

Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Catholic Education

Fall 2020 FAQs (as of July 12, 2020)

Will schools reopen in September?

All elementary, secondary and special education schools will reopen in the Fall following guidelines established by the PA Department of Education.

What guidelines are required by the state?

The state guidelines require each school to develop a health and safety plan. Schools will have pandemic coordinators and a pandemic team to help prepare schools to safely operate in the Fall. Key components of this plan involve promoting healthy behaviors to prevent the spread of COVID-19, having students and staff wear masks or protective equipment, increasing cleaning and disinfection, providing for social distancing in classrooms and hallways, and minimizing large gatherings. To view the state guidelines, please click [here](#).

Will these plans be made public?

The state has requested that plans be published on school websites once the plans are approved. We are recommending that all schools publish their plans on their website at least a week before school starts.

Will students have to wear masks in school?

Yes. The PA Department of Health issued an order requiring face coverings on July 1, 2020 and noted that school students will be required to comply. Face coverings may be removed while students are eating, when students are seated at desks six feet apart, and when students are engaged in activities which will keep them six feet apart. Any student who cannot wear a mask or face shield due to a medical condition, including those with respiratory issues that impede breathing, a mental health condition, or disability, and students who would be unable to remove a mask without assistance are not required to wear face coverings. Face coverings for students are to be supplied by parents and guardians. The coverings should be plain with no logos or written content.

Will students be in school every day?

Plans call for elementary and special education students to be present in school every day unless they are sick in which case an alternative learning format will be provided. The plan for secondary schools provides for a hybrid model in which students will be physically in school one day and

participating in their class virtually the next day. Cameras will be installed in the secondary schools to facilitate those students who will be at home.

No matter how instruction is delivered, students will receive the full curriculum.

Will there be options for parents who do not want students to attend in person?

In person instruction has been recommended by the American Association of Pediatrics. The safety measures being taken by schools are geared toward safely operating schools with students physically attending classes. Schools will endeavor to accommodate students with medical conditions that put them at high risk.

Will temperature screenings be done at school?

Most schools will not be doing temperature screenings at school. Parents are requested to take the temperature of the students daily and check for other symptoms before students leave for school. COVID-19 symptoms include fever, 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, and diarrhea.

For students participating in athletics temperature screenings will be required.

What is the risk of my child becoming sick with COVID-19?

According to the CDC and based on available evidence, children do not appear to be at higher risk for COVID-19 than adults. While some children and infants have been sick with COVID-19, adults make up most of the known cases to date. For more information about who is most at risk for health problems if they have COVID-19 infection, please visit the CDC's current [Risk Assessment](#) page.

How can I protect my child from COVID-19 infection?

You can encourage your child to help stop the spread of COVID-19 by teaching them to do the same things everyone should do to stay healthy.

- Clean hands often for at least 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid people who are sick (coughing and sneezing).
- Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces daily in household common areas (e.g. tables, hard-backed chairs, doorknobs, light switches, remotes, handles, desks, toilets, sinks).
- Launder items including washable plush toys as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water

setting for the items and dry items completely. Dirty laundry from an ill person can be washed with other people's items.

You can find additional information on preventing COVID-19 at [Prevention for 2019 Novel Coronavirus](#) and at [Preventing COVID-19 Spread in Communities](#). Additional information on how COVID-19 is spread is available at [How COVID-19 Spreads](#). The CDC also provides guidance on [What to do if you are sick?](#)

Are the symptoms of COVID-19 different in children than in adults?

According to the CDC website. No. The symptoms of COVID-19 are similar in children and adults. However, children with confirmed COVID-19 have generally presented with mild symptoms. Reported symptoms in children include cold-like symptoms, such as fever, runny nose, and cough. Vomiting and diarrhea have also been reported. It is 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. Government and Health officials are still learning about how the disease impacts children.