

July 1, 2020

Dear St. Monica School Families:

I hope this email finds you and your family well and that our students are enjoying getting into a summer routine free of ZOOMs and filled with sun and hopefully some spontaneity. I have tried to take these last two weeks away from school to rejuvenate, reflect, and recharge and to focus on the 2020-2021 school year. Some of our books have already arrived, as well as our PPE safety equipment, so we are able to begin in September.

Last week, Governor Baker's office and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education released their initial guidance about reopening schools this fall. I wanted to thoroughly go through the document, connect with colleagues, and digest the information before sending this email as there are lots of details and some things will not apply to us.

St. Monica School applauds the level of thought and care that went into the development of the DESE guidance, and shares its goal of the safe return of as many students as possible to in-person school settings in order to best meet students' academic, social, and emotional needs. Our COVID Response Team is in place, and we will continue to meet to discuss school-wide planning for the various models in the guidance as it applies to St. Monica School in the coming weeks. These initial guidelines do not address every topic, and we have been told that there will be additional guidance coming from DESE throughout the summer.

The full document can be found at [DESE Initial Fall Reopening Guidelines](#), but here are some key components:

- Current medical research supports a safe in-person return to school - with preventive measures in place - as infection and transmission rates are lower for children than adults.
- Preventive measures include masks/face coverings, physical distancing, handwashing, and cleaning frequently touched surfaces.

- Masks/face coverings will be required for all students in Grade 2 and above and for all adults; they are recommended for students in Grade 1 and below.
- Based upon current medical research, and in conjunction with other preventive measures, a physical distance of three feet has been recommended.

Our COVID Response Team will need to develop three separate plans - one for return to full in-person instruction with safety requirements, one for full remote learning, and one for hybrid learning that combines in-person and remote learning.

Based upon the current medical situation, the expectation today is that students will return to full in-person instruction in September; however, that is subject to change based upon how the medical situation develops. There are likely to be more questions than answers at this time, and I will continue to communicate with you in the coming weeks.

I wish you a happy and safe Fourth of July. I ask that Mary, the patron saint of our country, keep a watchful eye and a steady hand as we navigate the next few weeks. St. Monica, St. Lucy, St. Julie, and St. Francis- please pray for us. We, as a community of faith and learners, please continue to pray for one another.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Donna Henderson – Principal