



**Saint Edmond Catholic School**

**REOPENING WITH TRUST:  
RETURN TO LEARN PLAN**

**2020 - 2021**

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## Our Catholic Mission and Purpose

St. Edmond Catholic School provides a top-quality education for families. Our mission is to assist parents in the education and holistic formation - body, mind, and soul - of their children. We strive to prepare our students to live fully in Christ. We look forward to continuing to provide this valuable education to our St. Edmond families beginning August 24, 2020.

The information in this plan will help guide us as we reopen St. Edmond this fall. This plan will remain fluid and dynamic as we receive continual guidance from the State of Iowa, Webster County Public Health, and the Diocese of Sioux City. On Thursday, July 30, Governor Reynolds announced updated protocols for the determination of school closures due to COVID-19. We will be updating our plan in accordance to this new guidance.

As we proceed to walk with students and their families throughout this school year, we want parents to know the foundations of our decision-making:

- 1.** We will stay true to our mission by faithfully providing the very best Catholic education we have to offer to our families, whether onsite, hybrid, or at a distance.
- 2.** Since every human life is sacred and worthy of love, the safety and well-being of our students, families, and employees are of primary concern. We will do what we must to provide a safe and healthy school environment.
- 3.** We will responsibly follow the Covid-19 guidelines from the CDC, Diocese of Sioux City, State of Iowa Governor's Office, Department of Education, Girls and Boys Athletic Unions, and the State and Local Health Agencies.
- 4.** We will be flexible and prudently responsive to the ever changing situation.

We take seriously the trust families have placed in St. Edmond to care for and serve the wellbeing and education of their children. Our partnership between educators, parents (and caregivers), and students is only as helpful as it is trustworthy. To strengthen this trust, we have spent the past ten weeks canvassing teachers, hosting feedback sessions for parents, analyzing family survey results and holding Return to Learn planning sessions. In addition, we have sought to be well-informed of the ever-developing state and diocesan school-reopening guidelines.

While we thank our families for their contributions to the process and their patience; and we also regret the uncertainty families have experienced while awaiting our reopening plan. Based on our family feedback we have included three scenarios in our plan. Most families want their children to start the school safely onsite at St. Edmond. This is our first scenario and it is available to all families. Our second scenario is our Distance Learning Option. This is for families who find it best for their children to learn from home for the first semester. Our third scenario of Mandated Distance Learning will only come into effect if our state or local public health authorities advise us to temporarily discontinue onsite learning.

# Learning Opportunities for St. Edmond Families

## ONSITE LEARNING

In order to best serve our families and students, we plan to be onsite August 24th. Many measures have been put into place to provide the safest environment for our students and staff. The specific mitigations that have been implemented are explained in greater detail further within this document.

## DISTANCE LEARNING - Family Choice

The St. Edmond Distance Learning option is a distance learning option for students who are unable to return onsite. We have taken every step to ensure the safety of our students and value onsite learning as more instrumental to the holistic development of our students; however, we understand that some families may not feel comfortable returning to school. Reasons may include protecting individuals in at-risk groups for COVID-19, or others may have general anxiety about returning. As such, a distance learning option will be available to any family that does not wish to return. Below are the guidelines for the distance learning option:

- We will provide all students equal access to a faith-filled and rigorous Catholic Education.
- Each participant in distance learning will be provided with a school-issued device.
- Daily attendance will be taken for students in ALL grades.
- Students will continue to be assessed and receive grades for their work.
- The family will commit to distance learning for the fall semester. This will not be fluid. However, if a family chooses to exit onsite learning once school has started, they may transfer to the distance option at any time. Families will be able to re-evaluate their learning option for second semester.
- Teachers will use the same Google learning platform for all their students whether they are onsite or at home. We will be providing an interactive learning platform for distance learners to actively engage with their peers and teachers in distance learning.
- Distance learning will follow appropriate screen time guidelines to ensure that our students are safely using technology to support their learning, not as the only way to be learning. Therefore, we will be using a combination of technology and traditional methods to ensure the best education is provided to our students.
- Students who are engaged in the distance learning option will be able to participate in activities. However, attendance and grading policies will remain in place for eligibility just as they are for onsite learning.
- The family will remain enrolled and will continue paying tuition.

If families would like to commit to this option for their child(ren)'s learning, there will be a form available on the St. Edmond website. If you need one mailed to you, please contact the school.

## DISTANCE LEARNING - Mandated

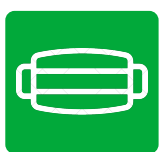
If state or local health officials were to mandate a closure, ALL students would move to distance learning with the same guidelines as listed in our Distance Learning Family Choice description. Additional information on this learning platform will be developed with the collaboration with our teachers and shared upon completion.

**CHANGE IN TERMINOLOGY:** *In previous communication with our families, such as the letter sent July 24, we have used the term "hybrid learning" to define our distance learning family choice option. We have decided not to use the term "hybrid" to describe this option; however, the option still remains. Now it is referred to as "Distance Learning Family Choice". Our use of the term "hybrid" now will be understood the way Governor Reynold's used the term in her press conference on July 30th. We understand the term hybrid to refer to the plan when the government limits the number of persons in the school building. Our hybrid plan is forthcoming.*

# Elements of Onsite Learning

Amid the uncertainties of the pandemic, we have intentionally strived to deepen trust among our community by thoroughly discerning and resolutely committing to policies and protocols that will allow us safely to continue forming and educating our students in-person and on the site of St. Edmond and our new Holy Trinity Church. The following safety elements will be faithfully implemented. Although they are something new and require something extra of ourselves, we do not view them as inconveniences but as acts of love for our students, families, and employees.

## Health and Safety



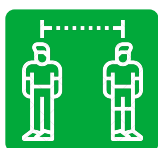
### Face Coverings:

Face coverings will be required to be worn during most, but not all, of the school day by everyone in the building. In order to make our St. Edmond Catholic educational experience accessible to as many families as reasonably possible we need to keep our employees and their families safe and healthy. We also recognize a number of our students, or their families, have their own health concerns that could prevent them from participating in our school day. Therefore, we are committed to taking reasonable measures to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission or infection at St. Edmond.

At this moment in the pandemic, we are requiring face coverings, whether a face shield, neck gaiter, or mask, to be worn in order to help maintain the health and wellbeing of our employees, students, and families. There will be regularly scheduled breaks from wearing face coverings during the school day. These breaks will occur when the students and employees are adequately physically distanced, at lunch, recess, outside, or physical education. We recognize that parents or caregivers may feel very concerned for the health and wellbeing of their child(ren) wearing a face covering. If this is or becomes the case, please contact the school principal with this concern.

Additional information regarding face coverings:

- Each family will provide a face covering for their child. This will help to ensure for level of protection and fit for each individual child.
- We encourage allowing your child to be involved in the selection process of their face covering. We ask that the design is appropriate and follows St. Edmond handbook dress code guidelines. No inappropriate designs.
- We also suggest that families purchase multiple face coverings for their child; face coverings will need to be laundered daily.
- The school will be able to provide masks for students if they happen to forget their own.



## Physical Distancing:

Physical guides, such as markings on floors or sidewalks and signage on walls, will ensure that staff and children remain 6 feet apart in lines and at other times during the school day.

- **Arrival/Departure:** Each group has been assigned a door for entering and exiting the building.
  - Preschool and TK - Door #8 (east playground door)
  - Kindergarten, First, Second - Door #6 (administrative office door)
  - Third, Fourth, Fifth - Door #7 (north stairwell door - elementary)
  - Middle School (6 - 8) - Door #1 (Auditorium entrance)
  - High School (9 - 12) - Door #15 (science hallway) and Door #22 (west door)
  - *\*\*Specific arrival times and procedures will be published at a later date.\*\**
- **Classroom Distancing & Guidelines:**
  - Desks and tables will be spaced 6 feet apart.
  - Students will be physically distanced, but they will still be able to engage in safe, social behaviors that will aid in their development and learning.
  - As adults are more susceptible than children, teachers should be more cognizant of distancing from students. In cases where teacher distancing is difficult, face coverings must be worn.
- **Cohorts:** St. Edmond will be providing classroom sizes and classroom spaces that allow for proper social distancing. Students and staff are grouped by homerooms and these groups will be kept together as much as possible with the same staff throughout the day (all day for elementary students, and as much as possible for middle and high school students). Elementary specials will be held in the classroom. PE will remain in the gym or outside. Students will not dress out for PE class because locker rooms will not be utilized. Middle and high school classes will utilize a consistent and physical-distance seating chart in each room to mitigate the spread of the virus.
- **Teachers & Staff:** Given what is known about transmission dynamics, adults and adult staff within schools should attempt to maintain a distance of 6 feet from other persons as much as possible, particularly around other adult staff. For all settings, physical distancing by and among adults is strongly recommended, and large meetings should take place virtually if possible, per American Academy of Pediatrics.
- **Large Group Gatherings:** Our Catholic schools pride themselves on family connections and often hold large gatherings for prayer services, family nights, etc. St. Edmond will refrain from these types of activities during this school year until we can once again gather safely in large groups without risk of COVID-19 spread.



## Health and Safety Procedures

Since every human life is sacred and worthy of love, the safety and well-being of our students, families, and employees are of primary concern. We will do what we must to provide a safe and healthy school environment.

- **Infection Protocols:** It is vitally important that everyone does their part and stays home if they are feeling sick or have any symptoms associated with COVID-19. We will follow the CDC guidelines and protocols set forth by the state and diocese.
- **Facility Cleaning:** We will follow an aggressive cleaning schedule and disinfectant procedures. We are using a top grade disinfectant cleaner, pure&clean™, that is highly rated for human safety. The high touch surfaces and bathrooms are scheduled to be cleaned and disinfected multiple times a day. (<https://pureandclean.us/about/>)
- **Frequent hand washing and hand sanitizing:** All students and staff must practice frequent hand washing, including upon arrival and before dismissal. Other hand washing practices will be encouraged throughout the day. Preschool through fifth grade have sinks in classrooms where they can use soap and water to wash their hands frequently. If hand washing is not available, hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol content can be used. Hand sanitizer stations have been installed outside every middle and high school classroom.
- **Temperature Checks:** Parents should take their child's temperature before coming to school. We are requiring our faculty and staff to take their own temperature. Anyone with a temperature of 100.3 degrees or higher must stay home.
- **Training:** All school staff will complete the AEA Learning Health and Safety Modules to help them understand and prepare for the increased safety measures being implemented.
- **Separate Sick Room:** In addition to the nurse's office, St. Edmond will also be providing a separate sick room for students who may be exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms. The nurse's office will be used for students who require regular visits to the nurse due to existing health conditions unrelated to COVID-19.
- **Confirmed Case of COVID-19:**
  - We will Immediately contact Webster County Public Health Department for next steps.
  - We will Inform the Catholic Schools Office and Superintendent of Schools.
  - We will follow their guidance for notification, contact tracing, cleaning, and closure.
  - Students quarantined due to a confirmed positive case of COVID - 19 or a close contact exposure will transfer to distance learning for the duration of their required absence.
- **Returning to Work or School After Exposure:**
  - Students and staff should follow the guidance provided by public health for returning to school after exposure.\*\*
  - If questions remain, contact Webster County Public Health for guidance and consult *CDC Guidelines for Returning* to determine when it is safe to return to school after showing symptoms of COVID-19, testing positive, or coming in close contact\* with someone who tested positive. (\*Close contact is defined as less than 6 feet for more than 15 minutes.)
  - *\*\*As of the Governor's press release on July 30, more guidelines and protocols have been issued by the Iowa Department of Education. This guidance will be added to the plan in the near future.*

## Additional Adaptations



### Communication:

We will utilize email as our primary mode of communication regarding any updates. Families may sign-up to receive email updates through the school by accessing the Parent Account on Infinite Campus. We will strive to produce clear and consistent communication that occurs on all channels to best inform our St. Edmond community. All staff, students, and families are encouraged to follow our Facebook and Twitter pages for updates and reminders as well.



### Mass:

It is one of our sacramental gifts to celebrate the Eucharist in community at a Catholic school. Therefore, St. Edmond will have weekly Mass for our faculty and students. Our health and safety protocols will be followed at Mass, and we will be following the diocesan directives for the celebration of Mass.

The Mass will be live-streamed for any students engaged in distance learning. Mass will either be held in the school or in the new church when it reaches completion.



### Supporting Social-Emotional Needs:

Our community of educators purposely commits to serve the overall well-being and development of each student. We seek to assist in the care and formation of our students' physical, emotional, psychological, intellectual, moral, social, and spiritual development and maturity.

Our lead support team for this holistic care and formation of our students consists of our guidance counselors, administrators, chaplain, campus ministry team, and nurse. Our team will meet regularly to identify and respond to the holistic needs of our school personnel, students, and families. In addition, our teachers will spend scheduled time interacting with their students as their listening and caring mentors. Social media and web-based communications and resources, especially in partnership with Catholic Charities, will be utilized to support our students and families.



### Supporting ALL Learners:

Knowing that there was a disruption in traditional learning at the end of last year, St. Edmond is dedicated to supporting all learners to provide a holistic education that meets the needs of each individual student - whether they are engaged in onsite or distance learning. As in the past, our educators will continue to provide a learning environment within the classroom that meets each individual students' needs.





## **Recess and Increased Outdoor Activity:**

We are going to strongly encourage additional physical activity and outdoor time for our students of all ages. Teachers will be responsible for making these decisions and providing them with these opportunities.

For elementary recess, high contact surfaces such as handrails, handles, balls, etc. will be wiped down between groups or shifts. All students will wash hands after recess and before returning to the classroom.



## **Breakfast and Lunch:**

Breakfast and lunch will be provided. We are planning that students will practice physical distancing during breakfast and lunch. We will provide students with the option of an individually packaged hot or cold lunch. There is always the option as usual per your child to bring their own lunch.

To begin the year, elementary students will have lunch delivered to their classrooms. Teachers will be encouraged to utilize the space outside for their students to eat. The commons will also be used, and we will follow appropriate physical distancing protocols. We are currently looking into how our middle school and high school students can have a relaxing, safe and social experience while following the most up to date diocesan and CDC guidelines.

At this time, we will not be offering a la carte items to middle and high school students.

As mentioned previously, more details will be published regarding daily arrival, which will include more specifics on our breakfast program.



## **SEAS After School Care:**

SEAS After School Care program will be offered this fall for families enrolled. SEAS will follow Department of Human Services guidelines as well as St. Edmond protocols and procedures to provide a safe environment to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

In the event that our local or state government would mandate a school closure, we are beginning to look into the possibility of assisting our families with an educationally enriched daytime childcare opportunity. We have been in communication with the Iowa Department of Human Services and have received their guidance on how we will be able to legally and safely implement this service.



## **Volunteers:**

Ordinarily, St. Edmond relies on many volunteers to assist in the function of our school; however, to reduce the risk and help to maintain the safest environment for our children, we will not be allowing non-essential volunteers into the building or classrooms at this time.



## School Extra-Curricular Activities

School activities and athletics will refer to and follow athletic union and public health guidance. The date of the first practice for football, August 10th and first competitions, August 27th, remain the same. Cross country and volleyball will also begin their seasons August 10th with first competitions starting August 24th.

For sport specific changes regarding cross country and football, please refer to the following website: <https://www.iahsaa.org/covid-19-guidance/>.

For more information regarding volleyball, please visit the following website: <https://ighsau.org/news/volleyball-covid-19-fall-guidance/>.

**If you have further questions regarding the current plan for the upcoming school year, we invite you to contact any of the following:**

**Mary Gibb**  
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