



Smart, Healthy, Holy:

A Home & School Partnership

Guidelines for Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School Opening September 2020

INTRODUCTION

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Catholic School exists to provide a “holistic Catholic Christian environment that serves the soul, mind and body of each child.” It is understood that all aspects of the child’s being must be attended to as “health” is more than simply the absence of disease. The emergence of SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19), the resulting pandemic, public health response and closure of our school have presented unique challenges for the upcoming school year. In the absence of medications to treat COVID-19, or a vaccine to protect against it, the strategies used to limit the spread will be a combination of recommended public health measures and modifications in our daily routines. It is important to note that no single action, or set of actions, will completely eliminate the risk of illness, but implementation of several coordinated interventions will allow Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School to return to the “vibrant community of prayer, love and learning” (Bishop Olmstead, video message 06/10/20) it has always been while safeguarding the health and well-being of our students, staff and families.

GUIDANCE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE - Diocese of Phoenix

In August 2020 the Arizona Department of Health Services in collaboration with the Arizona Department of Education released the document “Safely Returning to In-Person Instruction”. It begins, “Despite children having similar viral loads in their upper airways as adults, there appears to be a lower risk that children under 10 with COVID-19 will transmit to household members, compared to children 10 or older and adults. Both large scale epidemiological surveys and smaller analyses of household clusters suggest that younger children are less likely to infect the adults in their household with COVID than vice versa. Based on contact-tracing studies performed early in the epidemic, little evidence has been found of efficient transmission in school settings.”

<https://www.azdhs.gov/preparedness/epidemiology-disease-control/infectious-disease-epidemiology/index.php#novel-coronavirus-schools>

The Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Phoenix is utilizing this tool in assessing readiness to open.

As public health guidance is updated and made available, the reopening plans for Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School will be updated with the goal of safely welcoming students back to campus on September 8, 2020.

ASSESSMENT PHASE (June - August)

The occurrence of COVID-19 cases in the communities OLMC serves and occurrence of illness within the school community will be the data points used as Health Indicators.

1. In Arizona positive tests for COVID-19 are mapped to a person's place of residence. The Arizona Department of Health Services has been able to successfully map 90% of positive cases. This data is found on the Data Dashboard "Zip Code" metric.
2. Data analysis was done to compare the reported case numbers of COVID-19 in Maricopa County to the geographical areas that make up the OLMC school community (zip code).
 - 460 (K - 8 & Preschool) students reside in 46 Zip Codes
 - 45.3% of the student population (208) represent 3 zip codes:
85282, 85283, 85284 (Tempe cohort)
 - 18.1% of the student population (85) represent 4 zip codes:
85226, 85233, 85202, 85224 (Mesa, Chandler, Gilbert cohort)
 - Information available on the Arizona Department of Health Services (azdhs.gov) for COVID-19 is monitored daily and the reporting of cases by zip code has been compared to the communities Our Lady of Mt. Carmel students reside in.
 - Data has been captured for both new cases and all cases, over time, on the following dates:
 - **08/20/20** - 130,800 cases in Maricopa County (6,778 new cases/15 days)
1.4% (94 cases) in the Tempe cohort - less than 100/100,000 population
3.0% (207 cases) in the Mesa, Chandler, Gilbert cohort.*
**90 cases in Mesa zip code or 4.3% of cases*
 - **08/06/20** - 124,022 cases in Maricopa County (6,729 new cases/7 days)
1.6% (111 cases) in the Tempe cohort.
2.9% (199 cases) in the Mesa, Chandler, Gilbert cohort.
 - **07/31/20** - 117,293 cases in Maricopa County (20,582 new cases/11 days)
2.0% (420 cases) in the Tempe cohort.
3.4% (709 cases) in the Mesa, Chandler, Gilbert cohort.
 - **07/20/20** - 96,711 cases in Maricopa County (15,495 new cases/7days)
3.1% (494 cases) in the Tempe cohort.
3.5% (547 cases) in the Mesa, Chandler, Gilbert cohort.
 - **07/13/20** - 81,216 cases in Maricopa County (16,301 new cases/7days)
2.1% (352 cases) in our Tempe cohort.
3.0% (495 cases) in our Mesa, Chandler, Gilbert cohort.

- **07/06/20** - 64,915 cases in Maricopa County (25,289 new cases/4 weeks)
 2.4% (1585 cases) in our Tempe cohort.
 2.3% (1480 cases) in our Mesa, Chandler, Gilbert cohort.
- **06/14/20** - 18,692 cases in Maricopa County (7,463 new cases/10 days)
 2.78% (218 cases) in our Tempe cohort.
 3.48% (259 cases) in our Mesa, Chandler, Gilbert cohort.

Case Counts over Time

- **06/04/20** - On this date a **total** of 11,229 COVID-19 cases in Maricopa County since the onset of the pandemic. Of this total:
 5.45% (292 cases) are in Tempe cohort
 9.09% (515 cases) are in Mesa, Chandler, Gilbert cohort
 - **08/20/20 - Percentage of ALL cases (130,800) since onset of pandemic:**
 2.3% (3056 cases) in the Tempe cohort
 3.3% (4329 cases) in the Mesa, Chandler, Gilbert cohort
3. Data analysis of attendance records, specifically absences due to illness, for the school years 2018-19 and 2019-20 have been done to determine patterns of seasonal illness.
 4. The Centers for Disease Control has published the Schools Decision Tree to guide reopening.
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools-decision-tool.html>
 - a. When considering the attributes of the community, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School is able to answer “Yes” to all questions posed on the Decision Tree.
 5. The Arizona Department of Health Services/Arizona Department of Education have established “Benchmarks” to be considered in the reopening of schools (August 6, 2020).
 6. The Maricopa County Department of Public Health has established a “School Reopening Dashboard” applying the metrics of:
 - a. Case count in relation to population
 - b. Diagnostic test percent positivity
 - c. COVID like illness surveillance.

MCDPH metrics are accessible by municipality, school district, and zip code. It is recommended that “a school that draws students from an area broader than district boundaries could use a set of regional zip codes to define their region and average the case rates per 100,000 population and test percent positivity.”

7. Our Lady of Mt. Carmel will continue to utilize known zip codes to analyze data in combination with the known populations of those geographic regions (Tempe - 124,713; Mesa/Chandler/Gilbert - 157,746)

ACTION PLAN

1. Reopening will occur using a “phased-in” approach.
2. Those practices identified by healthcare professionals with expertise in public/community health as being “best practices” for limiting the spread of respiratory illness, and based on what is reasonable, practical, and feasible for our community, will be implemented.
3. Practices that have been identified as being vitally important in controlling spread of respiratory illnesses are: **Hand and respiratory hygiene, cohorting with physical distancing, and limiting contact with those who are sick.**
4. Enhanced cleaning and disinfection of classrooms, restrooms, common areas and high-touch surfaces, using EPA approved products will be implemented and continue as indicated throughout the school year. This will be done throughout the day and nightly.
 - a. A maintenance person is available on campus each school day from 7:00AM - 3:00PM to assist in cleaning and maintenance of the school facilities.
 - b. The School Nurse, on daily rounds, will participate in the disinfecting of high-touch surfaces.
 - c. Teachers will implement increased disinfection in their classrooms.
5. Upgrades to the HVAC systems include needlepoint bipolar ionization (NPBI), which have had up to a 99.4% rate of reduction for COVID-19. Additionally, new filters have been installed, and all coils have been sanitized and treated.
 - a. When environmental temperatures decrease, windows and doors will be opened to increase cross ventilation in rooms.
 - b. Weather permitting, teachers may instruct classes outdoors while maintaining physical distancing.

6. Hand Hygiene

- a. There will be an increased emphasis on hand hygiene and handwashing throughout the school year.
- b. Time and supplies will be allotted to facilitate more frequent and deliberate washing of hands among students, staff and visitors.
- c. Hand washing stations have been installed and are fully operational. Small groups of students will be brought to the station and supervised during handwashing following recess periods.

7. Respiratory Hygiene (Face Coverings/Masks)

- a. Cloth face coverings are barriers which protect others if the wearer is infected with COVID-19. Additionally, cloth face masks may offer some level of protection for the wearer. There is increasing evidence that the wearing of face masks during times of increased viral spread can help to limit the spread of respiratory illness.

(The CDC guidelines do not claim that wearing face-coverings may protect the wearer from contracting the virus. Additionally, the State of Arizona does not make any express or implied warranties regarding the face-coverings.

<https://www.azdhs.gov/documents/preparedness/epidemiology-disease-control/infectious-disease-epidemiology/novel-coronavirus/covid-19-safely-return-to-in-person-instruction.pdf>)

- b. An educational video is available on OLMC's YouTube Channel demonstrating proper mask etiquette.
- c. All students, staff/teachers, adults should wear a face covering during arrival and dismissal.
- d. Students should have a mask available to wear, on campus when physical distancing is not possible, or when an adult requests them to put on a mask.
 - Face coverings must be cloth and withstand daily laundering
 - Face coverings must not have text or graphics that are distracting or inconsistent with a Catholic environment.
 - Students must be able to independently apply and remove their own face covering and understand how to store their mask (in a sealed plastic bag).
- e. Wearing cloth face coverings may not be possible in every situation or for some people. In some situations, wearing a cloth face covering may exacerbate a physical or mental health condition, or pose safety concerns.

- e. Certain learning activities are difficult, at best, when either the teacher or student is masked. The teaching of language and phonics is most obvious. Face shields will be provided for all students and teachers.
- f. Students are not expected to wear a mask without breaks, or under fear of punishment, for 7 hours each day. “Mask breaks” will be allowed throughout the day when physical distancing is in place and the benefits outweigh risks.
- g. Masks/face coverings will not be worn during PE, recess or when actively eating or drinking.
- h. The wearing of masks should not become a discipline issue. Assisting students to know when it is necessary to wear their face coverings, with love and kindness, will be the approach.
- i. Parents may choose to have their student (any age) wear a face covering for the duration of each school day. If a parent chooses this, the parent must work with their child, at home, to practice wearing the mask for extended periods of time.
- j. Parents are asked to notify the School Nurse if their child has a medical condition which precludes mask wearing.

7. Home and School Bond

- a. We share a Home and School bond. We ask that you do your part at home to keep your family healthy as we will do our part as a faculty to keep ourselves healthy, especially the two weeks leading up to school. Be cognizant of where you are going and avoid large crowds and gathering.
 - i. *Please note if a parent is diagnosed with COVID-19 their child/children will need to quarantine for 14 days from the time the person with COVID begins their home isolation (Date person with COVID-19 began home isolation + 14 days=end of quarantine).*
 - ii. *If a student or staff member tests positive, we will notify the school community and follow the Maricopa County of Health Department’s most current procedures.*

ILLNESS SURVEILLANCE

1. The School Nurse is the designated point of contact for Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School and can be reached at (480) 967-5567 X1
2. The School Nurse will be responsible for daily tracking of attendance and monitoring for trends.

3. Home is the first point of screening for illness. All members of the OLMC school community are expected to monitor for signs of illness and **STAY HOME** if they are sick.
 - This would include checking for fever (temperature greater than 99.9°) and/or symptoms like cough, congestion, runny nose, sore throat, diarrhea, vomiting, or other indications of illness, prior to coming to school. The **“Daily Screening Tool”** should be used for this purpose.
 - According to the CDC, children may be less likely to have a fever as an initial symptom of COVID, thus the absence of fever is not a reliable indicator.
 - A parent/caregiver who is not able to screen their child prior to bringing to school, may request the School Nurse perform the assessment. Students needing to be screened are to be brought to a designated area (parking lot) for screening. A parent/caregiver will need to wait with the student until the student is cleared.
 - It is understood that when a parent, or designated caretaker, brings a child to school, they are assuring the child is well and fit for school.
4. Daily health screening, at school, will be in place for Phase 1.
 - Daily “rounds” will be done by the School Nurse at approximately 9AM, 11AM and 1PM. While community spread of COVID remains high, during 9AM rounds, temperature checks and screenings will be done on a random sampling of students (20%).
 - Increased surveillance measures will be enacted when warranted based on the monitoring of community Health Indicators.
5. Families/staff should self-report to the School Nurse if they or their student have symptoms of COVID-19, a positive test for COVID-19, or through contact tracing, were exposed to someone with COVID-19. The School Nurse will notify Maricopa County Department of Public Health in accordance with Guidelines for School Reporting (August 20, 2020).
6. If an employee or student has been in close contact with a person who tests positive for COVID-19 (within 6 feet for greater than 15minutes), they should not come to school and stay at home for fourteen days from the time of exposure.
7. Screening of staff, students, visitors and others coming to the school campus, for fever and symptoms, may be instituted in accordance with current public health recommendations and based upon community prevalence of illness.

MANAGEMENT OF ILLNESS

1. Any teacher, staff member or student who becomes ill at school with any respiratory symptom that is not known to be part of a chronic condition (i.e. asthma, allergies) will be separated from other staff/children and excluded from the school as soon as the parent/guardian can pick them up. Parents/guardians are expected to pick up an ill child within 30 - 45 minutes of notification.
2. A person displaying symptoms associated with COVID will be referred to their primary care provider for assessment and recommendations for COVID testing.
3. A resource list for PCR or antigen testing for COVID will be provided.
4. A person who tests positive for COVID should follow current Maricopa County Department of Public Health Guidelines; these will be provided.
<https://www.maricopa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/58863/Home-Isolation-Guidance>
5. In accordance with state and local laws and regulations, the School Nurse and Administration will notify school families if there is an exposure at school while maintaining confidentiality.
6. Care of ill students and staff will be guided by **Guidelines for Infection Surveillance and Control During 2020 Pandemic (COVID) for Healthcare Staff/Care of Students and Staff that Become Ill at School or Arrive Sick**
 - a. Any person who displays symptoms of respiratory illness:
Cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell or other symptoms identified as being associated with COVID will immediately be separated and placed in a designated “sick room” (isolation).
 - b. Establishment of a Sick Room
 - The Nurse’s Office will be used as a sick room as it is self contained, has a single door which can be closed, has furnishings that can be easily disinfected, and allows for the relative separation of the ill person from those who are not ill.
 - A sign will be placed on the outer door to clearly communicate the use of room for care of a sick person.
<https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/pdf/droplet-precautions-sign-P.pdf>
 - c. The use of facemasks for persons with respiratory symptoms and fever over 100.4 is strongly recommended. A single-use, disposable facemask will be used if it is developmentally appropriate and not medically contraindicated.

- d. One bathroom in the office, across from the Nurse's Office has been designated to be used by the nurse for a person who is in the sick room.
 - e. The nurse will wear a facemask, eye protection and gloves while providing care for the ill person. PPE has been secured through MCDPH.
 - f. While providing care for a person in a sick room (isolation), the School Nurse will limit interaction with other students or staff. All non-urgent, routine visits to the Health Office must be halted. If necessary, the medical needs of other students may temporarily be met by another member of the school staff as designated by the Principal.
 - g. When exiting the building, the ill person will use a path which limits exposure to other people, through the back door of the office and out to the parking lot. When the ill person passes through the corridor with other offices, those doors will be closed.
7. Using the *COVID-19 School Report Form* and established protocols, the School Nurse will notify the Maricopa County Department of Public Health of positive COVID cases. MCDPH will investigate suspected cases and follow up with further recommendations for OLMC.
8. The School Nurse will work in collaboration with Maricopa County Department of Public Health to perform contact tracing and identify those members of the community who need to follow up with a health care provider and/or begin home isolation.

PHASES 1-3:

Phase 1 - Specific Actions (September 8, 2020)

- a. Morning Care will be held in McCready Hall to allow students more space to spread out.
- b. Kindergarten and preschool parents **ONLY** may accompany children to areas outside of classrooms, each morning. Parents must wear a mask to be allowed onto campus. Adults should practice/model recommended physical distancing while waiting with children. **Parents may not enter the classrooms/buildings.** Parents will leave the campus immediately after the child enters the building on the East side behind McCready by the field.
- c. When lining up/waiting in line, students need to maintain space between themselves and others.
- d. The students will be dismissed from Morning Care at 7:50 and will go directly to their classrooms.

- e. We will begin a “kiss and go” drop off. Parents will enter the parking lot in the usual manner and follow directional cones to the “yellow brick road”. Students will exit their vehicles and enter the campus through assigned gates. A map explaining the drop off was included in “Back to School” folders and a video is available for viewing on OLMC’s YouTube channel. This should be viewed by parents prior to the commencement of school.
- f. There will be a staggered dismissal process. At orientation each family was assigned “younger” pick up (2:50PM) or “older” pick up (3:00PM). The youngest student dictates your assigned pick up. The dismissal procedure is demonstrated on the video available on OLMC’s YouTube channel.
- g. **Cohorting with Physical Distancing**
 - Each classroom will be treated as a “homeroom”. Students will stay with classmates from their homeroom, as much as possible.
 - Classrooms will be configured to allow as much space as possible between desks/students and teachers to adhere to physical distancing recommendations.
 - Students will sit in assigned seats.
 - There will be no mixing of classes (i.e. no “buddies”).
 - Special teachers will come to the classroom rather than students going to other classrooms.
 - Sharing of personal objects is discouraged; each student will have his/her own supplies.
- h. **Resting:** Will be done at desks; “nap-time” items should not be brought to school.
- i. **Recess:** Outdoor recess will continue. Students are encouraged to play games which do not involve physical contact. For morning recesses, students will be assigned to a designated area to allow for a limited number of students in any one location.
- j. Each student should have his/her own **water bottle**. Bottles may be refilled using the bottle filling option on drinking fountains. Students should not drink directly from the fountain. There will be sanitizer located near the water fountain and the children will be taught when and how to use it properly.
- k. **Lunch:**
 - Students will not eat in classrooms because of the number of students with life threatening food allergies (those requiring administration of epinephrine for exposure).

These students, particularly those in the younger grades, may experience increased anxiety when unable to sit in a “peanut-free” zone.

- To decrease the number of students at each lunch table and in McCready Hall at the same time, a lunch period has been added. Hot lunch will continue. Students will be served individually. There will not be a communal condiment/salad bar.
 - An additional lunch period has been added to allow for the maintenance of established “cohorting” during the lunch recess period.
 - When students are out of classrooms, during lunch, classroom tables, desks, etc. will be disinfected.
- l. **Mass:** Only one grade per week will attend Mass, seating will be according to a chart which allows for physical distancing. The remaining students will view Mass via livestream, in their classrooms. Families attending Mass may not sit with their child’s class; the student may sit with his/her family in a separate pew distanced from other classmates. If the family is late for Mass the student will not leave the class seating to sit with the family. Families must follow the current guidelines for participation in the Mass.
 - m. **Sports:** Suspended for fall season; await CYAA guidance.
 - n. **Field Trips:** No off-campus field trips.
 - o. **Volunteers/Visitors:** No volunteers/visitors permitted in classrooms.
 - p. Students going to **Kid’s Club** after school will go directly there at dismissal. Younger students will be in McCready Hall, older students will be in the Library. Snacks will be served individually, no “family dining”.

Phase 2 - Relaxing of some restrictions

- a. Lifting of restrictions in Phase 1 will be based on data from primary Health Indicators and in accordance with public health recommendations.
- b. Expanding the interaction of cohorts (“homerooms”) while continuing to maintain increased handwashing, physical distancing and separation from those who are sick will be the focus.
 - Students will be able to go to other classrooms for “specials”
 - 50% of classes will be able to go to the church for Mass

- c. Families attending Mass may not sit with their child's class; the student may sit with his/her family in a separate pew. Families must follow the current guidelines for participation in the Mass.
- d. **Volunteers/visitors will be allowed. All volunteers will need to have completed their Safe Environment Training and will be screened for illness when arriving on campus. Volunteers may not go to classrooms without approval.**
- e. After School clubs (Chess Club, Little Flowers, Little Women, Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts, etc.) allowed. Clubs must maintain small groups and practice recommended public health guidelines.

Phase 3 - Lifting of restrictions

- 1. Hand hygiene and frequent cleaning will still be practiced.
- 2. Community building activities will resume during this phase.
- 3. All students will be able to go to church for Mass.
- 4. Illness surveillance and management of illness will continue as outlined in
Guidelines for Infection Surveillance and Control During 2020 Pandemic (COVID) for Healthcare Staff
- 5. To control the spread of infection, during times of increased illness in the OLMC school community, Phase 1 restrictions may be reinstated.

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