



Aug. 10, 2020

## St. Raphael School and Nursery School Reopening Plan for 2020-21

Dear St. Raphael Families,

We cannot wait to welcome our students back this school year! We will be reopening our community the same way we always have, with "Faith and Reason." We have been working throughout the summer to plan how we will operate with an on-campus program and a virtual option. The school has consulted medical professionals to consider and incorporate recommended safety measures from the CDC, ADW Catholic Schools Office, Maryland State Department of Health, and the Office of Childcare requirements.

We have been brainstorming ideas to keep our staff and students safe. The school has purchased a supply of face shields, masks, and dividers for every learning environment. We are adjusting our programs and lesson plans to maintain social distancing and minimize stress. St. Raphael School and Nursery School are creating a well-thought-out plan, with health and well-being as our top priorities. The accommodations are built into this year's plan, not only for the safety of our students and staff who would be on campus but also for our family members at home. We are extremely grateful to everyone in our community who has contributed to this work and to those who are committed to being together again, whether virtually or in person. Our theme this year is "Believe," and I do believe that together as a family, we can reinforce our care for one another, enjoy our friends again, and strengthen our St. Raphael community. We are St. Raphael!

What?

St. Raphael School will reopen with a blended learning model. Families that opt for their children to return to campus will be attending classes Monday through Thursday; Friday will be independent learning from home. St. Raphael Nursery School will operate in person Monday through Friday. Families that choose distance learning for their children will be able to access our online learning program from home. In many cases, our distant learners will be able to join the in-person group virtually. Flexibility is key to our plan's success so that families and staff can seamlessly move to distance learning if required due to an individual's health or local health conditions. Our plan incorporates recommendations from the CDC and the Maryland Department of Health to mitigate staff or student risking exposure to covid-19.

Why?

St Raphael is committed to our mission of providing our children with an engaging and inspiring academic program infused with strong Christian morals and virtues. We work to ensure our Catholic identity permeates each subject and daily activity in a warm and welcoming classroom environment or reaches into our students' homes through distance learning. In faith and with guided opportunities to reason, we will continue to challenge our students to perform acts of service from their homes and from our classrooms. Together we embrace the love of God and neighbor; we will work to bring our faith to life in prayer, liturgical experiences, community celebrations, and in our service to others. Our Catholic identity is integral to our blended learning model, especially in these challenging times. The families of St. Raphael are well informed and take covid-19 health concerns seriously. We know our community is willing to make the necessary sacrifices to reduce the risk to our students and staff. We





are all in this together, quarantining together, social distancing together. Angels, we spread our wings to keep our fellow angels safe!

How?

**Focusing on health and safety as a priority** — All students and staff will wear face coverings in the building. Students will be asked to bring three (3) face coverings from home. They will wear face coverings when indoors throughout the day and outside when they are unable to maintain 6-foot distance. Classroom layouts are being redesigned to meet CDC and local health department guidelines. Maintenance staff will ensure that bathrooms, classrooms, and shared spaces will be cleaned regularly and disinfected daily and as needed. Special attention will be given to high-touch areas. St. Raphael Parish is limiting the use of the building to instruction. Teachers are encouraged to keep classroom windows cracked to promote better air circulation. Students in SRNS through 8th grade will be given individual school supplies so as not to share communal materials. Parents, visitors, and volunteers will have limited access to the building, and electronic communication will be encouraged.

**Daily health and symptom monitoring** — All students and staff will be required to complete a daily health assessment before entering the campus buildings. This will include a temperature check confirming that temperature is below 100.4 as well as appropriate responses to the health screening form. If these conditions are not met, the employee or student will not be admitted to the school building and will return home.

**Being proactive if covid-19 is suspected** — If a student or staff member becomes ill while at school and if they meet the criteria for “covid-19-like illness” based on the Montgomery County Health Department Decision Aid (updated July 23, 2020), the individual will be screened by the school nurse and placed in a designated isolation area.

Parents/guardians will be required to pick up an ill student within a designated timeframe or have the student picked up by another responsible adult listed on their emergency health and transportation forms. Parent/guardian will be instructed to call the child’s healthcare provider for further evaluation and possible testing.

St. Raphael will work with the Montgomery County Health Department to determine close contacts of anyone who tests positive for covid-19 or who has probable covid-19. Please be aware that quarantine of close contacts may be required, and students may need to switch to distance learning if necessary.

Students and staff who present with signs of an illness but do not present with symptoms of a probable covid-19 illness (based on the Montgomery County Health Department Decision Aid updated on July 23, 2020) will be sent home and instructed to call their healthcare provider for further guidance.

Fever is a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher. *Parents should never administer fever-reducing medication prior to sending a child to school.*

**Using a cohort model** — On-site students will be placed in class cohorts not to exceed 13 students. Cohorts will remain together throughout the day, and teachers will rotate to the cohorts. Our master schedule has been adjusted to minimize students in hallways and shared spaces. We have expanded our use of parish space in the





building to provide us the flexibility we need to implement this plan.

**Distance learning** — A blended instruction model will be used for distance learning. Students will receive their books, supplies, and iPads (grades 6-8) before the start of school. Students will have the opportunity to watch live instruction (via Cisco WebEx/Zoom streamed by cameras in most of our classrooms) and use digital and paper resources.

**Longer academic blocks and fewer subjects** — Core academic subjects — reading, math, science, social studies, and religion — will be given a more concentrated focus. To minimize student risk, music and library will not be offered initially. We will use those classrooms to support our cohort model, and impacted staff will shift roles.

**Outdoor learning breaks and lunch** — Teachers will be encouraged to use outdoor space as often as possible.

**Hot lunch** — Delphi's will continue to be our hot-lunch provider. Meals will be individually packaged and delivered directly to the cohort classrooms. Lunch staff will supervise lunch periods in the classrooms or outside.

**Lunch Bunch** — Lunch Bunch will no longer be served to students in large groups. Preschool students staying through lunch will eat in their classrooms with their small group and play on the playground with the same small group.

**Water bottles** — All water fountains in the school will be turned off. Students are to bring water bottles that are filled and clearly labeled from home. Water coolers will be available in the classrooms, and use will be supervised.

**Eighth-grade snacks** — The eighth-grade snack fundraiser will be discontinued until further notice.

**SRS AM drop-off** — Parents may begin arriving at school at 7:30 a.m., and all students will be dropped off at the entrance to the Duffy Center (where students normally exit in the afternoon for carpool pickup). School staff will assist to keep drop-off moving and direct students to their designated entrances. Details will follow.

**SRS PM pickup** — Parents may start arriving at 2:30 p.m. and lining up starting at the rectory. Student dismissal will begin at 2:45 p.m., and the school intercom system will be used to announce parents' arrival.

**SRNS AM drop-off and PM pickup** — Parents (wearing a mask) may start arriving at 9 a.m. to escort students to and from designated classroom exterior doors. Details will follow. Parents will be given the teacher name with corresponding classroom number in their student welcome letter mailed before the start of school.

**Late arrival SRS and SRNS** — Students unable to arrive at school by 10 a.m. are asked to plan on distance learning that day.

**Out-of-school appointments** — Doctor and dental appointments should be made after school or on Fridays. Students who must schedule appointments outside these times should plan on distance learning that day.

**Sanitizing entry and exit areas** — Maintenance will clean restrooms and high-touch areas throughout the school.





Before and aftercare — This program will be limited to those with essential needs, and we will work with families on an individual basis.

After-school activities — All extracurricular activities will be on hold as we open school in the fall. We will revisit this decision as the year goes on.

Continuous monitoring of CDC, Archdiocese of Washington, and Maryland's Office of Childcare — the administration and maintenance team will meet regularly to ensure St. Raphael is meeting or exceeding the most updated guidelines.

Catholic identity — Prayer will punctuate each academic class as well as before and after lunch. Morning Prayer, which opens the school, will be live-streamed into the classroom over the intercom by the principal every day. Each cohort will end its day with prayer. We are working with our pastor to create periodic opportunities for students to participate in a class Mass as well as view live-streamed daily Masses. St. Raphael is committed to continuing the outreach and service opportunities we provide our students. These outreach opportunities will be evaluated for safety, and procedures will be adjusted.

Health Room — This area will be located in the parish library. This space allows for appropriate social distancing and quarantine if needed. Students who are ill should be picked up at the Parish Library outside entrance to avoid further contagion in the school building.

Communication — We are committed to frequent and regular communication enabling us to closely monitor the evolving situation and evaluate how the pandemic development impacts school operations.

When?

We will adjust the first week of school schedule to accommodate pandemic awareness training for our in-class learners. Each family will be assigned a day to bring the child/children to school for training. For our distance learners, parents will be asked to sign up for a time to pick up all of their school materials.

School covid-19 training and distance-learning material distribution will take place the week of Aug. 31. A more detailed schedule will be provided once we finalize the results of our last parent survey.

Sincerely,

Teri Dwyer  
Principal

