



BISHOP HEELAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

A LIFETIME ADVANTAGE

2020-2021 School Year COVID-19 Plans and Options

Released on August 3, 2020

The purpose of this document is to provide clarity and options for our Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools being open for the school year. This guidance has been formed and informed by consultation with health and education professionals, the Diocese of Sioux City and school leaders. It will not and cannot anticipate or address every situation that may arise as we reopen our schools in August. However, it does provide basic information on procedures and protocols that Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools will follow to ensure the health and safety of students and staff members in our buildings. We acknowledge these procedures are intended to mitigate risk but cannot eliminate it completely. We are excited and ready to continue our partnership with your family. We are working diligently to ensure your family continues to receive a safe and sound Catholic education that meets your child's and family's spiritual, emotional and intellectual needs.

Living Our Mission

In this school family, we believe that we are better together because we are a family; indeed, we are many parts of one Body of Christ. We believe that we grow in our relationship with God by learning about God's creation: the world, the people in it, and ourselves. We are always learning, and we believe that we learn better together.

To that end, it is our goal to begin the school year on August 24 for 9th graders, August 25 for K-12th graders and September 2 for 3-year olds and preschool with on-site instruction for all. With this in mind, we are committed to providing a quality Catholic education, regardless of the mode of delivery used. The education your child receives from the Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools is distinct, as our Catholic beliefs, traditions, and teachings are deeply embedded in daily instruction. The BHCS staff is prepared to continue this for the 2020-21 school year.

Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools are committed to offering the highest level of education possible by focusing directly on the social, emotional, faith, and intellectual needs of each child.

- Religion classes and prayer opportunities will be held daily.
- Teachers will have daily communication and interaction with all students.
- Catholic beliefs, traditions, and teaching will continue to be deeply embedded in daily instruction.
- Mass will be celebrated.
- Service opportunities will be available for all students.
- Core classes will be taught daily.

Three Modes of Delivery

According to the Iowa Department of Education requirements, we are preparing three models of instruction in order to be ready for the unknown with the school year. Each one is described below.

On-Site Learning

This model indicates services are offered at Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools. We will begin the school year with on-site learning. To meet this goal, we have planned for additional cleaning, social distancing, training, and health/safety plans that are explained further below.

Hybrid Learning

This model indicates services are offered both remotely and on-site simultaneously. This model may be used to address specific student health concerns and a lack of readiness for that student to return to the onsite model, as well as state mandates for social distancing, etc. Students using remote virtual learning will utilize Google Classroom for grades 3-12 and SeeSaw for PK-2nd grade for instruction. This is available to any student at any time during the school year. If you or someone in your family has an underlying health concern, you can register for the Hybrid Learning and keep that child at home to learn. If this is the choice you make for your child(ren), the following is expected of them:

- Notify your building principal by August 17 if you plan to start the year this way.
- The student must participate each day synchronously with the teacher and classroom. They must check in online at the start of the day and remain plugged in online throughout the day.
- If a student is sick, then the teacher will work with them for the period of time they don't feel well.
- Teachers will be in essence broadcasting "live" throughout each day for any student not in the classroom.

This option is also for students who might be in quarantine.

Continuous Online Learning

This model indicates services will be held remotely for all students. Virtual learning will be used in emergency situations when on-site learning is not possible for instance, if the Governor shuts schools down or if the Siouxland District Health Department closes our schools due to the circumstances in Woodbury County or our schools. . When students are using remote virtual learning, they will utilize Google Classroom for grades 3-12 and SeeSaw for PK-2nd grade for instruction.

Communication

- BHCS will provide frequent and timely communication with parents and families on changes in delivery methods, reopening, return-to-learn, etc.
- Tell building principal if staff or student comes into close contact with a person who tested positive for COVID-19. (Close contact is defined as less than 6 feet for more than 15 minutes by the Siouxland District Health Department.)
- Staff and families must inform the school if they, or their student have symptoms of COVID-19, a positive test for COVID-19, or were exposed to someone with COVID-19 within the last 14 days.
- If there is a confirmed case in a student or staff member, while keeping the anonymity of the student or family, contact tracing will be used through the Siouxland District Health

Department to determine next steps. Additionally, the class members or those who potentially came in contact with the student will be notified of the positive case in the class.

OVERVIEW OF CURRENT HEALTH & SAFETY GUIDELINES

We rely on you, our families, to do their part to help keep our school community safe and allow us to remain on-site. Based on federal and state guidance and recommendations available at this time, we are asking all Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools families to follow these practices:

1. Stay home if sick: As schools commit to reopening, it is vitally important that everyone does their part and stays home if they are feeling sick or have any symptoms associated with COVID-19. **Parents are instructed to keep their child at home if they are ill, and/or have a temperature of 100.0 degrees or higher.** Please do not give your child ibuprofen and send them to school. We request that all students have their temperatures taken at home each morning before school. Symptoms can include:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

2. Face coverings and masks: Students and staff must wear face coverings or masks upon entering the building and throughout the school day. Face coverings will not be worn during lunch, recess and other breaks where students will be allowed outdoors or are able to properly social distance. Exceptions will be granted for those students or staff for whom it is not safe to wear masks due to age, medical conditions, or other considerations. Documentation must be provided by a physician. In cases in which face coverings or masks are not possible, social distancing of 6-feet is required. Parents will be responsible for providing students with face coverings or masks. Schools will have backup disposable masks available for students who need them. Staff may choose to wear their own mask or one provided by the school. Face shields may be used instead of masks, especially for lower elementary staff and students. The mask use policy will be reviewed regularly in conjunction with the CDC, Iowa Department of Health and Siouxland District Health recommendations.

3. Frequent hand washing and hand sanitizing: All students and staff must engage in frequent handwashing, including upon arrival, before and after meals, after bathroom use, after coughing or sneezing, and before dismissal. Effective handwashing means individuals use soap and water to wash all surfaces of their hands for at least 20 seconds, rinse thoroughly, and dry with an individual disposable towel or air dryer. If handwashing is not available, hand sanitizer can be used.

4. Physical distancing: Students and staff will maintain a physical distance of 6 feet to the greatest extent possible. Desks/tables will be spaced 3-6 feet apart facing the same direction, and protocols must be developed to maintain this distance when students are entering and exiting the building and moving throughout the school (including to and within restrooms) when feasible. All efforts will be made to maximize space in classrooms and common areas. Tape or signage to ensure distancing in common areas (library tables, commons, etc.) will be used to guide student and staff distancing. As adults are more susceptible than children, teachers should be cognizant of distancing from students and other staff members. In cases where teacher distancing is difficult, masks should be worn. Seating charts will be used and adhered to in all classrooms and areas to keep students in the same workspace each day. At the high school these seating charts will be alphabetized so that students will be more likely to sit by similar students class period after class period.

5. Isolation and discharge protocols for students who may become ill during the day: Our schools have developed protocols for isolation and discharge of students who become sick during the school day. A specific room will be maintained for students with COVID-19 symptoms that is separate from the nurse's office or other space where other ailments are treated.

6. Entry screening: It is not currently recommended to temperature check students at building entry due to the significant number of false-positive and false-negative results. Student and staff temperatures should be checked daily at home before leaving for school.

7. Arrival and dismissal to minimize crowding: Each building will communicate possible adjustments to arrival and dismissal times and procedures to minimize contact. Student pick-up and drop-off will occur outside the school building.

8. Visitors / Volunteers: Outside visitors and volunteers will not be permitted to enter school buildings to ensure the health and safety of the school and the larger community. Deliveries will be dropped either outside the building or left inside the door of the school. Parents are encouraged to enter the building only in an emergency situation and must wear masks upon entering the building.

9. Large group gatherings: Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools prides itself on family connections and often holds large gatherings for prayer services, family nights, etc. We will adjust or postpone these types of activities until we can once again gather safely in large groups without risk of COVID spread. Many of these events might be done virtually.

10. Signage: Our schools will post signs reminding students and staff of physical distancing, indicating one-way routes in hallways, spacing out at sinks in restrooms, marking distancing on floors with tape, etc.

11. Cohorting: Staff and students will cohort whenever possible. Class periods might be staggered by cohorts to limit numbers of students in hallways at one time. Recess can be scheduled by cohorts to limit the number of students interacting on a playground at any given time.

12. Transportation: BHCS will consult with Sioux City Public Schools to collaborate on guidance and requirements for students who require transportation to and from school.

Distancing Guidelines by Grade Level

3-Year old, PK and KG

Since distancing among small children is difficult to implement, in addition to face coverings, this age group will focus on effective strategies such as hand hygiene, cohorting, and outdoor activities when possible. When 6 ft. distancing is not possible between teacher and students, both will wear face coverings. Sharing of classroom materials (community school supplies such as pencils, crayons, markers, etc.) will be eliminated. Use of other learning materials will be rotated and disinfected on a daily basis.

Grades 1-5

Children should distance 3-6 feet whenever possible, and wear face coverings. Seating charts will be used and adhered to in all classrooms and areas. Cohorts will be used to minimize student and staff crossover (art, music, come to classrooms or use outdoor or larger spaces). Face coverings will not be required for outdoor recess. Sharing of classroom materials (community school supplies such as pencils, crayons, markers, etc.) will be eliminated.

Grades 6-12

Students should distance 3-6 feet whenever possible, and wear face coverings. Seating charts will be used and adhered to in all classrooms and areas. Avoid close physical proximity for choir, band, PE and conduct activities outdoors or spread out when possible. Lockers will be assigned by cohorts and spread out if possible. Teachers rotate instead of students when feasible for 6th-8th grade. Sharing of classroom materials (community school supplies such as pencils, crayons, markers, etc.) will be eliminated.

Mass Guidelines

Mass will be determined in consultation with each parish/building priest.

Lunchroom Practices

Distancing

Each building is developing a plan for lunch based on their space and schedule and will consider these items:

- Cohorted students by classroom/grade, or small groups and staggered to ensure distancing. Students will not face each other but all face the same direction at lunch.
- Lunch periods may be lengthened or adjusted to allow for an increased number of smaller student groups.
- Combinations of classroom and cafeteria dining on alternate days could be used to ensure distancing.
- Assigned seating at lunch tables (to allow for contact tracing if needed.)
- Additional spaces for lunch including classrooms, gymnasiums, etc.

Cleaning & Sanitizing

All staff and students will wash hands or use hand sanitizer before and after eating. Serving lines will be sanitized between groups or classes. If meals are delivered to classrooms, equipment will be sanitized after delivery.

Recess / Playground

Considerations

- PK-8th grade schools will assess whether playground equipment and structures can support use by multiple groups of students with reasonable cleaning after use. (For example, a structure that is crawled on and encounters many sets of hands may best remain unused, while a slide only requires handrail cleaning between uses.)
- Recess/outdoor play will occur in shifts and/or cohorts. If multiple groups are outside at the same time, distancing will occur between cohorts and/or different play activities.

Activities

BHCS will engage children in activities and games that limit physical contact such as:

- Relays, red light/green light, obstacle courses
- Walking, running, dancing
- Circuit challenges with individual stations or centers
- Seek advice from PE teachers on other low-contact activities

Cleaning and Sanitizing

High contact surfaces such as handrails, handles, balls, etc. will be wiped down between groups or shifts. All students will wash hands after recess and before returning to the classroom.

Cleaning and Disinfecting - General

BHCS will undertake new protocols and routines to ensure that facilities and surfaces are regularly cleaned, sanitized, and disinfected in accordance with health and safety guidelines and that hazardous materials are disposed of properly.

- Elimination of high-touch or high-risk surfaces is preferred to frequent cleaning. (For example, classroom doors can be left open until all students have entered.)
- We encourage students to bring their own water bottles. Drinking fountains will not be used.
- Commonly touched surfaces such as handrails, doorknobs, light switches, sink and faucet handles, etc. will be cleaned frequently.
- Outdoor play equipment with high-touch surfaces (handles, railings, etc.) will be cleaned frequently.
- Bathrooms will receive frequent cleaning and disinfection
- Students will be asked to clean their own work space at the end of the day with school provided wipes/spray bottles.

Returning to School after a Confirmed Case

1. Students and staff will complete the mandated 14-day quarantine and then provide a note from a physician documenting it is safe to return to school.
2. If questions remain, contact Siouxland District Health for guidance and consult [CDC Guidelines for Returning](#) to determine when it is safe to return to school after showing symptoms of COVID-19, testing positive, or coming in close contact* with someone who tested positive. (*Close contact is defined as less than 6 feet for more than 15 minutes.).

Final Thoughts

We are excited to have your children back and hope they are excited as well. Please understand that we are making the best decisions we can for all involved. We know that not everyone will be happy or agree with all of our decisions. We ask that you please share questions or concerns with us as they arise. Below are a few other things you can do to help our schools:

- Talk to your child about how school will look differently and discuss health and safety measures with them. Please view pictures, videos, and posts shared by our school and teachers showing classroom configurations and other helpful information.
- Continue to read school communications as more information becomes available.
- Make sure your contact information is up to date in case we need to communicate with you.
- **Please keep your child at home if they do not feel well.**
- It is up to each of us to be good stewards of everyone's health. We are a community and family and we need your partnership in this process.
- Report any exposure or positive cases to the building principal's office immediately.
- Please contact your principal to request to be part of our hybrid model if your child can not attend on-site.
- Please reach out with any questions or concerns. Our school staff is here to help!

Our school team continues to receive information almost daily from the Iowa Department of Education, Iowa Department of Public Health, CDC, Diocese of Sioux City Catholic Schools Office, and the Siouxland District Health Department. Please know that plans and guidance will change as more information is received. Our team will continue to review this information in order to welcome your child back to Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools as safely as possible. Thank you for entrusting us with your most precious gift.