

Thank you to the many families that have completed our surveys and offered their thoughts on the reopening of school. The health and safety of our students, faculty, staff, and families is our top priority. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) released its [guidance](#) on June 25th and we released our first update on June 27th. While we continue to develop our final plans and anticipate additional guidance from the Catholic Schools Office and DESE, we would like to share a few updates regarding the opening of school in the fall and try to answer some of the questions that we have been hearing. Our goal is to provide a robust educational environment in the safest way possible for our students and staff.

We appreciate your patience and understanding with this process. These are big decisions that we are trying to make, with potentially significant consequences. There truly is no way we will be able to make everyone happy. It is clear from the survey results that our parent community includes opinions at both ends of the spectrum and everywhere in between. Our decisions are based on data and science-- we are taking into account what the research says, data from parent and staff surveys, and then making decisions based on what seems to be best for our community as a whole.

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**Planning:** We are required to develop three plans for reopening that will be submitted to the state: fully in-person, remote, and a hybrid model. Given our physical plant, some version of a hybrid model will be in place; a 100% in-person opening will not allow for adequate distancing between students. We understand that some students may need to stay home due health concerns, and will ensure that those students are able to virtually attend classes with their peers. Our reopening task force is reviewing all aspects of the school day to develop a schedule of classes and to work through the myriad of logistical items that will accompany any plan. Our goal is to ensure the best experience possible for our students and their families under any of the three reopening plans. We are actively planning to reopen in person, but will make decisions that keep our community safe. In addition, we are required to follow the directives of the Arlington Board of Health, Governor's Office, DESE and the Catholic Schools Office as we formulate our plans. Your survey responses have been critical in forming our plans.

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**Screening:** Parents will be required to screen the student daily at home prior to coming to school. If a student reports any of the symptoms they must stay home from school (NO EXCEPTIONS) and contact Mrs. Boczenowski, the School Nurse, as well as their physician. Students who exhibit any signs of illness will be sent home immediately. Students are not allowed to return to school without proper documentation. More information will follow. Faculty and staff will also be expected to follow the same guidelines. A protocol is being established for students/staff who may test positive or who have been in contact with a positive individual.

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**Nurse's Office:** Mrs. Boczenowski will continue to be available throughout the day and will assist in monitoring the health of our students. In addition to the nurse's office, there will be a designated isolation room in case a student or staff member exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 while at school. We are currently working on plans to determine where this space will be.

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**Masks:** All adults and students will be required to wear a properly fitted 3-ply mask that covers their mouth and nose. Masks may not have any slogans or inappropriate designs. Families are required to provide masks for their students and should ensure an adequate supply to allow for daily washing of the mask. Cloth and disposable masks are both acceptable. Bandannas or neck gaiters are not allowed because droplets go under or through those. Face shields and goggles do not replace masks or face coverings, but may be added if desired.

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**Personal Hygiene:** Everyone will be expected to wash and sanitize their hands frequently. We will provide hand sanitizer stations in each classroom and other spaces in the school.

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**Student Lockers:** Students will likely not be allowed to use lockers during the school day and be required to carry a backpack/other bag with them. This will minimize time spent in hallways as well as outside materials left in the building.

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**Cleaning:** We are working with our maintenance company to ensure that all areas of the school are cleaned and disinfected on a regular basis. High touch surfaces such as door handles, etc. will be disinfected multiple times during the day. Student desks will be cleaned at the end of each period; as students travel from room to room they will have a disinfected desk to sit in. School bathroom use will be limited and moderated; bathrooms will be disinfected multiple times per day. We have purchased an electrostatic (fogging) disinfectant machine to increase sanitization efficiency; these machines can disinfect the entire school in a short period of time. There will be a complete cleaning and disinfecting between each session and over the weekend.

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**Distancing:** The DESE is requiring that student desks be three to six feet apart. We will attempt to keep 6 feet between students in classrooms. Students will be asked to maximize distance between others in hallways and other spaces.

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**Achievement Center/Extra Help:** Students who have been scheduled in the Achievement Center will continue to have that support as a part of their schedule. Faculty will be available for extra help on a schedule to be determined.

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**Remote Learning:** Students who are not physically present in school (based on the schedule, health or family choice) will be required to attend class virtually- there will be limited

asynchronous activities; all class time will be live. If we are required to close school and be remote again, a specific schedule will be in place for synchronous class meetings each day; this is an adjustment from last year. Including time virtually in school, students will be required to spend approximately 7-8 hours per day engaged in school work to both prepare for classes and work with material taught to demonstrate mastery. Students who are remote should not plan appointments, work, etc. during school hours.

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**Sports and Extracurricular Activities:** We are awaiting guidance on sports and will make decisions on offering extracurricular activities at a later date. We hope to be able to allow our many student groups to meet and are investigating a modified WIN period as part of the schedule.

As you know, Labor Day is late this year (September 7). We will be bringing staff back starting Monday, August 31 for professional development. We will need more time this year than we usually allocate, in order to ensure that teachers are well prepared with all of the new health and safety protocols, as well as teaching strategies for this new environment. Additionally, we are committing time to discussions around equity. The week of Labor Day (September 8-11) we would like to bring students back in small groups so that we can focus on orientation to our “new normal” and acclimate everyone. You will be receiving more detailed information about this in the near future. The official day of classes for all students will be Monday, September 14.

*We anticipate sharing a more specific schedule with you on Monday July 27th* and are planning for some live town-hall meetings to lay out the specifics of our plans for the coming year. Information will be sent soon.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to Mr. Graceffa ([jgraceffa@achs.net](mailto:jgraceffa@achs.net)), Mr. Naughton ([nnaughton@achs.net](mailto:nnaughton@achs.net)), Mr. Barrett ([sbarrett@achs.net](mailto:sbarrett@achs.net)) or Mrs. Boczenowski ([sboczenowski@achs.net](mailto:sboczenowski@achs.net)).