

St. Mark School  
399 Woodward Avenue  
Buffalo, New York 14214

Reopening Plan for the 2021-2022 School Year  
Mr. Christopher Gardon, Principal

Updated: August 13, 2021

## ST. MARK SCHOOL: RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN

### INTRODUCTION

The following Reopening Plan outlines options for St. Mark School's 2021-2022 school year. The plans include protocols and procedures that address: capacity; social distancing; personal protective equipment; face coverings; operational activity; restart operations; hygiene, cleaning, and disinfection; extracurriculars; transportation; food services; mental health and social emotional support; and communication. The plans include the reopening of school facilities for in person instruction; the monitoring of health conditions to ensure detection of infection; containment to prevent spreading of the disease if infection is detected; and closure if infection cannot be contained or if closure is otherwise necessary and/or required by the state or local department of health. This document outlines plans for multiple models for reopening, including in-person learning, distance-learning or a hybrid combination of the two models. The guidelines referenced in this plan are based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the New York State Board of Regents. This Reopening Plan is considered a living document that can be updated and revised as necessary.

### SECTION 1: STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATION

#### 1.a. EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

- It is important that all stakeholders of the St. Mark School community are informed with regular updates regarding COVID-19, NYS health and safety guidelines and our school's instructional models
- As new information becomes available and/or changes are made to this document, updates will be shared to keep everyone aware of current guidance measures
- Health and safety policies and other pertinent information will be sent home via email to all school community members
- Families will continue to be provided with clear and ongoing communication including reopening plan and guidance on school safety protocols and safety guidelines
- This Reopening Plan, including any periodic updates, will be posted on the school website
- Health and safety policies and protocols will be displayed on school website
- St. Mark School will also encourage all students, faculty, staff, and visitors through verbal and written communication (e.g., signage) to adhere to CDC and DOH guidance regarding the use of PPE
- Signage will be placed at all school entrances, office doors, classrooms and hallways throughout the school
- All signs will include text and graphics to ensure comprehension by students of all ages
- Teachers will review signage with students on a regular basis
- See examples of Signage in Appendix

### 1.b COVID-19 RESPONSE TEAM

- In alliance with the DOH guidance, the school principal, building nurse, and advising medical professional will be designated as points of contact upon the identification of positive COVID-19 cases. Herein they will be referred to as the “COVID-19 Response Team”
- The COVID-19 Response Team will be responsible for subsequent communication to families and the community at large. They will be responsible for answering questions from students, faculty, staff, parents, or legal guardians of students regarding the COVID-19 public health emergency and plans implemented by the school.

### 1.c CANCELLATION OF CLASSES

- Should the Governor’s Executive Orders, Buffalo Public Schools Superintendent, the Diocese of Buffalo Superintendent or government officials suspend or cancel in-school classes, St. Mark School will immediately transition to a Distance Learning Model
- NYS Dept. of Education will be notified if in-school classes are suspended or cancelled
- All teachers and staff will be educated on Distance Learning contingency plans during Teacher Orientation, including their roles and responsibilities.

## SECTION 2: HEALTH & SAFETY

### 2.a. HEALTH & HYGIENE PRACTICES

#### Checking For Illness

#### How to Check for Illness –

#### Children and Staff Actions to Take to Prevent Illness

- Encourage children and staff to take everyday preventive actions to prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses:
  - \* Strict adherence to staying home when sick
  - \* Appropriately covering coughs and sneezes
  - \* Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces
  - \* Washing hands often with soap and water
    - If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
    - Young children should be supervised when they use hand sanitizer to prevent swallowing alcohol.
- If any student or staff have any symptoms or don’t feel well, the MUST stay home.
- Symptoms of COVID-19 in adults may appear 2-14 days after exposure and include fever of 100F (38C) or higher, cough, shortness of breath, and other respiratory symptoms have been reported
- Symptoms of COVID-19 in children: Children with confirmed COVID-19 have generally presented with mild symptoms. It’s not known yet whether some children may be at higher risk for severe illness, for example, children with underlying medical conditions and special healthcare needs
- Reported symptoms in children include cold-like symptoms, such as: Fever of 100F (38C) or higher, runny nose, cough, and vomiting and diarrhea have also been reported

### Teachers & Staff

- Perform temperature checks when starting shift
- Have multiple thermometers available for screening
  - \* Thermometers should be cleaned and disinfected between uses, following the manufacturer's instructions for use (In the absence of instructions, disinfect with alcohol pad and let air dry between uses)
- Staff arriving with fever or symptoms will be sent home
- Document absence of fever, shortness of breath, new or change in cough, and sore throat
- Report any respiratory symptoms that develop during the shift

(This guidance was developed from CDC's K-12 Schools and Childcare Programs FAQs for Administrators and CDC's Coronavirus Disease-2019 (COVID-19) and Children Frequently Asked Questions and Answers)

- Students will be educated on all expectations surrounding health policies and protocols related to the school, CDC and DOH, including everyday preventive actions they can take to prevent the spread of COVID-19. These expectations and protocols will be reinforced on a daily basis
- **All persons must wear a mask or face mask upon entry to the school building. Gaiters are not allowed.**
- All teachers, staff and students shall be familiarized with the standard public health practices used to prevent the spread of diseases. Such practices will include: social distancing, frequent hand washing, use of hand sanitizer, use of face coverings that cover the nose and mouth, respiratory and cough etiquette, enhanced disinfection of surfaces
- Health and safety supplies shall be provided daily for students and staff. Such supplies will include: soap at all sinks, hand sanitizer available throughout the school, paper towels, tissues, disinfectant wipes, cloth face coverings
- The school encourages parents to take their child(ren)'s temperature at home before school and to keep any child with a temperature of 100F or higher or who exhibits any other sign of sickness to stay home or see a doctor
- Cohorts: Students will be placed in cohorts, to the extent practicable and as necessary, to limit exposure to the COVID-19 virus. Students in 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grades will be contained in homeroom classes as per NYS Interim Guidance. Content and Special Area Teachers will move throughout the Jr. High classrooms so students can stay in cohort classrooms.

### 2.b. CONTAINMENT PLAN

- Should an individual demonstrate symptoms or a case of COVID-19 be documented, the nurse will immediately coordinate with the local health department and inform school administration and advising medical professional
- If a student develops a fever of 100°F or higher during a school day, he/she will be isolated. Parents/guardians will be notified immediately and the child will not be permitted into school for a designated amount of time. The classroom will be disinfected
- Students with temperatures at or above 100°F will be isolated, checked by the nurse and will wait for a parent to pick them up to take them to a doctor or healthcare provider. Visitors and staff with temperatures at or above 100F will be dismissed from school grounds

- Any student displaying COVID-19 symptoms during the school day will be isolated and will have a parent to pick them up to take them to a doctor or healthcare provider. Students displaying such symptoms or diagnosed with COVID-19 will not be permitted to return to school for a minimum of 10 days until a doctor's note is provided indicating the student is not infected or a negative COVID-19 test is provided
- Any teacher displaying COVID-19 symptoms during the school day will be sent home immediately. Teachers displaying such symptoms or diagnosed with COVID-19 will not be permitted to return to school until a doctor's note is provided indicating the teacher is not infected or the CDC recommended amount of time spent in quarantine is achieved
- Any space occupied by an individual displaying COVID-19 symptoms will be emptied of occupants, sanitized and properly ventilated.

#### 2.c REPORTING INFECTION

- Parents/guardians need to notify the school directly if their child tests positive for Covid-19.
- Per the Erie County Department of Health (9/13/20): when the ECDOH is informed of a positive test related to our students or staff, they will contact the St. Mark COVID Response Team
- Per the Erie County Department of Health: persons who came into contact for 60 minutes or more with a person who tested positive must quarantine for 10 days. Siblings of students who must quarantine do NOT need to quarantine because they are considered contacts of a contact
- Distance Learning will be implemented for any students deemed a COVID close contact.
- The COVID-19 Response Team will assess the possible need of putting the entire school under quarantine for a designated amount of time. During this time all students will transition to Distance Learning and the school building will be completely cleaned and disinfected. St. Mark School administration will keep the school families and community stakeholders updated and will communicate when in person learning will safely resume
- All staff will be instructed to inform the school nurse and administration if they are sick with COVID-19 related symptoms and to stay home from school if they are displaying symptoms or test positive for COVID-19
- All parents will be instructed to inform the school if their child(ren) are sick with COVID-19 related symptoms and to keep the child(ren) home from school if they are displaying symptoms or test positive for COVID-19
- The COVID-19 Response Team will serve as the point persons for COVID-19 information reporting and will contact the Erie County Department of Health
- School-wide sick protocols will be communicated to all stakeholders, including signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and temperature thresholds requiring students or staff to stay home

#### 2.d SOCIAL DISTANCING, FACE COVERINGS AND PPE

- All physical spaces that will be occupied by children and/or adults will be configured and maintained in a way that provides maximum possible protection from spreading the coronavirus.
- Social distancing and other safety measures have been and will continue to be put in place to slow and prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Social distancing between student and teacher workstations will be maximized, and there will be a minimum of 3 feet between students in classrooms subject to adherence to mitigation strategies discussed herein (masks, etc).
- Space between teacher, staff and students will be maximized at 6 feet

- Markers and arrows will be placed on the floor to allow for social distancing and traffic flow
- When staff and/or students are required to move throughout the building, face masks must be worn. Individuals should remain 3 feet apart at all times and walk on the right-hand side of the hall in the direction they are going. Hallways and stairways will be marked and the center of all walkways will be divided
- All teachers and staff will be trained during Teacher Orientation to practice new protocols (social distancing, cleaning, hygiene practices, materials usage)
- The main office and nurse's office will be reconfigured to maximize distancing
- Plastic/Plexiglass shields will be placed throughout the main office and nurse's office, on every teacher's desk and on Kindergarten tables
- Families are encouraged to provide 2-ply face masks for students to wear on a daily basis. In compliance with NYSED regulations and Executive Order 202.16, disposable masks will be made available to supplement the cloth masks provided by families and will be available through the school office in case a clean mask is needed/required by students and/or employees
- Employees will be given the choice of providing their own face covering or wearing what is provided by St. Mark School. In compliance with NYSED regulations and Executive Order 202.16, disposable masks will be made available to supplement the cloth masks provided by families and will be available through the school office in case a clean mask is needed/required by students and/or employees
- All staff will be required to wear a face shield or mouth/nose covering when inside the building unless he or she has a medical reason making it unsafe to do so
- All students will be required to wear a face shield or mouth/nose covering when inside the building unless he or she has a medical reason making it unsafe to do so
- Mask breaks may be built into the schedule while following social distance, health and safety guidelines. In most cases mask breaks will take place outdoors when weather permits
- Students and adults may remove face coverings when eating while maintaining 3 feet of distancing with the use of shields
- All persons entering St. Mark School will be required to wear the face covering over their mouth and nose for maximum effectiveness. Disposable face coverings will be available at the school entrance if an individual does not have their own covering available.
- Any time an individual cannot maintain appropriate social distancing, they must wear acceptable face coverings.

#### 2.e. AT-HOME STUDENT SCREENING TOOL

- The health and safety of the children and adults in our school is paramount. Health and safety considerations always come first in every decision made and every action taken by the school. To maintain the health of all individuals, all who seek entrance to St. Mark School will be screened in accordance with the health and safety guidelines put forth by the CDC.
- To help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and reduce the potential risk of exposure to our employees and students, we will be supplying a student screening tool for families to reference on a daily basis prior to sending/bringing their child(ren) to school. This tool will consist of a set of questions related to COVID-19 symptoms. If the answer to any of the questions is yes OR if a child's temperature at home is 100F or higher, students should not attend school that day. This tool is on the school website.

### SECTION 3: ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

#### 3.a. TRANSPORTATION AND DROP OFF

- Students will be transported to school via personal vehicle or District supplied school bus
- St. Mark School students will be required to follow the face covering and social distancing requirements of the bus company
- Families who are able to transport their child(ren) to school even if they have access to school buses are encouraged to do so in order to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and reduce potential risk of exposure
- All student passengers will follow the protocols and procedures set forth by their district's school bus transportation program

#### 3.b. ENTRY POINTS

Arrivals:

Early Arrival (prior to 7:45 am):

All students enter gym door and will go to cafeteria

Students must be 3 feet apart when eating with shielding

Overflow students in Spanish and Art rooms, 3 feet apart

Regular Arrival (7:45 or after):

All students enter gym door

Dismissal:

1<sup>st</sup> call Bus: regular dismissal

2<sup>nd</sup> call After School: called and dismissed to wait in church

3<sup>rd</sup> Walkers/Pick up: staggered

- The temperature of all students will be taken before allowing access to the building
- Signage will be at entrances explaining procedures and expectations for school entry and maximum distance will be ensured. All individuals, including parents picking up their children, must wear a mask.
  - \* Note on congestion: Parents waiting outside to pick up their students must remain behind signage

#### 3.c. EMPLOYEE SCREENINGS AND PROTOCOLS

- To help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and reduce the potential risk of exposure to our staff and students, all staff members will be required to complete a COVID-19 self-screening questionnaire available on the school website
- Prior to entering the school building beginning each day all staff members will complete a "COVID-19 Daily Self-Checklist" questionnaire. If the answer to any of the questions indicates the staff member may have COVID-19 symptoms, the staff member will contact administration immediately. They will be denied entry to the school and will be directed to contact a health provider. All employees must be able to attest that they answered "NO" to all of the questions on the self-checklist in order to enter the school

- All staff members will be required to have their temperature taken. Should a staff member's individual temperature register at or above 100°F, they are directed to contact administration immediately. The individual will then be directed to leave the building to see their doctor or healthcare provider. They may not return to school for either 10 days or until they have permission from their physician to return. Before any others are allowed to enter this area, the area must be completely sanitized by maintenance
- After taking their temperature, the employee needs to sanitize the thermometer and then use the hand sanitizer before signing in for the day

#### SECTION 4: VISITORS & DELIVERIES

##### 4.a. VISITOR SCREENING AND PROTOCOLS

- Visitors entering St. Mark School will be limited to those individuals who provide services to our students through outside agencies and parents picking up their children
- All visitors must wear a mask or proper face covering
- All visitors' temperatures will be taken upon arrival
- A COVID-19 screening questionnaire will be administered to all visitors

##### 4b. MAIL & PACKAGE DELIVERY

- Mail will be delivered and picked up in the front vestibule near Door #2. Mail delivery personnel will be required to wear a face covering when entering the vestibule of the building
- Packages will also be delivered and picked up in the front vestibule unless otherwise noted. Delivery personnel will be required to wear a face covering when entering the vestibule of the building
- Should it be necessary for the delivery person to enter the building for any reason, they will be required to successfully complete the Visitor Screening
- If a delivery must be signed for, the signer will use the gloves provided by the office
- When necessary, deliveries will be sanitized by the maintenance staff before they are moved to another area of the building. The area where packages were deposited should also be disinfected when the delivery is removed from the area
- Food and supply vendors will be communicated with by the Cafeteria Manager to determine the safest way to handle deliveries

#### SECTION 5: FACILITIES

##### 5.a. MAINTENANCE, BUILDING & GROUNDS

- All Maintenance, Building & Grounds staff have been trained by a janitorial service in proper use of sanitizing equipment and products, along with how to properly clean and disinfect all surfaces
- Signs related to stopping the spread of the virus are prominently displayed throughout the school
- The entire school will be sanitized daily by maintenance staff
- Bathrooms will accommodate only two students at a time
- Drinking fountains will be closed and water bottle filling stations will be sanitized daily
- Natural and mechanical air circulation and proper ventilation will be enforced throughout the building. This includes classroom doors being left open, windows open when outside temperature allows, and use of air purifiers, fans and other air circulation techniques throughout the school.

#### 5.b. Daily Operations

- The master schedule will be amended to allow for: reconfigured traffic patterns throughout school, more time for class changes due to new traffic patterns, the needs for distancing during arrival and dismissal, and to allow for two grade levels per lunch period
- Fire, Safety and Emergency drills are required by law and will be conducted following health and safety precautions
- Worship Plan: Masses will be coordinated with school pastor to allow for maximized distancing and safety
- The School Sports program will be coordinated through our Athletic Director and Diocese regulations which will adhere to all CDC, state and local health and safety guidelines.

#### SECTION 6: CHILD NUTRITION & CAFETERIA USE

- USDA regulations and policies will be followed by the Cafeteria Manager and Cafeteria staff
- Cafeteria staff will wear single use gloves, masks and hair nets at all times
- Shared condiments and shared items will not be allowed
- All lunch materials will be disposable
- All students will sanitize or wash hands before entering the cafeteria
- Food will be delivered to the students while seated
- Students will sit distantly using multiple tables and table shields will be provided
- No outside food will be permitted (i.e. pizza cannot be ordered and delivered from a local restaurant). Students may bring their lunches
- Training will be provided for aides regarding food allergies, meal service-related activities and health and safety protocols. Plexiglass/plastic dividers will be installed to create a barrier between students when eating.
- Lunch periods will be scheduled with appropriate time for disinfection and sanitizing between use
- Appropriate hand hygiene will be practiced by all students and staff before and after eating
- Food and beverages will not be shared by students or adults
- All meals must be prepaid using the online account system. Cash is not permitted.
- Visitors cannot be permitted into the cafeteria or kitchen during any meal service
- Food and supply vendors will be communicated with by the Cafeteria Manager to determine the safest way to handle deliveries
- 3 feet of distance with appropriate shielding will be maintained when eating meals/drinking in cafeteria, gym, and/or the Art and Spanish rooms (which may serve as overflow rooms for the cafeteria)
- Cafeteria staff will be trained and retrained as needed on policies, protocols and procedures related to health, safety and standard operating procedures
- Documented requests for children with special dietary needs (ie. food allergies) will be accommodated
- Off-Site Meal Distribution: These services will be provided through the local public school districts and/or coordinated with our Cafeteria Manager and federal and state guidelines
- Meal benefit applications will be provided by our school office and on our website

## SECTION 7: ATTENDANCE

- It is important that students participate in learning opportunities regularly, regardless of whether it is in person learning or online learning.
- If a student will be ABSENT from in person or distance learning, the student must be called in as absent by a parent or guardian to our main office.
- Should a parent or guardian choose to keep a student home due to a COVID related circumstance, the parent or guardian must call and inform the main office that the student will be considered as a Distance Learner for that day or short time period.
- Should a student or group of students be quarantined, that will be indicated in our main office upon notification of a case from the DOH. All quarantined students must continue in their learning opportunities and will be instructed as Distance Learners during quarantine.

## SECTION 8: TEACHING AND LEARNING

8.a. From the NYS Reopening Guidelines for Religious and Independent Schools (7/27/20): “Hours of instructional time are not defined as a student’s time spent in front of a teacher or in front of a screen, but time engaged in learning under the guidance and direction of a teacher. These experiences might include but are not limited to: completing online modules or tasks; viewing instructional videos; responding to posts or instructor questions; engaging with other class participants in an online or phone discussion; conducting research; doing projects; or meeting with an instructor face to face, via and online platform, or by phone.”

All courses will be taught either in person or via Distance Learning, including ELA, Math, Social Studies, Science, Religion, Health (7 & 8), Spanish (4-8), Art, Music, Technology, Library, Physical Education

- Students who receive special education services required by an IEP will continue to receive such services wither in person or virtually
- Formative or diagnostic assessments will be used by teachers to determine student gaps and/or progress in order to provide appropriate instruction.

### 8.b. Grading

- Clear and transparent grading policies that are applicable to each model of learning and instruction and aligned to the outcomes of the course will be implemented and communicated with all teachers, students and parents.

### 8.c. Distance Learning

- Feedback from the Spring 2021 iteration of Distance Learning was strategically used to inform future Distance Learning and our online learning infrastructure.
- Whether our instructional model is fully distant learning, a hybrid of in-person and distance learning or fully in-person, changes have been made to St. Mark School’s online instructional model. We have strategically used the Spring of 2020 experience with Distance Learning and feedback from parents and teachers to make changes to online instruction. Implementing consistent communication and instructional strategies are of the utmost importance. The following changes will be made for the 2021-2022 school year:

#### Student Engagement:

- All students in K-8 will have St. Mark email addresses which will allow them access to Google Classroom

- Google Classroom will be implemented school wide
- Google Sites will be implemented school wide
- Zoom/Google Meet will be used by all teachers at least once per week for instruction, meetings or virtual social gatherings for students
- Zearn (a Math practice website) will be used for Math in K-5
- Consistent schedules for instruction, handing in work, virtual meetups and Specials will be implemented schoolwide

Communication:

- The Google Classroom Progress Reports feature will be mandatory for parents to access. Parents can choose daily, weekly or monthly reports to be shared directly.
- Teachers and administration will also use email to communicate with parents and students.
- Zoom/Google Meet will be used to virtually meet with students in groups or individually
- Zoom/Google Meet will be used for parent-teacher meetings when necessary
- Zoom/Google Meet will be used by administration to facilitate Grade Level Meetings, Professional Development and Faculty meetings when necessary.
- These changes will allow for streamlined communication and instruction should St. Mark School implement a full Distance Learning model or hybrid model. The changes also support an improved version of our online infrastructure for in-class learning.

8.d. Social-Emotional Learning & Mental Health

It is unrealistic to expect that students will return to instruction as they left it when the Stay At Home order began. Students may have had stressful or traumatic experiences while isolated from school, family, friends, and the community. Some students may have had positive experiences during the school closure, as well. The school is positioned to support and nurture these new skills and mindsets. The school is prepared to meet students where they are, regardless of the circumstances in which they may find themselves

- Professional Development will be provided for teachers on strategies for supporting students' SEL and mental health, along with their own adult SEL and mental health
- Our part time school psychologist and full time Health teacher and Religion teacher will coordinate virtual webinars for parents in supporting their children's SEL and mental health along with creating programming to support for our teachers and students
- Our Library teacher will support the school community with literature, including picture books, that will support students' SEL and mental health
- Staff will be reminded that they are mandated reporters who must identify and report issues related to abuse and neglect, even during Distance Learning

SECTION 9: ATHLETICS & EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

9.a. PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASSES

- Depending on activity, social distancing may be expanded from 6 feet to 12 feet
- Physical Education is very important for all students at St. Mark School, especially during times of stress and great uncertainty.
- Physical Education classes will focus on mental and physical well being through breathing activities and yoga

- Stretching and low impact aerobic activities will be practiced outside, weather permitting, with maximum distance ensured. If inclement weather calls for inside learning, the students will be in the gymnasium with proper ventilation
- Students will wear sneakers and the school gym uniform to school on days their schedule indicates Physical Education
- Hand sanitizer will be provided if needed throughout the class
- Teachers and students will wear a facemask anytime distance cannot be observed.

#### 9.b. INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS

- St. Mark School understands the important role that athletics play in the emotional, social, and physical aspects of our students' lives. The decision concerning interscholastic athletics will be made by the Diocese of Buffalo

#### 9.c. EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

- Extracurricular activities can be held subject to participants following proper COVID-19 protocols.

#### 9.d. AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

- The After School Program will have a maximum capacity of students and will use the bottom floor of the school building (cafeteria & gym)
- Students and staff will wear masks or proper face coverings
- Students will have their own supplies
- Areas used by After School staff and students will be sanitized after use
- Space between students and teachers will be maximized to allow for distancing
- All After School staff will be trained in proper health and safety protocols outlined by NYSDOH and CDC
- Dismissal protocol will be put in place using Door #1

### SECTION 10: STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Our maintenance staff has received training in proper cleaning and sanitizing techniques and protocols, along with proper use of newly acquired sanitization tools and PPE
- All teachers and staff have been trained in health and safety protocols for the prevention of the spread of COVID-19; such training will be ongoing during the year as necessary.