

St. Monica Parish School
Pandemic Preparedness Plan

Policy:

Realizing it is a matter of when, not if, a pandemic flu outbreak will occur, St. Monica Parish School takes planning for this as seriously as any other major catastrophe we might be subject to at school, such as an earthquake. Planning includes the areas of sanitary practices, movement and isolation of students and staff, and contingency plans in case of absences and school closure.

Guidelines

1. The “chain of command” of the school administration specifically for a pandemic outbreak would be: Principal > Vice Principal/Director of Student life > MS Department Head > Intermediate Department Head > Primary Department Head. Exceptions to any of the following guidelines may be made by the principal (or person at the top of the chain of command at the time).
2. During a recognized pandemic flu outbreak, there will be a required, increased vigilance in sanitary practices.
 - A. Desks, keyboards, and other highly-used areas in every classroom and office would be sanitized with disinfecting wipes immediately before school begins. This task could be accomplished by each teacher/administrator or could be assigned to a pair of students prior to 8:25, to all the students in the class as they enter at 8:25, or to an instructional assistant.
 - B. Before eating snacks or lunch, besides requiring all students to wash hands (using soap & water or “Purell-type” hand-sanitizing gel), teachers would require all students to sanitize their desks using disinfecting wipes.
 - C. All students and staff would be required to use “Purell-type” hand-sanitizing gel immediately before and after using public-use equipment, most notably before/after using keyboards in the classroom, computer lab, and library and before/after using musical instruments in the music room.
 - D. The maintenance staff will disinfect on a daily basis the commonly-shared objects/areas, such as doorknobs, phone receivers, light switches, and faucets.
3. During a recognized pandemic flu outbreak, we may decide to limit movement of students in order to keep the number of contacts with others to a minimum.
 - A. This could involve students staying in their homeroom classroom for all classes.
 - B. Instead of students traveling to other teachers’ rooms, those teachers would come to the homeroom.
 - C. Recesses could be limited to individual classes taking “private” outdoor recesses on a schedule that keeps classes separated. Recess items that could not be easily sanitized, such as the BigToy and sports equipment, would be off limits.
 - D. There could be a suspension of group activities and school-wide events, such as school Masses.
4. During a recognized pandemic flu outbreak, only students and school/parish employees will be allowed in school rooms and buildings.
 - A. This would mean there would be a suspension of visitors and volunteer parents in the school.
 - B. Exceptions would be made by the principal.

5. Students who become ill during a recognized pandemic (symptoms could include: high temperature, muscle aches and pains, extreme tiredness, diarrhea, nausea or vomiting, tiredness, cough, sore throat, stuffy or runny nose) shall be quarantined in the health room until a parent or listed guardian is able to take the student home.
 - A. If the school secretary is not available, staff will be assigned to supervise the health room.
 - B. The adjacent office bathrooms located near the health room will be used solely by these quarantined students.
 - C. The health room will be off limits to all other students and staff.
 - D. Students sent home will not be allowed to return to school without written approval from a health care professional.
6. Staff who become ill during a recognized pandemic shall be sent home.
 - A. Arrangements will be made to provide coverage for this departing staff member. If this ill staff member is a homeroom teacher, a specialist teacher will take over or two homerooms will be combined into one homeroom for the time being. If this ill staff member is a specialist teacher, that specialist subject will be canceled for the time being.
 - B. If the ill staff member is unable to drive himself/herself home, he/she will be quarantined until arrangements can be made for transport.
 - C. Staff sent home will not be allowed to return to school without written approval from a health care professional.
7. In the event of a pandemic flu outbreak, the possibility of casualties is greater. Loss of students, staff, and/or other family members is a possibility if bird flu does spread as predicted. It shall be incumbent on the entire staff to be vigilant of others who are suffering from that loss.
 - A. Staff needs to monitor the effects of cumulative stress on fellow staff members, especially the primary “caregivers” (office staff, classroom aides, homeroom teachers).
 - B. To aid in crisis recovery, a “safe room,” such as the large conference room and/or Commons, will be designated for recover and counseling.
 - C. A crisis recovery team shall be created to provide emotional-psychological support. This may consist of the pastor or other priests, a contracted school counselor, the principal or vice-principal, or others as necessary.
 - D. Job coverage for staff needing to recover could amount to combining classes, finding another staff member to step in, or hiring a substitute.
8. Closing School
 - A. The current policy is to contact the Health Department when 10% of the students are absent due to illness. In the event of a recognized pandemic, it is not known at this time what specific percent of absenteeism will cause the Health Department to close our school or any school.
 - B. If our school is forced to close or if we choose ourselves to close school, this could be for a few days or for as long as 3 months.
 - C. If the school is closed for fewer than 4 days, such employee absences will be considered paid absences for all salaried employees. No missed days will need to be made up by students.
 - D. When between 5 and 15 school days are missed due to a closure, the principal will add an appropriate number of school days to later in the school calendar as make-up days.
 - i. These added days will come from previously scheduled vacation days (such as Christmas break or Easter break) or from the summer months (June, July, August).
 - ii. The number of make-up days added do not necessarily have to equal the number of days missed, but will be a number determined by the principal that is needed to satisfactorily make up for missed instruction.
 - iii. Employees would be expected to work during these make-up days in order to continue receiving their full wages for the year.
 - E. In the event of a school closure for 16 or more school days, there would be two plans possible, or a combination of both.
 - i. We would institute the same plan as above, in making up the missed days by holding school during previously scheduled vacation days (summer, Easter, and/or Christmas).
 - ii. And/or we would make it possible for teachers and students to utilize the current school web site and teacher email accounts to continue instruction and academic continuity during the closure.
 - a. Teachers and administrators (principal, vice-principal/director of student life, development director, secretary) would continue to be paid during the closure time as long as they would consistently work online.
 - b. Homeroom teachers would be responsible for a minimum weekly online or phone contact with each of their students and students’ parents, explaining lessons, assigning homework, and assessing returned homework. Teachers would also need to give the administration weekly updates as to the topics taught that week, the number of contacts made, the progress of students, etc.

- c. Specialist teachers would either cover this online responsibility for homeroom teachers too ill to work, or would conduct their own online lessons with a designated number of classes (to be determined by the administration).
 - d. Administrators would be responsible for overseeing the teachers with weekly online or phone contact, including evaluating the teachers' lessons and assessments.
 - iii. To enhance the effectiveness of online teaching, all teachers will annually present one "remote learning" lesson to a class, utilizing the school website and family emails.
- F. In the event of a school closure, as described above in C, D, or E, parents would be expected to continue monthly tuition payments and fulfill fundraising commitments, in order to cover the school's fixed expenses. Minimum volunteer hour requirements could be reduced by the principal if parents are not able to visit school due to illness, school quarantine, or closure.
- G. In the event of an ill student unable to keep current with online instruction and fulfill the teachers' requirements, efforts will be made to promote the student at the conclusion of the school year through other means, such as subsequent tutoring or passing a cumulative grade level test.
- H. In the event of a staff member who cannot work, even online, due to an extended illness from a pandemic, the Family and Medical Leave policy will be enacted.

St. Monica Parish School
Illness

Current Policy and Guidelines:

If a student becomes ill during the school day, he/she will be sent to the health room in the office. The secretary or other office personnel will observe and comfort the child, and take the child's temperature and administer first aid if necessary. If the temperature is above normal, or if the child is obviously too ill to participate in class, a parent will be called to take him/her home. A health room reporting form for parents is sent home with all students who report to the health room.

To avoid passing on an illness to classmates, a student who has an above normal temperature, vomiting, or diarrhea is not to attend school until things return to normal for at least 24 hours. Likewise, a student with a contagious condition such as chicken pox or head lice is not to attend school until the condition is not considered contagious. Parents should immediately notify the school about the child's contagious condition so school parents can be informed via a letter sent home by the school.

Also, to avoid passing on illnesses, teachers, classroom aides, and office personnel annually instruct the students on proper hand washing, sneezing, and coughing techniques. Teachers should make sure students follow these techniques and wash their hands thoroughly after using the bathroom and before eating.

New Addition to Policy and Guidelines:

When the "regular flu season" begins and there is an increase in illnesses and absences, there will be an increased vigilance in sanitary and hygienic practices that could include one or more of the following:

- A. Before eating snacks or lunch, besides requiring all students to wash hands (using soap & water or "Purell-type" hand-sanitizing gel), teachers would require all students to sanitize their desks using disinfecting wipes.
- B. Desks, keyboards, and other highly-used areas in every classroom and office would be sanitized with disinfecting wipes immediately before school begins. This task could be accomplished by each teacher/administrator or could be assigned to a pair of students prior to 8:25, to all the students in the class as they enter at 8:25, or to an instructional assistant.
- C. All students and staff would be required to use "Purell-type" hand-sanitizing gel immediately before and after using public-use equipment, most notably before/after using keyboards in the classroom, computer lab, and library and before/after using musical instruments in the music room.