

**Holy Cross Academy**  
**2020-2021 Return and Mitigation Plan**  
**Updated October 2, 2020**

To better meet the needs of all our students, Holy Cross Academy will be adjusting our education model beginning November 2<sup>nd</sup>. Below is information on our updated plan as we transition away from a hybrid model to five day instruction for our in person and online learners alike.. While our instructional model will change, we will maintain our commitment to the health and safety practices that have allowed HCA to open school safely.

**Daily Instruction on Campus Daily for In Person Learners**

- Gray and maroon day students will begin attending class together in person each day beginning Monday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- A number of professional development days will be taken in the weeks ahead to allow us to prepare our classrooms for the larger number of in person learners. After the transition in November, we will use additional professional development days as teachers adjust their lessons and teaching practices for their in person and online learners.
- Morning and afternoon Aviat Care will continue to be available for students needing the service. Families must register for afternoon Aviat prior to using the program.

**Distance Learning Only Option**

- We realize that some students or their close family members have health conditions that prevent the student(s) from returning to campus. To help accommodate these students and their families:
- HCA remains committed to our students who need to learn 100% online instruction during this time due to a health concern of the student or a family member. It is important that we support all of our families in this challenging time.
- 100% online learners will continue to have vital lessons streamed to them and assignments posted.
- Elementary students should expect to spend a portion of their day streaming lessons from their classroom and participating in the lessons.
- Middle school students will livestream their seven classes each day so that they can participate virtually and not miss any of their course content.

If all schools in Virginia are required to close our doors to our students, we will again return to a distance only model for all students. Please join me in praying that this doesn't happen.

**Students at Risk for Severe COVID-19 Disease**

Children and staff with underlying medical conditions are at higher risk for severe cases of COVID-19 disease. Underlying medical conditions include:

- Severe Asthma, including those on daily medication for asthma or who have had an ER visit in the last year for asthma

- Chronic kidney disease, including those being treated with dialysis, hypertension, kidney transplant and immune suppressant drugs, attacks on the kidney tissue by disease or the immune system (glomerulonephritis), the growth of cysts on the kidneys (polycystic kidney disease), damage due to backward flow of urine into the kidneys (reflux nephropathy),
- Chronic lung disease such as cystic fibrosis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or pulmonary fibrosis
- Diabetes
- Hemoglobin Disorders: Hemoglobin disorders such as sickle cell disease (SCD) and thalassemia
- Immunocompromised including individuals undergoing cancer treatment, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, HIV with a low CD4 cell count or not on HIV treatment, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications.
- Liver disease such as liver cancer, chronic hepatitis or liver cirrhosis
- Autoimmune disease or cancer treatment
- Serious heart conditions including heart failure, coronary artery disease, congenital heart disease, cardiomyopathies, and pulmonary hypertension.
- Body Mass Index of 40 or greater
- The Rappahanock Area Health District strongly encourages students with any of the above conditions to exercise the distance learning only model.

### **Preventing the Spread of the Virus**

- Next year, more than ever, it will be important for students, faculty, staff, and volunteers to stay home if they are not feeling well.
- We will help educate our school community on the symptoms of the virus and how to minimize potential spread of the virus. People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:
  - Fever or chills
  - Cough
  - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - Fatigue
  - Muscle or body aches
  - Headache
  - New loss of taste or smell
  - Sore throat
  - Congestion or runny nose
  - Nausea or vomiting
  - Diarrhea

This list does not include all possible symptoms. CDC will continue to update this list as they learn more about COVID-19.

- Mrs. Richardson, our school nurse, is an incredible resource for helping everyone on campus stay safe. A volunteer nurse will provide additional support, especially early in the year as we establish a “new normal.”

- HCA will carefully follow guidelines from our local health organizations on how to proceed when someone in our school community tests positive for COVID-19 or has been exposed to someone who tested positive.
- Students who are feeling ill will be isolated from other students until a parent can take them home. An isolation area has been established where ill students will stay while they are waiting to be taken home.
- School wide, classroom, or large group singing practices and performances will not be conducted on campus until further notice.

### **Physical Distancing**

The reopening plan in place for Holy Cross Academy allows for social distancing at the greatest extent possible throughout the day.

- Reminders of social distancing guidelines will be communicated before the school year begins, in signs throughout the building, and in daily announcements each day at school.
- Students will be spaced apart to the greatest extent possible. Students will be distanced at least three feet apart throughout the day.
- If students must come into closer proximity than six feet with anyone on campus, they will be required to be wearing appropriate face masks during these times.
- We will orchestrate “traffic flow” patterns for students to enter and exit the building.

### **Hand Hygiene**

- Educate families and display signs throughout the building regarding the importance of regularly and properly washing hands.
- Regularly remind students of the importance of social distancing as well as proper hand-washing techniques.
- Purchase wall mounted hand sanitizers in each classroom and several free standing, touchless units.
- Install touchless faucets, soap dispensers, and paper towel dispensers in all restrooms.

### **Sharing Spaces**

In making for a safe learning environment, we will alter how students move about the building and increase our cleaning efforts.

- Middle school teachers will rotate from classroom to classroom to the greatest extent possible rather than having our students transition to different classrooms.
- Specials teachers will deliver lessons remotely or will visit student in their classrooms. We will avoid using specials classrooms as shared spaces.
- Students will use the same desk throughout the day and we will minimize the use of shared materials in the classrooms. Any items which must be shared will be sanitized between uses.

### **Personal Protective Devices**

- Everyone in the Holy Cross Academy family will be educated on the important role personal protective devices can play in helping to stop the spread of illnesses. Data shows that social

distancing and wearing masks are effective tools in greatly reducing the chance of transmission of the virus.

- Holy Cross Academy is going to require students to have a mask with them each day at school and requires them to wear it whenever a full six feet of social distancing is not possible. The Rappahannock Area Health District strongly encourages the use of face masks throughout the day for everyone on campus. It helps protect your child as well as every other soul on campus.
- Masks worn in school must be clean, dry face covering over the nose and mouth.
- Fabric masks must be laundered prior to the being worn for the next school day.
- The illustration (from the RAHD) shows the effectiveness of the combination of social distancing and face masks.

### **Lunch and Recess**

- Lunch will occur in the classrooms when students can be socially distanced by six feet or more as schools are to avoid shared spaces with large groups of students when possible.
- Classrooms that cannot space students six feet apart will have ½ of their students eat lunch socially distanced in another room on campus or outside (weather permitting).
- Students will be required to stay at their desks and maintain social distancing throughout their lunch period.
- Lunches will be brought to the classrooms rather than students coming to get them. Lunches will be boxed for students and the salad bar will not be an option.
- Currently, recess is limited to 50 students at a time in one play area.
- Thankfully, HCA is blessed with extensive grounds and we can have separate groups of students at recess on the baseball field, soccer field, and blacktop areas. Each group can maintain distancing of at least 50 ft. from one another.

### **Safety Measures and Precautions**

Below are some of the safety measures and precautions we will use in the coming year to keep our students, faculty, staff, and volunteers safe on campus.

- Educate families and display signs throughout the building regarding the importance of regularly and properly washing hands.
- Regularly remind students of the importance of social distancing as well as proper hand-washing techniques.
- Space our students in their classrooms and common spaces to reflect current guidance regarding social distancing.
- Purchase wall mounted hand sanitizers in each classroom and several free standing, touchless units.
- Classroom windows and doors will be kept open as regularly as possible to allow the maximum flow of fresh air into the classroom.
- Conduct temperature checks for students and volunteers as they arrive at school.
- Install touchless faucets, soap dispensers, and paper towel dispensers in all restrooms.
- Contract more hours with our overnight cleaning service to wipe down surfaces each night. Clearing products used will be among those recognized by the EPA to kill COVID-19.
- Utilize UV light sanitizing wands to help disinfect technology equipment.

- Wipe down commonly used surfaces regularly throughout the day.
- Use an electrostatic sprayer to sanitize the playground equipment each day as well as any other surface on campus that needs to be sanitized.
- Make masks available for faculty, staff, and students if they did not bring one to school. No one is allowed into the building without first having a mask.
- Encourage one way hallway traffic to the maximum amount possible.
- Take students to the classrooms earlier to minimize group time in Fr. Brisson Hall.
- Establish new protocols for students selecting, returning, and receiving books from the school library.
- Adult volunteers will complete a health screening form and undergo a temperature check before being dismissed to classrooms. Volunteers will wear a mask when on campus and will not break social distancing guidelines while performing their duties.
- Minimize the sharing of materials. When this is not possible, sanitize items between use.
- Stagger recess so no more than 50 at a time are in any given space outside. We can send groups of 50 to the blacktop area, soccer field, and baseball field.
- Mass and other traditional school assemblies may allow for limited, social distanced seating for some students. Otherwise, these will take place via Zoom or other teleconferencing system.
- Students in grade 3-8 will travel socially distanced to the lobby to receive Communion after viewing live streaming Mass on Fridays.

### *Threshold for Dismissal*

- Following guidelines from the CDC, any student or staff member assessed at the school and found to have a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher, or any other COVID-19 symptom will be dismissed from school for the day.
- Students or staff who are either sent home or are absent from school with COVID-19-like symptoms will be required to provide a note from a licensed independent healthcare provider (to include a physician, physician's assistant, or nurse practitioner), indicating that said provider deems the individual clear to attend school.

### *Mitigation of Exposure*

- In the event that a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, HCA will follow all directions from the Rappahannock Area Health Department related to contact tracing, quarantining and potential classroom or facility closure.
- When a student/faculty member becomes symptomatic, the person will be isolated and will leave school pending the results of COVID testing. A risk assessment will be conducted in collaboration with RAHD staff to determine risk to students and faculty per CDC guidelines.
- Students and/or faculty known to be in close proximity (defined by the CDC as closer than 6 ft. apart for longer than 15 minutes) of someone suspected to be COVID positive must quarantine until test results are known.
- Siblings/family members of students who are COVID symptomatic may not return to school unless the family member receives a negative test result.
- Contact tracing at HCA will be performed as necessary by Mrs. Richardson, our school nurse, in coordination with the RAHD.

- Holy Cross Academy intends to communicate with parents and guardians via email communications regarding positive COVID results of students or faculty/staff members while maintaining individual privacy of those impacted.
- Students or faculty members meeting CDC guidelines for “close contact” will receive an email and phone call notifying them to quarantine their student at home until test results are received from the symptomatic student.
- Students and faculty determined to be at low risk may from any symptomatic student/faculty member remain at school.
- Quarantined students will be invited to participate in distance learning as their health status allows, in order to continue academic growth.
- If COVID-19 test results are positive, RAHD staff will contact the parents and advise them on the necessity of isolation and the criteria for return to school.

### *New Frequently Asked Questions:*

With a new plan, comes a new list of frequently asked questions to accompany the changes.

#### **Why is Holy Cross Academy making this change?**

The current model allowed us to have a safe, successful start to the school year. Our students have been able to learn and adapt to the many new policies and procedures that are in place to ensure their safety. We have been able to establish routines for our in person and online learners alike.

The challenge we are experiencing is implementing our full curriculum using the current hybrid model. This change in approach allows the opportunity for additional direct instruction is necessary to meet our high curriculum standards. Expanding on our current model ensures we are fulfilling our high expectation for teaching, learning, and faith formation at HCA.

#### **Why is the transition occurring in early November?**

We have had the time to affirm that our methods and procedures are working and keeping our students safe. We have also had a chance to more thoroughly assess how the virus is impacting our area and local schools that have opened with all students on campus. The positivity rate of the virus in our area has decreased to near 5% which is well below the 10% threshold established as high risk by our health department.

Making the transition on November 2<sup>nd</sup> provides our teachers with more than two trimesters to teach in a more traditional manner and cover the Diocesan curriculum. The timing allows teachers to adjust their scope and sequence of their courses to meet the needs of their learners.

The faculty and staff can alter classroom configurations and practices over the coming weeks to make a successful transition to having all in person learners on campus.

#### **Will students be socially distanced throughout the school day?**

Students will be spaced apart to the greatest extend possible in the classroom. Students will be seated no closer than three feet from peers during the day. This matches the model used by many schools in

our Diocese and other private schools who have all their students back on campus. These schools are using similar safety measures with mask wearing and other cleaning and sanitizing best practices.

Our classroom enrollment of in person learners ranges from a high of 24 to a low of 13. HCA classroom are nearly identical in size. Classrooms can effectively be configured to fit 15 – 18 desks with a full six feet of social distancing. All classrooms can accommodate their learners with at least three feet of social distancing.

### **Is Fr. Brisson Hall or other spaces being used as classrooms?**

As we finalize plans for how to best accommodate our students in this new plan, we are being creative and considering using all spaces that could benefit our learners.

### **How many students will be on campus each day?**

In the opening weeks of the school year, we have approximately 190 students on campus on any given day. This is the total of our gray or maroon students in addition to our students completing their distance learning from campus.

As we transition all our in person learners to campus, we expect to have 315 students on campus each day. This number could increase if our number of 100% online learners continues to decrease as student rejoin in person instruction.

### **How will this impact safety measures on campus and in the classrooms?**

The pages of safety measures that you read about this summer are still in place. We will continue temperature checks in the morning, maintaining improved ventilation, hand washing/sanitizing, mask wearing, and cleaning and disinfecting classrooms and common spaces.

### **When do students need to wear a mask?**

Masks continue to be required when students are not socially distanced from others by six feet or more or when asked by a teacher or adult supervisor asks them to wear one. Students are also required to have their mask in place when they are out of their seat in the classroom, in the hallways, or in any common area of the school.

### **When will specials classes return to normal?**

While students have been on campus two days per week, we have maximized time that students spend on their core instruction. Specials classes allow our students a chance to expand their learning beyond the core curriculum. These classes also allow elementary teacher the chance for one planning period during their day.

The inability to share spaces and materials make instructing specials classes on campus very challenging. We have been able to offer physical education class for our elementary students. Ms. Bogley, our school counselor, has also begun classroom guidance for elementary students. Mr. Krueger has begun posting technology assignments for all grades. We plan to add Spanish for K-5 grade students in the coming weeks. We are also assessing the possibility of adding art as a virtual course of our students.

**Will lunch be modified to allow for social distancing?**

In classrooms where students cannot be socially distanced by six feet, we will separate students into two groups in different locations while they eat lunch so students can remove their masks.

**Will morning drop off / afternoon car line be altered?**

We will continue our procedures that we started at the beginning of the school year. The increased number of students on campus will result in a longer backup of cars in the morning and afternoon. We ask for families' patience at morning drop off as we temperature check each student and again in the evening as we dismiss 100+ additional students each day.