



COVID-19 PANDEMIC PROTOCOL 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR

The safety of our children, families and staff is our top priority at Saint Michael Episcopal School (SMES). In light of the pandemic caused by COVID-19, we have established new policies and procedures to help prevent the spread of the virus while maintaining our mission to provide a nurturing, individualized, inclusive early childhood experience. These policies and procedures are an extension to our Illness Policy and take into consideration recommended protocols established by the CDC, Texas Health and Human Services Child Care Regulation, Dallas County Health Department and the Southwestern Association of Episcopal Schools. No policy manual can cover every situation and SMES will update protocols whenever necessary. Please refer to the COVID-19 resource page on the SMES website for additional updates and resources.

Health Screenings

In addition to the Illness Policy in our Parent Handbook (which can also be found at the end of this document), the following procedures will be followed:

- 1) Prior to coming to SMES, parents should screen their child for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 or other illnesses. Signs and symptoms include:
 - Fever or temperature of 100.4 or above
 - Cough
 - Congestion or runny nose
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Chills
 - Muscle pain/body aches
 - Vomiting or abdominal pain
 - More than 3 loose stools in 24 hours
 - Fatigue
 - Headache
 - Sore throat
 - Loss of appetite
 - Loss of taste or smell
 - Diarrhea

- 2) A verbal screening will be completed when your child exits the car at carpool to verify everyone in your household is well and there haven't been any potential exposures. Your child will be visually observed for symptoms such as runny nose, cough, etc.
- 3) If a student becomes ill at school, parents will be called to pick up the child immediately (within 30 minutes). The student will be moved to a separate room and monitored by a designated staff member until a parent (or authorized person) arrives. Depending on symptoms of illness, a Rapid Antigen test may be required.
- 4) If a student, staff member, or a close contact (relative or friend) of a school student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, SMES will follow SMES protocols and policies along with CDC guidelines and inform the local health department and state child care regulation and follow the procedures and Student Evaluation Decision Tree provided by them.
- 5) If someone in the household is being tested for COVID-19 or has a pending COVID-19 test, your student may NOT attend school.
- 6) Any person that is presumed to have or has a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 may return to school following a period of isolation when all three of the following criteria are met:
 - Completion of a 5-day isolation period
 - Fever free without the use of fever-reducing medication and symptom free for 24 hours on the last day of isolation.
 - Significant improvement of symptoms
- 7) Any unvaccinated person that has had close contact to a person that has a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 must self-quarantine at home for 5 days after the last date of contact with the individual.
 - Close contact is defined as:
 - being directly exposed to infectious secretions (e.g. being coughed on); or
 - being within 6 feet for a cumulative duration of 15 minutes within 48 hours of the individual's positive test
 - having direct physical contact with the person (hugged or kissed them)
 - shared eating or drinking utensils
 - provided care at home to or been cared for by someone who is sick with COVID-19
 - Rapid Antigen test is required for any individual who has attended school after having been exposed to COVID-19 if the exposed individual exhibits symptoms.
- 8) Any fully vaccinated person who has had a close contact to a person who has a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 must self-quarantine and take a COVID-19 PCR test 3-5 days after the exposure.
 - If the COVID-19 test is negative, the person may return to school
 - If the COVID-19 test is positive, the person must continue to quarantine and may return to school when the criteria in #6 above have been met.
- 9) Individuals in COVID-19 Quarantine must take a COVID-19 PCR test no sooner than Day 4 of the quarantine period in order to return to school. Documentation of the negative COVID-19 PCR test results must be provided to the school Nurse before being cleared to return to school.

- 10) If a parent/household member has a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, is unable to isolate from the student and the student is asymptomatic:
 - The student remains home for the parent's/household member's 5-day isolation period PLUS a 5-day quarantine (total of 10 days at home) and must take a COVID-19 PCR test on Day 9 or later for a possible return to school on Day 11 if documentation of the negative test result is provided to the school nurse for clearance OR
 - The student remains home for the parent's/household member's 7 day contagious period PLUS a 5-day quarantine (total of 12 days at home) with no required PCR test to return.
- 11) If a student or teacher has close contact or direct exposure during an indoor Enrichment Class, the same guidelines and procedures above will be followed.
- 12) If a student or teacher has a close contact or direct exposure during an outdoor Enrichment Class, it will be handled on a case by case basis to determine level of risk, duration of potential exposure, etc.
- 13) Parents are required to contact the school if their student will be absent for any reason.

***SMES reserves the right to take any child's temperature at any time for any reason.**

***Documentation from a medical professional may be required at any time.**

Masks

- 1) For children ages 2 and up and fully vaccinated teachers/staff, masks are optional during the school day **except** at weekly chapel and all-school community gatherings where masks will be worn. (This is to prevent cross-grade/class exposures and multiple classroom closures in the event of a positive case.)
- 2) If preschool afternoon carpool is unable to be held outside due to weather, teachers and students will be required to wear a mask during carpool dismissal. Please send a mask with your child each day.
- 3) All non-vaccinated employees (teachers, staff, church staff) will wear their masks when indoors at SMES except when they are alone in an office or classroom.

Physical Distancing

Physical distancing will be encouraged and managed as possible in all spaces including the hallways, common areas, restrooms, and playgrounds.

Campus Visitors

- 1) Campus will be open to parent visitors for special class and school events, scheduled volunteer opportunities and scheduled parent/teacher conferences.
- 2) All visitors, regardless of their vaccination status, are required to wear a mask while on campus indoors. This includes adult only events.
- 3) Masks are not required in outdoor spaces.
- 4) If someone you are interacting with asks you to wear a mask, please abide by their request.

Classrooms

- 1) Students will be placed in classes with the same two teachers each day as usual.
- 2) Children will expand their cohorts to include the entire grade/age level.
- 3) Students will wash hands upon entering the classroom.
- 4) During nap/rest time, students will be placed 6ft apart from each other in a head to toe placement.
- 5) Activities and centers in the classroom will be arranged to minimize close physical contact.
- 6) Materials and equipment that cannot be properly cleaned and disinfected like pillows and dress up clothes will be removed from the classrooms. Low student-teacher ratios will continue to be met.

Restrooms

- 1) A maximum of 2 students in the same cohort will be allowed in the restroom at one time.
- 2) Teachers will monitor students in the restroom to make sure that proper hand washing hygiene is adhered to.
- 3) Songs, routines, posters with directions and visual cues of proper handwashing techniques will remain posted by each sink.

Chapel

- 1) PreK/Kindergarten classes will attend chapel together.
- 2) All Toddlers/Twos classes will attend a separate chapel service.
- 3) Classes will sit in assigned pews.

Playgrounds

- 1) Grade level cohorts will be permitted on the playground together.
- 2) Children may play outside without masks in their cohort.

Cleaning and Disinfection Measures

Routine and thorough cleaning and disinfecting minimizes and eliminates the spread of germs and illnesses. These processes will be a critical part of our daily routine and overall Pandemic Care. The cleaning and disinfecting process will include the following:

Cleaning and Disinfecting

- 1) SMES facilities and cleaning teams have enhanced cleaning measures/protocols, equipment utilized daily, weekly and monthly to mitigate the spread of illnesses and infectious viruses.
- 2) Teachers and staff will continue to use a bleach and water solution to clean classroom items, toys and commonly touched surfaces throughout the day.
- 3) Toys and play items that cannot be cleaned or sanitized will not be used.
- 4) Children's books will be rotated daily and will not be reintroduced until they are properly cleaned and disinfected.
- 5) Any classroom item or toy that becomes contaminated will immediately be placed in a tub with an antibacterial soap/ water solution until it is cleaned with a disinfecting product.
- 6) Nap mats will be sent home every week to be washed before returning to school.
- 7) Each child's personal items will be stored in individual spaces to avoid cross contamination.
- 8) Bathrooms and high touch surfaces will be cleaned/disinfected at a minimum of 3 times per day.
- 9) At the end of each school day the classrooms, common areas, bathrooms, and any frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned with a common EPA-registered disinfectant.

Hand Sanitizing

- 1) Hand sanitizing stations will be available in the school hallways and entry points.
- 2) Any person that has been screened and permitted in the building must use hand sanitizer prior to entering a classroom.
- 3) The hand washing procedure will include using soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer will be used.
- 4) Posters with pictures and description of the proper handwashing procedures will be posted near all sinks.
- 5) All children and staff will practice hand hygiene throughout the day and especially at the following times:
 - Before entering the classroom
 - Before and after eating or handling food or feeding individual children.
 - Before and after diapering individual children.
 - After using the bathroom or helping a child use the bathroom.
 - After coming in contact with any bodily fluid.

- Before and after playing on the playground.

Additional Changes in Policies and Procedures

We will evaluate and make changes to these policies and procedures when necessary. Communication regarding changes will be issued in a timely manner.

Carpool

- 1) All students will be dropped off and picked up through a carpool line.
- 2) Students will remain in their car until the screening process is complete.
- 3) For Preschool and any Toddlers/Twos siblings of PreK: all cars will enter the west parking lot from Lomo Alto and drop off/pick up under the west porte cochere.
- 4) For Kindergarten, Kindergarten siblings and Toddlers/Twos: all cars will drop off/pick up under the south porte cochere off Colgate.
- 5) A carpool tag with each family's last name will be provided and must be displayed during morning, mid-day and afternoon carpool.
- 6) Weather permitting, Preschool carpool will be held outside to allow for more social distancing. If carpool isn't able to be held outside, all teachers and children will be required to wear a mask for the period that all classes are gathered in the foyer for dismissal.

Lunch and Snack

- 1) The school will provide a morning snack for each child.
- 2) Children staying for lunch must bring their own lunch.
- 3) Please send 1 labeled water bottle/cup.
- 4) Students will wash their hands before and after eating snacks or lunches.

Clothing, Diapers and Items From Home

- 1) All students must bring a change of clothes in a labeled Ziploc bag on the first day of school.
- 2) If a child has a lovie and personal comfort item, they will be sent home daily with nap mats to be washed.

Communication

- 1) The administrative staff at SMES will continue to communicate with all school families via email and text messages.
- 2) Updates to changes in procedures and policies will be communicated in a timely manner.
- 3) Teachers will communicate with all SMES families through email or BrightWheel for Toddlers/Twos.

During this ever-changing time, SMES will continue to evaluate and modify schedules, policies and procedures in the best interest of our SMES community. We will continue to monitor all information issued by Texas Health and Human Services Child Care Regulation and the CDC.

ILLNESS POLICY (FROM PARENT HANDBOOK)

We take strong measures to prevent the spread of illness. We wash hands and sanitize toys and surface areas multiple times per day to help prevent the spread of germs. No policy manual can cover every situation. SMES will update and implement new protocols whenever necessary.

If your child becomes ill, we follow the regulations as established by the CDC, Texas Health and Human Services Child Care Regulation and the Southwestern Association of Episcopal Schools in regards to children's illnesses as listed below:

1. The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in child care center activities including outdoor play.
2. The illness results in a greater need for care than our teachers can provide without compromising the health, safety and supervision of the other children in care.
3. The child has any of the following symptoms, unless evaluated by a health-care professional and released to return or be included in the center's activities.
 - A. Forehead temperature of 100.4 degrees or greater.
 - B. Signs and symptoms of possible severe illness such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, uncontrolled diarrhea, vomiting, rash with fever, mouth sores with drooling, behavior changes, or other signs that the child may be severely ill.
4. A health care professional has diagnosed the child with a communicable disease, and the child does not have medical documentation to indicate that he/she is no longer contagious.

Children must be medication and symptom free for 24 hours before returning to SMES. We ask parents to be considerate of other children, families and SMES staff when deciding whether or not to send their child. If your child becomes ill, we will call you to pick up your child and to arrive within 30 minutes. This policy is to protect your child as well as the staff and other children in the School. If your child becomes ill with a contagious disease after attending a day at school, please let us know so that we can take the proper precautions to prevent an epidemic.