

Saint Therese Carmelite School Guidelines for Resuming In-Person Instruction
Under the Mantle of Our Lady of Mount Carmel
Updated February 2021

While there are still many unknown factors, we want to provide guidance for resuming in-person instruction given the current state of public health. Reopening our campus will require diligent planning efforts, cooperation, and attention to detail on the part of our parents, church community, Carmelite friars, faculty, and staff. We trust that Saint Therese Carmelite School staff, friars, students, parents, volunteers, and friends will do their part to protect the members of our community and their loved ones at home. In order to avoid exposure and help mitigation, we ask that you conduct a COVID-19 check prior to coming to church or school. If you or your children have the virus, if you have symptoms of the virus, or if you have been exposed to a confirmed case, please follow quarantine protocols and stay home.

PLANNING FOR MULTIPLE SCENARIOS

To the extent possible, this document focuses on measures and means of maximizing on-campus space, sanitizing our school, taking measures to mitigate exposure, and creating alternate plans in case of extended absences. Shutdown plans will be sent if they become necessary. *In addition, we are aware that some students may not be able to attend on-campus instruction due to health concerns. For those students, we ask parents to contact the administration directly.*

When our school reopens the campus for in-person instruction, we will have plans to address the following scenarios:

- The potential of repeated closures of classes, groups, or entire facilities when persons associated with the facility or in the community become ill with Covid-19.
- Providing an alternate study option for individuals who are at higher risk for severe illness or who cannot safely distance from household contacts at higher risk.
- Prolonged absences of students or staff due to Covid-19 infection or mandatory quarantine due to confirmed exposure.

MAINTAINING A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

Health Screenings

Before entering campus, all faculty, staff, students, and visitors will have their temperature checked via no-touch thermal scan thermometers. For the safety of our students and staff, an individual may not enter the school building if the individual has been in contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case, is exhibiting or has newly developed Covid-19 symptoms:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

Health Screening at home

We ask that parents monitor for newly developed Covid-19 symptoms. As always, parents will be expected to keep children home when sick. The rule that a child must be fever-free and not have vomited for 24 hours without medication will continue to be enforced and will be expanded. *Naturally, accommodations will be made for the continued education of these students.*

Screening at school

Temperature checks will be performed on site daily. As usual, students will be monitored for signs of illness throughout the day. If your child develops or has a fever, newly developed or unusual cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell, they will be asked to go home. Anyone with symptoms will go to a designated isolation area until they are picked up. We ask that students be picked up within 20 minutes.

COHORTING OF STUDENTS

We are blessed at Saint Therese Carmelite School to have small class sizes which will allow us to maintain a five-day school week while following social distancing guidelines. Our students will be placed in stable groups and cohorts according to their homerooms and subject levels. In addition to limiting the spread of the coronavirus, the point of cohorting students is to make contact tracing easier in case a student or teacher tests positive for Covid-19. By cohorting students, Saint Therese Carmelite School might be able to limit the impact on in-person instruction by only quarantining the cohort, rather than the entire school.

We will not compromise on the transmission of the faith, on delivering academic excellence, or on imparting virtues. These changes are necessary to ensure the safety of our students and their cohorts and to help alleviate the financial deficit we face due to the economic crisis and decreased enrollment.

PHYSICAL / SOCIAL DISTANCING

Physical Distancing Outside the Classroom

The playground will continue to be divided into zones and students will remain with their cohort throughout the day, including recess and lunch.

Procedures for lining up, entering and exiting the classroom, and enjoying lunch and recess will be communicated to parents and students. In order to limit exposure, once we resume in-person instruction, we will have early dismissal times as follows:

Mon-Wed 1:30pm
Thurs& Fri 12:30pm

Furthermore, there will be separate arrival and dismissal locations for TK/K, 1st/2nd, and 3rd – 6th grades. Schedules will be sent out to parents as they are finalized.

At this time, large gatherings are discouraged. With this in mind, we will continue with Morning Assembly in the classroom via the intercom. Parents will be informed if this changes.

Physical Distancing in the Classroom

We are blessed with small class sizes which allow for student desks to be at least 6 feet apart from each other and from the teacher's desk in all of our classrooms. Barriers or sneeze guards are not required for our school. The combination of face masks and 6-foot social distance meets the county and state guidelines.

Physical Alterations to Campus

Saint Therese Carmelite School will make alterations to classrooms, and common spaces as appropriate to support physical distancing. These are temporary alterations that include posting signs, limiting usage of space (art lab, music room, library), using tape, removing rugs and extra furniture, distancing desks, etc.

Additionally, we have portable washing stations on the playground. We have removed rugs and pillows from all classrooms, round tables from all the classrooms, carpet from TK/K, and cubbies from TK/K to allow more room. The campus has been sanitized and will be sanitized daily.

Use of the premises by outside groups and/or contractors has been suspended. Therefore, the Hot Lunch program will not be available for the 2020-2021 school year.

WEARING FACE COVERINGS (MASKS & FACE SHIELDS)

Staff

As recommended by health authorities, staff members will wear a face mask throughout the day.

Students

Students will be required to wear a face mask while on campus. Masks must be simple and logo-free and must be labeled with student's name. Students with asthma or other health challenges may not be able to wear a face covering; they will need a doctor's note. Alternative face coverings for them include a shield with a drape.

Students should arrive with a clean and sanitized face covering every day. We recommend that all parents send at least one back-up mask for each of their children so they won't be caught in a bind. The school will maintain a supply of face masks for emergencies.

Visitors

At this time, we are limiting the campus to essential visitors only. Visitors must wear face masks on campus at all times. For the safety of our students and staff, all visitors will be screened for fever and other symptoms, just as our students and staff are.

WHEN A STAFF MEMBER, OR STUDENT BECOMES SICK OR PRESENTS SYMPTOMS

Faculty, staff, and students will be monitored throughout the day for signs of illness. Anyone with a fever, newly developed or unusual cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, repeating shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell, or who display other Covid-19 symptoms will be sent home.

Any students, faculty, or staff exhibiting symptoms will immediately be required to wear a mask and wait in an isolation area until they can be transported home or to a healthcare facility, as soon as practicable.

Handling a Positive Case of Covid-19

As stated above, Saint Therese Carmelite School will isolate a student or employee if they exhibit symptoms. All affected areas will then be disinfected. If Saint Therese Carmelite School has a positive case of Covid-19, we will follow all county public health procedures, complete the Archdiocesan Covid-19 Report Form, and report the positive to the Archdiocese.

HYGIENE, CLEANING, AND DISINFECTION

Procedures for students and staff will be implemented to facilitate proper hygiene, cleaning, physical distancing protocols, etc.

Students and staff will be given frequent opportunities to wash their hands for 20 seconds with soap, rubbing thoroughly after application and using paper towels (or single-use cloth towels) to dry hands thoroughly.

Scheduled mandatory handwashing breaks or opportunities (especially for younger students) will occur at minimum:

- before and after eating
- after using the restroom
- before and after outdoor play
- before and after any group activity

Staff members will model and monitor frequent and proper handwashing, especially in lower grades where bathroom time is an opportunity to reinforce healthy habits.

Cleaning & Disinfecting

Saint Therese Carmelite School has been thoroughly disinfected and sanitized after confirmed COVID-19 cases (if they were at school.) Our campus is regularly sanitized and, prior to reopening campus, Saint Therese Carmelite School will be completely cleaned and disinfected.

Upon reopening, Saint Therese Carmelite School will be cleaned and sanitized daily. The restrooms and eating areas will be cleaned and sanitized at least twice daily. TK/K will use the restrooms in the office and in the atrium, 1st-4th will use the restrooms by 1st grade; 5th-8th will use the restrooms upstairs. Faculty and staff will use the restrooms in the office, upstairs and the Hall restroom. All cleaning supplies will be in compliance with approved disinfectants.

A specific cleaning schedule will be coordinated with the cleaning company once classes resume. The school procured an electro static sprayer, special certified sanitizing equipment, to provide the highest level of disinfection in consultation with our cleaning company.

LIMIT SHARING

Limit Sharing of Supplies & Materials

Teachers will keep each child's belongings separated and in individually labeled storage containers, cubbies, or areas.

Parents will ensure that shields and face masks will be labeled with each student's name.

The school will ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high-touch materials (art supplies, equipment, etc.) to the extent practicable or limit use of supplies and equipment to one group of children at a time and clean and disinfect between uses.

Whenever possible, Saint Therese Carmelite School will try to be "paperless" and provide forms digitally to reduce contact exposure.

County public health orders will be modified as conditions change. Schools must be prepared to adapt to new modifications as they are mandated by public health officials.

The Department of Catholic Schools will continue to update us on future modifications to local county health orders as they pertain to PK-12 schools.

This document will evolve as public health conditions change and modifications are provided by the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and the department of public health. Please anticipate updates as we work towards the fall.