



## 2021-2022 School Year Opening Plan

### **Mission Statement**

Epiphany Catholic School, a Christ-centered environment, is dedicated to developing the whole child through academic excellence and nourishing servant leaders in the footsteps of Jesus.

### **Introduction**

We look forward to opening the 2021-2022 school year with five days per week of in-person instruction. Our school day is 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., with drop off beginning at 7:45 a.m.

Members of the community are welcome to join us for Mass on Fridays at 8:30 a.m. Unvaccinated guests need to wear a mask.

We remain confident that we are serving our school community as safely and effectively as possible while continuing to take precautions due to the COVID-19 virus. Epiphany is following the latest guidelines and seeking advice from the Rappahannock-Rapidan Health District, the Virginia Department of Health, the CDC and the Catholic Diocese of Arlington to ensure student and adult safety while we continue to provide in-person learning.

### **Daily Wellness Checks**

Again, this year, parents are required to perform wellness checks, including a temperature screening, before departing for school each day. Children not feeling well and/or exhibiting COVID symptoms may not attend school. Keeping sick students at home is one of the most important ways to prevent the spread of disease in our school. The school will NOT be temperature screening as the students are dropped off at school.

### **Face Masks**

The Rappahannock-Rapidan Health District strongly recommends the wearing of a properly fitted mask covering the nose and mouth while indoors for all persons not fully vaccinated against the coronavirus.

***The choice for children to wear face masks will be left to individual families. In the coming weeks, parents will be given the opportunity to opt out of having their child wear a mask each day.*** Vaccinated faculty members and other adults in the school may also choose not to wear a mask. Unvaccinated adults need to wear a mask while inside the school. A government mandate requires that unvaccinated employees must wear a mask.

If a parent wants their child to wear a mask, it is not the responsibility of staff to enforce the parent's expectations. If asked, teachers can report to parents if their child is complying with parental expectations.

## **Distancing**

Epiphany will space desks, chairs and seats in classrooms, offices, the library, labs, hallways, the cafeteria, and the gymnasium to the extent possible. The distance between seats will vary depending upon the room size, the configuration of the room, furniture size and shape and the type of activity taking place. Students will move to other classrooms for their specials. At this time, to limit hall congestion, middle school students will not be rotating classrooms for their core classes.

## **Sanitation**

All students and staff are encouraged to wash their hands with soap or hand sanitizer throughout the day. Our restrooms have been updated with touchless light switches and hand sanitizer stations are available throughout the school. Disinfectants will be distributed to each classroom.

## **Lunchroom**

Lunch will be held in the pavilion. Cafeteria tables and seats will be sanitized between uses. Seating at lunch tables will be limited to 6 per table to allow greater spacing while students are unmasked. Outdoor tables with umbrellas are also available for use on days that weather permits.

The PTO will be reestablishing the lunch program. Specific guidelines will be in place to ensure that the food is distributed in a sanitized manner. More information regarding the lunch program will be available at the beginning of the school year.

## **Sharing of Water, Beverages and Food**

The sharing of food or beverages among students is generally prohibited. Commercially sealed food and unopened food and beverages may be exchanged with staff assistance. Cleaning the package as part of the exchange and sanitizing hands before consuming a shared food or beverage should occur.

Parents cannot bring in home-made food for purpose of sharing with classmates or staff to celebrate a birthday, holiday or other reason. Parent may only bring in commercially sealed food for this purpose.

## **Drinking Water**

Water fountains will continue to be closed. New this year, Epiphany will be providing filtered water stations that the students can use to refill their water bottles. Students are expected to come to school each day with a filled water bottle.

## **Bus Transportation**

***The government mandates that all students riding a bus must wear a mask while being transported.***

Students riding the bus are asked to provide their own masks. Disposal masks will be provided as needed. Buses will be disinfected after every route.

## **Extended Day**

Plans are currently underway to reestablish the extended day program. More information regarding this program will be available in the next few weeks.

## Athletics/After School Activities

We look forward to reestablishing our middle school sports and other extracurricular activities as the school year resumes. More info about these groups will be forthcoming from the coach/activity sponsor.

## Quarantine

In the event of a positive COVID case in the school, homeroom classes may be forced to quarantine. If an entire homeroom needs to quarantine their teacher would transition to online instruction for the length of the quarantine period. If individual students are forced to quarantine, they will be provided assignments by their teachers.

Students, staff and volunteers may be excluded from being present in the school when reasonable suspicion exists the person is at-risk of being infected by a communicable disease such as the coronavirus. These exclusionary factors for the coronavirus are:

- Resides within the home or had close contact with someone outside the home who tested positive for COVID in the last 14 days as a solitary factor.
- Fever of 100.0 degrees or higher as a solitary symptom.
- Recent loss of taste or smell and at least one other factor as listed below OR any three factors listed below:
  - Severe headache
  - Dizziness
  - Sore Throat
  - Coughing, wheezing or shortness of breath
  - Fatigue
  - Diarrhea
  - Abdominal Pain
  - Vomiting

Epiphany will continue working closely with our health district on contact tracing in the event of a positive COVID case in the school. Any unvaccinated close contacts of a COVID positive person will be required to quarantine for ten days.

## Please Note

Epiphany's health policies and procedures may continue to change based on guidelines provided to our school by the Rappahannock-Rapidan Health District, the Virginia Department of Health, the CDC and the Catholic Diocese of Arlington. We will comply with directives from the Office of Catholic Schools.

**School administration will be reviewing the Virginia Department of Health metrics on a weekly basis. The decision to change our COVID protocol will be based on these metrics as well as any COVID cases that we are aware of within the Epiphany community. If there is a change in our protocol, it will remain in place until the metrics improve.**

Epiphany will communicate any policy changes to our families in a timely manner.

## Thank You

We look forward to partnering with our families to provide rewarding, outstanding learning opportunities for our students this year. Together, we will work through any challenges that this year presents to help our students grow in their knowledge and faith. We remain grateful for your patience, cooperation and understanding.