



## **Smart, Healthy, Holy: A Home & School Partnership**

### **Guidelines for Saint Theresa Catholic School - August 2021**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Saint Theresa Catholic School exists to “help prepare students spiritually, academically, and socially to assume responsible and productive roles in society while living out the values of the gospel.” This is best accomplished when children are present in the classroom, having full access to not only the physical and educational resources available, but having the opportunity to interact with other members of the community who can impact their faith formation and lead them to an encounter with the Living Christ.

In March 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. Arizona has experienced two separate surges in cases of infection (June 2020 and January 2021). Overall, the number of new COVID-19 cases reported daily, hospitalizations and deaths have decreased significantly since January 2021. In mid-July, case rates began to rise owing to the circulation of the highly communicable Delta variant. This variant accounted for 3% of new cases in Arizona in May 2021 and 29% of new cases in June and July 2021 (AZ COVID-19 Sequencing Dashboard).

Maricopa County remains in the category of “substantial” spread, as do the communities that surround Saint Theresa Catholic School. In the absence of medications to effectively treat illness caused by the SARS-Co-V-2 (COVID) and current age parameters for vaccine eligibility, strategies to limit spread of infection must continue to be employed. No single action, or set of actions, will completely eliminate the risk of illness. The implementation of several coordinated interventions will allow for the healthiest environment possible.

These Guidelines are intended for the opening of school on August 11, 2021 and will be amended in accordance with public health guidance.

## **MONITORING OF HEALTH INDICATORS**

Updated guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) specifically for schools, emphasizes the need for monitoring of the local “community transmission, vaccination coverage, screening testing, and occurrence of outbreaks to guide decisions on the level of layered prevention strategies (e.g., physical distancing, screening testing)” (Updated Guidance for Schools 08/12/21).

**Community Data** -The Maricopa County Schools Dashboard monitors case counts of COVID-19 and the percent positivity for a given zip code, city, school and school district. Additionally, Maricopa County Public Health has developed and launched a Dashboard that tracks vaccine administration within communities and by demographics.

## **ACTION PLAN**

1. All activities associated with the “normal” operation of Saint Theresa Catholic School will be resumed (Mass attendance, sports, extracurricular clubs, etc.)
2. The Maricopa County Department of Public Health will continue to provide guidance and recommendations in accordance with CDC guidelines. Those practices identified by healthcare professionals with expertise in public/community health as being “best practices” for limiting the spread of respiratory illness, and based on what is reasonable, practical, and feasible for our community, will be implemented.
3. Routine cleaning of classrooms, restrooms, common areas will continue, using EPA approved products, throughout the school year. Classrooms, restrooms and common areas will be disinfected weekly. The Church will be disinfected prior to student use (i.e. prior to weekly Mass).
4. Vaccination is currently the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. Being vaccinated is the best way to stop the spread of infection and the evolution of variants.
  - a. Vaccination is strongly encouraged for those eligible, but is not required.
  - b. Currently, only those 12 years of age and older are eligible to receive a vaccine. Though it is not required, parents may submit documentation of their students receiving COVID vaccine with other immunization records. The student’s individual electronic health records will be updated accordingly.
5. Practices that have been identified as being vitally important in controlling spread of respiratory illnesses are: Hand and respiratory hygiene, physical distancing, and limiting contact with those who are sick.
  - a. Hand Hygiene
    - i. There will be a continued emphasis on hand hygiene and handwashing throughout the school year.
    - ii. More frequent and deliberate washing of hands among students, staff and visitors will continue to be encouraged.

b. Hygiene Masks/Respiratory

- i. Masks are not necessary for anyone when outdoors, engaged in physical activities, eating, drinking or more than 3 feet away from another person.
- ii. All people will wear a mask, regardless of vaccination status , when indoors .
- iii. All students/teachers will wear masks when attending all-school Mass.
- iv. Parents may choose to have their student (any age) wear a face covering for the duration of each school day. If a parent chooses this, the parent must work with their child, at home, to practice wearing the mask for extended periods of time.

## **ILLNESS SURVEILLANCE**

1. The Health Assistant is the designated point of contact for Saint Theresa Catholic School and can be reached at (602) 840-0010 Ext. 118.
2. The Health Assistant will be responsible for daily tracking of attendance and monitoring for trends.
3. Home is the first point of screening for illness. All members of the STCS school community are expected to monitor for signs of illness and STAY HOME if they are sick.
  - a. This would include checking for fever (temperature greater than 99.9o ) and/or symptoms like cough, congestion, runny nose, sore throat, diarrhea, vomiting, or other indications of illness, prior to coming to school.
  - b. A parent/caregiver who is not able to screen their child prior to bringing him/her to school, may request the Health Assistant to perform the assessment. Please call the Health Office for guidance and direction as to where to bring the student. A parent/caregiver will need to wait with the student until the student is cleared.
  - c. It is understood that when a parent, or designated caretaker, brings a child to school, they are assuring the child is well and fit for school.
4. Families/staff should self-report to the Health Assistant if they, or their student, have symptoms of COVID-19, a positive test for COVID-19, or through contact tracing, were exposed to someone with COVID-19. The Health Assistant will notify Maricopa County Department of Public Health in accordance with Guidelines for School Reporting.
5. Those identified as a “close contact” of a COVID+ person will need to follow the quarantine guidelines (as established by MCDPH) in place at that time.
6. Screening of staff, students, visitors and others coming to the school campus, for fever and symptoms, may be instituted in accordance with current public health recommendations and based upon community prevalence of illness.

## **MANAGEMENT OF ILLNESS**

1. Any teacher, staff member or student who becomes ill at school with any respiratory symptom that is not known to be part of a chronic condition (i.e. asthma, allergies) will be separated from other staff/children and excluded from the school as soon as the parent/guardian can pick them up. Parents/guardians are expected to pick up an ill child within 30 - 45 minutes of notification.
2. A person displaying symptoms associated with COVID will be referred to their primary care provider for assessment.
3. A resource list for PCR testing for COVID will be provided.
4. A person who tests positive for COVID should follow current Maricopa County Department of Public Health Guidelines: [Home Isolation Guidance](#)
5. In accordance with state and local laws and regulations, the Health and Wellness Coordinator and Administration will notify school families if there is an exposure at school while maintaining confidentiality.
6. Care of ill students and staff will be guided by Guidelines for Infection Surveillance and Control During 2020 Pandemic (COVID) for Healthcare Staff/Care of Students and Staff that Become Ill at School or Arrive Sick
  - a. Any person who displays symptoms of respiratory illness: cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell or other symptoms identified as being associated with COVID will immediately be separated and placed in a designated "sick room" (isolation).
  - b. While providing care for a person in a sick room (isolation), the Health Assistant will limit interaction with other students or staff. All non-urgent, routine visits to the Health Office must be halted. If necessary, the medical needs of other students may temporarily be met by another member of the school staff as designated by the principal.
7. Upon notification of a positive test, the Health Assistant will begin contact tracing and notify the Maricopa County Department of Public Health according to current protocols. MCDPH will continue the case investigation.