at home with the parents. Parents should monitor their child's temperature in the morning to ensure that their temperature is below 100.4°F. If your child's temperature is above 100.4°F, your child should be kept home. Please contact your doctor and the school. Any child with a fever above 100.4°F will not be permitted to come back to school for 3 days. The school will also be conducting a second temperature each morning when students arrive and may conduct others throughout the day, as needed.

Please keep sick children at home. If your child stays home sick, we ask that you please inform us of the reason and any medical diagnosis.

Q: If there is a staggered arrival for car rider drop off in the morning, is afternoon pickup also staggered?

A: No, there will not be an official scheduled staggered afternoon pickup. However, parents with flexible schedules are encouraged to wait a bit longer (delay until between 2:40-2:45) to arrive for pickup. While students can enter through different doors in the morning, there is no way for them to do so in the afternoon without a traffic backlog in the parking lot. Students will be called from their classrooms by family last name in the order of parents' arrival. Please be patient as we all make adjust

Q: Will bus transportation be available?

A: Self-transportation is strongly encouraged. In the event bus transportation is required, it must be requested prior to the start of school. No changes will be possible after that. When on the bus, physical distancing will be maintained between passengers. This includes one passenger per seat. Proper cleaning will occur after each transport session. Proper bus protocol from the St. Mary's County Nonpublic School Transportation Department:

- Students should maintain physical distance when boarding a school bus.
- Students must always wear face masks on the bus.
- Students must use hand sanitizer when boarding the bus.
- Drivers will clean and sanitize buses between routes.
- Drivers will maintain logs for contact-tracing procedures.
- Additional information will be forthcoming from the St. Mary's County Nonpublic School Transportation Department.

Q: Will the building be cleaned frequently?

A: The reopening plan includes specific requirements for the ongoing cleaning and sanitizing of our school building. The school building will be cleaned very frequently, with a focus on high-traffic areas and common/high-touch surfaces (i.e. bathrooms will be cleaned at regular intervals). Windows will be opened, based on weather conditions. The reopening plan contains instructions for managing shared areas such as hallways and bathrooms.

Q: Will students be allowed to keep hand sanitizer and/or wipes at their desk?

A: Hand sanitizer will be available in each classroom and at various places throughout the building. Students will not be able to keep it at their desks. They will be permitted to use hand sanitizer from a small bottle that is clipped to their lunchbox. Wipes cannot be kept in students' desks.

Q: How will lunch take place when school reopens? Will milk be available for purchase?

A: Students will be eating in their assigned classroom space. Students will have the option to bring lunch from home or order a grab-and-go style lunch through the Orgs Online ordering system. Grab-and-go lunches will consist of hot/cold sandwich or salad options as allowed by the St. Mary's County Health Department. An order form to be used for purchasing milk will be included with beginning of the year forms.

Q: What about recess? How will the shared recess items (balls, equipment, etc.) be sanitized?

A: A rotating schedule will be developed to designate different areas of the playground/playing fields to be used by each class. When multiple groups are outside at the same time, a minimum of 30 feet of open space between each group will be utilized. Groups will not be permitted to mix. Each class will have its own equipment (balls, jump ropes, etc.) that will be cleaned/sanitized with an EPA approved solution after each daily use. Appropriate games/play with limited contact will be encouraged. Masks may be removed during recess. However, staff will monitor student spacing and instruct students when necessary to ensure physical distancing requirements are met.

Q: Will cell phones/electronic devices be collected & turned into the office or retained by students?

A: Cell phones/electronic devices will not be collected. Cell phones must remain inside students' backpacks and must be turned off.

Q: Will extended care (before and after care) be available this year? Where will the program be conducted?

A: Yes.

1. Before-Care – Prior to entering the building, a daily health screening will be conducted with students who arrive for Before-Care.
2. After-Care - Students who remain in the building for After-Care will be the last group to be dismissed at the end of the school day. They will remain in their classroom spaces until dismissed to their designated space.

Extended day will be held in a separate, non-classroom space, but the exact location cannot be determined until enrollment numbers are verified. Possible locations include a sectioned off part of the gym or the St. Aloysius parish hall.

Q: Is it okay for my family to travel out of town during the COVID-19 pandemic?

A: Any student RETURNING FROM A DESTINATION under a federal, state or local travel restriction, or whose household member has returned from such a destination, is strongly recommended to stay home for 14 days prior to returning to school. Distance learning will be offered to any student who must stay home.

INFECTION PROTOCOLS

Q: What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

A: Symptoms vary for COVID-19. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has identified several symptoms of COVID-19, including high fever (above 100.4°F), chills, shivering, sore throat, coughing, nausea, headache, muscle aches, loss of taste or smell, diarrhea, vomiting and difficulty breathing. Please view symptoms chart from CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/community/schools-childcare/COVID19-symptoms-tablegraphic-v1.pdf>.

Q: What should I do if my child has symptoms of COVID-19?

A: If your child shows symptoms of COVID-19, you should contact your child's primary care provider. You should alert the school office and not send your child to school. If the symptoms occur during the school day, your child will be immediately sent to the nurse to be evaluated. If determined to be a possible case of COVID-19, the child will move to and wait in the isolation area. Parents/guardians are required to pick up their child as soon as possible but no later than 30 minutes after notification.

Q: My child had COVID-19-like symptoms but tested negative for COVID-19. When can he/she return to school?

A: Please provide the school with negative test results and a doctor's note stating that it is safe for you to return to school. Parents should follow the recommendations that your doctor and St. Mary's County Health department set for your return to school.

Q: What should I do if my child tests positive for COVID-19?

A: If your child test's positive for COVID-19, please contact your doctor and the St. Mary's County Health Department and follow their recommendations. We kindly ask you to participate in the contact tracing. You must notify the school ASAP. You will not be permitted to enter school until we receive two negative tests. **This can continue to change per CDC and ADW guidelines.**

Q: What should I do if a member of my household (who is not my child) tests positive for COVID-19?

A: Students must not access the premises or enter the facility if they are in close contact with a family member that is COVID-19 positive or if the family member is awaiting COVID-19 test results. They must follow CDC and local St. Mary's Health Department. If a student contracts COVID-19 they will need to present the school with negative test results in order to return to school.

Q: What happens if my child's teacher tests positive for COVID-19?

A: If an employee tests positive for COVID-19 or has symptoms we will follow the recommendations set by the St. Mary's County Health Department. If your child's teacher becomes sick and is unable to work, the school will provide a substitute teacher.

Q: What happens if another student in my child's class tests positive for COVID-19?

A: The school will contact families of the student's class following the recommendations set by the St. Mary's County Health Department and ADW policy. According to CDC recommendations all students in that class group will be monitored closely for COVID-19 symptoms. The health department is likely to recommend that all students in the group and any adults who were in close contact with the student remain at home in quarantine for at least 14 days. If this happens, students will be able to participate in distance learning.

Q: Since we usually follow the public schools with regard to closures, what metrics will you use to determine if attending school becomes unsafe?

The St. Mary's County Health Department will determine when school becomes unsafe. Any directives for closure will come from Dr. Brewster, St. Mary's County Health Officer.

Q: Could the school building be closed due to COVID-19 this year?

A: We will do our best to ensure a safe and healthy environment in the coming year. However, if numerous cases appear in the school, resulting in the isolation of multiple classes, we may need to close the school building and transition all students to virtual learning for a time. Parents will be updated regularly should that need arise.

For additional information related to infection protocols see the information on the Maryland Department of Health website -

<https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/Documents/Response%20to%20a%20COVID%20Case%20in%20Schools%20and%20Decision%20Aid.pdf>.

ACADEMICS

Q: What can we do as parents to help our teachers/staff feel supported?

A: The best thing for parents to do to help the teachers/staff feel supported is to be patient and understanding; share your words of appreciation and encouragement. They are going to go above and beyond to do what is in the best interest of your child, keeping him/her safe and providing a quality education to all learners no matter where they are. They will be teaching in a much different way than they ever have before so be willing to give them grace.

Q: Will my child's curriculum be changed this year?

A: FAW will still deliver high-quality instruction in core subjects (religion, language arts, math, science and social studies). Special requirements will be in place for departmentalized classes and special area subjects. The implementation of safety and health requirements which were outlined earlier in this FAQ will create new complexities in instruction, but our commitment to providing your child the best possible faith-based education has not changed.

Q: Are there any reasons a student would not be allowed to transition from online to in-person after the first quarter?

A: The decision to transition to in-person learning at the conclusion of the first quarter would be based on the level of comfort the family has with returning. The school would be prepared for all online learners to return in-person if families are ready to do so. The option to move from distance learning to in-person learning will be permitted quarterly, as needed, until full in-person school operations can resume.

Q: Is there guaranteed to be availability for students in the classroom after the first quarter if they begin the year distance learning?

A: Yes. The number of students enrolled in each grade level will include those students who begin the year as distance learners. The total number will not exceed the class size cap of 30.

Q: If my child begins the year in-person, but becomes uncomfortable, anxious or stressed with the new environment, will he/she be able to switch to distance learning?

A: Yes. If a child is experiencing difficulty with the health and safety requirements of the in-person environment, he/she may switch to distance learning. After doing so, the student must remain in distance learning until the end of the quarter.

Q: What learning management system(s) and platforms will the school be using?

A: Both in-person and distance learning students in Pre-K – 2nd grade will be using Seesaw while all grade levels will be using the Clever Single Sign On (SSO) Dashboard, Google Classroom, and Google GSuite for Education Apps (Google Docs, Slides, Sheets, Sites, Jamboard). Training in the use of these systems/platforms will be provided to both students and parents.

Q: Will the school day begin with morning prayers? How will distance learners participate?

A: The school day will begin with video morning prayers. All in-person students will participate watching from their classroom and distance learner can join from home. The exact platform for the delivery of morning prayers is still being determined.

Q: What will the distance learning plan look like? Is this a separate curriculum or live streaming the classroom? Can you elaborate on how this will work?

A: Children who are distance learning will receive synchronous live streaming instruction via Zoom or Google Meet at the same time as their in-school classmates. The plan to be implemented considers all grade levels and age appropriate amounts of time for synchronous streaming instruction. Asynchronous elements that provide a greater level of flexibility will happen more frequently for students in PK-5. We are using the following recommended time allotments for expected online time:

National Board of Professional Teaching Standards Recommendations

- Elementary grades PK-5 1-2 hours online each day
- Middle School 6-8, 2-3 hours online each day

Q: What will the schedule be for online learners? Will they be required to log in ALL day or will there be a specific time scheduled for each subject that is taught?

A: Pre-K – 4th grade teachers will be developing the schedules for the self-contained classrooms. The students will not be required to be logged in all day. The students in grades 5-8 will be expected to follow the same schedule as their in-person counterparts, logging in for at least a portion of the class period. At the conclusion of the lesson's direct instruction, the teacher will be able to dismiss the online students, allowing them to log off to complete independent assignments. Students who would like additional opportunities to ask the teacher questions, should remain "in class"

Q: Are online students fully able to participate during the class (ask questions, answer questions, etc.)? Will they be offered the same level of access to teachers for additional assistance if needed?

A: Yes, online students will be able to fully participate during the class. Teachers will dedicate part of each class to providing additional support to online learners.

Q: What equipment has been purchased to better present the materials being taught for the benefit of the online students?

A: Technology upgrades/purchases include webcams and microphones as well as additional projectors and document cameras.

Q: Will devices be provided for both in-person and distance learners?

A: Yes. Students in grades PK-2 will be using iPads in the classroom, and students in grades 3-8 will be using Chromebooks. Any family who has chosen the distance learning option can request that a device be issued by the school for use at home.

Q: How should we inform school/teacher a child was not able to be online for internet connection related issues? Will those days be considered unexcused absences?

A: A parent can email the teacher when a student is experiencing technical difficulties with a device or internet connection. Keep in mind the teacher may not see the message immediately. Those instances will not be considered unexcused absences.

Q: In Middle School, English and Literature are now seemingly combined into Language Arts. Are there no longer separate English and Literature classes?

A: In order to accommodate the daily required health screening with a staggered morning drop-off as well as time needed throughout the day for increased hand hygiene and other health/safety measures, the official school start time had to be shifted to 8:30. Therefore, changes needed to be made to the way in which the middle school curriculum is delivered and to the overall daily schedule. With the number of hours in the day, middle school can now only accommodate 5 class periods plus lunch/recess, as opposed to 7. In an effort to make better use of the instructional minutes we do have, the class periods will be extended to 60 minutes as opposed to 40. Language Arts will include instruction in grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension and writing.

Q: How will Scantron testing work for the online option?

A: Students who are distance learning will do their Scantron testing at home. The student will be scheduled for 2 separate days and would log on to a Zoom meeting with a teacher/proctor. We will be using the express version of the Scantron tests - one for reading with 25 questions and another for math with 25 questions.

Q: Will tests and grades still be given this year?

A: Yes. It is important that we continue to gauge student academic growth throughout the school year. As such, you should anticipate tests being administered in your child's class. These tests will include the standardized testing (Scantron Performance Series). Students who will be distance learning will also take the Scantron Performance Series assessment. These students will be able to take the test from home. More information will be provided to parents on how this test will be administered at home.

Q: Will middle school students still have electives?

A: Unfortunately, with the health/safety requirement that students remain in cohorts that do not mix throughout the day, electives are not possible at this time. Hopefully, this is temporary as we all look forward to when we can one day return to "normal."

Q: With students not moving classrooms during the day, will the CHAT program in grades 2-5 not be used this year?

A: Unfortunately, the CHAT groups program will be temporarily suspended. However, teachers will continued to provide differentiated, leveled instruction within the cohorts of learners.

Q: Will students still have the opportunity to participate in Advanced Math and Advanced Literature classes?

A: Students in grades 5-8 will continue to have the opportunity to participate in the Advanced Math class. Advanced Literature will not be offered in the same manner as last year. However, Ms. Weems and Ms. Rowland will differentiate instruction and provide enrichment opportunities for students who are ready to be challenged.

Q: Will my child's classroom look different?

A: Yes, classroom layouts will ensure desk and/or tables/chairs meet the physical distancing requirement of 6ft. Desks and tables will be arranged so that they face the front of the room. In order to maximize floor space, non-essential furniture and other items will be removed or rearranged. Other spaces in the building have been identified to reduce the number of students in each class. These steps will be taken to minimize risk of any infection in the classroom.

Q: Where will my child's classroom be?

A: Unfortunately, this is still a work in progress. Final room assignments cannot be determined until we know the number of families that are choosing the in-person option.

Q: Will students still change classes?

A: In order to protect all classes which will be divided into groups, the students will not move to different classrooms. Instead, the teachers will be moving to provide academic instruction. Teachers will remain at least six feet apart from students to maximum extent practicable.

Q: Will the school still offer classes in special subject areas (e.g., art, music, P.E., etc.)?

A: Yes. Special subject area teachers will travel to each classroom for instruction. PE will be taught outside if weather permits. During inclement and cold weather months, the ADW has provided schools with alternative ways of teaching P.E. in the classroom.

Q: Will online learners be required to participate in specials?

A: Yes. The weekly specials classes for online students in Pre-K – 5th grade will be art, music, PE and Spanish. Students in grades 6-8 will have a weekly PE class.

Q: Will students share school supplies? Are there any additional supplies needed.

A: No. Students will not share school supplies (e.g., books, crayons, technology, etc.), including for such subjects as art and music. Updates to school supply lists will be shared in the next few days.

Q: Will student be able to check out library books?

A: Checking out library books is temporarily suspended. Mrs. Pietsch will be providing students with information on alternate sources for obtaining reading material.

Q: My child has a Catholic Accommodation Plan (CAP) because of an identified learning, behavioral or physical need. Can the needs of my child still be met this year?

A: As each CAP is different, we will be evaluating each CAP to determine whether additional modifications are needed in light of COVID-19-related health and safety protocols. The school will contact you if it is determined that changes to the CAP need to occur. If you have urgent questions, you should contact the principal.

Q: Will the students who participate online still have opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities (Student Council, NJHS, FLL, sports)?

A: We cannot have extracurricular activities to start the year, but when we are given permission to start those activities, online students will be able to participate if they are interested in doing so.

Q: Will the school still collect tuition this year?

A: Yes. While this school year may look different, our school will continue to provide a high-quality academic experience while supporting the moral and spiritual development of each student. Our school depends upon tuition revenue to pay our employees who do this work and support other school-related expenses.

Q: I am having difficulty paying tuition, as my workplace has been impacted by COVID-19. What do I do?

A: We know that some families may have difficulties paying tuition due to the loss of pay during workplace closures and are ready to support those in need of assistance. If this is happening to you, please contact the school principal. We understand your situation and will do our absolute best to work with you.