



"Fall 2020 Learning Journey"

August 2020

Dear Families,

I would like to begin by thanking all of you for your support of our nursery school over the past few months. 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. I have spent the past few months planning for the return of our students and staff for the fall of 2020. 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 2020.

St. Therese Nursery School will be opening as scheduled on September 8, 2020 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 of 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. With regards to the fall, many local school districts have a variety of plans that involve hybrid and virtual learning. As you will see in the plan attached, we do not fall into that category. This is a bit like comparing apples to oranges. Our program is a licensed early childhood program where we do not need a hybrid model as 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. In the past some students attended certain days in one classroom than others. This will not happen in this school year so that we can maintain self-sustaining classrooms. 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? We will look a bit different than before as each classroom will be self-sustaining with many safety procedures. Each classroom will enter and exit through their own door and remain as a class unit "family". We are currently constructing a new four-year-old classroom in the other wing of the building to meet the number of students and lower ratio. 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. In addition, we have installed UV air scrubbers in all five our furnaces to clean the air as it circulates throughout the building. 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 2020".

With regards to tuition, I will be providing information regarding tuition in the event we need to convert to virtual learning on Thursday after guidance from our finance council. I am hopeful that we will not need to take these measures as many early childhood centers reopened in June and have successfully remained open with the safety precautions in place from the Office of Early Childhood.

Finally, I know that this is difficult decision for many of you and I am here to guide you on this unexpected part of the journey. This is about what you are comfortable with as a family and everyone's needs may differ. With that being said, I also need to finalize class lists and staffing for the fall in the next two weeks. Teacher assignment, classroom location, and further information will be mailed the third week in August. Please let me know by Monday, August 10, 2020 if you have any modifications for your child's placement for the fall. If you have chosen or are thinking of an 8:00 a.m. drop off, I need a confirmation of each of these with certainty to maintain a separation by class. I may be able to assist you and provide an option that will meet your needs that you did not initially plan for. Our Meet & Greet will still occur on Friday, September 4th. Each classroom will have a specific time to visit to keep all classes separate. You will receive a notification of your time next week. Thank you again for your continued support of our school and I will continue to pray for all our families as we continue during these times.

In God's Peace,

Michele Adinolfi

Director, St. Therese Nursery School



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Cleaning and Physical Plant Modifications:

1. We have purchased and will be using 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.
 - 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 will be 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. A map will be provided in the teacher placement letter for each classroom.
- ii. The director will be stationed in between the white fences to direct families to the separate entrances and answer any questions as I normally did so in the foyer.
- iii. All parents and children will wear masks at arrival and dismissal. Staff members will always have masks on. Children will be able to remove the mask by their parent at the door upon entering the classroom. Upon entering they will immediately wash their hands. At dismissal, the children will place their mask back on to leave the building. If a parent would prefer their child wear a mask during the school day, they may do so. Staff will not be able to assist the child with the mask in case of contamination.
- 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.**
 1. **Staff will ask the parent/guardian to confirm that the child does not have a fever, shortness of breath, or cough. ♦ Make a visual inspection of the child for signs of illness which could include flushed cheeks, rapid breathing or difficulty breathing (without recent physical activity), fatigue, or extreme fussiness.**
- 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 well being 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. All sinks in the nursery school will now have automated dispensers to avoid contact and cross contamination. Paper towels will be easily available at each sink. The classrooms sinks will have an Alexa type device that will play music at twenty second intervals to ensure the children wash for the appropriate time.

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 table 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.

*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 child care provider must notify families and staff about the exposure.

◆ In February 2020, COVID-19 was added to the List of Reportable Diseases. Those required to report such diseases must report cases of COVID-19 infection immediately to the DPH Epidemiology and Emerging Infection Program (860-509-7994) and the local department of health in the town of residence of the case-patient by telephone on the day of recognition or strong suspicion of the disease. Contact information for the local health department can be found at <https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/Local-Health-Admin/LHA/Local-Health-Administration---Site-Map>.

Additional practices to those below may be recommended to the provider in consultation with the local health department or the DPH:

- ◆ Determine the date of symptom onset for the child/staff member.
- ◆ Determine if the child/staff member attended/worked at the program while symptomatic or during the two days before symptoms began.
- ◆ Identify what days the child/staff member attended/worked during that time.
- ◆ Determine who had close contact with the child/staff member at the program during those days (staff and other children) and implement steps below for child or staff member exposed to COVID-19.
- ◆ Exclude the children and staff members who are determined to have had close contact with the appropriate cleaning and disinfection.

Depending on the size of the program and the number of people affected, closure of a particular room in the program (for larger centers) or the entire program might need to be considered. Specific situations and exposures can be discussed with the local health department or the DPH at 860-509-7994.