

Catholic Schools

Reopening with Trust: A Planning Framework for the 2020/21 School Year

Revised Aug. 11, 2020

Additions highlighted in yellow

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
2020/21 SCHOOL YEAR

**WE ARE
CALLED...**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from Superintendent Dr. Jim Rigg.....	3
Executive Summary.....	4
Reopening Teams.....	5
Health and Safety Requirements.....	5
Infection Protocol – What to Do if Someone Gets Sick.....	13
Staffing Guidelines.....	16
Academics and Programming.....	18
Tuition Guidelines.....	22

MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Catholic School Leaders, Teachers and Staff,

We live in extraordinary times. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected every aspect of our lives and has left a mark on Catholic education. Since the pandemic began, I have been deeply impressed by the creativity, ingenuity, and dedication of our Catholic school employees. Your sincere care for your students and families is reflected in the quality of our collective response. The Office of Catholic Schools has received high praise from families and the general public for your efforts. You have my deepest appreciation for your incredible work during these challenging times.

The purpose of this document is to look ahead to the fall. It is our intent to safely reopen our school buildings to all families this fall. However, such a reopening will require careful and diligent planning on the part of our school employees. I am aware of the immense educational, operational, social, and spiritual challenges that will be laid before us this academic year, but I encourage you to plan and focus your efforts on the items that are within your control and directly benefit students. This plan framework has identified key areas for schools to consider as they engage in reopening. Each was compiled with the input of several stakeholders including the OCS staff, school principals, teachers, employees, and the Archdiocese of Chicago COVID-19 task force. In addition, we carefully studied the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Department of Public Health Transition Joint Guidance document (June 23, 2020). Our plan attempts to augment and clarify how and when these guidelines relate to our Catholic schools.

This summer will be a very busy time for our schools. Please know that the OCS and other archdiocesan offices are ready to support you as you construct your local reopening plan. We are doing God's work in educating His children, and I know that God will continue to bless us and our efforts.

Yours in Christ,



Jim Rigg, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Catholic Schools
Archdiocese of Chicago

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is an Executive Summary of the protocols and procedures, known as the Plan for reopening buildings for in-student attendance at Archdiocese of Chicago schools. The full Plan, including guidance on health and safety, academics, human resources, finance, and communications, is provided at the end of this summary. The school reopening Plan complements the Parish Reopening Plan and has been developed by the Office of Catholic Schools in consultation with national education experts, the Chicago Public Schools, and state and local public health officials.

Four guiding principles of our Plan to reopen Catholic schools and mirror the principles behind our Parish Reopening Plan are:

1. Everything possible should be done to timely reopen our school buildings and provide a safe, faith-filled education for our students.
2. The course of the pandemic in Illinois remains fluid. While much has been achieved, there remains the potential that the gains made thus far could be lost.
3. We must establish trust among parents, students and staff that the top priority in any Plan is their safety and well-being. We cannot take for granted that they will feel safe merely because schools are reopened.
4. Calling people to exercise faithful citizenship will be key. Each family must take personal responsibility for the common good as well as their own safety.

We designed this Plan to safely resume the full scope of education in our school buildings with these principles in mind. The Plan calls for schools to operate under a Cohort model and provides guidelines around Health and Safety; Academics and Social and Emotional Supports; and Human Resources and Staff Support.

The Plan envisions a set of required tasks and certification to ensure schools are prepared to operate under the “Cohort” model. There will be an ongoing review of the Plan and adjustments will be made in accordance with new data and guidelines.

The Plan was created in consideration of the [Transition Joint Guidance](#) document created by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH). This document, released on June 23, 2020 offers specific suggestions and requirements for public and non-public schools in the State of Illinois. Our Plan is meant to augment the state guidance and clarify how/when this guidance applies to our Catholic schools.

The basics of the Plan are as follows:

1. We will maintain a robust communications effort to inform families of the Plan and any updates to it.
2. Each school will recruit staff volunteers to serve on two “Reopening Teams” – one addressing Health and Safety considerations and the other Academics – to guide and assist in plan implementation.
3. Members of the Reopening Teams are to complete training by way of a webinar. The webinars will take place on July 16 (Health and Safety, 9–10:30 a.m.) and July 20 (Academics, 1–2:30 p.m.). Webinars will be recorded if team members are unable to attend live.
4. Each school will complete a Reopening Requirements Checklist confirming their completion of all action steps and demonstrating that the school has modified daily routines to safely reopen.
5. A certification of readiness to reopen will be required of each school by August 14, 2020. Once the school has completed the School Reopening Principal Checklist, school leadership can submit a certification of preparedness for approval to reopen. The checklist will then be reviewed by the OCS, which will grant the certification to the school. **Schools may not open their doors to students until they are certified by the archdiocese.**
6. Through ongoing discussions with principals, health care professionals, and civil authorities, there will be an ongoing review of the Plan to make adjustments in accord with new data, guidelines, or developments.

REOPENING TEAMS

In preparation for the implementation of this Plan, principals should form two “Reopening Teams” made up of staff and school/parish community volunteers. The purpose of these teams is to assist the principal in understanding, planning for and implementing the requirements of the Archdiocesan Reopening Plan. The principal should serve on both teams. Reopening Team members are asked to sign the School Reopening Certification Form.

The Reopening Teams are:

- 1. Health and Safety:** Assists with the **Health/Safety** and **Response Protocol** portions of this document.
Recommended Participants: Principal, pastor, business manager/operations director, facilities director/head custodian, other members as deemed appropriate. **This team must also include at least one school parent (who is also not an employee of the parish/school).**
- 2. Academics and Programming:** Assists with the **Academics and Programming** portion of this document.
Recommended Participants: Principal, assistant principal, lead teachers, intervention coordinator, technology director other members as deemed appropriate.

Principals should share the appropriate sections of this document with each Reopening Team and meet with them to define the school’s specific plan. Particular attention should be given to continuous communication to stakeholders and ongoing training in procedures.

Other sections of this document (e.g., Staffing, Tuition, Marketing) do not require engagement with a specific Reopening Team. The principal should study these sections carefully and share information with appropriate staff as needed.

ROLE OF SCHOOL BOARDS

We recommend the principal engage their local school board, when possible and appropriate, on the key provisions of the Reopening Plan. The board should be enlisted as advocates within the school community for the successful implementation of the Plan.

HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

This section provides guidelines related to the safety, health and hygiene of students to be considered by the **Health and Safety Reopening Team**. These guidelines include specific ideas for integrating safety/health procedures into instruction and the school day. Other sections describe pedagogical adaptations to instruction.

Principals and members of the Health and Safety Reopening Team should carefully read pages 30–48 of the ISBE/IDPH’s [Transition Joint Guidance](#). The guidelines on these pages should be carefully considered, bearing in mind that most are best practices not required for non-public schools. The guidance below is required of all schools and is meant to augment and clarify the [Transition Joint Guidance](#).

KEY PRINCIPLE – THE COHORT MODEL

All Archdiocese of Chicago schools must operate under a “Cohort” model when buildings reopen this fall. Under a Cohort model, students and staff are grouped by homeroom. These groupings are as static as possible by having the same group of children stay with the same staff (all day for young children and as much as possible for older children).

This strategy maintains a safe environment by eliminating the interaction between cohorts, which allows single classes to be quarantined in the event of infection, rather than closing the entire school building. Homeroom teachers are considered part of the same cohort as their students, but other teachers (including special area teachers) and staff are considered outside the cohort.

Even while utilizing the Cohort model, schools should strive to physically separate students in the same cohort as much as possible. Such separation will help mitigate risk. For example, classroom furniture should be arranged to maximize space between students.

MASKS AND PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

- All individuals in school buildings (students, employees, visitors/volunteers, etc.) must wear masks at all times unless they are younger than two years of age. Individuals who have a specific medical condition may also be exempted from mask requirements, as outlined in the [Transition Joint Guidance](#). Such individuals must be socially distant (at least six feet apart) when not wearing masks.
- Schools should ask families to purchase masks for their child/children.
 - If families are using **reusable masks**, families should purchase at least two masks, and masks should be washed by parents after every school day.
 - If parents are using **disposable masks**, masks should be discarded after every school day. Parents should send students with extra disposable masks in case they are damaged during the day.
 - Schools may opt to use **transparent masks** for select employees, assuming they meet the criteria above.
 - Schools may permit the use of **“gaiters”** (pull-up face coverings) as an alternative to masks, provided they have three layers of fabric and can remain over the mouth and nose at all times.
 - **Valve masks should not be used.**
 - Masks should not contain messages or images that would distract from the educational environment of the school.
- Each school will be provided with a “Starter Kit” of PPE and cleaning supplies to help schools through the initial days of classes (see School Reopening PPE and Cleaning Supplies form).
- Schools should ensure an ongoing supply of masks for all employees (at least two reusable masks or at least eight disposable masks per week per employee).
- Schools should maintain a minimum supply of five masks per student in the event students forget or break their personal mask.
- Schools may opt to purchase face shields for use by select staff members in **very limited situations** (e.g., early education teachers, where facial expressions are important).
 - ELL situations where mouth movement must be visible.
 - Speech therapists.
 - Preschool and kindergarten teachers (where facial expressions are important for student development).
- Masks may be removed in special circumstances. These include:
 - When students are eating lunch, breakfast or snacks.
 - When engaged in outside activities or instruction.
 - When removing masks, students and employees **must** remain socially distant by at least six feet.
 - When removed, masks should be stored in an individual paper bag (not plastic or cloth) that is labeled with the individual’s name. Individuals should wash or sanitize hands before putting their masks back on.
- Masks may be moved aside for short sips of water bottles. In such cases, six feet need not be maintained (see section below).
- All students and employees must receive training on proper mask-wearing. An archdiocesan-approved video will be shared for use with staff and/or students.
- Schools should maintain a regular supply of gloves for cleaning surfaces and treating students with medical injuries/illnesses.

ARRIVAL PROCEDURES – WELLNESS CHECKS

- Utilize as many exterior entryways as possible and assign classes to enter through only their assigned doorway. This will help limit cross-contamination between cohorts. Avoid congestion of any form around school entrances.
- All students and employees must wear facemasks on arrival.

- Schools must perform “Wellness Checks” of **all** students at school entrances as students enter the building. Wellness Checks consist of four individual “checks”:
 - **Temperature Checks:** A temperature check of each student must occur. Any student with a temperature over 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit must be sent home (see Infection Protocol section).
 - **Hand Washing or Sanitizer Check:** Students should either wash hands or receive hand sanitizer (from an adult or a stationary dispenser). Staff should ensure that such hand cleaning occurs.
 - **Mask Check:** A check of each student to ensure that masks are present and properly worn.
 - **Symptom Check:** Students should be asked the following questions every day: “Do you feel sick in any way? Do you have a cough or fever?” Any student who identifies as feeling sick should be sent home.
 - Schools may utilize dependable volunteers to assist with “Wellness Checks.” However, each entrance must contain at least one employee.
- Employees and volunteers are likewise responsible for taking their temperature every day. Any individual with a temperature over 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit must remain home (see Infection Protocol section).
- Parents and guardians should **not** enter the building to escort students to/from classrooms at arrival and dismissal.
- For schools that utilize busing, create distance between children on school buses (e.g., seat children one child per row, skip rows) when possible. Students should wear masks when traveling via bus. No more than 50 individuals should be on a bus at one time.

DISMISSAL

- As with arrival, schools should utilize as many exterior entryways as possible and assign classes to exit through only their assigned doorway.
- Parents should be instructed to remain in vehicles instead of congregating outside school exits. Schools should implement procedures to screen student pickups to ensure ongoing safety.

INTERNAL TRAFFIC FLOW

- Think through traffic flow throughout your building, with the intent of keeping cohorts physically apart. Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls, to ensure that staff and children remain at least six feet apart in lines and at other times (e.g., guides for creating “one-way routes” in hallways and stairwells). Depending upon the layout of the school building, consider assigning classes to use specific routes. Principals should carefully think through how students travel through high-traffic areas of the school building, such as the lunchroom, gym and bathrooms.
- Utilize as much of your school building as possible to achieve distancing. Close and (where possible) lock areas of the school building not being used.
- Student lockers should not be shared. If a school has extra lockers, student lockers should be spread out by cohort. Develop a schedule of locker access to mitigate breaking cohorts (e.g., cohorts should be accessing lockers at different times if lockers are located in the same hallway).
- Passing periods should be avoided. As indicated below, students should remain in their homeroom class instead of traveling to other departmentalized classes.

GENERAL FACILITY CLEANING, HYGIENE, & SHARED SCHOOL SUPPLIES

- Schools should follow the building cleaning and disinfection procedures outlined on page 35 of the ISBE/IDPH’s [Transition Joint Guidance](#).
- Sharing of school supplies such as pencils, markers and art supplies should be eliminated. All students should maintain their school supplies in individually labeled containers, cubbies, or desks. Shared equipment, such as one-to-one devices, should be used by as few children as possible and must be cleaned and disinfected before use by another child.

- All rooms should have access to either a sink and soap for frequent hand washing or hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol.
- Spray bottles of cleaning disinfectant should be readily available in each classroom and shared space for use throughout the day. Common surfaces in shared spaces (e.g., office, bathrooms, stair handrails, etc.) should be cleaned multiple times per day.
- Install physical barriers, such as sneeze guards and partitions in shared areas where it is difficult for individuals to remain at least six feet apart (e.g., main office desk).
- Food and drink should not be shared (including student snacks, lunches and birthday treats). Food and drink should be covered when not being consumed.
- Drinking fountains should only be used to fill reusable water bottles or to fill disposable cups provided by the school. Signs should be placed on water fountains indicating their sole use for refilling water bottles. If drinking fountains are used, they should be cleaned regularly.
- When practical, increase the circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, for example by opening windows and doors. Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk (e.g., risk of falling, triggering of asthma symptoms) to children using the facility.
- When possible, interior doors should be kept open to eliminate the need to use door handles. Be mindful of fire code and student safety when determining whether to keep internal doors open.
- Landline phones should only be used by a single, designated individual.
- For the 2020/21 school year, schools should discontinue the use of perfect attendance awards and assessments based on absenteeism.

CORE CLASSROOMS – REMAINING WITHIN COHORT

- All students and staff must continue the use of masks within cohorts.
- Students should remain separated by at least three to six feet at all times. Classroom space should be decluttered of non-essential items to maximize floor space.
 - For larger cohorts, consider alternative layouts and/or larger instructional areas so that three to six feet of distancing is possible.
 - If schools are unable to distance students by at least three feet, the principal should contact their Regional Director for further instructions.
 - In some cases, clear barriers can be used to allow students to sit closer than three feet. Contact your Regional Director if interested in this option.
- Homeroom teachers are considered part of their class' cohort. As such, they may move throughout the classroom, although they should attempt to maintain distance when possible.
- Eliminate shared spaces, such as reading nooks or instructional breakout tables, until the pandemic has passed.
- Arrange desks in rows facing the same direction and provide as much distance between desks as possible. If tables are used instead of desks, attempt to spread out students at tables as much as possible. Consider taping off tables to separate student workspace.
- Frequently clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces daily, including desks and door handles.
- Shared classroom spaces, such as science labs, should be cleaned before and after usage by each cohort.
- Students and employees should sanitize or wash hands with soap after returning to the classroom from any location.

EARLY EDUCATION CONSIDERATIONS

- Follow all guidelines that apply to core classrooms (see section above).
- Classroom supplies may be shared, given the unique educational practices of early education. However, supply sharing should be limited to essential use only and shared supplies should be cleaned frequently.
- Snacks: Separate students as much as possible (six feet or more). Students may remove masks, but masks should be placed in labeled paper bags (see masks section, above). Teachers should vigilantly monitor snacktime to minimize student movement and prevent food sharing. Used surfaces should be cleaned immediately after snacktime.
- Naptime: Assign cots and bedding to individual students and do not permit sharing. Students should be spread out as much as possible. Masks may only be removed if students are at least six feet apart. Schools should consider alternate spaces for naptime to maximize distance.

DEPARTMENTALIZED CLASSES AND MIXED INSTRUCTIONAL GROUPS

- For departmentalized schedules (e.g., junior high programs), students should remain in their classroom for all core subjects.
- All students and staff must continue the use of masks for all classes.
- Many schools mix students from various grades/classes, such as when utilizing leveled math classes or Title I instruction. Schools should consider avoiding such mixing when possible, leveraging technology to supplement instruction when possible. If such mixing is absolutely needed, efforts should be made to distance students from different cohorts.

SPECIAL AREA CLASSES

- Whenever possible, specials classes should be held in each cohort's homeroom classroom. This is particularly emphasized for classes such as art, music, foreign language, STEM and health. Specials teachers should attempt to come to the students, rather than students to the teacher.
- Specials teachers must maintain distancing from students in the cohort and wear a mask.
- If a shared classroom is used for specials classes, such as a computer lab or gym, the room must be thoroughly cleaned before the room can be used by another cohort.
- Specials teachers should minimize shared supplies amongst students (e.g., art supplies). Supplies should be cleaned between each use, particularly when used by different cohorts.
- Music classes should avoid singing or asking students to play woodwinds or brass instruments, including recorders.
- Consider moving classes outside, especially physical education classes, when possible. Avoid physical exertion when students are wearing masks.

BATHROOMS

- Bathroom capacity should be restricted to three students or fewer for a typical-sized communal bathroom. Students should wear masks and remain socially distant while in bathrooms.
- Schools should post signage on bathrooms indicating that no more than three students may be present at a time.
- Students and employees should be trained on bathroom capacity and procedures.
- Capacity in bathrooms should be restricted to allow for distancing. If a school has multiple bathrooms, classes should be assigned to use specific bathrooms instead of allowing students to choose.

MAIN OFFICE AND STAFF WORKROOM

- Install physical barriers, such as sneeze guards, in the main office counter or desk area.
- Spread out seating in the main office to ensure distancing. Eliminate seating when distancing is not possible.
- Use tape on the office floor to direct traffic flow and manage any lines, ensuring proper distancing is followed.
- Teachers, administrators and staff should wear masks and maintain distancing when in the main office or staff workroom. Be mindful of high traffic areas, such as copy machines.
- Clean common surfaces multiple times per day, such as counters, desks, doorknobs and copy machines.
- Conduct parent, student and teacher meetings virtually if possible. If face-to-face meetings are required, meet in large open areas (such as unused classrooms) instead of more confined spaces (such as the principal's office). Meeting participants should wear masks and maintain distancing.

LUNCH

- Students **must** be separated by at least six feet while eating lunch (due to the removal of masks).
- If six-foot distancing is possible, lunch should be held in classrooms to prevent cohorts from intermingling in a cafeteria.
- Lunches may be delivered to the classrooms to avoid having students pick up lunches in a cafeteria.
- If students pick up lunches in the cafeteria, only one cohort should pick up lunch at a time and distancing must be maintained.
- Students must wash their hands or apply hand sanitizer before and after eating.
- Surfaces used for lunch should be disinfected after eating prior to resuming classroom activities.
- The cafeteria or other suitable space (e.g., gymnasium, multi-purpose room, church) may be used if proper distancing is not possible in homeroom classes. The alternative space must be cleaned and sanitized between uses. No more than 50 students can utilize the space at one time. Only cohorts may sit near each other and all students, including those within cohorts, should distance as much as possible.
- Use disposable food service items (e.g., utensils, dishes). If disposable items are not feasible, ensure that all non-disposable food service items are handled with gloves and washed with dish soap and hot water or in a dishwasher. Individuals should wash their hands after removing their gloves or after directly handling used food service items.

RECESS

- Schools should discourage strong physical exertion during recess when possible (recognizing that children, particularly young children, do need physical recreation).
- Recess must be scheduled so that cohorts do not intermingle with other cohorts.
- Consider assigning recess equipment to specific cohorts. If recess equipment is being used by multiple cohorts, it must be cleaned between cohort usage.
 - For stationary recess equipment (e.g., slides, swings, etc.), consider devising a schedule whereby only a single cohort may use the equipment per day. By doing so, equipment need only be cleaned daily versus multiple times per day.
- When recess is held outside, masks may be removed and stored in paper bags if distancing is maintained (see section above).

WATER BOTTLES

- Students and employees may bring refillable water bottles from home. Water bottles should be kept closed when not in use.

- Students and employees may take short sips of water by moving their mask aside. Assuming the sip of water is short in duration (less than 10 seconds), individuals need not remove masks entirely or separate by six feet within their cohort (they should remain separated by at least three feet, as indicated in the cohort section above).
- If masks become wet due to drinking water, they should be immediately replaced.

SCHOOL STAFF – COHORTS

- Unless they are a homeroom teacher or instructional aide (and assigned to the cohort of their homeroom class), all other teachers and staff are considered outside a cohort. This includes such staff as special area teachers, administrators, front office staff, custodial personnel, etc. These individuals should practice distancing and wear masks when around others in the school building.
- School employees should not gather for lunch or other social functions. Faculty meetings, professional development and other teacher/staff gatherings should be conducted virtually whenever possible. If not, promote social distancing of at least six feet between people if events are held. Limit group size to the extent possible.
- Parent conferences and meetings should be conducted virtually when possible. If not possible, all parties should wear masks and practice distancing.
- More specifics about staffing concerns (e.g., medical issues, travel, etc.) are covered in separate sections of this document.

MEDICAL CARE FOR STUDENTS

- Schools may provide for the ongoing medical students, as per a normal year. This includes the administration of approved medicines and prescriptions and basic first aid with the exception of nebulizer treatments, which should not be administered at school.
- Staff should wear gloves when providing medical care that involves touching students.

VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERS

- Limit visitors to the school building as much as possible. Cancel or postpone events that involve a lot of visitors in the school (e.g., Special Persons' Day). When parents come to school, try to limit access to the main office only.
- Minimize the extended use of volunteers. If volunteers must be used for some activities, attempt to utilize regular volunteers who can serve for longer periods of time instead of several volunteers over shorter periods.
- Volunteers may be used in short intervals for arrival and dismissal but must follow school health and safety protocols.
- Keep accurate records of visitors and volunteers, including the individual's reason for visit, contact information and all locations visited, in case contact tracing is needed.

SCHOOL PICTURES – PICTURE DAY

Many schools take pictures of students for the purposes of the yearbook, sending pictures to families, etc., typically as part of an organized "Picture Day." In participating in this practice, schools should follow these guidelines:

- Cohorts should not be mingled for photos (cohorts should generally go to pictures together vs. individual students).
- Social distancing (more than six feet) with the photographer must be maintained.
- Masks may be removed by students during pictures. However, they should be placed in designated and individualized paper bags (as per our guidelines). Students must remain at least six feet distant from all others when masks are removed.

- Any surface this is touched by students during photos should be cleaned between every use.
- The photography area should be generally cleaned between cohorts.

STUDENT TRAVEL

- Discourage families from travel out of town.
- Students should remain home for two weeks after traveling to another country, or to states experiencing significant COVID-19 outbreaks (as determined by the IDPH).
- Students should inform schools immediately if they display COVID-19 symptoms during the two-week period. Schools should follow the Infection Protocol, outlined below, in such cases.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

- Ask international students to remain at home for at least two weeks following travel to their country of origin. Students should be allowed to complete work virtually while at home.
- Students should inform schools immediately if they display COVID-19 symptoms during the two-week period. Schools should follow the Infection Protocol, outlined below, in such cases.

SHARING SPACE WITH PARISH MINISTRIES AND OTHER EXTERNAL GROUPS

Parish ministries (such as Religious Education classes) and “external groups” (e.g., Boy Scouts) should be encouraged to use any vacant or unused instructional space if possible (including special area classrooms that are not being used). Such groups should restrict their access to required areas only. Used areas should be cleaned before and after usage by external groups.

SPECIAL EVENTS (MASSES, ASSEMBLIES, FIELD TRIPS, ETC.)

- Large group gatherings, such as assemblies or HSA meetings, should be avoided or conducted virtually. **Principals should conduct their back-to-school gathering virtually.**
- Pursue virtual group events, gatherings or meetings when possible, and promote social distancing of at least six feet between people if events are held. Limit group size to the extent possible.
- Off-site field trips are prohibited during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Principals should work with their pastor to determine whether school masses are practicable during the outbreak. Use the [Archdiocesan Liturgical and Sacramental Guidelines](#) to determine how/whether to conduct school masses. As outlined in these guidelines, masses should be streamed virtually or conducted with very small groups. If multiple cohorts are attending a mass, cohorts should be separated (in addition to outright social distancing). Masks should be worn during masses.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

Emergency drills should still be conducted, as per ISBE requirements.

EXTENDED CARE (I.E. BEFORE- AND AFTER-SCHOOL CARE)

- Schools should attempt to separate students from different cohorts (using extra rooms, if practical, with appropriate adult supervision).
- Students and staff must wear masks and maintain distancing. Extended care rooms should be arranged so that seating maximizes distancing. Schools should declutter extended care rooms to maximize floor space. Consider using larger multipurpose rooms or gyms for extended care to maximize distancing.
- Keep students outside as much as possible during extended care times.
- Avoid sharing any supplies or toys in extended care programs. Clean supplies and toys regularly.
- Extended care rooms must be cleaned before and after extended care use.

PARENT AND COMMUNITY GATHERINGS

- In general, schools should avoid conducting face-to-face parent/community gatherings (e.g., HSA meetings, school board meetings, social events, fundraisers, etc.). Such events should be canceled or conducted virtually.
- If a principal feels a physical gathering is necessary, they should seek approval from their regional director. If an event is approved, masks and social distancing will be required. Gatherings will be restricted to 50 or fewer individuals.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Principals should use their best judgment in determining whether extracurricular activities can be conducted safely in the school setting. In some cases, it may be best to cancel or postpone an extracurricular activity or ask that the group meet virtually. Extracurricular activities must follow the school health and safety requirements set forth above, which include social distancing, appropriate use of PPE and limiting the number of individuals in one space to 50 or fewer.

Athletics

- Summer athletics activities have been cancelled.
- Fall athletics competitions are cancelled. Elementary athletic leagues may postpone fall sports into the winter or spring, if preferred (although a decision on whether winter and spring sports may occur has not yet been made).
- Practices and conditioning for fall sports are still allowable under the following conditions:
 - Schools must adhere to the state's **Fall Sports Guidelines**, which designate which sports may participate in practices or conditioning and under what circumstances.
 - Schools must abide by all other Archdiocesan health/safety guidelines (e.g., masks, distancing, etc.).
 - Principals may opt to cancel fall sports practices and conditioning at their discretion.

Band

- Given the unlikelihood of large gatherings (such as band concerts) during the school year, schools may wish to consider canceling band.
- Large group practices (more than 15 students) should be conducted virtually.
- Small group practices (involving 15 or fewer students) may be conducted for **non-wind instruments only** (e.g., percussion, strings, etc.). Masks should be worn, and social distancing should be practiced by all. Shared musical instruments should be cleaned between every use.
- Practices for wind instruments (brass and woodwinds) should be conducted virtually only.
- Band concerts should be conducted virtually when practicable. However, if conducted, concerts may have no more than 50 individuals present (both in the band and audience) and all participants should maintain social distancing. Alternative formats, such as drive-in concerts, may be an option; seek guidance from your regional director for more information.

Choir, Drama/School Play, Christmas Programs

Such programs should be canceled or conducted virtually until approved otherwise by the OCS.

Other Extracurricular Activities (e.g., academic clubs, debate, chess, etc.)

- Consider conducting activities virtually.
- If face-to-face meetings are necessary, masks must be worn, and social distancing should be practiced by all.
- If the activity involves sharing a space (particularly with a homeroom class), the space should be cleaned before and after the activity's use.

INFECTION PROTOCOL – WHAT TO DO IF SOMEONE GETS SICK

PREVENTION

- As outlined in the Health and Safety section, temperature checks of all students and staff must be taken on arrival at school each morning. Any student, employee or volunteer who has a temperature above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit must be sent home and encouraged to contact a doctor.
- Masks must be worn at all times by individuals who are above the age of two.
- Be mindful of COVID-19 **symptoms**.
- All other steps outlined in the Health and Safety section should be followed to mitigate the risk of exposure and spread of COVID-19.

RESPONSE TO COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

Students:

- If a student is exhibiting a fever or two or more other COVID-19 **symptoms**, they should be immediately separated from others (ideally in a separate room with clear line-of-sight with a responsible employee). Students should never be left alone and must always be supervised while maintaining necessary precautions. Parents should be immediately contacted so the student may be taken home. Schools should utilize other emergency contacts if parents are not reached.
 - Any siblings of the student should likewise be sent home, regardless of whether they display COVID-19 symptoms. Siblings may return for the next day of school unless the student receives a positive COVID-19 diagnosis or the siblings develop symptoms.
- The student should see a doctor to assess symptoms and/or administer a COVID-19 test. Parents should be encouraged to read the **CDC guidance for caring for oneself and others**.
- For students that see a doctor and it is determined the illness is not COVID-19, either through a test or the doctor's diagnosis, the student may return to school when symptoms subside. **A doctor's note is required for illnesses that last more than three days.**
- If the student has symptoms but has tested negative on a COVID-19 test, they should remain at home until symptoms disappear. They must provide a doctor's note or the documented COVID-19 test results before being allowed to return to school.
- If a student tests positive for COVID-19 or does not seek medical attention, students must isolate and not return to school until they have met CDC's **criteria to discontinue home isolation**, which currently includes:
 - **24 hours with no fever (without medication) and**
 - **Other symptoms reduced substantially (by at least 75 percent) and**
 - **10 days since symptoms first appeared.**
- Students should be allowed to complete and submit work remotely during time away from school.
- If a student is positively diagnosed for COVID-19, follow the Isolation Protocol outlined below.

Employees:

- Principals and other employers should be familiar with the **Phase 1 Parish Employee Guidelines**, which do relate to Catholic school employees.
- If an employee is exhibiting COVID-19 **symptoms**, they should be immediately sent home. Employees should be encouraged to read the **CDC guidance for caring for oneself and others** and contact their doctor if symptoms become severe.
- **For employees who see a doctor for an illness determined not to be COVID-19, either through a test or the doctor's diagnosis, the employee may return to school when symptoms subside. A doctor's note is required for illnesses that last more than three days.**

- Employees that test positive for COVID-19, or that do not receive a negative diagnosis, must not return until they have met CDC's **criteria to discontinue home isolation**, which currently includes:
 - 24 hours with no fever (without medication) **and**
 - Other **symptoms** reduced substantially (by at least 75 percent) **and**
 - 10 days since symptoms first appeared.
- See the section below for more information about how to handle sick days, benefits, etc. when employees are quarantined.
- If an employee is positively diagnosed for COVID-19, follow the Isolation Protocol outlined below.

Volunteers:

- As described in the Health and Safety section, schools should strive to minimize volunteers, only using volunteers when absolutely necessary.
- If a volunteer is exhibiting COVID-19 **symptoms**, they should be immediately sent home. Volunteers should be encouraged to read the **CDC guidance for caring for oneself and others** and contact their doctor if symptoms become severe.
- For volunteers that see a doctor and it is determined the illness is not COVID-19, either through a test or the doctor's diagnosis, the volunteer may return to school when symptoms subside. The principal may request a doctor's note in order to allow a volunteer to return.
- Volunteers that test positive for COVID-19, or that do not receive a negative diagnosis, must not return until they have met CDC's **criteria to discontinue home isolation**, which currently includes:
 - 24 hours with no fever (without medication) **and**
 - Other **symptoms** reduced substantially (by at least 75 percent) **and**
 - 10 days since symptoms first appeared.
- If a **volunteer** is positively diagnosed for COVID-19, follow the Isolation Protocol outlined below.

ISOLATION PROTOCOL

If any student, employee or volunteer is diagnosed with COVID-19, **principals should immediately contact their regional director for more instructions**. While every situation is unique, the following steps will likely be implemented:

1. The student, employee or volunteer should **be asked to remain** at home and monitored for ongoing symptoms, as described above.
2. The principal should distribute the **COVID-19 Exposure Letter** to all parents and employees. Note that it is essential that the privacy of the impacted student or employee be protected. Principals should not disclose the specific identity of the infected individual to parents or any employees who do not need to know. For example, it would be appropriate to inform a homeroom teacher if a student in the teacher's class has been diagnosed with COVID-19. However, the principal should not inform other teachers in the school (or any parent).
3. The cohort of the infected individual should be quarantined and move to distance learning. Principals should distribute the **Cohort Quarantine Letter** to all families and employees within the cohort.
 - When cohorts are quarantined, the entire cohort (students and employees) are sent home. They are asked to remain home until they have met the CDC's **criteria to discontinue home isolation**, which currently includes:
 - Three days with no fever **and**
 - General **symptoms** improved by at least 75 percent **and**
 - 14 days since symptoms first appeared **or**
 - 14 days since exposure to the infected individual(s) for asymptomatic individuals.

- The principal will work with their regional director to decide if/when some or all of the cohort members will return to school.
 - Students should be allowed to complete and submit academic work while quarantined.
 - The principal should continue to closely monitor the health of all non-quarantined students and employees.
 - The cohort's classroom should be thoroughly cleaned. Windows in the area should be opened to maximize airflow.
4. In cases of widespread infections in a school (particularly multiple cohorts), an entire school may be quarantined. Principals should work with their regional director in determining if a school-wide quarantine is needed.

EMPLOYEE QUARANTINES: SICK DAYS

- As outlined in the Infection Protocol section, employees may be asked to quarantine if exhibiting symptoms or if there are multiple COVID-19 cases in the employee's assigned cohort.
- **If an employee is sick:** An employee must use his or her accrued sick time (and/or personal and vacation time) to be compensated while he or she is unable to work due to a COVID-19 diagnosis. If the employee remains sick and is unable to return to the workplace after three (3) days, he or she is eligible to apply for Family Medical Leave (FMLA). The archdiocese FMLA request form can be found on IZZY.
- **If an employee is not sick but is quarantined:** If an employee is able to work from home during the 14-day self-isolation period, they should be allowed to do so and will be paid their regular pay. If an employee is unable to work from home, the employee's time in self-isolation will be considered time away from work, and the employee should use available sick time (or vacation and/or personal time if they do not have enough sick time available to be paid). This same guidance applies to employees who are unable to work because they are caring for a family member who has been diagnosed with COVID-19.

COVID-19 EXPOSURE OF FAMILY MEMBERS

In cases where students, employees, or volunteers have exposure to individuals (such as an immediate family member) who are COVID-19-positive in their home, the following steps should be followed:

- The individual should be asked to remain at home for at least 14 days from last exposure to their family member, or in the event the employee continues contact with their family member, 14 days from the time when their family member has met the CDC's **criteria to discontinue home isolation**, which currently includes:
 - Three days with no fever **and**
 - Other **symptoms** improved **and**
 - 14 days since symptoms first appeared.
- Students should be allowed to complete and submit academic work while at home.
- As per the Staffing section, employee sick days, pay, and benefits should not be impacted if an employee is able to perform their duties from home.
- If an employee is unable to work from home while in quarantine or caring for a family member, the employee's time in quarantine will be considered time away from work.
- Schools should be particularly mindful of this approach for families that have multiple siblings in a school. For example, if a child or parent in the family is diagnosed with COVID-19, the entire family should remain at home until the conditions above have been met.

STAFFING GUIDELINES

This section provides additional information for supporting employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. The focus of this section is on healthy employees (those not displaying COVID-19 symptoms). Please note that the Infection Protocol section provides information on how to handle specific infections of COVID-19 with employees.

This section is also meant to supplement the section on Health and Safety, which describes specific protocols for setting up classroom space, managing students, organizing the main office and staff workroom, etc. Likewise, the Academics and Programming section discusses how teachers should adjust instruction and student care.

EMPLOYEE TRAINING AND FAQs

- Distribute the **School Employee FAQ** document to all employees prior to the start of classes.
- Employees are required to participate **in the School Employee Webinar (broadcast on Aug. 10)**. Employees may participate live or view the recorded version.
- Train all staff on COVID-19 response protocols, as outlined in this document. Principals and other supervisors should be available to answer questions and handle concerns about these protocols. If a principal is unable to answer an employee question, they can contact their regional director or human resource vicariate manager (HRVM).

EMPLOYEES IN AT-RISK GROUPS

- Employees should inform their principal that they are part of an at-risk group for COVID-19 or have an immediate family member who is part of an at-risk group.
- Principals should determine if the work can be performed remotely. Most school staff, such as teachers, are likely unable to perform core job tasks remotely.
- Employees in a vulnerable population who are unable to perform work should be asked to talk with their healthcare providers about steps they can take to protect their health when at school. Steps may include wearing additional PPE, working in an alternative physical space, etc.
 - After talking with their healthcare provider, employees should talk with their principal about their concerns and share possible steps.
 - The principal should evaluate the practicality of the request and consult with their human resource vicariate manager (HRVM).
 - If the employee's request cannot be reasonably accommodated, the principal should explore alternatives and attempt to appropriately address the employee's health concerns while fulfilling the necessary duties. Documentation from a healthcare provider requesting any possible temporary changes to the employee's work practices or environment may be required. Please note that such requests may or may not be met, depending upon the needs of the school.
 - If an employee and principal are unable to agree upon a plan, the principal should work with their HRVM on next steps.

EMPLOYEES WHO FEEL ANXIOUS ABOUT RETURNING TO WORK (BUT ARE NOT PART OF AN AT-RISK GROUP)

- Some employees may express anxiety about returning to work, even if they (or one of their immediate family members) are not part of an at-risk group (see above).
- If such situations are brought to the principal, the principal should demonstrate appropriate empathy. The principal may wish, at their discretion, to allow some/all of the employee's work to be performed remotely. However, many school roles (including most/all teachers) do require a face-to-face presence in the school.
- If a principal determines that an employee's work cannot be performed remotely, the employee should be asked to remain at work. If the employee persists with their concerns, the principal should contact their HRVM for additional instructions.

EMPLOYEE TRAVEL

- Employees should avoid work-related travel (e.g., professional conferences).
- Employees should inform their supervisor if they are planning to participate in personal travel out of town.
- Principals should contact their HRVM if they learn that an employee has traveled via air or ship. The employee may be asked to quarantine depending upon the unique circumstances.
- Employees and students that travel internationally or to states with significant COVID-19 outbreaks (as determined by the CDC) must remain home for at least two weeks following their arrival home.

ACADEMICS AND PROGRAMMING

In addition to implementing health and safety protocols, schools should consider what adaptations will be necessary for instruction at the start of the year. This section is meant to guide the **Academic Reopening Team** on specific guidelines for organizing instruction, managing assessments, considering e-learning options, providing for social-emotional care, supporting Catholic identity and other important areas.

CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION DESCRIPTION:

DO FIRST (To be completed by August 1)	
Technology and E-Learning Preparations	<p>Identify no more than two platform(s) that will be used as a Learning Management System (LMS) for grade bands pk–2 and 3–8.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommended options are Schoology, Otus, Seesaw, Google Classroom, or Microsoft Teams (Keep in mind your ELL population in selecting an LMS). <p>Identify a single video conferencing tool that should be used in remote learning for all grades (pk–8).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples include Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, GoToMeeting, etc. <p>Determine 1–1 student and teacher device plan.</p> <p>Identify tool for cloud-based student/staff document storage and email.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSuite for Education or Microsoft 365 for Education. • Create student accounts for all students. <p>Determine technology training plan for staff, students and parents.</p>
Socio-Emotional Learning	<p>Connect social and emotional learning (SEL) to pacing guides/curriculum maps.</p> <p>Review and update school policies that teach and socialize students to new expectations and address safety within a supportive learning environment.</p> <p>School Discipline Considerations</p> <p>Connect with each teacher and other school personnel to check-in and discuss their hopes and concerns for the next year. Preview some of the safety guidelines.</p> <p>Update your school crisis plan to include preparing for and responding to a pandemic.</p> <p>Preparing for a Pandemic for School Crisis Teams Resource</p>

Catholic Identity	<p>Partner with the pastor, DRE, and vicariate LFC to complete sacramental reception for First Communion and Confirmation candidates held over from Spring 2020 if applicable.</p> <p>Review your calendar with the pastor/chaplain and discern how to celebrate school prayer events in-person or remotely.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the school's technological capabilities in the planning of prayer. For example, is there a way to live stream school-wide mass, prayer, etc. so students can participate while remaining in their classroom space? • Consider alternative experiences for school-wide prayer if large group Eucharistic celebrations or gatherings are not possible. • Think about the sacramental and cultural events for the entire school year. Work with school and parish staff to plan important events in advance, and outline plans for community celebrations if they must be held virtually or at a later time.
Curriculum Planning	<p>Review your own local existing pacing guides/curriculum maps at a minimum for English language arts, math and religion in pk through eighth grade.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a curriculum map template and exemplars to teachers who need to create pacing guide/curriculum maps. • Identify curriculum sources that include SEL components and a schedule for when they will be introduced/implemented.
Use of Assessments	<p>Develop and oversee the creation of an assessment plan that emphasizes the use of a diagnostic test in the first month of school to identify student learning needs.</p> <p>Review student handbooks and other policy documents to ensure that grading practices are flexible and are student-centered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples such as the use of zeros, hard deadlines, and excessive penalties for late submissions should be removed and replaced with proactive policies.
Re-Entry Orientation	<p>Prepare an approach to educate students and families on health and safety protocols.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include protocols on hygiene, new entry/exit plans, etc. • Discuss the rationale and purpose behind PPE, masks and limiting contact between cohorts of students. • Identify acceptable communication practices and discuss alternative methods for engaging with other students (e.g. replacing handshakes, etc.).
English Language Learners	<p>All high-level communication needs to be translated to meet the needs of the school community.</p> <p>For more information on ELL resources</p>
Inclusive Education	<p>Designate one or two staff members to serve as the liaison/s for students with special needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review all student support plans to determine what health and safety modifications need to be implemented. <p>For more information on inclusive education resources</p>
Early Childhood	<p>For more information on early childhood resources</p>

PRIOR TO OPENING (To be completed between 8/1 and Opening Day)	
Technology and E-Learning Preparations	<p>Update and submit CIPA Compliance documentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate parents and students on cybersecurity and digital citizenship expectations using Common Sense Schools guidance. • Ensure the school's firewall is updated and activated. • Review the school's safety policies/acceptable Use Policies. <p>Plan for 1–1 Device Distribution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Device Loan Agreement • Device Support and Repair • Device Management • Home Filtering Options • Device ID's <p>Plan for professional development on blended learning strategies, LMS integration, instruction with video, etc.</p>
Socio-Emotional Learning	<p>Intentionally build structures that promote supportive adult-student relationships and a sense of belonging.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For example: assign every student and family at least one caring adult at the school who checks in regularly with them and to whom they can reach out if needed. <p>Plan continuous check-ins with staff to monitor the impact of safety practices and burn-out.</p>
Catholic Identity	<p>Collaborate with the pastor/chaplain and DRE to articulate practical, ongoing sacramental preparation that benefits students and their families for first reconciliation, Eucharist, and confirmation in a remote learning environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dynamic Catholic offers free access to 84 children's videos and supplemental material for remote sacrament preparation: First Reconciliation and Eucharist Confirmation • Consider creating a video resource in which the pastor, DRE, and principal give a walk-through about how sacramental preparation and celebration will take place in the church moving forward through the pandemic.
Curriculum Planning	<p>Ensure that pacing guides/curriculum maps are available for teachers for both uses of in-person and remote learning at a minimum in English language arts, math and religion for at least the first term.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate alignment (vertical/horizontal) between teachers to promote an understanding of instruction and student learning during closure. (protocol/webinar of meeting structure)
Use of Assessments	<p>Discuss the schedule and implementation of an initial diagnostic assessment like i-Ready.</p> <p>Share changes to the student handbook and other policy documents regarding grading and student behavior. Grading policies should ensure grades reflect progress on standards rather than behavior, responsibility, etc.</p>

Re-Entry Orientation	<p>Practice and prepare teachers for guidance regarding the facility, logistics and health on the first day teachers return.</p> <p>Provide teachers time to build individual re-entry plans that include the specific teaching of procedures, practices that are impacted by COVID-19 in their first days of school lesson plans.</p>
Inclusive Education	<p>Ensure that students with special needs receive appropriate modifications and accommodations as identified in student support plans and in accordance with current health and safety guidelines.</p> <p>For more information on inclusive education resources</p>
English Language Learners	<p>All high-level communication needs to be translated to meet the needs of the school community.</p> <p>For more information on ELL resources</p>
Early Childhood	<p>Emotional Well-Being Toolkit COVID-19 Resources for Families with Young Children For more information on early childhood resources</p>
OPEN AND OPERATING (Throughout the year)	
Technology and E-Learning Preparations	<p>Review building infrastructure and connectivity: consider the amount of bandwidth and access points in buildings for additional devices.</p> <p>Plan for remote learning: specifically, class schedules and expectations, additional technology tools that teachers may need.</p>
Socio-Emotional Learning	<p>Establish daily classroom meeting routines which include greeting, prayer, sharing, and SEL activities. Include prayer or other announcements over the school PA system at the beginning and end of the day to foster a school-wide community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These practices should be incorporated into school-wide remote learning plans. <p>Morning Meeting Planning Template Sample digital check-in using Google forms</p> <p>Incorporate SEL training for teachers into professional development offerings.</p>
Catholic Identity	<p>Include the creation of a Catholic, online presence as part of the school's remote learning plans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the school's social media sites are well organized and centered on Catholic values in regular school postings during remote learning. • Coach teachers about how to effectively use Catholic imagery, prayers, language, and multi-media to create an e-learning homepage. • Consider designing a unique virtual space dedicated to student sharing about faith and Catholic values in remote learning. <p>Encourage teachers to hang a crucifix or have other Catholic images visible in pictures and/or recordings of remote lessons. Support teachers in creating a prayer corner or prayer wall for students to see and utilize as part of remote learning lessons.</p>
Curriculum Planning	<p>Continue to develop pacing guides/curriculum maps for the entire year at a minimum for English language arts, math and religion.</p>

Use of Assessments	Continue to review data as a whole school from local assessments that include i-Ready and other formative tools to assist in identifying student progress. Limit the specific amount or weighting of items like homework and classwork that do not assess student understanding of material or standards and only serve as unrelated work and practice of non-essential content.
Re-Entry Orientation	Practice as needed to ensure proper handwashing, sanitizing, movement around the building and other protocols. Discuss among teachers the proper reactions for non-compliance with established protocols. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasize that while said behavior is not acceptable, students should be provided opportunities to practice, model and correct behavior without punitive consequences.
Inclusive Education	Continue to update Student Support Plans for students with disabilities to include both in-person and remote learning accommodations and modifications. For more information on inclusive education resources
English Language Learners	Continue to ensure that all high-level communication is translated to meet the needs of the school community. Consider best practice strategies for remote learning for ELL students. Identify specific activities, texts and engagement strategies. For more information on ELL resources
Early Childhood Resources	For more information on early childhood resources

TUITION GUIDELINES

GENERAL PRINCIPLE

Generally speaking, tuition collection should continue as normal during the school year. There are generally two reasons why families may convey concerns about paying tuition. These are an **inability to pay** due to legitimate financial hardship, and an **unwillingness to pay** due to COVID-19 adaptations, quarantines (at the cohort or school level) or a family choice to remain at home. Both scenarios are outlined below.

GUIDELINES FOR FAMILIES UNABLE TO PAY DUE TO FINANCIAL HARDSHIP

You should first verify the legitimacy of the need, if possible, through an employment document (e.g., layoff letter). You should use your good judgment in determining the validity of the need. If you feel that the need is sincere, take the following steps as appropriate:

If the hardship is temporary:

- Defer payment of some/all tuition for the duration of the closure/hardship. A postponement of payments is possible through FACTS if FACTS is notified within 2–3 business days of a scheduled payment. For more information, **see these guidelines from FACTS** or contact FACTS directly. We recommend this in any instances requiring ETA so that we have time to determine the impact of the COVID-19 crisis.

If the hardship is longer-term:

- If your school maintains a funded scholarship program, provide support to the family through local scholarship funds.
- If the school does not have access to local scholarship funds, apply for relief through the Emergency Tuition Assistance Fund (ETA) (which now also includes funds from the AoC Coronavirus Emergency Fund). Please be aware that our funds are limited, and applications are many, so we may not be able to fulfill all requests.

Note that the process for COVID-19 relief comes from both the school and the family. You should provide the following link to any family requesting COVID-19 relief: [COVID-19 Emergency Tuition Assistance Request Form](#). The school should then submit an [ETA application](#) for any family requesting aid. For more information on the application process, contact Clare Sullivan, director of scholarships, at csullivan@archchicago.org.

NOTE: DO NOT discount tuition for any family before going through the ETA process. While this differs from our traditional tuition discounting guidance, our schools and the archdiocese are facing significant financial pressures due to COVID-19 impact. The current challenges require that we manage this situation together, so we ask that all family needs other than deferment route through the ETA scholarship process.

We should work hard to ensure that no family is forced to leave our schools due to legitimate financial hardship created by the coronavirus infection.

GUIDELINES FOR FAMILIES WHO ARE UNWILLING TO PAY TUITION

Some families may express an unwillingness to pay tuition due to COVID-19 adaptations, quarantines or families that have chosen to remain at home.

Principals should respond to concerns on a case-by-case basis (versus sending out a mass communication to all parents). Tuition discounts or rebates are not recommended. Principals and/or other staff (e.g., pastors, business managers) should talk individually to each family. In this discussion, they can utilize some/all of the following talking points:

- Impress upon the family that productive learning is still taking place.
- Remind the family that the archdiocese has committed to continue paying teachers and staff members during the closure. As such, these funds are still needed.
- Remind them that they signed a tuition contract and we feel that this contract is still being fulfilled by the school.
- Remind them that attendance in grades k–8 is required by the state. If they withdraw from the school or are asked to leave due to non-payment of tuition, they would need to enroll in a local public school for the remainder of the school year. This point does not apply to preschool.

OTHER FEES:

Schools typically collect fees for a variety of reasons (e.g., athletics, technology, etc.). If a fee has been collected for an activity that has been directly impacted by COVID-19 adaptations the school may consider a refund, discount or credit. For example, if schools collected a fee for the school play, but the play will not take place, schools should likely return the fee.

Schools should not refund, discount or credit fees that were not significantly impacted by COVID-19 adaptations. For example, many schools collect a technology fee; as most students are presumably engaged in technology usage during e-learning, this fee should still be in effect.

As fee structures vary school-by-school, feel free to contact your RD or DVO/DTO if you have any questions.