



THE HIGH SCHOOL OF
SAINT THOMAS MORE
STUDENTS TODAY. COMMUNITY LEADERS TOMORROW.
CHRIST'S DISCIPLES FOREVER.

STM Return to School 2020-2021 Plan

Dear STM Families, Faculty, and Staff,

The High School of Saint Thomas More affirms that humans were created in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1:26), a God who is a perfect relationship of persons. Thus, to be fully human is to live in relationship, that is, in community with each other. Within education, in-person instruction has proven to increase student achievement and support social emotional development. The God who created everything that we study in our academics is also the God who created us with a physical need for each other. At STM, we have the gift of our Lord Jesus Christ, physically present in our Chapel. We also have the gift of smaller class sizes and ample space in which to safely welcome our students, faculty and staff each day. We can never mitigate all risk in our lives, but we can enter into relationships with each other confident that we have a God who “came that we might have life, and have it abundantly.” (John 10:10)

As the days are getting closer to the start of the school year, we here at STM are focusing our efforts on developing plans to keep all of our students, teachers, and staff safe. We have read and reread all of the current information given to us by the Diocese of Peoria, Illinois State Board of Education, Illinois Department of Public Health, and Champaign-Urbana Department of Public Health, and are developing protocols that are strictly in-line with all of their mandates and recommendations. We know that this is an uneasy time for all of us, and we are doing our best to alleviate as much stress and anxiety from our families as we can. We are blessed to be able to offer in-person instruction 5 days a week to our students. We know this is not the best option for every student, and so we are also offering a 5-day-a-week Virtual Academy, which will be further explained below. After reviewing the information, please verify attendance [here](#).

Thank you for your continued support of the High School of St. Thomas More and your partnership with us. We look forward to the opportunity to develop your students in faith and educate them to the fullest extent.

“Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:6-7)

Peace,
Sister M. Bridget Martin, Principal
Fr. Michael Pica, Chaplain

******Our protocol may evolve to remain current with CDC, IDPH, CUDPH, and OSC guidelines.******

The School "Day"

1. Prior to arriving at school, students and staff are asked to self-certify each day and make the decision not to go to school if they are showing any symptoms of illness or have a fever.
2. Masks (face coverings) will be worn the entire school day by all staff and students while they are in the building. If a student forgets his/her mask, we can supply a disposable mask to use for the day. Families are asked to supply masks for their child/children. Reusable cloth masks are allowed with the stipulation that they be washed every night in preparation for the next school day if using the same mask. Disposable masks are preferred in the school setting with the intention of disposing at the end of every school day. Parents should send students with extra PPE in case masks are damaged during the day. Masks should not contain messages or images that would distract from the educational environment of the school.
3. Temperature Checks/Symptom Checks: ALL students and staff will be temperature checked and symptom screened at the entrance of the school prior to being allowed to enter our building. If a student or staff member has a temperature above 100.4 degrees, they will be taken to our designated COVID symptom room until a parent can pick their student up. PPE will be provided to each staff member in the event a student displays symptoms or presents with a temperature above 100.4 degrees. This PPE will be utilized on a 1 time use per basis. Students and staff are required to wear a mask upon entrance of the school building for the duration of the day

In-Person Instruction Option

Students who choose in-person instruction will report to school from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. each day, unless otherwise noted.

Remote Learning Option (Virtual Academy)

One part of this plan centers around a Virtual Academy that we are very excited to be offering to our students and families. This Virtual Academy will operate parallel to our in-class experiences for our students. Students who are enrolled in the Virtual Academy will be given the opportunity to watch live-recorded daily classes instructed by their teachers here at STM on the same day that the class was taught. Lectures will be uploaded within an hour of the recorded class. One possible benefit of this, for instance, is that the teachers may tape and upload a class for students to view before their scheduled class time. (If you had originally had an 8th hour course, but the teacher live-tapes their 1st hour course, you will have access to that lecture much earlier in the day and can start on your studies at your own pace.) Students will then have the same assignments as they would as if they were on campus. All assignments and homework this year will be posted on Schoology. Students will have a consistent place to see homework assignments, lesson plans, and grades for all of their classes. Students taking part in the Virtual Academy, then, are taught by our own teachers and are receiving the same quality education as their counterparts who attend in-person. This has no bearing on degree status.

By having this Academy operational and following the same schedule as our on-campus students, it will be a seamless transition for students needing to come in and out of the academy due to medical reasons and mandatory quarantines. Every teacher will have his/her designated office hours each day (one of their plan periods) in which students can reach out for additional clarity or help.

Parents as the primary educators of your children, we will be asking for a little help for those who choose the Virtual Academy when it comes to assessments. Teachers will be communicating with you for the

proctoring of assessments if that is needed in their specific class. Thank you ahead of time for your help in that area.

Something that was learned from our spring e-learning endeavors was that sometimes when you are at home, it is sometimes difficult to communicate effectively with teachers/staff and one can feel alone. We have taken this into consideration when setting up our Virtual Academy. Thus, we have appointed Mrs. Pope to be the head of this academy. She will function as the liaison between students enrolled in the academy with their on-campus teachers. She will be the person to support students and parents, as well as teachers, on this journey. Should any questions arise, please contact Mrs. Pope at a specially created email, stmvirtual@hs-stm.org. Separating these contacts will help to streamline the confusion for students and parents of “who do I contact” when issues arise.

100% E-Learning Mandate (If schools are shut down by ISBE/Governor’s Office)

If STM were to be shut down due to spikes in COVID-19 positive cases and/or by ISBE and the Governor’s Office, our E-Learning Plan will be put into action. This should be a fairly smooth transition if that were to happen since our teachers are already delivering content to those who are choosing to learn from home. Our updated E-Learning plan is forthcoming and will be communicated prior to the start of the school year.

Tuition

Regardless of which form of education you choose, tuition will remain the same. The tuition collected not only pays the bills for the physical school building, but also (and more importantly) pays the teachers’ salaries, and we know they will be working even harder during this time to give the highest quality education to all students.

Student Arrival

Students will be assigned a door to enter by grade level. Two staff members will be at each point of entry to administer temperature checks, quickly and effectively. Students will then report to their first hour classroom so as to avoid lingering in the hallways or congregating in other areas.

Student Dismissal

Students will be asked to leave the school as soon as they are able. If students need to wait for a ride, they may go to the library, but that space is reserved for those who are waiting for rides. Everyone else should leave the school so that sanitization of the building can begin.

Lockers

Lockers will be assigned in a spaced out pattern so as to help limit larger gatherings. Students will be permitted to go to their locker by grade. Freshmen and sophomores will go to their lockers after the even hour classes (2, 4, 6, 8) and the juniors and seniors will go to their lockers after odd hour classes (1, 3, 5, 7).

Classrooms

Class sizes are being limited to 20 students in most rooms, except the science rooms which will be limited to 16 students. Dividers will be used in some rooms to be able to bring that many students safely into the classroom, but one of the joys of STM is our small class sizes. This has not been an issue for scheduling purposes. Students will be tasked with helping to sanitize their desks/spaces before they leave each room so that the spaces are all cleaned for the next round of students. Cleaning equipment and PPE will be provided in each classroom for that purpose. Teachers will also be encouraged to hold

class outside when able and opened windows for better ventilation are also encouraged, as per CDC recommendation.

Internal Traffic Flow

Directional traffic in the hallways will be guided by the usage of signs and enforced by staff along with the usage of signs as reminders to maintain physical distancing.

Restrooms

Students will be allowed to use the restrooms with permission from their classroom teacher. Students will not be allowed to enter a restroom that has reached a safe capacity to minimize the risk of exposure. Restrooms will be sanitized on a regular basis. Signage and supervision will remind students to wash their hands for 20 seconds or more as well as the use of hand sanitizer when exiting and entering the classroom from a restroom break.

School Lunch

Seating will be spaced appropriately for lunch in both the cafeteria and the gymnasium. Food selections will be more limited to prevent cross contamination and to ensure all students have time to eat their lunches. The eating areas will then be cleaned and sanitized before the next group of students use it.

Education for Students on COVID Protocols

Students will be expressly taught procedures regarding safety precautions, protocols, and expectations on the first day of school.

Sanitizing of our Facilities

We will execute best practices in cleaning and sanitizing STM. Custodians will clean multiple times a day using an EPA-registered disinfectant. Frequently touched surfaces in the classroom (including door handles, pencil sharpeners, desks, etc.) will be disinfected after each class period and school surfaces (handrails, bathrooms) will be sanitized throughout the day.

Health and Hygiene

1. All students will wash their hands (or use hand sanitizer) upon arrival at school, before and after using the restroom, entering a classroom and exiting a classroom.
2. We will have hands-free water bottle filler stations installed at all water fountains.
3. We have a large disinfectant sprayer to assist custodial staff in sanitizing large areas (classrooms, gymnasium, etc.) quickly and efficiently.
4. Desks will be kept as far apart as possible (minimum 3 feet with face coverings).
5. Students will use their own school supplies.
6. Electronic devices will not be shared with other students.
7. Disinfecting wipes, and hand sanitizer will be provided and readily available for students and staff to use throughout the day.

Extra-Curriculars

STM believes in developing the whole student. Extra-curricular activities play an integral role in the life of an STM student and will do everything we can to support the continuance of these activities for our students. IHSA is now (as of 7/27/20) working directly with ISBE and the IDPH on their Return to Play guidelines and fan participation. We will adhere to current guidance.

Notification of Positive Covid 19 Test Result and Protocols

In our efforts to keep STM students and staff healthy, it is going to require the help of our entire STM community. If a student is ill or experiencing any symptoms of illness typically associated with COVID-19, we request that the student remain home from school and activities. Families will notify the main office of a student's absence and will give a specific reason for student absence including one or two symptoms if the student is ill. This may prompt a follow up from the main office or administration. This information is kept confidential and this admission is required by the Illinois State Bureau of Education.

RESPONSE TO COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

Students: If a student is exhibiting a fever or two or more other COVID-19 symptoms, they will be immediately separated from others (in a designated COVID-19 isolation room under supervision of an employee). Parents will be contacted in order for the student to be taken home.

If it is determined that the illness is not COVID-19 either through a test or a doctor's diagnosis, the student may return to school when symptoms subside (fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication) and with a doctor's note confirming the negative COVID-19 diagnosis.

If a student 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: 3 days (72 hours) with no fever and without fever-reducing medication; and improvement in other clinical symptoms; and 14 days since symptoms first appeared.

Students will 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.

ISOLATION PROTOCOL

If any student, employee or volunteer is diagnosed with COVID-19, principals will immediately contact the Superintendent of Schools. While every situation is unique, the following steps will likely be implemented:

- The student, employee or volunteer will be sent home and monitored for ongoing symptoms, as described above.
- The principal will distribute the OCS 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 will 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 grade level teacher or classroom teacher if a student in the teacher's class has been diagnosed with COVID-19. However, the principal will not inform other teachers in the school (or any parent).
- The student or employee's classroom/work area will be thoroughly cleaned. Windows in the area will be opened to maximize airflow.
- The principal will carefully monitor the health of students and teachers. The entire school population will be notified of any positive COVID-19 cases while respecting the anonymity of the infected student or staff member.
- For high schools, the local public health department and Superintendent of Schools will be contacted in order for a decision to be made on whether or not to close the entire school for quarantine.

When quarantine is issued by the principal, the student(s) and employee(s) 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 without fever-reducing medication; and
- Improvement in other clinical symptoms; and
- 14 days since symptoms first appeared; or
- 14 days since exposure to the infected individual(s) for asymptomatic individuals.

The principal will distribute the *OCS Quarantine Letter* to all families and employees when a group or entire school is placed in quarantine.

The principal will work with the Superintendent of Schools to decide if and when some or all of the students and/or staff will return to school.

The principal will continue to closely monitor the health of all non-quarantined students and employees.

In cases of widespread infections in a school, an entire school may be quarantined. Principals will work with the Superintendent of Schools in determining if a school-wide quarantine is needed.

Students will be allowed to complete and submit academic work while quarantined.

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 will be followed:

- The individual will 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 without fever reducing medication; and
 - Improvement in other clinical symptoms; and
 - 14 days since symptoms first appeared.

Students will be allowed to complete and submit academic work while at home.

Schools will 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.

As we embark on this new school year, which brings with it many varied obstacles, let us not lose sight of the God who loves and cares for each of us. Let us allow Our Lord to continue to protect us and put our trust in Him while doing our part to keep our students and staff as safe as possible during these unprecedented times. "Christ beside me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ within me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me."

The Office of Catholic Schools Reopening Plan Press Release can be found [here](#).