



Covid-19

Policies and Procedures

During this current pandemic, we want to ensure that we do our very best to keep a safe and clean environment for your child to learn and play. Although we are eager to return to normalcy, we are implementing new requirements and guidelines handed down from the Archdiocese of Atlanta and approved by our pastor, Fr. Terry Crone. These guidelines were developed by a Task Force from a select group of diverse professionals to assist the Superintendent of Catholic Schools.

Any questions or concerns regarding these policies should be directed to Gina DeGennaro, Preschool Director

gdegennaro@smmcatholic.org

678-854-9990

Reopening of Schools-Fall 2020

Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Atlanta

Background on Covid-19

Sars-CoV-2, commonly known as COVID-19, is the virus which causes the novel coronavirus of 2019 (COVID-19). At the end of June 2020, there are 2.5 million confirmed cases and more than 125,000 deaths due to the virus in the United States with more than 75,000 confirmed cases in Georgia. However, children younger than 18 represent fewer than 4 percent of documented cases in Georgia. Children are more likely to have mild or asymptomatic illness and much lower rates of hospitalization, critical illness and death than adults. Additionally, a growing body of evidence suggests that children do not spread the virus to the same degree as adults, either to peers or their adult caregivers including parents and teachers.

Because disease severity and mortality rates increase with each decade of life, children younger than age 10 are at the least risk and children older than 10 are at slightly increased risk. In schools, the individuals with greater risk will be older adults, particularly those with higher risk conditions. Meanwhile, there are significant harms to children by not having in person instruction including loss of academic progress, loss of various physical and mental health services, nutritional support and continued social development. These impacts will vary depending on student age, but will ultimately affect all children to some degree.

The task force carefully reviewed these considerations and has determined that, while it is impossible to eliminate all risks of COVID-19 infection, the benefits of in-person instruction outweigh the risks, provided the schools consistently implement appropriate risk mitigation strategies. Accordingly, the recommendations contained in this document are intended to assist schools in making decisions regarding reopening school in a manner that reduces the risk of COVID-19 exposure and spread in our Catholic schools. The schools are asked to develop school reopening plans in a manner consistent with these recommendations.

(Excerpt from “Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Atlanta” Reopening of Schools-Fall 2020, pg. 1)

We are so excited to start a new school year in our brand-new building, *Annunciation Hall*. This building is the culmination of a long-held dream for us at Saint Mary Magdalene. We wish to safely and effectively educate students in the context of our Catholic faith, working towards building disciples for God. We are looking forward to planning a dedication and opening celebration of this beautiful new building when the circumstances allow us to gather freely again.

For now, we will cautiously open our preschool by using best practices to provide a safe and happy learning environment for our students. This packet details the special policies and procedures we will follow to keep our students and staff as safe as possible during the global pandemic. Please be supportive and patient with us as we navigate new territory while providing a quality education.

We recognize that one of our highest priorities is the health and well-being of our community, so we hope that all members of our Preschool community will respect the guidelines presented here.

These guidelines are intended to support our effort to reduce the risk of the virus that causes COVID-19. The preschool will incorporate guidelines established by the CDC, Georgia Department of Health, Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) and the Archdiocese of Atlanta Office of Catholic Schools.

Due to the unpredictable nature of the virus, our plans will be evaluated on a regular basis. These policies will go into effect and will override some previous preschool policies in our Family Handbook for as long as necessary. Updated information will be communicated to staff and families as new information is provided by national and local governing authorities referred to above.

Thank you for collaborating with us toward a successful school year at Saint Mary Magdalene Catholic Preschool. We invite you to pray for us as we pray for you.

Sincerely,

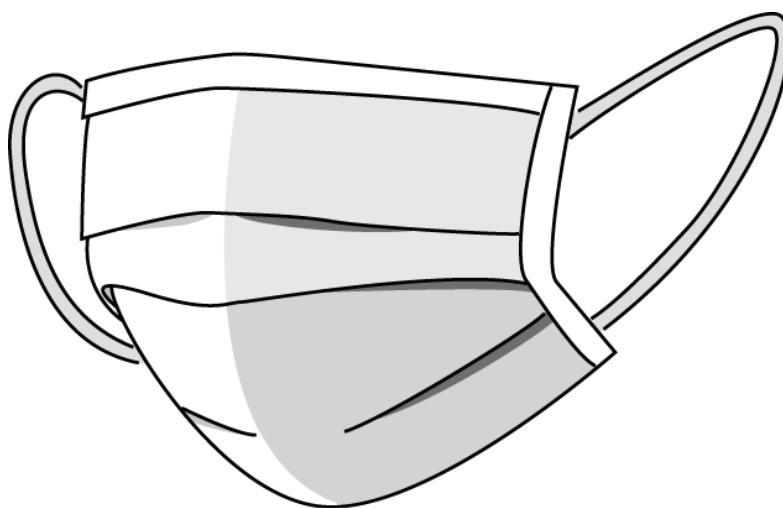
Gina DeGennaro

Preschool Director

Masks

“While we believe our risk/age strategy shared in the guidelines we sent to the schools represents a reasonable set of recommendations, we believe we have to modify them in one area. This is due to the increasing appreciation being shown in federal and state health guidelines for the role of masks may be playing as a critically important preventative measure in the fight against the spread of COVID-19. We have therefore chosen to require the wearing of masks for all children and adults in our schools, not only in common areas but also throughout the school day unless at times when physical distancing is able to be consistently maintained at 6 feet or more for each individual in all directions. Examples include outdoor activities such as physical education classes, recess, eating and drinking. Not only is this modification being adopted out of an abundance of caution for the children, who are at low risk of COVID-19 infection, it is also to do our best to ensure that our teachers feel as safe as possible. Please note, for our Pre-K4 students, masks may be removed while in the classroom at the teacher’s discretion for instructional purposes.”

-Archdiocese of Atlanta



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Arrival

All families must use the carpool line. For the safety of the staff, please remain in your vehicle with your child. A staff member will come to your car for a temperature check. Our staff member will be wearing a mask, and we ask that your child and all occupants in the vehicle have a mask on during this time. If possible, the same parent should be designated for drop off and pick up every day.

Before arrival at school, parents should complete a self-monitoring questionnaire for themselves and their child(ren), see below. Parents should be on the alert for any symptoms of COVID-19 and keep the child(ren) at home if showing any signs of illness, (fever, coughing, shortness of breath). Parents should also help children practice handwashing and covering cough or sneezes at home.

We will need each child to come to school with a clean mask on and have a clean backup mask in their extra clothes bag. During drop off in the car line, temperature checks will be taken. All passengers in the car must have a mask on at the time temperature checks are taken. Parents will be asked if they have completed the following self-monitoring health questions that will be posted for viewing:

Screening

-Does your child have a fever (100.0° F or higher), cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, other respiratory symptoms, or at least two of the following symptoms: chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell?

-Has your child had any of these symptoms since you were last here?

-If yes to any of the above, is this related to any known medical or chronic condition (i.e. allergies)? For any known medical or chronic condition, a doctor's note may be required.

-Have you or your child been in contact with anyone with these symptoms since the last time you were here?

-Have you or your child potentially been exposed to COVID-19 or have reason to believe you have COVID-19?

-Within the past 10 days, have you or your child received a positive nasal swab test result for an active COVID-19 infection?

-Do you attest that your child has not been given any fever reducing medicine in the last 24 hours?

Once the student has been cleared, the child will then be unbuckled and walked to the door of the preschool, by a teacher who will then watch them walk down the hall to their classroom teacher. If at any time during the school day the child's temperature registers over 100.0° F, then the child's temperature will be recorded, and he/she will be sent home. The child may return to school after 48 hours without fever or symptoms and not on fever reduced medications AND 48 hours vomit/diarrhea free without the use of medication.

Late arrivals (after 9:00 a.m.) should call the office 678-854-9990. A staff member will walk to your vehicle to take the child's temperature. They will then escort your child into the building. Please be timely with drop off and dismissal.

Hygiene Practices

Sanitizing hands and handwashing with soap and water will take place throughout the preschool day including but not limited to arrival and before dismissal, bathroom time, before and after center time, snacks, lunch, recess, and after nose blowing, coughing or sneezing. All staff and students will wash their hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer throughout the day. Staff will supervise children to teach and ensure proper handwashing.

Staff will clean frequently touched surfaces such as tables, doorknobs, light switches, sink handles, and flush handles upon staff arrival, throughout the day, and at the end of the day. We are always accepting donations of cleaning supplies.

Removal

Teachers will remove all soft items from the classroom, such as pillows, stuffed animals, and dress up clothes, as they are difficult to keep clean. We will not have a sensory table this year.

Playdough will be separated and labeled for each child to use as their own, along with separate art and writing materials.

No toys, blankets, stuffed animals, or anything other than your child's essential belongings are allowed on preschool grounds.

Our drinking fountains are closed but water will be readily available to your child throughout the day in their classroom.

Visitors

At this time, no visitors or parents will be allowed in the building. This is a necessary precaution to keep the students and staff as safe as possible.

Classroom Protocols

- Bins will be available in the hall for each child to place their essential belongings (lunch/snack box, extra seasonal clothes, extra mask, Friday folder/Friday backpack, tuition envelope, coats). No non-essential items will be allowed from home.
- Teachers will send information home at the end of the school week in the students Friday folder.
- Please send a change of clothes in a gallon Ziploc bag with your child's name on it. Please also mark all clothing with your child's name.
- Masks and social distancing will be used at the discretion of the teacher for instructional purposes.
- All students will have their own set of supplies to be kept at school which will be sanitized daily.
- Snack and cold lunch will be eaten each day in the classroom with water to drink in disposable cups.
- Children will wash hands before and after snack times.

- All surfaces in the classroom and bathrooms will be cleaned/sanitized throughout the day by the teachers in the classroom.
- The parish/maintenance staff will clean all bathroom fixtures and floors, clean and mop all floors, vacuum classroom rugs, and spray disinfectant on all surfaces daily.

Dismissal

Car line will be the only means for dismissal this year. Please always remain in your car. Have each car occupant wear a mask as we load your child for the protection of our staff. You will need to buckle your child in once they are loaded into your car. You may pull into an empty spot to assist your child with buckling and securing them in their car seat. We will not dismiss anyone into a car without a car seat in compliance with Georgia State law.

Illnesses

If a child becomes ill during the morning, parents will be called immediately to pick them up. A staff member will wait in an empty classroom with the student, door ajar and in full view until the parent arrives. The parent will need to call the office upon arrival and the student will be escorted by a staff member to the student's vehicle.

Archdiocese of Atlanta Infectious Disease Policy

The primary responsibility for the prevention and control of infectious diseases lies with individuals, families, and public health authorities. Schools are not responsible for providing expert infectious disease advice or treating students; this is the role of medical practitioners and health authorities.

Attendance at any school may be denied to any student reasonably suspected of or diagnosed with a contagious or infectious disease that could make the child's attendance harmful to the welfare of other students, faculty and staff.

Schools reserve the right to require a statement from the student's primary care physician authorizing the student's return to school. Schools will respect the privacy of all its community members. Parents of children attending the school will be notified that their child has been exposed to a communicable or infectious disease in a manner that avoids identifying any community

member who has been identified with the disease, to the maximum extent appropriate in each particular circumstance.

Local school procedures will include:

- Prevention techniques – Hand washing education, coughing and sneezing education; hand sanitizer in the classrooms; sanitizing wipes in classrooms for computers, desks, common areas, etc.; tissues in all rooms; sanitation procedures; and if appropriate, the mandated use of facial masks along with social distancing.
- Preparedness – Schools will comply with the CDC, Georgia Department of Health guidelines, and directives from the Office of Catholic Schools.
- Response – Schools will follow the Office of Catholic Schools policy for school closures (Policy 5285) and directives from state and local (county and municipal) jurisdictions. The Office of Catholic Schools will provide a written Reopening of Schools Plan specific to the infectious or communicable disease present.
- Recovery – Schools will publish a return to school procedure in accordance with directives from the Office of Catholic Schools which aligns to the Reopening of Schools Plan approved by the Superintendent of Schools.

Students who travel to Level 3 Nonessential Travel Zones or any location identified as a current Hot Spot for an infectious disease by the CDC may be required to quarantine for a period of 14-days. In the case of an identified pandemic or epidemic, the Superintendent of Schools reserves the right to require parents who travelled to a Level 3 Nonessential Travel Zone (as identified by the CDC) to self-quarantine at home for 14-days before entering school property. This period of quarantine may also be required of students residing in the home.

Archdiocesan Policy on The Closing of Schools

In the event of a natural disaster, disease outbreak or any other circumstances which, in the judgement of the Superintendent of Schools, makes it infeasible, unsafe or otherwise imprudent to continue campus-based education, all Archdiocesan schools shall resume as soon as practical via distance learning and/or other methods adopted and/or developed by the school administration and faculty and approved by the Office of Catholic Schools. Due to continuing financial obligations relating to operational costs, including administrative, faculty and staff salaries, there shall be no suspension, reduction or refund of tuition or applicable fees.

Assumption of Risk Policy: COVID-19

The novel coronavirus, COVID-19, has been declared a worldwide pandemic by the World Health Organization. COVID-19 is extremely contagious and is believed to spread mainly from person to person through respiratory droplets when an infected individual coughs, sneezes or speaks.

As a result, government agencies at all levels and federal, state and local health agencies recommend social distancing and have placed limits on the congregation of groups of individuals. St. Mary Magdalene has put preventative measures in place to reduce the spread of COVID-19; however, the preschool program cannot guarantee that you or your child(ren) will not become infected with the COVID-19. Further, attending activities on the campus of St. Mary Magdalene could increase your risk and that of your children for contracting COVID-19.

While St. Mary Magdalene will make all reasonable efforts to lower the risk of COVID-19 exposure and spread during preschool, we are unable to provide any guarantee that students or their families will not be exposed to or infected by COVID-19. By enrolling your child(ren) in and attending preschool, you acknowledge the contagious nature of COVID-19 and voluntarily assume the risk that you, your child(ren) and or other family members may be exposed to or infected by COVID-19.

It is expected that preschool children and other preschool family members will follow preventative measures and guidelines implemented by St. Mary Magdalene including not coming to school if demonstrating any signs or symptoms of COVID-19.

 I understand and acknowledge receipt of the **COVID-19 Policies and Procedures** along with **The Assumption of Risk Policy**.

Printed Name_____

Signature_____

Date_____