



**St. Thomas Regional School**

is full **S.T.E.A.M.** ahead!

*Arts Integrated Learning*

*We Walk By Faith*

**St. Thomas Regional School**

**Re-Opening Plan**

**August 2020**

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# Introduction

To Our St. Thomas Regional School Family:

As we approach the school year ahead, we can agree that it will be a challenging one. This is a challenge we will rise to and face together. We learned a number of things this past spring when we had to unexpectedly move to a Distance Learning platform. Most importantly, as a school family working together, we learned we can accomplish anything. I have never been so proud to be a part of St. Thomas Regional School. As a school family, students, teachers, parents, Pastor, as well as many extended family members and friends, we will continue to support each other and face the new school year with the same dedication, vigor, and comradery as we did this past spring. We are best when we work together and I have no doubt that the 2020-2021 school year, although much different than any other school year, will be better than ever. We look forward to being with you all again, socially distant of course, soon.

Peace and Prayers,

Mrs. Mary DiMuccio  
Principal

## **Vision**

St. Thomas Regional School is inspired by our faith in Jesus Christ. The faculty and staff work together with the parents to support, nourish, and strengthen the students in our school. We are committed to providing a high-quality education, whether in school or through Distance Learning, of flexibility and creativity, while affording students a safe place where they can learn and grow. We are committed to compassionately supporting the academic, spiritual, social, and emotional needs of our students, families, faculty and staff in this time of uncertainty and widespread anxiety. As we continue to Walk By Faith, we will face each new challenge together.

## **Guiding Principles**

### **Health and Safety First**

As always, the health and safety of our school community is most important. We will continue to take all necessary precautions to help keep our entire school family, students, teachers, parents, pastor, and extended family members, and friends, physically, spiritually, and emotionally healthy.

### **Academic Excellence**

Although where we learn, home or school, may change as the school year progresses, we are committed to providing every student at every grade level, the same high-quality, content-rich Catholic education using the most effective synchronous and asynchronous platforms and practices.

### **Be Prepared**

There has never been a statement that resonates more in these current times than “you never know what tomorrow may bring”. Our current reality is that things can, and do, change daily and we need to be prepared for what is next. We will continue to be plan for, communicate with, and support each other, with flexibility, for whatever situation arises.

# Health & Safety

St. Thomas Regional School will continue to follow best practices as determined by the Rhode Island Department of Health. As always, we are committed to providing a healthy environment for our entire school family. While we realize that we cannot eliminate every possible risk, we will take every and all precautions necessary, as recommended by the RIDOH, to maintain a safe and healthy school environment. We will focus on the following areas: stable groups/pods, social distancing and face coverings, hand washing/sanitizing, facility cleaning, & staying home when sick and symptom free.

## **Stable Groups/Pods**

Each homeroom will be a designated a stable group/pod. Grades K & 1, Grades 2-4, and Upper School will use larger group spaces, maintaining 14 feet distance between stable groups/pods, for recess, art, PE, and Extended Day. This will be the case for Full In-Person, and Partial In-Person Re-Opening scenarios, as determined by RIDE. In the case of Limited In-Person Re-Opening scenarios, any homeroom greater than 15 would make use of a larger space, such as the cafeteria, and become two stable pods within one larger space while maintaining 14 feet distance. Students will remain in their stable groups/pods throughout the day with the same teachers.

## **Social Distancing & Face Coverings**

Social distancing will be encouraged at all times. Desks will be spaced as far apart as possible and face the same direction per RIDE guidance. Students will sit in the same desk every day and each desk will have a sneeze shield which can be removed as needed for lessons or to sanitize. Sharing of class materials is not allowed. A tape line on the floor around the teacher's desk will remind students not to get too close and to follow the 6 feet apart rule. Floor signage has been added to keep students distant and the hallways are marked for the same flow of traffic on each side.

Classroom doors have been designated as “in” or “out” to be sure all students come in the classroom and leave the classroom through the same door. Signs have been placed on the front door to the school, in each hallway, and in every classroom as reminders to stay 6 feet apart.

All students and staff must wear a face covering. This is not to say that they will have a face covering on for the entire day. We have planned in mask breaks and plan to get the children outside whenever possible, weather permitting, for lessons, snack, lunch, etc. All students will be given a lanyard to attach their face covering. This will prevent students from accidentally using another student’s face covering.

### **Hand Washing/Sanitizing**

Touchless hand sanitizing stations have been placed at every entrance and each classroom has a wall mounted station. Students and teachers will be required to use the station when entering the building in the morning and when entering the classroom. Students will be required to wash their hands before and after snack, lunch, recess, and use of the restroom. Hand washing signs have been placed on the doors exiting each of the restrooms.

### **Facility Cleaning**

A professional cleaning company will come in each evening to clean and sanitize the building. Regular cleaning and sanitizing will take place throughout the day of restrooms, desks, doorknobs, and any commonly touch surfaces using EPA approved disinfectants. We have purchased a handheld electrostatic sprayer which will allow us to sanitize up to 800 square feet in minutes. Windows will be kept open at all times, weather permitting to increase fresh air ventilation. We will make every effort to continue this practice as the weather gets colder.

### **Staying Home When Sick/Symptom Free**

All students must stay home when they are sick or experiencing any symptoms. This is critical to keep our school environment healthy. All parents will be required to submit the on-line Screening Tool before

sending your child to school. Parents will receive an email every morning by 6am asking three questions: 1. Is your child coming to school? 2. Does your child have any Covid symptoms? 3. Does anyone in your household have Covid symptoms? If you answer yes to these questions you need to keep your child home from school until they are symptom free, without medication for 24 hours. Students will not be allowed to come to or stay in school if they have not submitted the Covid screening tool. If a student or staff member is required to take a Covid test, they will not be allowed to come back to school without a doctor's note. All students will have their temperature taken when entering the building each day. Students with a temperature greater than 99.5 will not be able to stay in school. I realize this may be difficult but we will need full parental support and cooperation to help protect the health of our entire school family. Thank you in advance for your support.

If your child becomes sick during the school day and is experiencing Covid-like symptoms, the student will be isolated and the parents will be called. Students must be picked up within the hour.

The appropriate personal protective equipment, including face masks, shields, gloves, and gowns are on site to use as needed.

We will be following the directives from the RIDOH as outlined in the Outbreak Response Protocols: Pre K -12 in the event of a positive COVID case at the school. Mrs. DiMuccio will be the point of contact to work with RIDOH on follow up to outbreak containment.

Visitors will be restricted to essential personnel only and will be required to wear a face covering. A log will be kept of all visitors' names and contact information.

# Instruction

St. Thomas Regional School, whether In-Person, Distance Learning, or Hybrid Learning, is committed to providing every student, at every grade level, with the same high-quality, content-rich Catholic education using the most effective synchronous and asynchronous platforms and practices. Although our goal is to take great precautions to protect student health so students can be “in” school, we realize this may not always be possible and Distance Learning or Hybrid Learning may be necessary throughout the year. In order to be sure that instruction is consistent, whether in or out of school, all teachers will continue to use Google Classroom as the learning platform. All lessons and classwork will be posted in the Google Classroom and will be accessible to students who may not be able to attend school for various reasons due to Covid.

We will continue to use IXL Math and Reading, and Rosetta Stone for foreign language. We will be adding a project component to our Spanish program as well. Students will continue to have Physical Education with a health curriculum incorporated. Our goal is to get the students outdoors whenever possible which may mean more Physical Education lessons as opposed to health lessons. The children will not have a Performing Arts class this year due to a number of restrictions. Instead, we have added a new class called “The Arts” which they will have three times weekly. Classrooms teachers will team teach this across stable groups with lessons in any form of the arts.

As you know technology will be a vital part of instruction and learning. As a result, I am working to secure a chromebook for every student. We have also upgraded the internet access points in the building to be sure there is one in every classroom.

Highlander Institute and Security RI will provide teacher support and professional development.



## **Social, Emotional & Spiritual Support**

These last five months have been difficult for everyone. We have left behind all that we considered normal and have had to accept the reality of the “new normal”. When we first went to Distance Learning in mid-March, it was hard for all of us to be away from our school family. This did not discourage us however. We bonded together, day to day, to support and encourage each other through our photos, messages, phone calls, emails, and text messages. Even though we were not physically together, we continued to be for each other the social, emotional, and spiritual support system we needed during these difficult times. As a small school community, we are fortunate that we operate very much like a family, everyone knows everyone, teachers, students, parents, and in many cases grandparents, aunts, and uncles. As we plan to return to school, we will continue to bond together to provide that support for each other.

We will continue with monthly masses and Benediction as well. Each class will plan mass and the rest of the school will watch the mass virtually at school. Benediction will either be on a rotation schedule or socially distant. Father John will also continue to have a chapel mass with each class which will be conducted, not in the chapel, but in the full Church. Should we have to move to Distance Learning, Father John has a live broadcast of Mass every day at 7:30 am. Morning prayer will continue each morning, whether in school or through Distance Learning.

The social, emotional, spiritual, as well as physical health of the school community will be a top priority in the coming school year. The better we feel the better we perform in our day to day tasks.

# Operations and Communication

There will be a few changes to certain operations procedures for the coming school year in the areas of arrival, dismissal, lunch, bussing, and extended day.

## **Arrival and Dismissal**

All students in PreK-8 must be dropped off in the back-parking lot. The traffic pattern and flow of traffic will change. ALL cars must enter by the driveway next to the Church. Under no circumstances are any cars to enter through Edendale Avenue. Once you have entered through the Church driveway, continue straight around the basketball court. The area will be marked off by cones. Drop off, for all students, will be after the basketball court. Staff members will be there to guide you. Parents will not be allowed to exit the car. Students will be directed to their stable group near the entry door for their class. Once you have dropped your child/children off, please continue through the parking lot to exit by Edendale Avenue.

We realize that this will be a bit different and will require more patience, effort, and cooperation on everyone's part. We thank you in advance for your cooperation and support as we work together to keep our school family health and safe.

Now more than ever, it is imperative that all student arrive to school on time. As I mentioned, Edendale Ave will only be able to accommodate one-way traffic. Therefore, late drop off via Edendale Avenue will not be possible. Also, in following the guidelines for separate entrances for separate stable groups, late students, from various stable groups will not be able to enter through the front door. Please plan for all students to arrive at school no later than 8am. Again, thank you in advance for your help and cooperation with this matter.

Dismissal procedures will not change much. Parents who are picking up their children should park, as usual, in the back lot. Students will be dismissed as follows:

- K & 1 bus students
- Grades 2-4 bus students
- Upper school bus students
- K&1 riders
- Grades 2-4 riders
- Upper school riders

Students will enter and exit the building through designated doors. Parent may exit the cars when it is time to retrieve their child/children only and must wear a mask and follow six-feet apart guidelines. Cars will be dismissed row by row. Please do not exit the row. Again, this may take a bit more time, but it is necessary to allow for a safe exit for all. Thank you in advance for your patience and cooperation.

## **Bussing**

Bussing is provided to students by local towns. If you have any questions regarding bussing, please direct them to your local school department. If you have registered to ride the bus and do not plan on doing so, please contact the local school department or Statewide Transportation and let them know. Please be aware there may be delays, etc. to bussing services in the coming school year.

## **Lunch & Snack**

Students will eat lunch in the classrooms at their assigned desk. Students must wash hands before and after lunch. All desks will be cleaned and sanitized when the students have finished. Students may eat lunch outside on occasion, weather permitting. Our school lunch program will also be available. You may order lunches in the same way you have in the past, by the month, and students will come to the cafeteria, in their stable groups, to receive their lunch.

Students will have snack every day at 10am in their classroom in their assigned seat. Students will also have snack outside when possible, socially distant. Students must wash their hands before and after snack.

Very Important: Please remember we are a PEANUT/NUT FREE SCHOOL. Items containing any type of nut or nut product are not allowed for snack or at lunch time.

## **Extended Day**

We will continue to offer before school and after school extended day. In order to plan for social distancing, etc. you must let us know before hand if your child will be here. Students will be grouped in their same stable pod as during the school day. Stable pods may be in the same larger area (cafeteria), as long as 14 feet social distancing is maintained. Your child must have their own supplies, pencil, scissors, eraser, crayons, & glue stick, for extended day as sharing supplies is not possible.

Parents will pick up students at the front door but will not be able to go past the front entry and must wear a mask.

## **Communication**

Now more than ever communication is key. We will continue to keep all school families up-to-date to new information as it becomes available. Please be sure we have your primary email address and cell/home phone number and update as necessary to ensure you are receiving all communications. In the event of a positive case, we will follow the guidelines as outlined in Outbreak response Protocols: Pre K-12 set out by the RIDOH. Any questions or concerns regarding health and safety protocols, or issues beyond the scope of the daily routine of the classroom, should be directed to Mrs. DiMuccio.

