

St. Mary's Catholic School
225 6th Street
Tracy, Minnesota 56175



CoVid-19 Preparedness Plan

August, 2020

The situation surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic continues to change quickly. All policies, procedures, and information outlined in this guide are subject to change based on the advice of our local health department and/or the Diocese of New Ulm. Any and all changes are and will be effective immediately. It is important to keep in contact with St. Mary's school and read all communication.

DIOCESE
of NEW ULM

Office of the Bishop

July 23, 2020

Dear Catholic school families and stakeholders,

Warm greetings to your communities! I am pleased to welcome our new director of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of New Ulm, Dr. Michelle Kramer. She joins us during a time fraught with questions regarding the re-opening of schools after last spring's distance learning programs. While teachers in our diocese proceeded with valiant efforts during distance learning, we know that this model was far from ideal, and we are excited to open our doors once again and continue to provide excellent academic programming infused with Gospel values. The health of our students, teachers, and families remains a top priority, yet we recognize the value that face-to-face learning has in meeting our students' academic, social, emotional, and spiritual needs. Toward that end, we plan to open our schools in the fall – with careful planning using the guidance of the Center for Disease Control, Catholic Mutual, the Minnesota Department of Health, and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

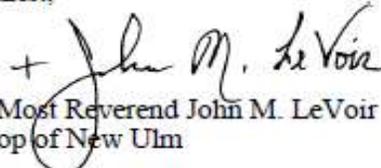
Minnesota diocesan directors/superintendents have been working together to assist principals and teachers in preparing plans for their re-opening. Dr. Kramer has been working with Catholic school leaders and public school officials throughout the state to identify best practices and provide recommendations for our schools. Each school will create specific re-opening plans using guidance provided by our diocese and the aforementioned institutions. The plans will include procedures for operations, community, curriculum and instruction, health and safety, and Catholic identity. Many schools are forming task forces to create these plans, and they will then be made available to school families. We understand that the coronavirus has not gone away and that all planning will need to be flexible as we adjust to changing circumstances. Our goal is to continue to provide an excellent, Christ-centered education while maintaining the health and safety of our students and staff.

Our school parents are to be commended for their tremendous commitment to their children's success, during distance learning especially. The experience again demonstrated the valuable teacher – parent partnership. Thank you for your commitment to Catholic education and willingness to allow us to assist you in your role as the primary educators of your children.

I extend my deepest gratitude to the principals and school staff throughout the diocese who have gone, and continue to go, the extra mile to meet the needs of our community. May God bless and reward each of you as you continue to share the Good News amidst these times of trial.

As a Church, we understand the value of community. Our separation from the Eucharist during the months during the shelter-in-place order reminded us of how very much we need Jesus and each other. May we continue to pray for health and healing, and may we do our level best to make the return to schools a smooth process for our young people.

In Christ,

+ 
The Most Reverend John M. LeVoir
Bishop of New Ulm



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2020-21 School Year Quick Facts (As of August 5th, 2020)

Q | What is the current plan for returning to school in the fall of 2020?

A | On July 23, Bishop LeVoir of the Diocese of New Ulm announced our Catholic schools will be opening this fall according to regular schedules and policies, in conjunction with state and local policies. We plan to reopen for in-person instruction five days a week beginning in September.

Q | What will the first day of school be?

A | Our open house and orientation events, which will look different this year, will be held on Wednesday, August 26 (more information will be sent at a later date) and the first full day of school will be Tuesday, September 1 for Preschool – 6th grade.

Q | As a St. Mary's School family, am I required to send my child(ren) for in-person instruction? What if I want to continue at-home learning?

A | St. Mary's School will not offer an at-home learning option for individual students. If you are concerned about learning in person, please contact Mrs. Dieter to discuss this further.

Q | Will masks be required for students and staff?

A | Yes. Effective July 25, 2020, Minnesota Governor Tim Walz implemented an executive order 20-81 face covering mandate for the entire state. The order requires every individual, age five and older, in Minnesota to wear a face covering when indoors or in an enclosed space. Face coverings are strongly recommended in all other settings, including outdoors when it is not possible to maintain physical distancing. Face masks can be removed when eating or drinking. The order defines a face covering as a paper or disposable face mask, a cloth face mask, a scarf, a bandanna, a neck gaiter, or a religious face covering that covers the mouth and nose. That does not include mesh masks, masks with holes or openings, or masks with vents. The situation surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic continues to change quickly. All policies, procedures, and information outlined in this guide are subject to change based on the advice of our local health department and/or the Diocese of New Ulm. Any and all changes are and will be effective immediately. It is important to keep in contact with St. Mary's School and read all communications. Face masks will be required for all K-6 students. Our staff will also be required to wear a face mask when working closer than six feet to students or co-workers and when moving throughout the building. In the event a student, staff member, or teacher has a medical condition, disability, mental health condition, or other sensory sensitivities that prevent them from wearing a mask, a medical note must be provided. Simply choosing not to wear a mask will not be allowed. If that is the case, the student will need to remain at home and provide their own schooling. When the mask order is lifted, we will review our mask policy at that time and alert our families to any changes of this executive order. St. Mary's School mask policy will remain in effect unless families are notified otherwise. For more information you may reference Executive order 20-81 section 12.

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Q | Will the school be providing masks for students to use?

A | Our school will provide masks for K-6 students who are not able to provide their own or forget theirs at home. We encourage each student to have multiple washable masks available at home to ensure a clean mask can be worn to school every day.

Q | Can my child still bring lunch from home?

A | Yes. Students are welcome to bring lunch from home. The situation surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic continues to change quickly. All policies, procedures, and information outlined in this guide are subject to change based on the advice of our local health department and/or the Diocese of New Ulm. Any and all changes are and will be effective immediately.

Q | When is a child too sick to attend school?

A | All of our existing rules and policies as it relates to a sick child still apply. If your child has a fever of 100° F or higher, along with any of the symptoms listed below, they must remain at home until they are symptom free without the use of medication for 24 hours. Medical experts say COVID-19 can present with fever, cough, nasal congestion or rhinorrhea, sore throat, shortness of breath, diarrhea, nausea or vomiting, fatigue, headache, muscle pain or muscle ache, poor feeding, or poor appetite. Under these conditions, we must assume a child has COVID-19 until proven otherwise. Therefore, please be prepared for your child to need to come home until they are feeling well and fever free without medication for 24 hours. As recommended by our local health department, you should never send your child to school if he or she has a temperature of 100° F or higher.

Q | What should I do if my child is sick?

A | A sick child must stay home from school, regardless of the type of illness. Please call the school's office to keep the lines of communication open regarding the reason for your child's absence and if the absence is related to COVID-19.

Q | Can I come inside my child's school?

A | St. Mary's School will not allow visitors into buildings during the school day for the 2020-21 school year. This includes parents and guardians and encompasses our drop-off and pick-up procedures. This policy is also open to change based on guidance from MDH, Diocese of New Ulm, and local health officials.

Q | What if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 at St. Mary's School?

A | We will notify parents/guardians of the students within that grade level and follow our local health department's recommendation as it relates to how we conduct future education in light of a confirmed case of COVID-19. The situation surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic continues to change quickly. All policies, procedures, and information outlined in this guide are subject to change based on the advice of our local health department and/or the Diocese of New Ulm. All

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Q | Is St. Mary's School prepared in the event the school would need to shut down due to a COVID-19 outbreak?

A | Yes. We are prepared in the event a classroom needs to be quarantined or if our entire system needs to be quarantined. Therefore, a quarantine would be implemented for a short time, with students and staff returning to in-person instruction as soon as possible. If our local health department deems a classroom(s) needs to move to at-home learning due to COVID-19 exposure, our staff is prepared to deliver virtual-based instruction for core content areas daily. This new format will offer more live sessions of instruction daily and reduce assignments the students will need to complete at home.

Q | Which organizations is St. Mary's School working with to make these decisions?

A | We are working with recommendations and guidelines of local medical and health leaders, Minnesota Department of Health Department, and the Diocese of New Ulm. We are also paying attention to what state leaders and organizations are recommending.

Q | How will St. Mary's School share updates or potential changes to the policies and procedures outlined in this guide as the COVID-19 pandemic continues?

A | St. Mary's School will continue to regularly communicate with families. Please take the time to read all paper and email communications that are shared. Policy and procedure changes may happen quickly, and this will be the best way for you to stay up to date.

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St. Mary's School Safety Measures

Hygiene & Cleanliness

COVID-19 Positive Case Procedures

In the event of a COVID-19 positive student or staff member, St. Mary's School will work with a team including school nurse, teachers, administrative leaders, and local health department officials to make recommendations to the other members of the St. Mary's School Community that are directly impacted by the COVID-19 positive case.

Parents/guardians must contact the school's administrator and/or main office immediately if you or your child(ren) have been exposed to COVID-19.

A student or employee who is diagnosed with COVID-19 should receive documented permission from a medical professional (doctor, nurse practitioner, PA, etc..) to return to school.

If a classroom(s) is impacted by a student or employee diagnosed with COVID-19 the parents/guardians will immediately be notified if they have students in the same grade level of the COVID-19 positive case.

A student or employee who is directly exposed to a person who is carrying COVID-19 should quarantine for ten (10) calendar days (or as recommended by our local health department at that time).

Common Covid-19 Symptoms:

- Fever of 100° F
- Shortness of breath
- Cough
- Sore throat

Facility Cleanliness

We will be disinfecting our school daily, and in some situations mid-day depending on the activity level and traffic volume.

Hand Washing & Sanitizer

Our student and staff will participate in hand washing/sanitizing every two hours, minimum, depending on activity level. Hand sanitizer will be readily available in all areas of our building for immediate use at any time.

Masks, Desk Shields, and Physical Distancing

Masks covering the nose and mouth will be required for all K-6 students during their school day. Students will be excused from wearing a mask if they have an underlying medical condition with a note written by a medical professional (doctor, nurse practitioner, PA, etc..). Disposable masks will be available for student use if needed. Students may remove their masks when they are eating lunch, participating in rigorous activity, or properly social distanced outdoors.

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St. Mary's School faculty and staff members will be required to wear a mask and/or clear shield when in the presence of students. If staff are within 6 feet of students, they must have a mask on. If they feel that some instruction would be better taught with a clear shield, they must maintain the 6-foot social distancing rule while wearing the clear shield. St. Mary's School faculty and staff may forgo wearing a mask and/or clear shield during their preparational hours with no student contact.

All authorized visitors entering our building will be required to wear a mask. The number of outside visitors entering the building will be minimal. Our school will have a supply of masks in the event someone forgets to bring his or her own.

Physical distancing will be practiced as much as possible throughout the school day. Our classrooms will be arranged to allow students to physically distance themselves from one another. Since this may not be possible in all areas of the building desk shields have been purchased for every student. The desk shields are a clear plastic divider that enclose each desk shielding the front and sides of each student. Students will be able to see through the clear dividers to receive instruction.

Smaller rooms (bathrooms, offices, maintenance work areas, etc.) will have posted occupancy. Spaces should not exceed the set occupancy. Teachers may send one student per gender to the restroom at a time throughout the day.

Drinking Fountains

We recommend all students to bring their own labeled, filled water bottle each day. All drinking fountains at our schools will be turned off except for touchless bottle-filling stations. If your child does not have a personal water bottle, then they will not be able to get a drink from the fountains.

Communication

St. Mary's School will continue to regularly communicate with families. Please take the time to read all paper and email communication that are shared. Policy and procedure changes may happen quickly, and this will be the best way for you to stay up to date.

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Policies and Procedures

Liability Waivers

St. Mary's School will not be liable for any COVID 19 positive cases or transmission that happens within the building. St. Mary's School has put in place preventative measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Health Screening Requirements

St. Mary's School **WILL** take your students' temperature as they enter the building to begin their school day. Students' temperatures will also be taken after lunch each day.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to make certain a child is healthy and able to attend school. Parents should also take each child's temperature in the morning prior to sending him or her to school. **Sending a child(ren) to school with obvious symptoms of illness is unacceptable. The child's parent/guardian will immediately be notified to make arrangements to have the child picked up from St. Mary's School.**

If, during the school day, a student appears to have an illness, the school will help the student and proceed with standard medical responses, like taking the student's temperature, as in the past. St. Mary's School will be vigilant and will not ignore possible symptoms of an illness.

Our school will cooperate with local health departments and MDH if a student or staff member is diagnosed with COVID-19.

Physical Health

We will make certain all student and employee health files are complete and up to date. Our school will be prepared and know local health clinic and hospital information. Our school has an "isolation room" for sick students. Sick students will wait in the isolation room until a parent/guardian arrives to take them home.

- Students who have a temperature over 100° F will need to be sent home immediately.
- Employees with temperatures of 100° F will be sent home.

Mental Health

We will use the power of prayer to support each other through difficult situations and problems.

All proper crisis plans will be up-to-date, and employees will be trained according to the plans. Without violating HIPPA laws, we will make chaplains aware of families in need or at risk.

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We will continue to provide a Christ centered, caring, and compassionate environment for students and staff.

Absences

Parents/guardians should keep a child home when the child has obvious symptoms of being ill. Administration and administrative assistant will monitor student absenteeism closely. Mrs. Dieter will be required to communicate directly with families who are dealing with prolonged illnesses. If your student has a pre-existing condition that shows itself with COVID-19 symptoms you must provide a doctor's note clearly stating that your child has a history with a different condition. For example, if your child has seasonal allergies you must provide a doctor's note to prove that their condition is not COVID-19 related.

Our teachers are prepared to accommodate prolonged student absences. St. Mary's School has a plan in place to work with individual students who miss many days of school in a row **due to COVID-19 related issues/illness.**

School Closure Due to Absenteeism

We will monitor daily attendance and reasons for absences. We will work closely with our school nurse and local health department if several absences are identified as being related to COVID-19.

In case of a widespread illness in the state, county, or community our school could close for an extended amount of time out of concern for the health of students, staff, and community. During a time of closure, we will implement our distance learning plan.

We must have the permission of the Diocese of New Ulm, our Pastor, and our principal to close any individual classroom, section, or whole school. If the situation requires, and we have the proper permissions, we may decide it is prudent to close St. Mary's School even if other area schools remain open.

In the event that St. Mary's School must re-evaluate our plan or we are no longer able to do full time in-school learning. Students will be offered a hybrid schedule or an improved distance learning schedule. Determination of the alternative schedule will be based on current MDH, local health officials, and Diocese of New Ulm guidelines.

Visitors

At St. Mary's School, we will begin the 2020-2021 school year with a "No Visitor Rule". That is no one outside staff and students will be allowed past the office.

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If an individual has an emergency, sick child, or educational-based reason to enter the building, he or she must call the school office prior to coming to the main door and **STOP** in the office.

If there is a need for a parent to drop off a lunch or school materials, the office personnel will greet you at the entryway. St. Mary's School **WILL NOT** be using in-classroom volunteers throughout the pandemic. We appreciate and value your willingness to be involved in your child's education, however, we must limit the number of people entering each building during this time.

Transportation

St. Mary's School is encouraging/asking families to find alternative ways of transportation to get their students to school other than the bus. If students have no other way to get to school students may ride the bus.

Arrival and Dismissal of Students

St. Mary's School will be utilizing designated entry and exit doors for arrival and dismissal. Our main doors (on the south end of the building) will be designated our "entrance" door. The north doors (nearest the preschool room) will be designated the "exit" door.

Beginning of the Day:

- St. Mary's School will allow students to be dropped off no earlier than 7:30. We will not have supervision provided before that time for social distancing or general safety.
- When students arrive, they will go to a designated area in the front hallway and have a temperature screening completed.
- Upon entrance a teacher from their grade level will take their temperature, they will use the restroom for toileting and hand washing.
- The students will then move to the gym where they will sit or stand on a visible marking on the gym floor that will be measured for socially distancing.
- If they are found with a fever, they will be sent to the isolation room and parents will be expected to pick up their student immediately.
- After all children have been screened, used the restroom, and are socially distanced in the gym, we will begin our day with our daily announcements and prayers.
- After our daily announcements & prayers, the grade levels will be dismissed one grade level at a time to exit the gym and enter their classroom.

Picking up Student Mid-Day:

- If you need to pick up your child(ren) for an appointment during the school day, please call the school office when you arrive at the school and a staff member will bring the child(ren) to the front door, along with a sign out sheet that will need to be completed.

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Dismissal:

- All students will remain in their classrooms until the prior classroom has exited the building.

Food Service

Upon entering the lunchroom, students will be seated at assigned tables. St. Mary's School staff will pick up the food trays and distribute the trays to the students. While in the lunchroom students will be allowed to take their mask off while they eat. Once they have finished their meal, they will place their mask back on their faces. Students will take their tray to the designated area and place their tray on the counter.

Students will sanitize or wash their hands before eating lunch and when finished. Lunch will be served in the cafeteria when possible based on recommendations from our local health department.

St. Mary's School is allowing students to bring their lunch from home.

No outside adults will be allowed inside our school kitchen; only kitchen staff will be allowed to enter.

Playground/Recess

Students will wash or sanitize their hands before going to recess and when returning from recess. Students will still observe physical distancing while remaining with their grade level in their designated areas.

Students will not be allowed to play competitive team games that involve a lot of physical contact.

Playground supervisors will do their best to monitor and students will not share equipment outside of their grade levels.

Teachers will be encouraged to take students outside, if possible, throughout the day to give students mask breaks while maintaining social distancing.

Academics

All St. Mary's School students will remain in their self-contained classroom with the same homeroom students to start the year. Students may be leaving their room to attend specials if their schedule allows them to do so. If students typically see different teachers throughout their day, the teachers will rotate between the classroom instead of the students moving rooms. This could change as recommendations from the local health department, Diocese of New Ulm, and CDC change throughout the year.

Shared materials will not be allowed unless they are sanitized between each use.

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Mass

All students will attend Mass at school one time per week. Each classroom will continue to prepare Mass on a rotating basis.

Specials

Students will wash or sanitize hands when going in and out of each new class throughout the day. Students will also wear masks in every special only taking them off in gym; permitting what they are doing requires them to do so.

Music- instruction will be provided in each homeroom for all grades, preschool – 6th.

Phy Ed. - students will utilize the outdoors whenever possible and will practice social distancing while in the gym.

Band – if Tracy Area Public Schools offers band lessons to our 5th & 6th grade students, the students will continue to be transported between the Tracy Area Elementary School and St. Mary's School.

Computers/Tech- When schedules permit, each classroom will receive computer instruction in the computer lab with only their classmates. Students will be assigned seating in every other seat.

Library- students will have class in the library. The regular weekly library schedule will remain the same as past years.

Hybrid/ Virtual Education (If Necessary)

It is our goal to offer in-person instruction on all regularly scheduled school days during the 2020-2021 school year.

If we have no other choice but to go to a distance learning plan the following items are in place for every student:

- Class materials will be shared with K-6th grade students via Google Classroom
- Students in need of electronic devices will have an iPad assigned to them.
- Students will continue regularly scheduled instruction with the teacher they would have had in person for all subjects
- Teachers will continue to utilize a variety of methods to present lessons including, but not limited to Google Classroom, SeeSaw, Zoom, Google Meets, record tutorials, websites, YouTube videos, and Online lessons.
- Emphasis will be put on live sessions and participation.

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Resources for Schools

<p>“Leading with Hope” From the Andrew Greeley Center for Catholic Education</p>	<p>http://www.luc.edu/gcce/index.shtml</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Logistics and planning guidance -Maintaining community guidance -Curriculum and instruction guidance -Promoting Catholic identity guidance -Technology support guidance
<p>“Guide to Reopening” From Catholic Mutual Group</p>	<p>http://catholicmutual.org/en-us/home/covid-19caresrecources.aspx</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Staying home guidance -Health screening -Social distancing directives -Facility cleanliness and disinfecting considerations -Transportation recommendations
<p>Minnesota Department of Health</p>	<p>https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Decision tree for people with COVID-19 symptoms -Public school planning guide -Masking recommendations -Food service information -Cleaning and Disinfecting Guidance
<p>Center for Disease Control</p>	<p>https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus2019-ncov/community/index.html</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Signage for posting -Screening checklist -Best practices in hand and respiratory etiquette -Cleaning and disinfecting guidance -Working with high risk individuals -Congregating setting recommendations -Preparations for outbreak or diagnosis in facility
<p>American Academy of Pediatrics</p>	<p>https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infectionsclinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-inperson-education-in-schools/</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Recommendations for age categories -Recommendations for cleaning and disinfecting -Use of masks and PPE -Guidance on mental health of students and staff

Local Resources and Updates

<p>Southwest Health and Human Services</p>	<p>https://swmhhs.com/coronavirus/ (507) 537-6713</p>
<p>Minnesota Helpline</p>	<p>https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/ For questions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, 651-297-1304 or 1-800-657-3504 Mon.-Fri.: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.</p>

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City of Tracy	www.tracymn.org
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Mental Health and Parent Resources

Wide Open Schools -At home learning resource	https://wideopenschool.org/
Mindfulness and Meditation from the Mayo Clinic	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T0Tv7FuvNJ8&feature=youtu.be&disable_polymer=true
Greater Good's Guide to Wellbeing during the Coronavirus	https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/greater_good_guide_to_wellbeing_during_coronavirus?_ga=2.18674745.1894135735.1585339015-988973372.1582235500
Coping with Traumatic Events	https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/coping-with-traumatic-events/index.shtml
Recovering Emotionally	https://www.redcross.org/get-help/disaster-relief-and-recovery-services/recovering-emotionally.html
Help! I am a Parent not a Teacher	https://www.regiscatholicschools.com/documents/ncea_parent_news_april.pdf
Talking to your Children about COVID	https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/helping-children-cope-with-changes-resulting-from-covid-19

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