

## St. Emile School Re-opening Plan for the 2020/21 School Year

Last Updated: August 18, 2020

This summer, the Province of Manitoba indicated its strong desire for students to return to school in the fall. School will officially re-open to staff on September 2, 2020, with students returning on September 8, 2020. On July 30<sup>th</sup>, the Province announced its decision on returning to school, along with re-defined response levels. These response levels will continue to evolve and may need to transition between all three response levels. This may be done at the class, school or broader community level and will be determined by the Department of Education and Manitoba Public Health. The three levels are as follows:

### **Level One**

*In class learning – All Kindergarten – Grade 12 Students*

- K-8 students to be in school 5 days per week, regular instruction, full classes.
- 1 metre physical distancing when seated, if students are organized into cohorts.

### **Level Two**

*Blended Learning – In-Class and Remote Learning*

- K-8 Students prioritized for in-class learning.
- 2 meters of social distancing, smaller class groupings.
- Combination in-school learning and remote learning.

### **Level Three**

*Remote Learning*

- Remote Learning taking place at home.
- Schools are closed with the exception of K-6 children of critical care workers

When school begins in September, the Government has announced that we will begin with **Response Level One**. In-class learning will resume for students in all public and independent schools in the province. St. Emile School will return to full day classes, five days per week for Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 8. **Students in grades 1 – 8** will begin classes on **September 8, 2020**. **Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten** students will begin their year with a **staggered start**. If you have a child in these grades, your child's teacher will email you the start dates.

### **Guiding Principles**

This plan is based on the most current information available and is subject to change. Schools must follow existing public health requirements and educational priorities as identified by **Public Health** and **Manitoba Education**. The province has released several documents that have helped in the planning of this plan. You may access them at [www.gov.mb.ca/covid19](http://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19) They will also be available on the school website at [www.stemileschool.ca](http://www.stemileschool.ca) by August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020

## **St. Emile Guidelines for the Re-opening of School**

*As previously stated, St. Emile School will be operating with the **Response Level One Guidelines** which is a full time program with students sitting 1 metre or more away from each other. Students will be organized into class cohorts.*

### **Cohorts**

In order to accommodate all of our students, we will be using a system that groups students together into groups referred to as 'COHORTS' (as suggested by Public Health). In this system, one metre of distance is required between student workplaces. For our purposes, we will consider each class a cohort, which reduces the number of contacts for students. Additional student workplaces will be added to classrooms to supplement existing classroom set-ups. All unnecessary furniture will be removed to provide increased space to ensure adequate social distancing.

### **Personal Protective Equipment**

*The Province has recently mandated masks be worn for students in Grades 4 – 8. Younger students have the option of wearing a mask, at the discretion of their parents. The school has a supply of medical masks for any staff or students who have forgotten or are in need of a face mask.*

*All students will be provided with an individual private desk shield. This shield is designed to provide cover and protection for one workspace. Each child's shield will only be used for that particular child and will be thoroughly disinfected daily.*

*All staff members will be wearing face masks and/or face shields. Teachers will use face shields when teaching class lessons and transition to face masks when assisting students.*

**If your child in in Grade 4 – 8 please ensure they come to school each day with a clean reusable mask or a new disposable mask.**

### **Teaching Focus**

The beginning of the school year will focus primarily on assessment and review of last year's curriculum. Teachers will target any learning gaps that may have occurred during the distance learning sessions. Particular focus will be placed upon Mathematics and English Language Arts. Some adjustments will be made to Music and Physical Education classes to allow adherence to public health orders. Until further notice, Physical Education will be taught outside.

### **Attendance and Participation**

As outlined by Public Health and Manitoba Education, students are expected to attend in-class learning unless they are ill or exhibiting symptoms. Families are required to report absences or lates to the school office and or teacher as per our regular process. We are also asking parents to report the reason for the absence (illness, appointment etc.)

## **Remote Learning**

In some circumstances, remote learning will be provided for students *who are medically advised not to return to school due to COVID – related risk factors*. Any student who has been medically advised will be taught through remote learning.

## **Family Preparedness**

### **Communication**

We will be communicating any pertinent information through email. Any COVID related information will also be posted on the school website. If there are families who are not able to receive communication in this way, we will look for other ways to respond.

### **Illness at School/Screening**

Parents will be expected to screen their child at home. The school has a screening protocol based upon the screening tools developed by the Province of Manitoba. Families will conduct self and child screening before leaving home in the morning. Staff members will also self-screen for symptoms. Students and staff who are ill or showing any symptoms must not come to school.

If a student should become ill or symptomatic while at school, he or she will be isolated away from the group. An isolation area has been set up in the school kitchen, with room for two students distanced from each other. An additional space will be set up in the office as a reserve isolation area. Students who exhibit symptoms will be given a mask to wear while they await pick-up. Parents will be contacted by the school to take the student home. Parents are encouraged to have contingency plans in place to care for an ill child. In addition, parents are advised to contact Health links at (204-788-8200 or 1-800-315-9257) or your child's health care provider for direction.

### **Contact Tracing and Outbreak Management**

In the event of confirmation of a case of COVID – 19 connected with the school, Public Health will lead the response and provide guidance, including ensuring appropriate supports are in place to coordinate the response. Contact tracing involves identifying the contacts of a positive case and contacting those individuals who may have been exposed. Public health may:

- Request records that identify cohorts of staff and students in the school for a specific timeframe;
- Offer testing following established guidelines to staff, students who may have been exposed to the virus; and
- Assess whether the school needs to be closed for a period of time.

Public Health will advise staff and students if they have been in close contact, if they need to self-isolate and when they may return to school.

### **Parents/Visitors in the School**

Under normal circumstances, we welcome parent involvement in our school community. Provincial guidelines instruct us to limit the number of non-essential visitors in the school until further notice. If

possible, we are asking parents to conduct school business via email or telephone. If this is not always possible, please contact the school to set up an appointment. All visitors will be required to wear a mask when entering the school. Parents may accompany students to the door, but we ask that parents refrain from coming into the school.

### **Student Drop-off**

*Depending on your child (ren's) grade, they will be entering the school/portable/church through different doors. Your child's teacher will send an email indicating specifics in the first week of September.*

All students will be allowed to enter their classroom at 8:30am. Each student will enter their classroom through their designated entrance. At each entrance, we will have a staff member present to direct students and answer any questions parents may have. They will also direct students to use hand sanitizer that will be available at each entrance. Door supervisors will remain present until 8:50am, after which the doors will be locked. After that time, we ask all students/parents to use the front doors by the office.

### **Student Pick-up**

We will be staggering the student exit from the building, utilizing all of the exits.

Double blue gym doors – prek @ 3:15

Sterling Exit – Kinder/Pacheco @ 3:10, 1/Remple @ 3:20, 2/Spitula @ 3:25 and 3/Lussier@ 3:30

Main Doors- Kinder/Patek@ 3:10, 7/Sucharyna @ 3:20, 7/Smith @3:25, 8/Martin @ 3:30

Back Doors- 1/Villegas @ 3:20, 4/Mak @ 3:25, 6/Guyot @ 3:30

Church Double Doors – 3/Katopodis @ 3:30

Church Single Door – 4/Hudson @ 3:30

Portables – 5/Burdey & 5 Baines @ 3:30

### **Before and After School Care**

Childcare is essential for many St. Emile families. In order to accommodate this need, the program will have some differences this year. The before school program will take place in the Parish Hall and classrooms. Students will be taken to their regular classrooms at 8:30am. The afterschool program will run similarly as in previous years.

*Families will be advised of the drop-off and pick-up procedures for this program before the first day of school.*

### **Operational and Building Preparedness**

#### **Increasing Cleaning and Disinfecting**

The St. Emile custodial team will be increasing our cleaning and disinfecting regimen, with more frequent cleaning of washrooms and high touch surfaces. We have purchased a disinfectant sprayer, allowing us to completely disinfect a classroom in ten minutes. Each classroom will be cleaned and disinfected at least once

per day. Doors of washrooms will be set open to allow for less contact. Other high touch surfaces including handrails, push-releases, counters and light switches will be cleaned with greater frequency. Hand sanitizer, cleaning supplies and disinfectant have been secured for this purpose and will be restocked as needed.

### **Hand Hygiene**

All entrances, rooms and spaces are equipped with hand sanitizer. Anyone entering the building will be expected to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer. A schedule for class hand washing will be in place (before eating, after recess, after wiping their nose and additionally as needed) with students receiving direct instruction on hand washing and use of hand sanitizer.

### **Physical Distancing in and Around the School**

Signage has been installed around the school encouraging hand hygiene, physical distancing and listing symptoms of COVID-19 for all to be aware. All traffic flow through the building will be “keep right” as students and staff move through the building. Review of this practice will be part of the education for students.

### **Washroom Usage**

Students will be assigned specific washrooms throughout the school. Staff will be attentive in keeping bathrooms limited to three students at a time. Each teacher will review these procedures with students.

### **Water Fountains**

Our water fountains are all equipped with touchless water dispensers for filling water bottles. The touch buttons have been closed off. Students must bring a water bottle to school each day. Water bottles will go home for families to disinfect at the end of each learning day.

### **Locker and Cubby Usage**

As we are seeking to minimize traffic in the hallways, students will only be using lockers and cubbies for clothing such as coats and ski pants. Students will be on a timed schedule, outlined by teachers, that will allow for minimum students in the hall.

### **Outdoor Learning and Play**

Outdoor learning and play is considered by Public Health to be one of the safest of choices and will be part of teachers’ planning in the fall, at least until winter weather arrives. Students must come to school prepared to go outside, both for Physical Education and other classes. Hand hygiene will take place before and after outdoor play.

### **Lunch and Recess**

*All students will participate in a staggered recess and lunch program. Teachers will be emailing recess and lunch schedules to all parents before school begins. The goal is to create opportunities for students to play in their cohorts with less total students on the playground.*

Lunch for all students, will be located in their classrooms. Each class will have staff supervision.

### **Use of Microwaves**

In order to limit contact points for students, all microwaves will be removed from classrooms. Please ensure students either use a thermos to keep food warm from home or bring a lunch that does not require heating.

### **Hot Lunches**

For the month of September there will be no hot lunches offered. We are looking for safe ways in which we can offer students the opportunity to have hot lunches at a later date.

### **Shared Supplies and Personal Items**

Teachers are actively planning on ways to avoid sharing items and school supplies. Although families have always been asked to label personal items, this will be of increased importance.

### **Uniforms**

As sharing of personal items is not permitted, please ensure that your child has their full name written on their uniform.

### **Facility Use and Gym Rentals**

Until further notice, St. Emile School will not be offering the building for rentals of any kind.

### **Food Handling/Sharing**

The school has a well-established policy on “No Sharing” of foods brought from home, originally set as an allergy measure. Students will be reminded of this rule and its increased importance through the pandemic.

Shared food as part of a class celebration will be **suspended** until further notice. As well, special lunches, as hosted by our Parent Association will be on hold until the process of distributing food has been evaluated and protocols put in place to ensure safety of students, staff and volunteers.

The Milk program **will be** available for students. The procedures for the program will be reviewed to ensure that there is little risk involved to the students and staff.

### **Toys and Other Shared Learning Equipment**

Play is an integral part of the learning in the early years, as reaffirmed in Manitoba Education’s publication *Learning and Joy in the Pandemic: Manitoba Kindergarten Practice Resource*.

Consideration will be given to how to mitigate the risks of interactive play. Staff will assess the toys and other items used in the classrooms and put away items that are not easily disinfected, including: stuffed toys, costumes, hats, etc. An electrostatic sprayer will be used to disinfect the remaining items.

### **Learning Preparedness**

#### **Recovery Learning**

We have been fortunate to have reported a high rate of student engagement through the remote learning period in the spring. That said, there are students who will need additional supports as they re-enter school. Transition meetings took place in the spring to communicate information on students’ academic, social and

emotional needs to the receiving teachers. We anticipate that there will be some additional needs that surface as we begin classes in the fall and through the subsequent months. Our Resource team will provide assessment and additional supports as needed.

### **Blended Learning**

Undoubtedly, there will be students who must remain home for short or long periods of time during the pandemic. Teachers will be able to send and receive assignments electronically. The school has a loan system in place for families that need devices for their children to use during remote learning. If internet connectivity is a persistent issue, teachers and administration will strategize to find alternatives for families.

In addition, teachers will prepare learning packages as needed for pick-up or delivery. Frequent email and phone communication with students and parents will be in place to ensure engagement in remote learning. This will be facilitated by the classroom teacher, but may also require involvement from support staff.

### **Physical Education**

Allowing students to be physically active will be an important part of the school's reopening, as it is important for mental health and social emotional connection in addition to physical well-being. Our PE program will incorporate activities that allow for increased distancing and will endeavour to allocate equipment to particular cohorts to reduce the amount of disinfection necessary between classes. Students will be expected to clean hands before and after gym class. Until further notice, students will not be required to change clothing. This may be re-introduced as we progress through the school year. As previously stated, when possible, Physical Education will be held outside.

### **Extra-curricular Activity and School Sports**

Our school community values extra-curricular opportunities, including sport, and has historically offered a wide variety of options for students. Extra-curricular activities will be gradually reintroduced as the school year begins, with thorough assessment of each activity to ensure that public health orders can be maintained.

### **Faith, Prayer and Spirituality**

As a Catholic school, we have the good fortune of being able to connect with each other through our faith and spirituality. During these challenging times, opportunities for prayer and faith discussions are even more integral to the well-being of students, families and staff. We will incorporate prayer and faith practice as much as possible at all response levels.

### **Mass**

We will not be able to accommodate all students at once for monthly mass. After meeting with Father Gerry we have decided to divide the school into smaller groups for mass each month. We will have mass more frequently to allow all students to attend once a month. A schedule for the year will be posted in September

### **Mental Health Preparedness**

In the days before classes begin, all school staff will be discussing approaches to helping children at all levels talk about, and cope with, their concerns arising from the pandemic. Through health and religion classes, teachers will provide opportunities for students to discuss personal experiences during the pandemic.

Students will also be given the opportunity to talk about any fears, concerns and strategies that may arise as we adjust to our “new normal”.

In addition, teachers will continue to use the “Mind Up” program to assist students in dealing with external stresses and how best to deal with them.