



A Message from the Principal

July 1, 2020

Dear Saint Mary's Families,

As you know, this summer continues to be a roller coaster ride as we plan for the future only to have circumstances change. Fortunately, Our Lord knows and carves the path that we are on as we navigate these challenging times. We are awaiting guidance from the Catholic Schools Office on how Governor Ducey's recent announcement regarding the beginning of in-person classes at public schools affects Catholic schools. I will let you know once a decision has been made. **UPDATE: AS OF JULY 16, IN-PERSON CLASSES WILL START AUGUST 17.** However, at this time, I wanted to share with you some of the plans that are already underway at Saint Mary's so you are aware of what we are doing as a school to welcome your student back to campus.

Before I share our plans, let me say that we have always been, and will continue to be, committed to the formation of young men and women through the relationships built amongst students and faculty. For this reason, the Saint Mary's faculty and staff are committed to do everything in our power to return to safe in-person education here at Saint Mary's. Of course, we must be humbly obedient to our state and diocesan leaders as we attend to the health and safety of our students, but we remain firmly committed to forming virtuous young men and women.

Here are some of the plans that we are making, and continue to make, as we respond to these dynamic circumstances. Please know that this is a constantly changing situation, and plans can (and probably will) change.

Spiritual Formation

The spiritual formation of our students is our highest priority and our most sacred duty as Catholic educators. Hence, we will:

- Continue to offer daily Masses during lunch and before school.
- Live stream All School Masses to students in the classroom with the ability to receive the Eucharist after Mass.
- Continue to offer confessions during lunch.
- Provide spiritual direction and support through our Campus Minister, new Campus Chaplain Father Estevan Wetzel, and Guidance Counselors.

Academic Formation

As a school committed to in-person learning and formation, we will:

- Take the necessary precautions to allow in-person learning to continue to take place in our classrooms.
- Allow high risk individuals or individuals who live with high risk individuals to participate in distance learning, at a minimum, until Fall Break (Please keep an eye out for an email from Mr. Atkinson with more information and a survey regarding this option). High-risk students may opt into distance learning at any point, but must then remain in distance learning until Fall Break.
- Maintain our normally small class sizes.
- Position desks in classrooms to maintain the required maximum distance between individuals.
- Require students to use their own materials and supplies rather than shared supplies.
- Utilize seating charts in all classes to minimize contacts.
- Adjust expectations and content to meet the needs of students.
- Provide regular tutoring to assist students in need.
- The House System and Club System will still be a part of the student experience, but in modified formats.
- Allow athletics and PE classes to operate following the guidelines from the Arizona Interscholastic Association (AIA).

Physical Safety and Health

Recommendations from the CDC and government officials continue to be that practicing physical distancing, wearing a face mask, and practicing good hygiene are the best ways to prevent spread. The definition of a person who is exposed to someone with Covid-19 is a person that has had close contact (less than 6 ft) with a person with Covid-19 for greater than 10 minutes without a mask. Therefore, we will operate as follows:

- Conduct health screenings at the beginning of the school day, which may include checking temperature and possible symptoms.
- Any student or staff member with a fever needs to stay home according to CDC guidance.
- At least as long as the order from the City of Phoenix remains, all students and faculty will wear masks on campus. Masks must be a single color, and plain cloth or medical style masks, or Saint Mary's masks in green with the SM logo purchased in the Spirit Shop.
- Numerous hand sanitizer and hand washing stations are being installed around campus so that students can regularly practice good hygiene.
- We will have two lunch periods and use spaced round tables with fewer chairs to minimize student contact in the Cafeteria and to allow ample time for students to eat and wash safely.
- Cafeteria food will be packed as grab and go and students will be encouraged to bring their own snacks and lunches.
- Traffic patterns will be established in hallways to minimize congestion as well as possibly staggering passing periods.

- Lockers may be distributed strategically to minimize congestion during staggered passing periods.
- Establish clear protocols for when and how a potential or confirmed case of Covid-19 will be treated with respect to school attendance.
- Install hospital grade air filters in all rooms.
- Establish increased cleaning procedures during the school day and after school focused on high touch surfaces and common areas.
- Temporarily discontinue the use of drinking fountains and install water bottle filling stations.
- Have students assist in cleaning their own space before and after use.
- Increase the number of outside eating areas and purchase additional umbrellas for shade.

Contingency Plans

If we are not able to have full in-person classes due to state and diocesan restrictions, we have the following contingency plans in place:

- Option 1 (Hybrid of in-person and online classes): Our plan is to have students alternate coming on campus and working online through Microsoft Teams. The plan includes different options based on restrictions for number of days and number of students allowed on campus.
- Option 2 (Online classes): Similar to last semester, we have a plan to utilize Microsoft Teams for all classes to be conducted online. Our plan would include an increase, compared to last year, in synchronous instruction and live interactions between teachers and students.

As you can see, it will be a busy time at Saint Mary's. We continue to pray for those affected by the virus and that we will be able to return to a normal situation sometime soon. We cannot wait to see your children's smiling faces soon, or at least their raised cheek bones.

In Christ,



Kevin Muir
Principal

The mission of Saint Mary's is to form virtuous young men and women who know the Truth and love the Good.