



"Fall 2021 Learning Journey"

August 2021

Dear Families,

I would like to begin by thanking all of you for your support of our nursery school over the past year. Many of you are new to our school and this will be your first experience in a myriad of ways. Our Fall of 2021 Return to School plan is extremely like the Fall of 2020. Although our world is evolving in this pandemic, we prayerfully had great success last year with our school remaining open for the entire year. Our families and staff demonstrated that through faith and perseverance we would continue this learning journey in a way we never imagined or encountered. I pray that everyone continues to be healthy physically and emotionally. As with all schools, a great deal of preparation, planning, and implementation has gone into this process. I have sought the advice of our Office of Early Childhood specialist from the State of Connecticut, our local health sanitarian from Quinnipiac Valley Health, the Office of Education, Evangelization, and Catechesis from the Archdiocese of Hartford, and our North Haven Fire Department fire inspector. After prayerful consideration and careful review of the guidelines and laws set before us during this time, I have drafted our return to school plan for fall of 2021.

St. Therese Nursery School will be opening as scheduled on September 7, 2021, in our full capacity in four separate self-sustaining classrooms with the safest precautions being taken for the students, families, and staff. We are working diligently to provide the safest environment possible with many new protocols and physical changes to our building to achieve this goal. Whether it be the electrostatic sprayer that will sanitize our rooms and toys to the UV filters that will be placed on all our furnace/air condition units to clean the air of the building, we are dedicated to going above and beyond in the name of safety as we have done so for the past twenty years. The social emotional component of nursery school and the lack of social interaction for many of our children over the past few months is of our utmost concern. Without social interactions with peers, many children have regressed in many areas. The return to school is critical for the social/emotional component for our little friends. Our staff is designing a developmentally appropriate curriculum to address these very needs in addition to support from educational consultants with a focus on socialization.

I realize that many school districts are announcing their plans for the fall and a great deal of information is being shared in the news regarding this. I want to clarify and explain how we fit into this puzzle. For some background, the Office of Early Childhood from the State of Connecticut has allowed all licensed programs to remain open this entire pandemic. STNS closed in March 2020 due to a directive the Archdiocese of Hartford Office of Education, Evangelization, and Catechesis that asked all programs to close if the town they resided in closed. Our program is a licensed early childhood program, and our classrooms and students are separate from each other physically and schedule wise with some children already attending either

Monday/Wednesday/Friday, Tuesday/Thursday, or Monday-Friday. All classes will be self-sustaining with the same teacher, teacher assistant, and students. We do not need to follow the local school district as they are making decisions regarding large schools with many ages and bus transportation with regards to hybrid and virtual learning. We will follow the guidance and mandates of the Office of Early Childhood and the directive our Pastor, Reverend Michael Santiago on any closure or conversion to virtual learning.

How does this look for our school? Like last year, each classroom will enter and exit through their own door and remain as a class unit "family". There are signs that will mark the entrance to each classroom in addition to circles placed six feet apart to wait for entry. The classrooms will not interact with one another to maintain the self-sustaining groups. The playground will be on a set schedule for each class with a fifteen-minute window in between for cleaning with our hydrostatic sprayer. There are many adaptations physically, but our mission will remain the same to provide the ideal early childhood experience that balances the spiritual, social, and emotional needs of all our children and their families. Please review the attached "STNS Return to School, Fall 2021".

With regards to tuition, in the event we are mandated to go virtual, we will continue to provide an early childhood education through online classes as well as supportive materials for activities including the tools needed to do so. I am hopeful that we will not need to take these measures as we remained open last year for the entire school year.

As always, please feel free to contact me with any questions at any time. Together we can work on making our school a safe place for our children to grow on this learning journey. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

In God's Peace,

Michele Adinolfi

Director, St. Therese Nursery School



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Cleaning and Physical Plant Modifications:

1. We utilize a professional cordless Electrostatic handheld sprayer made by the Victory company to us in sterilization of the classrooms and toys. This type of sprayer can be used in schools and is safe for those who have asthma. After receiving the spray, the item or surface is sanitized for viruses and dries within three minutes. The spray and electrons encapsulate an item for this sanitization procedure.
 - a. The classrooms will be sprayed each morning by our cleaning company prior to the start of school in addition to our more extensive daily cleaning.
 - b. The sprayer will be used on the playground in between the different classes on all the equipment, bikes, cars, and helmets.
 - c. The sprayer will be used in the classroom in between each center use on all items such as blocks, Legos, play kitchen items, and all surfaces of the centers.
 - d. Our cleaning company will use extended measures with our Lysol products to clean the classrooms and bathrooms.
 - e. Our HVAC system has been fitted with UV filters to clean the air provided by our air condition and heating systems.
 - f. All tables and chairs will be wiped with Lysol wipes before and after each use.
 - g. At every transition during the day the areas in use and materials will be cleaned and sterilized with the electrostatic sprayer, Lysol wipes, or Lysol disinfectant.



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Arrival/Dismissal to school:

- i. Each classroom will enter a separate door to the individual classroom. Lawn signs identifying classrooms A, B, C, and D will be prominently placed to denote where to enter. Families will wait on the STNS circles six feet apart on the sidewalk and into the building. We will utilize these entrances for Meet and Greet so that our families will have a practice run.
- ii. The director will be stationed in between the white fences to direct families to the separate entrances and answer any questions.
- iii. All parents and children will wear masks at arrival and dismissal. Staff members and students are required to wear masks. There will be mask breaks at snack, lunch, and during outdoor recess. In addition, if a child requests a mask break, they will be able to do so at a safe distance from the other children under the supervision of one of the staff members within the classroom. We are asking parents to provide at least two additional masks in a Ziploc bag in their child's tote bag. In the beginning many children will wet their masks and require changing.
- iv. Temperature check & Health Screening: Although no longer mandated by the OEC, all children will be temperature checked by an infrared forehead thermometer at the door to the classroom. The teacher will ask the parent to record the reading. Children will not be allowed to attend school with a temperature over 100.4. In addition, **we will screen staff and children for any observable illness, including cough or respiratory distress, prior to entering the facility. A copy of our daily screening log is attached for your reference.**
- v. Hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol will be placed at every sign in log to the classroom for your use and your child.
- vi. Parents will sign their child in and complete a questionnaire each day regarding the health and wellbeing of their child. Pen boxes will include new pens and a box for used pens.
- vii. Thermometers and doorways will be decorated by each teacher for a vibrant and kid friendly welcome.
- viii. Communication with families at arrival and dismissal: We will be keeping our communication brief at arrival and dismissal as people will be waiting in line outside and weather could be inclement. Our staff will be utilizing other methods of communication such as emails, Remind text, or phone calls.

- ix. Nap items: These items will be sent home each day. A bag for nap items for our all-day students will be sent home at Meet and Greet. Nap bags will be placed on separate hooks in the hallway or near the classroom for separation and easy retrieval. Nap items should be limited to a receiving size blanket and travel size pillow.
- x. Lockers will be divided so that each child has a specific area and tote bags and coats do not touch one another. Lunch boxes will be stored in the smaller portion of the cubby so as not to meet other lunch boxes.

Handwashing

Handwashing is the best defense against the spread of any virus. Our handwashing policy has now been updated to include the following procedures.

Staff and students will wash their hands at the following times:

- xi. Upon arrival to school
- xii. After arrival activity
- xiii. At every transition
 - 1. Example: Before and after every center, before and after eating, before and after playground use
- xiv. Washing hands before and after lunch with automated dispenser
- xv. After using the bathroom
- xvi. Any time a person coughs or sneezes

Food

*All lunches are peanut/tree nut free. Parents will provide the utensils needed for each lunch daily.

*Snack: Each classroom will have labeled snack items and drinks. One staff member in the kitchen at a time retrieving and returning the snack items.

Nap

- xvii. Children will be placed six feet apart or head to toe to accommodate the spacing.
- xviii. Washing of hands before and after nap for both students and staff
- xix. Nap items will be stored on hooks in bags separate from one another being sent home nightly so that the personal belongings of each child do not remain in the school overnight.

- xx. Cots will be sprayed individually after each use and stored with a plastic cover when not in use.

Playground

- xxi. Playground schedule: Each class will have a set playground time with a 15-minute gap in between for cleaning with the sprayer to sterilize big toys/cars/outdoor toys. All day classes will have a morning and afternoon playground time.
- xxii. Purel, tissues, gloves, and a trash can will be placed on playground.

Outdoor Classroom

- xxiii. Outdoor seating area with tables will be an option for teachers to utilize for snacks, lunch, or instruction. This area will be within the fenced in playground in a separate area. These tables will be sanitized before and after use.

Individual Learning Tools

- xxiv. Playdough will be placed in separate mini tubs with tools in a labeled bag for each child.
- xxv. Pencil boxes: Labeled for each child with crayons, markers, scissor, pencil, glue stick.
 1. Teachers can decide which items at the timetable of usage.
 2. Pencil boxes will travel to the writing centers with the children.
 - a. Storage of pencil boxes on top of writing centers

Health and Well Being

*If a child becomes ill while at school for any reason, they will be brought to the meeting room outside the Director's office which will serve as the isolation room. Parents will be notified to pick up the child.

*Temperature checks will also occur mid-day to ensure that there is no change in the child's temperature if the staff notices a change in behavior or observes any symptoms differing from the initial screening at arrival.

*Update to our current policy regarding illness: A child must now remain out of school for 48 hours if they have a fever or gastrointestinal illness. The child must be fever free and not exhibit any signs of gastrointestinal distress for 48 hours before returning to school.

If COVID-19 Is Diagnosed in a Child or Staff Member

Per the OEC

If a child or staff member who has been present in the program is diagnosed with COVID-19, the childcare provider must notify families and staff about the exposure.

Please see the attached documents about exposure, notification, and quarantine from the Office of Early Childhood.