



**SACRED HEART CATHOLIC SCHOOL**  
**POLONIA, WISCONSIN**

*“Sacred Heart School will foster a Catholic atmosphere, teaching as Jesus did, enabling children to grow in their relationship with Him, and becoming responsible leaders of the future in this world and saints for eternity.”*

**2020–2021 4K-6 Parent & Guardian  
Reopening Information  
(COVID-19)**

**Sacred Heart Catholic School  
7379 Church Street  
Custer, WI 54423-9757**

**(715)-592-4902  
[www.SacredHeartPolonia.com](http://www.SacredHeartPolonia.com)**

*August 14, 2020*



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## Letter from the Diocesan Superintendent of Catholic Schools

In the spring of 2020, we were impacted by the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. Governor Evers’s Safer at Home order went into effect on March 25, 2020—closing all K-12 schools. The closure of K-12 schools ended on June 30, 2020. The Catholic schools in the Diocese of La Crosse will open the 2020–2021 school year to a new “normal.”

Our guidelines are an effort to help our Catholic schools open successfully. We desperately want all students, parents, faculty, administrators, and support staff to feel safe, happy, and holy throughout the entire 2020–2021 school year. And, we want to make certain we are educating each student in the Catholic Faith.

Catholic school administrators must work with their local county health department and the other schools in their geographical area to determine the best way to reopen.

If the situation mandates or the government issues another school closure, we will support that. We have a duty to our 6,500+ students to do everything we can to continue a high quality Catholic education.

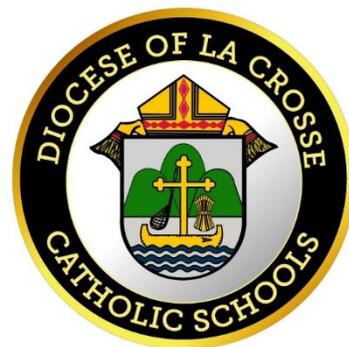
Thank you to the other Catholic school superintendents in the state of Wisconsin for their friendship and contributions to our guidelines.

1. Dr. Kathleen Cepelka – Archdiocese of Milwaukee
2. Todd Blahnik – Diocese of Green Bay
3. Peggy Schoenfuss – Diocese of Superior
4. Michael Lancaster – Diocese of Madison

In the words of Father Woodrow Pace, I wish all of you safety, good health, happiness, and holiness.

God’s Grace be With You,

Thomas Philip Reichenbacher  
Superintendent of Catholic Schools  
Diocese of La Crosse  
treichenbacher@diolc.org  
www.diolc.org



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## Letter from the Sacred Heart Pastor and Principal

In these uncertain and confusing times, we have one steady, enduring voice that speaks, “Be not afraid”. The lessons of perseverance through the challenges of life are often the most valuable for us to learn and for us to impart to our children. We can choose to look at how these struggles will make us stronger and more enlightened after they have ceased to be struggles anymore. First, and always, we turn to prayer, but then to action, living out the Gospel in our daily lives.

Catholic schools have always been a great evangelical mission of the Church. Our Bishop, William Patrick Callahan, has emphasized the necessity of maintaining our schools to serve the children of now and of the future so that the Gospel of Christ can be carried forward. Bishop Callahan has directed that all schools in the Diocese of La Crosse be open full-time for in-person instruction starting this coming school year. We support the Bishop in that call and we know the importance of keeping our school operating as only Catholic schools can, one that educates the entire child and, therefore, one that is a necessary evangelical arm of Holy Mother Church.

The plan that follows is not perfect, but we believe it is reasonable given what has been recommended by various agencies. Our general principle from which we operated in creating this plan was to be “as strict as required and as free as common-sense will allow”. We know that some will not agree with the plan. We only ask that you carefully consider the importance of Catholic education as you weigh the elements of the plan below.

We pledge to do our part in seeing that this coming school year is one that carries on the long tradition of excellence that has always marked Sacred Heart School.

Be assured of our prayers and we ask that you pray for us and for Sacred Heart School.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*Father Alan M. Guanella*

Fr. Alan M. Guanella  
Pastor

fr.guanella@sacredheartpolonia.com

*Thomas McCann*

Mr. Thomas McCann  
Principal

tmccann@sacredheartpolonia.com

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## **2020–2021 School Year Quick Facts**

(as of August 14, 2020)

### **Q | What is the current plan for returning to school in the fall of 2020?**

A | On June 17, Bishop William Callahan of the Diocese of La Crosse announced our Catholic schools will be opening this fall according to regular schedules and policies, in conjunction with state and local policies. We plan to reopen for in-person instruction five days a week beginning in September.

### **Q | What will the first day of school be?**

A | Our supply drop-off, which will look different this year, will be held on Thursday, August 27, and the first full day of school will be Tuesday, September 1 (more information will be sent soon).

### **Q | Will masks be required for students and staff?**

A | Yes, masks are required for all adults and children 5 years of age and older while within the school building. This is to be the policy of all schools within the Diocese of La Crosse while the governor's executive order remains in effect. If your children ride the bus, the Stevens Point School District also requires the wearing of masks.

### **Q | What if I do not want my child(ren) to wear a mask?**

A | Bishop William Callahan calls on the Catholic faithful to comply with the mask regulations, given our reverence for life and human dignity. The policy of all schools within the Diocese of La Crosse is that masks are required. If you do not want your child(ren) to wear a mask, they must have an excuse from a medical professional (doctor, nurse practitioner, PA, etc.) on file at school or fall under section 3 of Governor Evers' Emergency Order #1.

### **Q | Will the school be providing masks for students to use?**

A | We do have cloth masks available for any student whose family requests one. We encourage students to have multiple washable masks available at home to ensure a clean mask can be worn to school every day.

### **Q | Can my child still bring lunch from home?**

A | Yes. Students are welcome to bring lunch from home. We will, of course, be having our hot lunch program as in previous' years.

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**Q | When is a child too sick to attend school?**

A | All of our existing rules and policies as they relate to a sick child still apply. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, if your child has a fever of 100.4° Fahrenheit, they must remain at home until they are symptom free without the use of medication for 24 hours.

**Q | What should I do if my child is sick?**

A | A sick child must stay home from school, regardless of the type of illness. Please call the school to keep the lines of communication open regarding the reason for your child's absence and if the absence is related to COVID-19.

**Q | Can I come inside my child's school?**

A | The DPI, the Diocese of La Crosse, and the county health department has strongly recommended that visitors not be allowed into the building during the school day for the 2020–21 school year. This includes parents and encompasses our drop-off and pick-up procedures.

**Q | What if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 at my child's school?**

A | We will notify parents/guardians immediately of our local health department's recommendation as it relates to how we conduct future education in light of a confirmed case of COVID-19.

**Q | What is the plan in the event the school has to shut down due to a COVID-19 outbreak?**

A | We are prepared in the event a classroom needs to be quarantined or our school needs to be quarantined. Our local health department has assured us it wants schools to continue to remain open as much as possible. Therefore, a quarantine would be implemented for a short time, with students and staff returning to in-person instruction as soon as possible.

If our local health department deems a classroom(s) or the school needs to move to at-home learning due to COVID-19 exposure, our staff is prepared to deliver distance learning for core content areas on a regular basis. Depending on the grade, this format will offer a combination of recorded instruction, video conferencing, and prepared packets that the students will need to complete at home. The plan is essentially the same as what was done since mid-March of the past school year.

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## **Mandated Items from the Diocese of La Crosse**

***The following directives apply to all Catholic Schools in the Diocese of La Crosse:***

All Catholic School administrators and teachers in the Diocese of La Crosse will complete this list of items as part of the reopening process.

1. Before a Catholic School reopens the administration must receive approval from:
  - a. Bishop William Patrick Callahan
    - i. This approval was given to all Catholic Schools in the diocese through Bishop Callahan's letter of June 17, 2020.
  - b. The school-system's dean or the parish school's pastor
2. Administration needs to work with its local county health department to ensure the school reopening goes smoothly.
3. Students will be taught or review the importance proper hygiene:
  - a. Washing hands often with soap and water for twenty or more seconds
  - b. Sanitizing hands when soap and water are unavailable
  - c. Keeping hands away from one's face
  - d. When sneezing or coughing, sneeze or cough into a tissue or an elbow
4. Students who do not feel well should stay home.
  - a. Documented instructions to guardians must be communicated before the first day of school.
5. Employees who do not feel well should stay home.
6. School entryways, hallways, bathrooms, and classrooms need adequate signage to help encourage proper hygiene.
7. The following plans must be on file, ready to use, and updated regularly:
  - a. These three may be kept separately or under one plan:
    - i. Distance learning
    - ii. Response to a student diagnosed with COVID-19
    - iii. Response to an employee diagnosed with COVID-19
  - b. Safety (Security)
8. Review the Student / Parent Handbook

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## **School Mass Guidelines from the Diocese of La Crosse**

***The following directive applies to all Catholic Schools in the Diocese of La Crosse:***

The summit of the Catholic Church is the celebration of the Holy Mass. On May 14, 2020, Bishop William Callahan instructed priests in the Diocese of La Crosse on how the Holy Mass would be publicly celebrated starting on May 31, 2020. We must follow the instructions Bishop Callahan gave to his brother priests.

Bishop Callahan's preference is all schools continue to follow the rule of minimally one school Mass a week (Monday–Friday). If, due to the recent Mass instructions, students are not able to attend Mass once a week, students must have reflection/prayer time during the week that they miss Mass.

Because we will be increasing physical distancing during Mass, each parish and school will be communicating their individual procedures for attendance by parents and parish community at school Masses.

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## **Recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Department of Public Instruction (DPI)**

Schools in counties that issue regulations for school reopening will need to work with those regulations. It is the recommendation of the Diocese of La Crosse that when counties do not issue their own guidance or regulations, schools should review the CDC and DPI information. Schools must determine their ability to comply with these recommendations. Some recommendations, however, may not be feasible. Strict compliance with CDC and DPI guidance is not recommended nor is it possible in some areas, so schools may need to be creative and imaginative as they determine how to ensure student and staff safety. The following elements are key:

1. Communication and involvement of both parents and teachers in the decision- making process. While no solution will work for everyone, new ways of operating will succeed only with parent and faculty support.
2. Consultation with the local public school districts, especially regarding school bus transportation and schedules.
3. Flexibility
4. Agility to move between modes of instruction during the school year

The link to the CDC's guidelines for reopening schools is  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html>.

The link to the DPI's guidebook, *Education Forward*, for reopening schools is  
[https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sspw/pdf/Education\\_Forward\\_web.pdf](https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sspw/pdf/Education_Forward_web.pdf).

### Hygiene and Cleanliness

1. Individuals will be trained properly to clean the building.
2. All employees should be washing their hands with soap for twenty or more seconds.
3. Hand sanitizer and wipes should be readily available.
  - a. Adults must make certain younger students are using these properly. (The high alcohol content of hand sanitizers means younger students cannot be licking or chewing on their hands.)
  - b. If a student, teacher, or aide leaves a classroom, he or she should sanitize his or her hands when reentering the classroom.
4. Areas of the school where illnesses are commonly spread should be cleaned after the school day starts but before the middle of the day (lunchtime) and then again after the school day is completed. (Try to clean these areas two times a day.)
5. Each school building should be deep cleaned once a week. Schools may consider using a fog chemical that is safe for schools to accomplish this deep clean.

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6. Employees should try to limit physical contact with students and other staff. (No handshakes, high fives, fist bumps, etc.)
7. Students need to be instructed that they should do their best to always cough or sneeze into a tissue (discarded) or their elbow. At all times, this needs to be modeled well by school employees.
8. After blowing their noses, students should discard the used tissue and wash or sanitize their hands. Again, adults working in the school should model this practice.
9. Administrators and faculty should discreetly correct students who do not have good hygiene practices.

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## **Sacred Heart School Safety Measures (Hygiene & Cleanliness)**

### Classroom/Building Closure Procedures

Parents/guardians must contact the office immediately if you or your child(ren) may have been exposed to COVID-19.

A student or employee who is diagnosed with COVID-19 should receive documented permission from a medical professional (doctor, nurse practitioner, PA, etc.) to return to school.

Our administration and faculty will make adjustments to work with students and employees who are unable to come to the school building.

If a classroom(s) is impacted by a student or employee diagnosed with COVID-19, the room will remain unused for three (3) calendar days and be deep-cleaned before it will be used again.

A student or employee who is directly exposed to a person who is carrying COVID-19 should quarantine for ten (10) calendar days (or as recommended by our local health department).

Our school will be prepared in the event an entire class needs to engage in distance learning for ten (10) days.

### Facility Cleanliness

We will be cleaning and disinfecting our school regularly.

### Hand Washing & Sanitizer

Our students and staff will participate in hand washing regularly, depending on activity level. Hand sanitizer will be readily available in all areas of our buildings for immediate use at any time.

### Masks/Face Shields and Physical Distancing

Masks are required for students and staff.

Cloth masks are available for students and staff should they be requested. Face shields will also be available for staff should they request them in addition to, but not in place of, masks.

Besides lunch and recess time, students will be given mask-breaks as needed throughout the day. We encourage families to have their children practice wearing masks prior to attending school.

All authorized visitors entering our school building will be required to wear a mask. Our schools will have a supply of masks in the event someone forgets to bring his or her own.

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It is important that physical distancing is practiced by adults and students to the extent that it is feasible to do so. We will discuss with students the idea of personal space, or each person's "circle of grace." Our classrooms will be arranged to allow students to physically distance themselves, with desks/seats moved approximately six feet apart. There may be situations where social distancing is difficult such as group activities.

These types of activities will be kept to only those necessary for sound instruction.

Smaller rooms (bathrooms, offices, maintenance work areas, etc.) should not have more than nine (9) people in them at one time.

#### Drinking Fountains

We recommend all students bring their own water bottle labeled with their name. All bubblers have been removed and a water bottle filling station has been installed.

#### Communication

We will continue to regularly communicate with families both at the school and classroom level. Please take the time to read all paper and email communications that are shared. Policy and procedure changes may happen quickly, and this will be the best way for you to stay up to date.

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## Sacred Heart School New Policies & Procedures

### Home Health Screening Requirements

We will take temperatures of students as they enter their classrooms in the morning. Temperature information will not be logged, recorded, or saved.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to make certain a child is healthy and able to attend school. A parent/guardian should take each child's temperature in the morning prior to sending him or her to school. **Sending a child(ren) to school with obvious symptoms of illness is unacceptable and that child will immediately be sent back home.**

If, during the school day, a student appears to have an illness, the school will help the student and proceed with a standard medical response such as taking the student's temperature, as we have done in the past. We will be vigilant and will not ignore possible symptoms of an illness.

We will cooperate with county health officials such as the school nurse if a student or employee is diagnosed with a COVID-19 or another serious illness.

### Physical Health

We will make certain all students and employees health files are complete and up to date. Our school has a room for sick students. Sick students will wait in that room until a parent arrives to take them home.

- Students who have a temperature of 100.4° Fahrenheit or higher will need to be sent home with a parent/guardian immediately.
- Employees with temperatures of 100.4° Fahrenheit or higher will be sent home.

### Absences

Parents/guardians should keep a child home when the child has obvious symptoms of being ill. (For example, fever, stomach ailments, severe running nose, a bad cough, difficulty breathing, headaches, sore throat, etc.)

Our teachers are prepared to accommodate prolonged student absences. Every teacher will have a plan in place to work with individual students who miss many days of school in a row.

Absences will be monitored closely. We will communicate directly with families who are dealing with prolonged illnesses.

### School Closure Due to Absenteeism

In the case of a widespread illness in the state, county, or community, we could close for an extended time out of concern for the health of students, staff, and community (such as last year when we closed for the flu and COVID-19).

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We will monitor daily attendance and reasons for absences. We will work closely with our local health department if several absences are identified as being related to COVID-19.

We must have the permission of the pastor to close any individual classroom or the school itself.

If a situation requires, and if we have permission, we may decide it is prudent to close our school even if the public schools remain open (such as we did with the flu last year).

### Visitors

The DPI, the Diocese of La Crosse, and the county health department have strongly recommended schools do not allow visitors into buildings during the school day for the 2020-21 school year.

If an individual has an emergency, sick child, or educational-based reason to enter the building, he or she should call the school (if possible) prior to coming to the main door to be 'buzzed in'.

If there is a need for a parent to drop off a lunch or school materials, they will be allowed in the entryway. We appreciate and value your willingness to be involved in your child's education, however, we must limit the number of people entering the building during this difficult time.

### Transportation Procedures

#### Beginning of Day

- Regardless of the mode of transportation, students will be dropped off directly at school and parents/guardians will not be allowed to enter the building.
- Students who are dropped-off must be taken to the back of the school and will enter through the rear door. Parents should use the west driveway between the church and the rectory to enter the back parking lot and exit through the east driveway between the church and the school dropping the children off at the steps leading down to the sidewalk to the back door of the school.
- Students will go directly to their classroom upon entering the building.

#### Dismissal

- All students will remain in their classrooms until the dismissal bell.
- Those students who are being picked up will line up at the rear door. Those students taking the bus will line up at the front door.
- As with the morning drop-off, parents/guardians will enter the back parking lot using the west driveway between the church and the rectory and form a line with the first car stopping at the steps down to the sidewalk off the east driveway between the church and school. Students will be sent out when their car reaches the steps. The vehicles should exit driving straight ahead.

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### During the School Day

- If you need to pick up your child(ren) for an appointment during the school day, your child(ren) will come to you in the front entry. They must be signed out as usual. If they are returning, please drop off your child(ren) at the front door.

### Busing

In the morning, when the bus arrives, students will enter the front door and go directly to their classrooms. At the end of the day, students who are riding the bus home will line up at the front door and be sent out when the bus arrives.

Please be aware that the Stevens Point Area Public Schools and the Rosholt Public Schools provide the busing and they may establish rules as to proper conduct on the bus. During this difficult time, there may be new rules such as the wearing of masks and assigned seating.

### Shared Materials

The sharing of materials is strongly discouraged. If materials must be shared, precautions will be taken to ensure that the item(s) is disinfected or kept isolated for three days before being used again.

### Physical Education

To limit physical contact and the need to share equipment, our Physical Education classes will focus on individual skill development. If a team activity is used, students will wash their hands before and after the activity and any shared equipment will be either disinfected or kept isolated from further use for three days.

### Library

Students will have access to the books in the library or their classroom libraries.

When books are returned, they will be placed in quarantine for three (3) days before being added back to the library shelves to be made available for other students.

### Lunch

Students will wash their hands before heading down to lunch and after recess. Upon entering the lunch line students will sanitize their hands and take a tray that will have the necessary utensils and napkin on it. All food will be served, even items such as condiments. Students will go to their designated table which will have enough room to maintain social distancing.

### Playground/Recess

Recess will occur as usual.

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## **Distance Learning (When Necessary)**

**It is our goal to offer in-person instruction on all regularly scheduled school days during the 2020–2021 school year. Unfortunately, Sacred Heart School does not have the resources to hold both in-person instruction as well as online instruction at the same time.**

If our local health department deems a classroom(s) or the school needs to move to at-home learning due to COVID-19 exposure, our staff is prepared to deliver distance learning for core content areas on a regular basis. Depending on the grade, this format will offer a combination of recorded video instruction, live video conferencing, and prepared packets that the students will need to complete at home. The plan is essentially the same as what was done since mid-March of the past school year.

Each teacher is required to have a plan in place by mid-September as to how they will handle distance learning in each of the following scenarios:

1. A student is out for an extended period.
2. They are out for an extended period.
3. The classroom or school is closed for an extended period.

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*There is no evil to be faced that Christ does not face with us.  
There is no enemy that Christ has not already conquered.  
There is no cross to bear that Christ has not already borne for us  
and does not now bear with us.*

—Saint Pope John Paul II

Homily at Oriole Park at Camden Yards, Baltimore  
Sunday, October 8, 1995

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