

# **St. Francis Xavier COVID-19 Resources**

## **Guidelines and Documents 2020/2021**

### **Introduction**

Our mission at St. Francis Xavier Elementary School is grounded in the Jesuit principles of building a strong religious based experience that is loving and strives for intellectual competence. We are open to growth and committed to doing justice for all. We exist for the Magis, or the concept of more, striving for excellence in our daily lives and living within intention as a community of Cura Personalis, caring for the whole person. We respect each individual as a child of God deserving of dignity and respect, loving and caring for the whole person. Our school exists for the greater glory of God. It is in this time of world pandemic that our personal choices matter more than ever. Our community of faith guides us to follow the teachings of Pope John Paul XXIII by making choices for the greater good of all. As we journey through this pandemic may we do so with respect for each individual, for the social well-being of our community at St. Francis and for peace and comfort for all.

### **Guidance of Catholic Schools Office from the Diocese of Phoenix**

Per the Diocese website, published on July 29, 2020

“The Diocese of Phoenix Catholic schools have been working diligently over the summer to prepare their individual school reopening plans. Students, families, and educators are eager to begin the new academic year while focusing on keeping everyone safe and healthy.

Based on guidance from Governor Ducey and the Arizona Department of Health Services, Catholic schools in the Diocese of Phoenix will begin this new school year with online learning starting between August 10 and August 17. In-person classroom instruction is projected to begin on September 8, depending upon information provided from the new state public health benchmarks for reopening schools and other public health data. Individual schools within the Diocese will base their final in-person start date decisions upon these benchmarks and dates may be adjusted as necessary.

We pray that as we move ahead with the start of the school year, our students and families will experience a Catholic educational experience that promotes academic excellence, moral values, and lifelong service.”

## **Assessment**

Our school will utilize the benchmarks reported by the Arizona Department of Health Services (azdhs.gov) for Maricopa county along with the incidence of illness within our school community as indicators of the overall health. Students and staff at SFX reside in many different zip codes and thus we will use the data from the county to better reflect our community. You may access the COVID-19 dashboard below (you will need to select Maricopa county):

<https://www.azdhs.gov/preparedness/epidemiology-disease-control/infectious-disease-epidemiology/index.php#novel-coronavirus-schools>

The CDC has published the School Decision Tree to guide school reopening which may be accessed below:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/decision-tool.html>

## **SFX Plan**

St. Francis Xavier will follow the recommendations of the Diocese of Phoenix along with the parameters set forth by the Arizona Department of Health Services for our planned reopening of on-campus instruction. Distance learning remains an option for students. The metrics set by the AZDHS will continue to guide our school. The AZDHS uses the following metrics as benchmarks to reopen schools:

- a. Case count in relation to the population
- b. Diagnostic test percent positivity
- c. COVID-19 illness surveillance

Use of these parameters along with guidance from the Diocese and our administration will dictate how we proceed as a school community.

## Virus Spread

COVID-19 is classified as a respiratory virus. According to the CDC the virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person to person, primarily through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. Spread is more likely when people are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).

## Preventing virus spread

There are several practical steps that can be taken to limit the spread of germs, including the COVID-19 virus. **Best practices include washing hands, physical distancing, wearing a mask and staying home when sick.**

## Mask wearing on campus

Part of the SFX safety plan during COVID-19 requires that masks be worn on campus. Masks are meant to protect other people. According to the CDC, you can potentially spread the COVID-19 virus even if you do not feel sick but are infected with the virus (asymptomatic carrier spread). Everyone should wear a mask in public settings and when around people who don't live in your household, especially when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain. Masks should not be worn on a person who is having trouble breathing or is unconscious or cannot remove the mask on their own. A mask should not be worn by children under the age of 2 years.

Your mask should have 2 or more layers and should be made of a breathable material. Your mask should fit correctly, it should cover your nose and mouth and should fit your face. Make sure that the mask you wear allows for easy breathing and does not block your vision. Your mask should either be a one-time use disposable version or one that can be properly cleaned. A reusable mask should be laundered daily to remove any germs and dirt that may have accumulated during wearing. A wet mask is ineffective in filtering out potential droplets and should be changed. **Please have a back up mask to use if yours should become wet or dirty.**

It is important to handle your mask safely. If possible, your mask and your face should not be touched. Touching your face is a way to spread germs from your hands to your face. If you do handle your mask, wash your hands after touching your mask. If you need to remove your mask, please carefully place your mask in a container such as a zip top food bag or plastic container. This keeps your mask from touching other surfaces and helps keep germs from spreading.

Do not wear a mask that makes it hard to breath, such as one that is made of vinyl. Never wear a mask that has a valve. This type of mask is intended to only filter inhaled air and is designed to provide a direct path out for exhaled air. Certain healthcare workers are required to wear masks labeled as N95. These specialized masks require certified fittings and should only be worn in hospital settings by hospital staff.

There will be times allowed for “mask breaks” while on campus.

[Please click here for the mask schedule.](#) Additional information regarding mask wearing can be found below:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>

## **Handwashing**

Handwashing is good practice anytime. The CDC recognizes that thorough hand washing during this time of COVID-19 takes on additional importance. When germs get onto hands and are not washed off, they can be passed from one person to another leading to illness. Washing hands prevents illness and the general spread of germs. Germs can unknowingly be transferred to us if our hands are not clean. People frequently touch their eyes, nose or mouth without even being aware. This is an easy avenue for germs to enter our body. Unwashed hands that handle food can also be an avenue that germs are shared.

The simple task of washing our hands is one of the most important steps we can do to help prevent the spread of the Corona virus and many other agents that can make us sick. There is a proper way to wash your hands. Wet your hands with clean running water that is either warm or cold, and then apply soap and wash your hands.

Soap is an effect agent in the process of removing germs. Studies have shown that the surfactant in soap helps to lift germs off skin surfaces, allowing them to be rinsed off hands and sent down the drain. People who use soap also tend to wash their hands

longer. Lathering and scrubbing creates friction which also aids in lifting germs from skin. Washing your hands for 20 seconds, which is easily timed if you hum the 'Happy Birthday' song twice, is sufficient time to wash your hands. Remember to dry your hands with a clean towel.

Additional handwashing information can be found at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>

## **Hand Sanitizer**

St. Francis has invested in additional hand sanitizing stations that have been placed throughout school. Washing your hands with soap and water, rinsing and drying hands thoroughly remains the most effective way to remove germs from skin. Sometimes handwashing is either not readily available or is inconvenient. A reasonable substitute is the use of hand sanitizer. Alcohol is the agent in hand sanitizer that reduces the number of germs in many situations. The CDC recommends that a minimum of a 60% alcohol based hand sanitizer be used to reduce germs. If you choose to use hand sanitizer, wash your hands as soon as possible to facilitate the removal of germs.

Additional information regarding the use of hand sanitizer can be found at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/hand-sanitizer-use.html>

## **Physical Distancing**

One of the most effective steps to take to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is to make sure there are at least 6 feet between each other. The accepted standard of 6 feet between each other allows a safe distance between one person and the potential germs being exhaled from another person. Students will be instructed to maintain a safe distance from others while on campus especially while indoors. Classrooms have been rearranged to help with physical distancing. Assigned seating is in place. Students will be encouraged to keep a safe space between themselves and classmates throughout the school day.

Class cohorts have been created to limit the interaction between students. Each homeroom will stay with their homeroom as much as possible. There will be no mixing of classes at this with the exception of specific scheduled recess periods. Masks will be

worn at recess. Students should come prepared for class and should have their own school supplies.

Elective and special classes, for the most part, will be conducted within the homeroom. This means that the elective or special teacher will be joining the class in their homeroom rather than the class traveling to another classroom. The only exception would be for a specific class that may travel to a classroom that has not been used that day. Teachers have made preparations for down time during the learning day.

## **Lunch and Recess**

Students will eat lunch either in their classroom or outside. Physical distancing will be maintained. Handwashing will take place before and after eating lunch. Students will not be allowed to share food of any kind. Our school lunch program will continue for students who ordered from the lunch menu.

## **Food Allergies**

Food allergies are a reality that affects every classroom at St. Francis Xavier. It is estimated that food allergies are present in 6-8% of all school age children. Approximately 25% of allergic reactions to food occur in school settings. First time allergic reactions can occur anywhere, including on a school campus. Food allergies should be taken seriously by all. **Food allergies can be life threatening.**

**NO food items containing peanuts or tree nuts of any kind may be brought to campus. This includes items that use any component of nuts or are manufactured in a facility where nut items are processed. Students will not be allowed to share any food items. Sharing food potentially exposes a person to a life threatening situation.**

According to the Arizona Resource Guide for Supporting Students with Life Threatening Allergies, “Allergic reactions to foods vary among students and can range from mild to severe life-threatening anaphylactic reactions. Some students, who are very sensitive, may react to just touching or inhaling the allergen. For other students, consumption of as little as one five-thousandth of a teaspoon of an allergic food can cause death. The severity of a reaction is not predictable. Allergic reactions look different from one student to the next. Because there is a cumulative effect from past exposures to an allergen, the severity of a future exposure cannot be predicted.”

Avoiding allergens is the best prevention. Students will wash hands before and after eating. Students with known allergies are required to inform St. Francis Xavier and to provide an Action Plan to the school nurse that will be followed by all staff. Students with EPIPens or AViQ epinephrine pens will follow the directions on their action plan. Staff is trained to administer epinephrine in an emergency situation.

Additional information regarding allergies, especially in the school setting, can be found at:

<https://www.azdhs.gov/documents/prevention/azwic/food-allergies-resource-guide.pdf>

## HOME AND SCHOOL

Home and school share a bond. We need parents to do their part at home to keep their family healthy as we will do our part as teachers and staff to keep ourselves and our community healthy. Be mindful of where you are going and avoid large crowds and gatherings. The success of our school health depends on everyone doing their part to keep all healthy. You can do your part by doing the following:

Parent(s) should conduct a health screening for each student in their household before the student comes to campus. [Please click here for the screening tool.](#)

If your child(ren) will be absent from school because of COVID-19 symptoms, please notify the SFXS attendance line (602)266-5364. Please remember to call the attendance line to report each student's absence for any reason.

### EXPOSURE, CLOSE CONTACT, NO SYMPTOMS

Visual Flow Chart for information

[Please click here for visual chart](#)

**Please review the guidelines stated in the visual chart above. If you have questions regarding exposure please contact our school nurses directly.**

### DIAGNOSIS, POSITIVE TEST, NO SYMPTOMS

**If a student or staff member tests positive, St. Francis will follow the Maricopa County Department of Public Health safe practices in accordance with Guidelines for School Reporting (August 20, 2020).**

**Anyone who tests positive for the COVID-19 cannot go to school. They must stay home and quarantine for a minimum of 10 days and must be symptom free without medication for the 24 hour period before returning to school. Please check with the nurse with any questions.**

#### **DIAGNOSIS, POSITIVE TEST, AT LEAST 1 SYMPTOM**

**Anyone who has not had a COVID-19 test but has at least 1 symptom from the list below CANNOT GO TO SCHOOL. They must stay home and quarantine for a minimum of 10 days since the first symptom. They must also have no fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications. All other symptoms must have improved or resolved.**

**A student will be sent home with any of the following COVID-19 symptoms identified by the CDC:**

**Cough**

**Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing**

**Fatigue**

**Congestion/Runny Nose**

**Sore Throat**

**Diarrhea**

**Nausea/Vomiting**

**Headache**

**Body Aches**

**Fever ( $\geq 100.4$ )**

**Chills**

**New Loss of Taste or Smell**

<https://www.maricopa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/58863/Home-Isolation-Guidance?bidId=>

Parents should have their child evaluated by their physician to rule out COVID-19 or any other illness. The student should follow the direction of their physician which includes potentially isolating for 14 days.

The parent must notify the SFX School Nurse at (602) 266-5364 with the recommendations from their physician giving SFX the opportunity to proceed with any further actions to promote a safe environment at school



## HEALTH & SAFETY ON CAMPUS

The School Nurse is the designated point of contact for St. Francis and can be reached through the main school phone number, (602) 266-5364.

The School Nurse will be responsible for daily tracking of attendance and monitoring for trends in illness escalation.

Home is the first point of screening for illness. All members of the SFX community are expected to monitor for signs of illness and **STAY HOME if they are sick. There will be a zero tolerance policy with regard to sick students, staff and teachers on campus.**

According to the CDC, children may be less likely to have a fever as an initial symptom of COVID, thus the absence of fever may not be a reliable indicator. Please check all symptoms listed above.

**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.**

Daily “spot checks” will be done by the School Nurses throughout the day to obtain random sampling of students and staff.

Increased surveillance measures will be added when warranted based on the monitoring of community health indicators. Screening would include checking for fever (temperature greater than 100.4) and/or COVID-19 like symptoms.

**Families/staff should self-report to the School Nurse if they or their student(s) have symptoms of COVID-19, a positive test for COVID-19, or through contact tracing, were exposed to someone with COVID-19. The School Nurse will notify Maricopa County Department of Public Health in accordance with Guidelines for School Reporting (August 20, 2020).**

**If an employee or student has been in close contact with a person who tests positive for COVID-19 (within 6 feet for greater than 15 minutes), they should not come to school and stay at home for 14 days from the time of exposure.**

## **MANAGEMENT OF ILLNESS**

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 school. Parents/guardians are expected to pick up an ill child within **30 - 45** minutes of notification.

The Nurse's Office will be used as a sick room as it is self contained, has a door which can be closed, has furnishings that can be easily disinfected, and allows for the relative separation of the ill person from those who are not ill. A sign will be placed on the outer door to clearly communicate the use of room for care of a sick person. While providing care for a person in the Nurse's Office, the School Nurse will limit interaction with other students or staff. All non-urgent, routine visits to the Nurse's 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. When exiting the building, the ill person will use the "sick kid pick up door" which limits exposure.

A person displaying symptoms associated with COVID will be referred to their primary care provider for assessment and recommendations for COVID testing.

A person who tests positive for COVID should follow current Maricopa County Department of Public Health Guidelines.

Using the COVID-19 School Report Form and established protocols, the School Nurse will notify the Maricopa County Department of Public Health (MCDPH) of positive COVID cases. MCDPH will investigate suspected cases and follow up with further recommendations for SFX.

The School Nurse will work in collaboration with Maricopa County Department of Public Health to perform contact tracing and identify those members of the community who need to follow up with a health care provider and/or begin home isolation.

## **CAMPUS CLEANING AND DISINFECTING**

Upgrades have been made to the air filtration system throughout the campus. We will have two HEPA air purifiers in each classroom. Our water fountains on campus have been altered to allow for refilling a water bottle only. All drinking fountains have been suspended at this time. Please have your student(s) bring a refillable water bottle to

school labeled with their name. Cleaning supplies are available in each classroom. Disinfecting of high touch surfaces will take place throughout the day. The entire campus will undergo enhanced cleaning every night.