

# St. Mary's Academy Charter School Parent and Public Covid-19 Notice

SMACS will designate a group that is responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns. Individuals should call 361-358-5601 extension 1000 (school office) during normal business hours to be connected with the appropriate designated staff member. If you cannot wait for the school business hours, please call your family medical provider or 911 if an emergency.

*Every decision made will take into consideration the latest guidance and direction from local, state and federal authorities.*

*Updated: 7/17/2020*



Dear St. Mary's Academy Charter School Families,

Based upon guidance and direction from the Texas Education Agency and local and state officials, we are moving forward with plans to reopen our school for the fall semester and want to provide you with our commitment to student and staff safety. We have remained in contact with local, state, and federal authorities and have developed two options, approved by the Texas Education Agency, for students to learn in a face-to-face or remote learning (online) platform. We are committed to providing you the most up to date information as we learn more and seek to clarify how these changes will affect our school year.

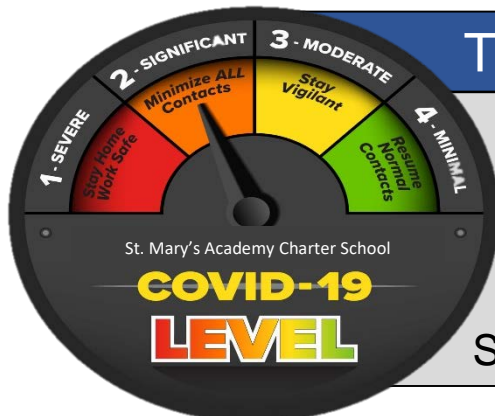
This document provides guidance on health protocols, school day operations, and instructional guidelines. In addition to these protocols, we will implement COVID-19 Action Levels on our campus. This system will include adjustments to arrival and dismissal procedures, child nutrition services, and campus organization. We will implement new and more intense health and hygiene practices, along with increased cleaning, training and reminders about safe and healthy practices. New protocols including restrictions on campus visitors, deliveries and student gatherings are in place for the protection of all students and staff.

Campus and program specific guidelines will be communicated as we get closer to the start of school. We will communicate specific information about efforts related to health and safety. We ask that you take time to read through this guidance document and reach out with your feedback or questions. We know we will get through this crisis and we look forward to when we are all back in our regular routines. Regardless of the platform you choose for your child, rest assured we will support your decision and are committed to providing your child an excellent education in either platform.

Thank you and stay safe!

Hirma Elizondo, Principal

Stan Simonson, Superintendent



The image shows a circular gauge with four colored segments representing COVID-19 levels. The segments are: 1 - SEVERE (red, 'Stay Home Work Safe'), 2 - SIGNIFICANT (orange, 'Minimize ALL Contacts'), 3 - MODERATE (yellow, 'Stay Vigilant'), and 4 - MINIMAL (green, 'Resume Normal Contacts'). The needle points to level 2. Below the gauge is the text 'St. Mary's Academy Charter School' and 'COVID-19 LEVEL' in large, bold letters.

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# Health Protocols

SMACS continues to monitor the spread of COVID-19 and receives regular guidance from Texas Governor Greg Abbott, Texas Education Agency Commissioner Mike Morath and other local, state and federal agencies regarding response, prevention and mitigation efforts. This guidance will continue to evolve based on COVID-19 conditions across the state and our local community. We will educate our students, staff, and community members about the importance of social distancing; frequent hand washing; covering a cough or sneeze; not touching one's eyes, nose, or mouth; staying home when sick; and other measures to help prevent the spread of communicable diseases. Hand sanitizer will be available at every building entrance and in every classroom. SMACS Custodial Staff will continue to routinely clean and disinfect all facilities, including frequently touched objects and surfaces with CDC approved germicidal agents which are effective against multiple disease causing viruses and bacteria.

## **Covid-19 Daily Self-Screening**

All parents, students and staff will be required to self-screen daily prior to entering any SMACS facility.

Parents/Guardians can help by keeping children who are sick home. If a child has COVID-19 symptoms, under TEA guidelines, the child cannot return to school until at least ten days have passed since symptoms first appeared, and at least three days (72 hours) have passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever reducing medications); and the individual has improvement in symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, etc.)

## **Social Distancing**

Students and staff will be asked to maintain a distance of 3-6 feet when feasible.

## **Face Coverings**

All students and staff will wear face coverings. Some SMACS staff, such as school nurse, Nutrition Staff, and Custodial Staff will be wearing masks and gloves throughout the school day.

## **Temperature Checks**

Daily temperature checks of all students at school will be performed as long as it is beneficial. Campus has been provided no-touch infrared thermometers for screening symptomatic students and staff.

## **Registered Nurse**

There is a part-time registered nurse on campus.

## **Response to COVID-19 Cases**

SMACS staff will initiate the SMACS Isolation Plan in the event of a suspected COVID-19 case on campus. In working with federal, state, local health ordinance, and district authorities, a course of action will be determined regarding necessary communication, required sanitation, possible closures, and contact tracing. Upon notification of a lab confirmed COVID-19 case on a campus, the district will communicate with teachers, staff, and families of students who were potentially exposed.

# School Day Operations



## Cleaning

- Campuses will be cleaned throughout the instructional day
- Classrooms will be equipped for cleaning between transition of students
- Age appropriate signage for proper hygiene practices will be posted throughout the buildings.

## Arrival/Dismissal

- Multiple entry/exit points will be established.
- Students will report to their assigned area daily. (TBD)
- All areas of the building (cafeteria, larger classrooms, common areas, etc.) will be utilized to limit the size of student groupings.
- Students will be released straight from their assigned areas.

## Transitions

- Students and staff will follow protocols for face coverings.
- Classroom doors will be left open to reduce high touch area when possible.
- Traffic patterns will be established throughout the campus that separate individuals to the greatest extent possible.
- Staff and signage will be posted to reinforce physical distance expectations.

## Meal Service

- Breakfast and lunch will be provided for all students in their classroom pod.
- Serving areas will be cleaned as students' transition.
- Campuses will use a variety of options for seating arrangements to maximize social distancing.

## School Calendar

The district plans to utilize the Board approved 2020-2021 calendar. However, the district is prepared to modify the calendar. Ample notice and communication will be provided if a calendar change is needed.

## Recess/Outdoor Time

Outdoor play and outdoor learning will be encouraged.

## Visitors/Deliveries/Miscellaneous

- SMACS will restrict visits in the school to only those essential to school operations
- Essential meetings will be by appointment or a virtual format.
- All approved visitors must self-screen prior to entry, their temperature may be taken before they are admitted.
- To ensure the safety of students and staff, no outside deliveries for students will be accepted. (i.e. gifts, etc.)
- **No outside food will be brought in.**
- **Parent access will be limited to the main school building and the school business office.**

## Health Screening

All staff must self-check for symptoms daily before coming to campus. The self-check for staff includes a daily temperature check and evaluating if they have come into Close Contact as defined below. Any yes answers should be immediately reported to your supervisor before coming on campus.

Weekly parents will receive a Remind from their student's homeroom teachers to check for symptoms or close contact information. These two questions must be answered yes or no for each student. Failure to respond could require students to be switched to Remote Instruction.

## COVID-19 Symptoms

1. Have they recently begun experiencing any of the following in a way that is ***not normal for them?***
  - Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit
  - Loss of taste or smell
  - Cough
  - Difficulty breathing
  - Shortness of breath
  - Headache
  - Chills
  - Sore throat
  - Shaking or exaggerated shivering
  - Significant muscle pain or ache
  - Diarrhea

## Close Contact

2. This document refers to "close contact" with an individual who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19. Close contact is determined by an appropriate public health agency. For clarity, close contact is defined as:
  - a. being directly exposed to infectious secretions (e.g., being coughed on while not wearing a mask or face shield); or
  - b. being within 6 feet for a cumulative duration of 15 minutes, while not wearing a mask or face shield;

if either occurred at any time in the last 14 days at the same time the infected individual was infectious.

Individuals are presumed infectious at least two days prior to symptom onset or, in the case of asymptomatic individuals who are lab-confirmed with COVID-19, two days prior to the confirming lab test.

*Individuals Confirmed or Suspected with COVID-19*

1. Any individuals who **themselves** either: (a) are lab-confirmed to have COVID-19; or (b) experience the symptoms of COVID-19 (listed below) must stay at home throughout the infection period, and cannot return to campus until the school system screens the individual to determine any of the below conditions for campus re-entry have been met:
  - o In the case of an individual who was diagnosed with COVID-19, the individual may return to school when all three of the following criteria are met:
    - i. at least three days (72 hours) have passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications);
    - ii. the individual has improvement in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and
    - iii. at least ten days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
  - o In the case of an individual who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and who is not evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, such individual is assumed to have COVID-19, and the individual may not return to the campus until the individual has completed the same three-step set of criteria listed above.

If the individual has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to school before completing the above stay at home period, the individual must either (a) obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis or (b) receive two separate confirmations at least 24 hours apart that they are free of COVID via acute infection tests at an approved COVID-19 testing location found at <https://tdem.texas.gov/covid-19/>.