



# Catholic High Schools Compass: Continuing Excellence in Catholic Education



This document outlines the key components of our plan to reopen Archdiocesan High Schools in the fall. The plans fully follow school operational guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE).

Our plan, *Catholic High Schools Compass: Continuing Excellence in Catholic Education*, like the four points of a compass, is firmly grounded in directional principles:

**Safety** During this pandemic, our foremost priority has been the safety of students, faculty and staff. In our reopening, we will focus on providing the recommended six feet distancing in classrooms and other areas of the school, implementing screening, following requirements for face coverings, increasing cleaning and sanitation and promoting healthy behaviors.

**Academic Excellence** Our schools are known for their academic excellence, providing students with both the academic skills and values to be successful in life. While we need to change how education is delivered to ensure safety, the full curriculum will be covered and our increased use of technology will help students prepare for college or careers.

**Technology** Catholic High Schools were able to switch to online learning in March because of the strength of the technology in our schools. Over the summer, we have strengthened our systems further with the adoption of a learning management system, Schoology, additional laptops for teachers and Chromebooks for students, more online textbooks and a camera system that will enable synchronous full day instruction.

**Faith Formation** The bedrock of our plans is faith formation, which is integrated in all aspects of our schools from Academics to extra-curricular activities. Throughout this crisis, our faith has kept us together. As Archbishop Nelson Pérez often says, "we are a people of hope." Working together with you as parents, we will safely chart a course through this storm.

All high schools are preparing individual health and safety plans which will be published on each school's website in August. We hope that this document will help you in understanding the key issues behind all of those plans.

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# Health and Safety Plans

All high schools are completing individual operational plans following [CDC](#) and [PDE](#) guidelines. Each school will publish its plan on the official school website and share it broadly in a variety of ways. Each school also has an appointed Pandemic Coordinator and a supporting Pandemic Response Team which has developed plans to help facilitate issues that may arise as the COVID-19 landscape evolves. Key components of those plans include:

- **A Hybrid Instruction Model.** To allow for the recommended six feet distancing in classrooms, cafeteria spaces, and other locations, only half the students would attend school in person each day. On alternating days, students would participate in the same class live from home using a learning management system and classroom cameras.
- **The Schoology Learning Management System.** An investment in a learning management system with Zoom technology, so that students can participate in live instruction from home on alternating days. Now, Schoology will also allow students to access resources, to collaborate with each other and to have one log-in access to hundreds of widely used educational resources.
- **Cohorting.** As recommended by health organizations, students will be cohorted as much as possible in rostering. If a case of COVID-19 were to surface with a cohort, we would then move to virtual learning at home with just the identified cohort for the 14-day quarantine period. The rest of the school would continue to operate with in-class instruction.
- **Scheduling Changes.** School schedules will be adjusted to allow more time between classes so that all of the students are well spaced apart in the hallways. Where possible, schools are increasing the number of electronic books to reduce the need for students to go to their lockers.
- **Strict Safety Protocols.** All schools will strictly follow recommended protocols for safe distancing, screening of students and staff, requiring face coverings, reducing large gatherings and restricting visitors.
- **Enhanced Cleaning.** All schools were professionally sanitized. There will be increased cleaning and sanitation during the day so that bathrooms and frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned. Frequent hand washing will be encouraged and hand sanitizer will be available throughout the buildings.
- **Improved Ventilation.** Ventilation systems have been checked and enhanced and teachers will be encouraged to open windows to circulate fresh air.
- **Training.** Students and staff will receive training on new procedures, software systems and technology. Handbooks will be updated to reflect new policies.



# The Hybrid Instructional Model

To allow for proper social distancing all schools will operate with a hybrid instructional model utilizing an every other day cycle, which has been termed an A/B cycle. Students will remain rostered for their normal school day schedule and participate in class every day, allowing for a full year of complete instruction. Under this model, students will be assigned to an A or B group. Some schools will use school colors, such as green and white, to designate the days.

While the A group students are present in the building, students in the B group will participate in each class live through a new Learning Management System (LMS) and a video conferencing system, both of which are explained on the next page. On the following school day, students in the B group will be present in the school building while students in the A group learn from home.

This type of synchronous learning means that students are receiving direct, real time

instruction whether in the school building or at home.

The CDC notes that having all students in school is the highest risk model. They recommend six foot distancing of desks, limiting most of our classrooms to no more than 17 students.

According to pediatric disease specialists, high school students are at a higher risk of contracting COVID-19 than their elementary school counterparts. Additionally, high school students are better suited to remote, quality instruction than younger children.

The success of our virtual learning during the Spring of 2020 highlighted the maturity, self-discipline, and focus of our students. This hybrid model will offer both in-class instruction and the safety of virtual learning.

Our goal is to have every student back in the classroom every day, as soon as it is safe to do so. We will be flexible and make changes as the plan as matters evolve.

# Investing in Technology

A significant investment is being made to enhance our already strong academics and technology through new learning management system, the purchase of additional teacher laptops, an increase in the number of digital textbooks, and increased level of professional training in using technology for faculty to optimize resources for high quality instruction.

## Video Conferencing Technology:

Cameras and sound equipment will be installed in classrooms throughout our 17 high schools as soon as they are delivered. All classes will be live streamed through Zoom education accounts, which will be embedded in the Schoology LMS. This integration will improve security and allow students to video conference. This capability provides for synchronistic learning on days when students are not scheduled to be physically present in the school building. Most importantly, students learning from home will not only be able to view classes live, but they will also be able to participate in all class activities. As a result, there will be seamless educational integration between A and B cycle days.

## Schoology Learning Management System:

To increase student engagement and provide greater support for student learning in both the physical and virtual classrooms, we are utilizing the Schoology (pronounced: Skoo'-luh-jee) Learning Management System (LMS) in all 17 high schools. It is the largest PreK-12 LMS in the country and offers extensive capabilities. This single site provider enables students to access assignments, assessments, and classroom resources electronically anywhere they have Internet access. The LMS also allows for student collaboration, immediate teacher feedback on work, and one log-in access to hundreds of widely used educational resources including the Google Suite of Applications, Newsela, Edpuzzle, and Infobase. Student learning on Schoology promotes high levels of effective engagement for teachers and students by allowing them to upload and view videos, share slide deck presentations, comment on work, and collaborate virtually. Parents can also easily view upcoming assignments and monitor student progress using their parent account. Another benefit of the addition of the Schoology LMS is its parent company, PowerSchool. Now parents will be able to remain connected with student school work, assignments, progress, and grades through these interconnected systems.



# Safety for Students and Staff



- Students will be seated a full 6 feet apart, as recommended by the CDC, when in classrooms or seated in the cafeteria or other spaces in the school. Signage will be placed in hallways and stairwells reminding students of the distancing requirement.



- Students and staff will be required to wear face coverings following the directives of the Pennsylvania Department of Health.



- Screening for symptoms will be in place for students, staff and essential visitors.



- Ventilation systems are being checked and classroom windows will be opened to provide fresh air.



- The time between class periods is being increased to allow students to safely change classes.



- Only bottle fill water coolers will be used in schools.



- Greatly enhanced cleaning and sanitation will be performed during the school day with deeper cleaning each night. Electrostatic disinfecting equipment has been purchased for each school so that schools can regularly disinfect surfaces.



# Athletics & Activities

## ATHLETICS

Athletics and activities are an important component of the high school experience for many students. Safety procedures will be in place for all athletic programs with each high school having a separate athletics-reopening plan. Those plans will be updated to reflect any changing guidance from the state, county, or respective league in which the school is located and/or participates as the COVID-19 landscape evolves.

- As a general guideline, student athletes will be screened prior to every practice or game and follow protocols regarding physical distancing and the use of face coverings.
- The use of certain facilities such as locker rooms may be limited and weight rooms will operate at reduced capacity with students taking care to wipe down equipment between each use. Students will be provided with wipes and sanitizing spray. Teams will be encouraged to come dressed for practices and games to limit the use of the locker room.
- Any shared equipment must be wiped down between uses. Students will be provided with wipes and sanitizing spray.
- Athletic areas will have extra cleaning and sanitation and healthy routines such as hand washing and use of hand sanitizer will be encouraged.
- Spectators are not permitted to attend practices and are subject to state guidelines regarding crowd size for all games whether the event is indoor or outdoor.
- Student athletes will be instructed not to have any unnecessary contact such as high fives, handshakes, and fist bumps.
- School transportation of student athletes will employ social distancing and carpooling of anyone except for immediate family members is strongly discouraged.
- Schools will be encouraged to adjust their playing schedules when possible in an effort to reduce travel, limit large gatherings, and mitigate risk.

## ACTIVITIES

Schools will pursue virtual activities and events in lieu of field trips, large student assemblies, large performances, and school-wide parent meetings. Many student activities will be able to continue as before, but with the standard precautions of social distancing, wearing face coverings, and practicing good hygiene.

# Working Together

The partnership of all the members of a school community – parents, students, faculty, staff – is necessary to help make school plans successful. In developing athletic plans, many schools instituted student pledges to follow the rules to help keep each other safe. A necessary element for everyone is the need to stay home if you have symptoms or feel sick. All students should screen themselves for symptoms and temperatures before leaving for school each day.

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 – CDC norm is a temperature of 100.4 or more
- 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



## Have Questions?

Over the upcoming weeks additional information will be made available to parents through website updates at <https://aopcatholicschools.org/covid-19-information/>, through video messages, and newsletters and through communications directly from schools.

A dedicated email address is available for parents and guardians to send questions. Please send messages to: [covid19@archphila-oc.org](mailto:covid19@archphila-oc.org).

School specific questions should be directed to your local high school.



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