

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION SCHOOL RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN

RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN – Parent Plan
IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

IMMACULATE
CONCEPTION SCHOOL

SCHOOL REOPENING TASK FORCE

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REOPENING CONSIDERATIONS

In order to best prepare for the return to school, it is important to assess the status of readiness and develop a plan to re-enter school this fall. In order to help ICS prepare, guidelines have been established in the areas of:

- Safety and Health
- Technology
- Catholic Identity
- Curriculum/Assessment
- Creating and maintaining a community

The goal is to open safely and efficiently. This plan will be re-evaluated and updated as new information is shared.

INTRODUCTION

The ICS Task Force Committee worked toward creating a plan to support the reopening of ICS where employees, students, and families feel safe, while reducing the risk of COVID-19 conditions upon returning to the 2020-21 school year. The guidelines referenced in this plan were carefully studied and are based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO), American Academy of Pediatrics, and the State of New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) *The Road Back*.

ICS students will have a choice between two school models. A Parent Survey will be shared giving each family an opportunity to choose their desired school model for the 2020-21 school year. School will open using a Hybrid Learning approach, allowing students to attend school Monday-Friday from 7:50 am to 12:30 pm. and continue in the afternoon with modified virtual

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instruction. Following the same timeline, the second model allows students to learn from home, using a full-time Virtual Learning approach.

Regular updates will be made to this plan based on information provided by the CDC, WHO, and applicable federal, state, and local agencies. ICS is committed to extending the school day as guidelines relax and students can safely return to a full-time school day.

SOURCES

Center for Disease Control: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html#anchor_1589931942037

New Jersey Department of Education: <https://www.nj.gov/education/reopening/NJDOETheRoadBack.pdf>

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Immaculate Conception School is committed to our children's academic, spiritual, and moral growth within a supportive and joy-filled community. As such, the following principles guided this work:

- Protecting the health, safety, and social and emotional well-being of our students and employees
- Prioritizing conditions that will support developmentally appropriate learning
- Being physically together as much as possible
- Partnering with our families to best support our students
- Remaining flexible to make adjustments within this uncertain environment

PHASES AND TIMELINES

Information and direction about the phases and timeline will be sent to all employees and parents before implementation. Please see below for a summary of the phases and timelines.

| Phase | Timing | Items |
|----------|--------|---|
| Planning | July | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supplies, equipment• Prepare detailed work schedule for phases• Prepare building and transportation for reopen with thorough cleaning |

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| Phase | Timing | Items |
|---------|---|--|
| Phase 1 | August | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement social distancing protocol and open facilities with limited access/use |
| Phase 2 | August | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expand use of school based on recommendations and data from CDC, NJDOH, New Jersey Governor, and applicable state and local agencies |
| Phase 3 | August 27th August and September | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open school• Expand full operation based on recommendations and data from CDC, NJDOH, New Jersey Governor, and applicable local and state agencies• Determine what restrictions/guidelines stay in place |

HEALTH PROTOCOL AND SCREENINGS (EMPLOYEE AND STUDENT)

ICS has adopted a policy for screening students and employees upon arrival for symptoms and history of exposure.

Students:

Parents are encouraged to be on the alert for signs of illness in their children and to keep them home when they are sick. At minimum, the screening should be completed by the child's parent/guardian prior to arriving at school each day. A parent waiver will be provided to each family requiring them to check their child for symptoms and temperature daily prior to going to school.

The school's policies for screening may include the following:

- Students will have their temperature checked at the door each day.
- Staff will visually check students for symptoms upon arrival every day and/or confirm with families that students are free of COVID-19 symptoms (via waiver).
- Student health checks will be conducted safely and respectfully, and in accordance with any applicable privacy laws and regulations. Results will be documented when signs/symptoms of COVID-19 are observed.
- Any screening policy will consider students with disabilities and accommodations that may be needed in the screening process for those students.

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COVID-19 symptoms include:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea
- Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit
- Known close contact with a person who is lab confirmed to have COVID-19

Employees:

School staff will be screened (temperature check and visual) every day upon entering the building. A staff waiver will be provided requiring each employee to check for symptoms (listed above) and temperature daily prior to going to school.

Protocol for Symptomatic Staff and Students:

ICS has adopted procedures for symptomatic staff and students. Procedures include the following:

- Students and staff with symptoms related to COVID-19 will be safely and respectfully isolated from others in the nurse's office and the case form will be completed.
- Once an employee or student arrives at the isolation room, they will immediately be provided with a mask and gloves. It will be explained to them that this is to help protect other employees and students and prevent the spread of the potential virus. The nurse and others attending the suspected infected person, will also wear a protective mask and gloves while working with the suspected infected person. If a mask is not tolerated by the child, staff will use a face covering and follow social distancing guidelines (6 ft. away).
- The nurse will call the local health authority and seek advice regarding transportation and location.
- If an employee becomes ill at work or is exhibiting symptoms of COVID19 at work, they will be asked to leave work and go home or to the nearest health center.
- If a student becomes ill at school or is exhibiting symptoms of COVID19 at school, the nurse will call the parent or authorized adult of the student to be picked up and go home. Students will remain in isolation with continued supervision and care until picked up by an authorized adult.

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- The isolation area and suspected employee's or student's work area/classroom will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected, in addition to all other common surfaces recently touched by the employee or student.

Reporting

- ICS will follow current State of New Jersey Communicable Disease Service guidance for illness reporting - <https://www.nj.gov/health/>
- When an individual tests positive for COVID-19, or the school becomes aware that a person that spent time in the school tests positive for COVID-19, school officials and the nurse will immediately notify local health officials, staff, and families of a possible or confirmed case while maintaining confidentiality.
- The nurse and principal will identify persons who may have come in contact with the suspected infected person. *Unless required by the local health authority, the name of the employee will not be provided.*
- As a part of the ongoing collaboration with the Hunterdon County Department of Health, they act as the primary responsible party for contact tracing.

Facilities should be prepared to provide the following information when consulting public health officials:

- The identity of the person with COVID-19 or probable COVID-19 (i.e. staff, child in care, household contact).
- The date the person with COVID-19 or probable COVID-19 was last in the building
- The date the person developed symptoms.
- Types of interactions the person may have had with other persons in the building or in other locations.
- How long his or her interactions were with other persons in the building.
- If other persons in the school have developed any symptoms; and
- Any other information to assist with the determination of next steps.

Re-admittance Procedures After Recovery From COVID-19:

Students and employees diagnosed with COVID-19 must stay home quarantined for a 14-day recovery period before re-admittance to school. A doctor's note is required stating the person is symptom-free and healthy to return. All students and employees who have spent time with the student or employee will need to be in quarantine at home for 14 days and allowed to return to school with a doctor's note.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

Social distancing is an effective way to prevent potential infection. Immaculate Conception employees, students, and parents should practice staying approximately 6 feet away from others and eliminating contact with others.

- ICS has allowed for social distancing within the classroom to the maximum extent practicable. This can be achieved by ensuring students are seated at least 6 feet apart and considering the flow of student traffic around the room. Social distancing guidance will support a 3-foot radius around each student desk (from the center), resulting in a 6 foot total distance between any two students.
- ICS can maintain physical distance and additional modifications have been put in place. These include using physical barriers between desks (if needed) and turning desks to face the same direction (rather than facing each other) or having students sit on only one side of the table, spaced apart. Each elementary classroom can accommodate sixteen desks, leaving extra space for students to move around while practicing social distancing. Each Early Childhood classroom can accommodate twelve to thirteen students, while encouraging and practicing social distancing.
- Traffic Flow – At any given time, students in hallways will only move in one direction; students will not be moving in both directions side by side in the hallway. Social distancing of 6 feet will be maintained between students in the hallway. If there is an emergency and students must move in opposite directions, students will be instructed to move close to the walls.
- Organizational techniques and strategies will be established that allows for physical distancing. The number of students in the hallway at the same time will be minimized by staggering release from classrooms.
- Larger rooms (i.e. Multi-Purpose Room, cafeteria/gym, Art Studio, Science Lab, Innovation Lab) can be used as classrooms to allow for social distancing.
- The outdoor grounds will be utilized as outdoor classrooms when possible and when seasonally appropriate.
- Physical barriers, such as sneeze guards and partitions, may be installed in the front office where it is difficult for individuals to remain at least 6 feet apart.
- Ad-hoc Interactions/Gatherings – Non-essential/informal meetings and visiting will be avoided during this time. Morning Gathering in the Multi-Purpose Room will be suspended, and instead the morning activities will take place in the classrooms.

Cohorts:

In order to maintain 6 feet distance between desks in the classrooms as specified by the NJ Dept. of Education, larger classes will be divided into 2 groups. The ICS elementary building provides ample classroom space for these groupings. The cohort groups would remain together for the entirety of the school day and year (until restrictions are lifted) with teachers rotating as

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necessary for subject areas rather than students. For self-contained classrooms (TK - 4th) that are divided into two groups, classroom teachers would have the support of a staff member to ensure adequate supervision and equal instructional time with the classroom teacher.

- There will be minimal to no mixing between groups/cohorts.
- **It is highly recommended that students do not change classes or leave their rooms.** Classes (cohorts) will remain together with the same group of children each day. **Where applicable, teachers will change classrooms, with students staying in the same classroom.** There will be a minimal amount of adult movement from cohort to cohort.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

In order to minimize exposure to COVID-19, PPE will be needed to prevent certain exposures. PPE includes:

Masks: Face masks are an important part of employee protection, as well as personal hygiene, social distancing, and frequent cleaning efforts.

- School staff are required to wear face coverings inside and outside the school buildings, unless doing so would inhibit the individual's health.
- **All students are required to wear face masks throughout the school day** unless doing so would inhibit the student's health. Students will supply their own cloth face masks (required) and shields (optional). Cloth masks with designs, pictures, or sports teams are permitted, however no messaging. Print on face coverings should be appropriate in nature, as determined by ICS faculty and administration.
- Face masks should be washed each evening, or a student should wear a new, clean mask.
- All students should secure a lanyard to their face mask (one lanyard will be supplied by ICS for each student). When masks are removed, they will hang at the neck by the lanyard.

Gloves: Touching the face with contaminated hands, whether gloved or not, poses a significant risk of infection. Wearing gloves does not diminish the need to wash hands. Students wearing gloves will be instructed on the proper removal of gloves to reduce the risk of being exposed to contamination.

Please note that social distancing should still be practiced even with the use of gloves and masks.

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In addition to using PPE, students will be instructed to:

- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available
- Avoid touching the eyes, nose, and mouth
- When coughing or sneezing, cover the mouth and nose with a tissue or the inside of the elbow.

All ICS students and employees will be required to wash or sanitize his/her hands upon entering the school building.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Detailed arrival and dismissal procedures will be communicated to parents prior to the start of the school year. The following general guidelines will be implemented:

- ICS will use a curbside morning drop off and curbside afternoon pick up each day, unless students are being picked up from After Care.
- Separate entrances and exits to school facilities will be utilized.
- Face covering will be worn upon entering the building and in the hallways.
- Social interaction of students and adults will be kept at a minimum between drop-off and entrance into school facilities.
- Hand sanitizing stations will be at each school entrance.

FACILITIES CLEANING

The safety of employees and students is the priority. The school will be completely cleaned and disinfected prior to reopening. All necessary safety precautions will continue to be adhered to each day. In addition to the deep clean of the office and school before employees and students return, the cleaning steps outlined below are to be taken to disinfect workplace surfaces, chairs, tables, etc. to protect employees and reduce the risk of spread of infection. Employees will be required to maintain this safety standard by continuously cleaning and disinfecting based on the frequency stated below. Deep cleaning is triggered when an active employee or student is identified as positive for COVID 19 based on testing.

GENERAL DISINFECTION MEASURES

| Category | Area | Frequency |
|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Workspaces | Classrooms, Offices | At the end of each use/day |
| Appliances | Refrigerators, Microwaves, Coffee Machines | Daily |
| Electronic Equipment | Copier machines, Shared computer monitors, TV's, Telephones, keyboards | At the end of each use/day and/or between use |
| General Used Objects | Handles, light switches, sinks, restrooms | Several times a day |
| Buses | Bus seats, handles/railing, belts, window controls | At the end of each use/day |
| Common Areas | Cafeteria, Library, Conference rooms, Gyms, Common Areas | At the end of each use/day; between groups |

Classrooms:

- When appropriate, students will be directed under the supervision of the teacher to clean their personal space (including desks, cubby, and/or lockers) using approved cleaning products. This includes wiping down desks when leaving the classroom and arriving in the classroom.
- Employees will be encouraged to disinfect their own personal workspace (teacher desk, phone, etc) throughout the day, giving special attention to commonly touched surfaces.

Hand sanitizing stations with alcohol-based hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol) will be placed inside each classroom and throughout the buildings:

- Inside the door of each classroom there will be a Cleaning Station equipped with hand sanitizer, wipes, tissues, extra masks, and gloves in accordance with CDC guidelines.
- Hand sanitizer stations will be at entrances and exits of buildings and near lunchrooms and toilets.
- Children ages 5 and younger will be supervised when using hand sanitizer.
- Classrooms that have existing handwashing stations, will be prepared with soap, water, and alcohol-based hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol).

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- Students will be taught to wash hands for at least 20 seconds at regular intervals, including before eating, after using the bathroom, and after blowing their nose/coughing/sneezing.
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) will be used if washing with soap and water is not possible.

For Early Childhood programs, when possible:

- Close group learning activities like reading circles will be avoided.
- Designated times for handwashing will be part of the daily routine. Students will be taught to wash hands with soap and water, including, at a minimum:
 - at the start of the day when children enter the classroom
 - before snacks and lunch
 - after using the toilet or helping a child use a toilet
 - after sneezing, wiping, and blowing noses
 - after snacks and lunch, particularly if hands are sticky, greasy, or soiled
 - when students come in from outdoor play or recess

In limited cases, hand hygiene with an alcohol-based sanitizer or alcohol-based wipes, when there is no visible soiling of hands, are alternatives to hand washing with soap and water by children over 24 months of age, under the supervision of the teacher. The CDC recommends an alcohol-based sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol and to rub the product over all surfaces of the hands and fingers until the hands are dry, about 20 seconds, then wash hands with soap and water as soon as possible.

Other Considerations:

- Student supplies and equipment will not be shared. All students will have their own set of supplies and tools to support learning.
- Electronic devices, toys, books, and other games or learning aids will not be shared, without being thoroughly cleaned and disinfected between use.
- Student belongings will be kept separated from others' and in individually labeled containers, cubbies, or areas.
- Regularly planned times for handwashing will be encouraged throughout the day.
- When possible, the circulation of outdoor air will be increased, for example, by opening windows and doors. Windows and doors will not be opened if doing so poses a safety or health risk (e.g., risk of falling, triggering asthma symptoms) to children using the facility.

SIGNAGE

Immaculate Conception staff will use the signage provided to indicate the room for sanitizing and disinfecting. Signage has been posted around the school buildings (inside and out) to provide hygiene advice and reminders. There will be an increased frequency of cleaning all surfaces, including walls (to the appropriate height, based on age of students).

Signage will be placed throughout the offices and school. A sample is provided:



RESTROOM USAGE DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

The school will establish maximum capacity for each restroom that allows for social distancing. The school will post the maximum capacity sign on the restroom door. There will be limited shared use of restrooms. Classes will be assigned a specific time to use the bathroom. The goal will be to have a limited number of children in the hall and bathrooms together.

RECESS, PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- Recess times for each grade will be staggered. If two or more cohorts are participating in recess at the same time, they should have at least 6 feet of open space between them.
- Cones, flags, tape, or other signs to create boundaries between groups will be used when necessary.
- Hands will be washed immediately after outdoor playtime.

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- ICS will stagger the use of playground equipment and establish frequent disinfecting protocols.
- Contact with equipment and sharing of equipment is discouraged. If equipment must be shared, it must be cleaned and disinfected between each use.
- Specific outdoor areas will be designated for each group to avoid mixing of cohorts.

VISITORS ON CAMPUS

Until further notice there will be no visitors, including parents, allowed in the school buildings during school hours. Fewer people entering the school building allows for greater implementation of safety measures. There will be a rolling cart left outside the front door entrance each morning for packages or other items; if a child forgets snack/lunch or other school-related items they can be placed on the cart.

MEAL PERIODS

At this time lunch periods will not be part of the school day. Children staying for After Care will have lunch in school. It will be determined if the school needs to provide lunch from the cafeteria, once parents have decided if this is a service needed.

In the future, as the school day is increased, the school will resume preparing lunch meals and give students the opportunity to purchase lunch from the cafeteria staff. As the guidelines are followed, the first preference is for students to remain in a self-contained classroom and have meals brought to the classrooms.

As stated from the guidelines, when cafeterias or group dining areas are used:

- Stagger times to allow for social distancing, and clean and disinfect between groups.
- Clean and sanitize tables/surfaces between each meal service, pursuant to the protocols outlined here by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
- Space students at least six feet apart.
- Individuals must wash their hands after removing their gloves or after directly handling used food service items.
- Discontinue family style, self-service, and buffet. Serve individually plated meals or meals in pre-packaged boxes or bags.
- Ensure students are not sharing food.
- Use disposable food service items (e.g., utensils, dishes).
- If disposable items are not feasible or desirable, ensure that all non-disposable food service items are handled with gloves and washed with dish soap and hot water or in a dishwasher. Encourage proper hand washing before and after eating meals.

SNACKS

Bringing refreshments to share during school is prohibited in order to limit the risk of contamination. Snack time is permitted, but students must bring their own snack items and drinks to school. **Water fountains and water refill stations will be closed, students must bring a filled water bottle(s) to school.** The school will not provide snacks to students until further notice.

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

To stay updated on the most current information:

1. Teachers, students, and parents need to check their email often.
2. Visit the school website
3. Follow the school's social media platforms
4. Check SeeSaw (grades Preschool-3) and Google Classroom (grades 4-8) for academic information from classroom teachers
5. PowerSchool Student Information System-grades kindergarten to grade 8 for grading and attendance

ACADEMICS AND HOME-BASED LEARNING

ICS is prepared to offer each family a choice of two models:

Each family will commit to sending their child/ren to school using the chosen model for one full marking period. If a parent is seeking a change in their chosen model, the parent must schedule an appointment with the school's principal.

(1) Hybrid Learning Approach:

Transitional kindergarten to grade eight classes will be in session five days a week, Monday through Friday from 7:50 am to 12:30 pm. in the school building. Most grades will be divided into two cohorts and will be managed by the grade level teacher with the help and support of an additional faculty member. All students will engage in some type of afternoon virtual learning organized and guided by the classroom teacher. The virtual platform will allow students time to travel home and have lunch before starting an afternoon session. For students needing extra childcare coverage beyond 12:30 p.m. due to parent work obligations, After Care will be provided. After Care will be available from 12:30 pm to 3:00 p.m. and managed by a faculty member at no extra charge. After Care will continue from 3:00 pm till 5:30 pm at \$8.50 an hour and will be covered by After Care staff members. Students will remain in cohorts during after care and social distancing will be observed.

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(2) **Virtual Learning Approach (at home full time)**

Some families may not feel comfortable having their child/ren return to school for instruction. In addition, some students may be medically fragile, and their physician does not recommend returning to school. In either case, provisions have been made to provide these students with instruction. Virtual instruction will be offered via live streaming of direct instruction. Students will be expected to attend their regularly scheduled classes, Monday through Friday from 7:50 am to 12:30 pm, via live streaming.

As restrictions relax, school time will be added to the day to include lunch and recess periods, to move toward a full day of in school learning.

Immaculate Conception's goal is to design flexible instructional plans that work best in both traditional face to face and remote environments. The following is being developed by ICS faculty and principal:

- Year-long plans to facilitate more meaningful, interdisciplinary units that can be delivered face to face or remotely.
- Instructional experiences that include modeling, guided instruction, collaborative work, and independent work rather than over-reliance on independent work during remote learning. This requires strategic use of synchronous and asynchronous lessons.
- Best practices are being reviewed and will be implemented to include synchronous and asynchronous instruction to meet student needs and engagement.
- Adjustments and modifications will be made to school-based service plans for students with disabilities. All accommodations and modifications will best service students with special needs on the virtual learning platform using a Blended teaching approach.
- Create an “early warning system” to identify and intervene with students who may be exhibiting academic and/or behavioral concerns.
- Develop a plan for benchmark screening and intervention delivery during face-to-face and remote learning.

CATHOLIC IDENTITY

Catholic schools have a two-fold charge: to provide an education that is academically excellent and one that is deeply rooted in Catholic identity. Catholic values will be infused intentionally across all grade levels and all subject matter. Participation in liturgy and prayer will continue to be encouraged for both traditional face-to-face and remote settings. At this time, students will not attend First Thursday Mass as a school. Teachers will collaborate and design a Mass schedule, allowing all classes to attend daily Mass at least two times monthly. Cohorts will attend daily Masses. Faith Family service projects are a priority and will remain in place. However, projects will be fulfilled within each cohort classroom.

GRADING AND ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students are expected to attend classes every school day and complete all posted assignments. Teachers will take attendance daily for students attending in person and on the virtual platform. Attendance will be recorded in Power school. The grading policy is in the school handbook and is expected to be followed as stated.

REMOTE LEARNING

In the event school must close in 2020-2021, the guidelines below will be followed for receiving and returning student work.

The school will continue to use *SeeSaw* for Preschool through grade 3 and *Google Classroom* for grades 4 to 8. Google Classroom and SeeSaw will be another communication method used for parents to contact the classroom teachers.

ONLINE INSTRUCTION

The school's [Virtual Learning Plan](#) is posted on the ICS web site. ICS is committed to reevaluating and revising the virtual plan regularly. As revisions take place, ICS administration and the classroom teacher will inform all families of changes. All grade level teachers will clearly define and explain student learning expectations that will guarantee each child the best education and school experience possible.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES/BEFORE AND AFTERCARE PROGRAMS

- All in-person extracurricular activities are suspended and will be re-evaluated at a later date.
- Technology and online resources will be maximized in an attempt to continue some extracurricular activities without person-to-person contact

If and when extracurricular activities resume, the following guidelines will be adhered to:

- Maintain all applicable social distancing requirements and hygiene protocol during any extracurricular activities.
- Restrict use of school facilities to school-sponsored extracurricular activities and groups.
- Cleaning/disinfecting schedule may not allow for in-person gatherings outside school hours.