

St. Thecla Preschool
COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan
2020-2021



“We, the community of St. Thecla Catholic School, dedicate ourselves to serving God through our growth in faith, education, and love for one another as members of God’s Family.”

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August 10, 2020

Dear St. Thecla Preschool Families,

The Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) has mandated that every child care facility develops a COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan in order to reopen. The St. Thecla Preschool Program falls under this category and we are governed by the State of Michigan Child Care Licensing Rules. A written response plan addressing the following inquiries is sited in this document. Please take your time to thoroughly read through all the concerns stated below:

- How will we monitor symptoms of COVID-19?
- How will our program practice social distancing, as developmentally appropriate?
- How we will ensure hygiene (including regular cleaning and disinfecting)?
- How we will use safety equipment (including PPE, when appropriate)?
- What is the communication protocol for families to report symptoms or a positive test and policies on when children will be excluded from care?
- What is the isolation procedure in case of symptoms or confirmed cases onsite?
- How we will maintain required staff to child ratios in the event that a staff member(s) becomes ill?

Although we understand this is a challenging time for all of us, we hope this plan allows you to make the best decision possible for your preschooler and family. This is not the way we wanted to reopen, but overall safety is our main concern for all involved. This plan is very complicated and involved many hours of careful deliberation by the St. Thecla Preschool Team.

It is important to understand that immunocompromised children and children with chronic respiratory conditions should only return to school under the direction of their primary care provider. Children must also be up to date with

current vaccination schedules to protect from vaccine-preventable infectious disease outbreaks, including influenza. If vaccines have been delayed as a result of the stay-at-home order, families need to have a plan with their child's medical provider for catch-up vaccinations in a timely manner.

If the state of Michigan, specifically Macomb County, is in Phase 4, St. Thecla will open for face-to-face instruction. If we are in Phases 1-3, we will offer distance learning that incorporates necessary changes to the plan that was implemented at St Thecla from March through May. Regardless of what Phase we are in at the time of re-opening, will be implementing the usage of Seesaw as a technological learning and communication platform. Details will be shared by your student's teacher and you will receive the login information during the first week of school. The St. Thecla Preschool staff are committed to working hard to provide you with excellent education and follow what is detailed in our Mission Statement.

As Dr. JB stated in the school reopening plan, "Our students and families make our school community the wonderful faith-based, caring place it is! We will get through this together." We whole-heartedly agree and are dedicated to continue guiding the youngest learners of St. Thecla Catholic School through the beginning of their educational journey.

May God bless you always.

Sincerely,

The St. Thecla Preschool Team

Our Mission:

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2020-2021
Phase 4

Monitoring Symptoms:

Child care providers are required to check for COVID-19 symptoms when children and staff arrive. It is recommended that the checks are conducted before children and staff enter classrooms. We will be using the following guidance to monitor symptoms:

Children

- Daily temperature scans will be done at arrival using a touchless thermometer.
 - Fever is the key indicator for young children. If a child's temperature is above 100.4 degrees, the CDC say the child should be excluded from care. Cough and/or diarrhea in addition to fever is suggestive of coronavirus.
- Parents/guardians will be asked a series of questions each morning such as:
 - Has your child been in close contact with a person who has COVID-19? (If yes, the family should self-quarantine for 14 days.)
 - Has your child felt unwell in the last 3 days? (persistent cough, temperature, difficulty breathing, cold, diarrhea and/or vomiting)
- Staff will be visually checking the students throughout the day for signs of illness, including flushed cheeks, rapid or difficulty breathing (without recent physical activity), fatigue, or extreme fussiness. We will continue to monitor symptoms throughout the day and monitor temperatures when children appear ill or "not themselves."
- Children with a fever alone, or a fever with a cough and/or diarrhea should be isolated from the group and their parents will be contacted for prompt pick up. Parents should contact their primary care physician/medical provider.

Staff

- Temperature checks daily.
- Screen for cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, change in smell or taste, and diarrhea.
- Staff arriving with fever above 100.4 or other symptoms will be sent home.
- Staff will be required to report contact with anyone outside of work who has had a documented case of COVID-19. Staff will be instructed to self-quarantine if they have been exposed to COVID-19.

Social Distancing:

According to the CDC, limiting face-to-face contact with others is the best way to reduce the risk of the spread of the Coronavirus disease.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html> Masks will be required through common areas of the school such as hallways and bathrooms but can be removed inside the classroom. To allow for proper social distancing, the following protocols will be in place:

- Hallways and other areas will be marked with social distancing markers (6 feet apart).
- Signage will be posted reminding everyone of the requirements to wear masks, social distancing, hand washing, etc.
- Students will be spread out /social distanced in classrooms to the greatest degree possible. Extra furniture will be removed for increased space in the classroom.
- Teachers will have scheduled restroom times to decrease the number of students in common (hallway) areas. If not at a scheduled time, students will be allowed to use the restroom as necessary.
- A sink-to-toilet ratio will be used to determine the number of students in the restroom at any given time, (For example- four toilet stalls to four sinks equals 4 students).
- Students will be assigned entry doors for arrival and dismissal. Assigning designated arrival doors should help with social distancing. These door assignments will be shared closer to the start of the year. Dismissal times will be staggered to reduce congestion in the hallways and exits.
 - Additionally, the sign-in/out procedure will be different this year. The Michigan Department of Education is offering flexibility on how parents sign in and out due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During the state of emergency and reopening of child care there are two alternate ways to obtain parental signature for time and attendance purposes.
 - We can create a separate document for parents to sign and return at the end of the week; or
 - Confirm attendance times via emailThe Preschool team will assess these options and give more direction as we approach the starting date.
 - According to the CDC, it is ideal to have the same parent or designated person should drop off and pick up the child every day. If possible, older people such as grandparents or those with serious underlying medical conditions should not pick up children, because they are more at risk for [severe illness from COVID-19](#).

- Mass will be held using socially distancing protocols. Preschool classes may attend mass on staggering days to limit the amount of people in the church as much as possible. The schedule will be shared as soon as it is available.
- Large zip top plastic bags will be used to store student nap supplies in their individual cubbies. School supplies will be kept in separate bins labeled for each student. These will not be shared at all this year.
- Safety drills will be scheduled and conducted with guidance from the AOD and Health Department. Updated information will be shared as soon as it is available.
- Field trips, assemblies, and large group gatherings will be cancelled until the state is in Phase 6, and these special events can be conducted safely. It may be possible to schedule a field trip or event in Phase 5 if the guidance of health professionals permits. Virtual field trips may be scheduled by the classroom teacher.
- Back to School Night and school community events will be postponed if the school is not in Phase 6. Meet the Teacher/Back to School will be conducted in person during the week of August 24 via Sign Up Genius. We will determine how we will conduct Parent -Teacher conferences closer to the date of conferences.

Hygiene and Cleaning Procedures:

To ensure we are taking every possible step towards making our program as safe as possible, the following hygiene and cleaning protocols have been established:

- The school has been cleaned and sanitized thoroughly with approved cleaning products prior to reopening. A cleaning company has also been hired and will be using approved cleaning products to clean the classrooms, hallways, offices, and restrooms daily at the close of school.
- Restrooms will be cleaned periodically throughout the day.
- Our cleaning protocol is as follows:
 - Daily Cleaning - Custodial staff will work during each school day to support the learning environment (See above).
 - Enhanced Cleaning - Staff will clean all high-touch surfaces as needed throughout the school with an EPA approved disinfectant.
- Disinfectant Cleaning - In the event of a COVID-19 confirmed positive, our staff will initiate an intense cleaning and disinfecting of identified areas.
- We are working with suppliers to ensure we have disinfectant products that are safe for students, while also minimizing the COVID-19 virus.

Reducing the risk of exposure to COVID-19 by cleaning and disinfection is an important part of reducing the spread of the virus. The virus that causes COVID-19 can be minimized through the use of effective products.

- Hand sanitizer stations have been placed throughout the school for staff and K-8 students ONLY. Preschool students will be guided and reminded throughout the day to wash their hands. Preschool staff will be instructing students on how to properly wash their hands using soap and water for at least 20 seconds. This is especially important after blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.
- Students that attend the afternoons will be assigned specific cots labeled with their name. Cots will be placed at a minimum of six feet apart, when possible. Bedding will be placed at the recommended head-to-toe positioning.
- We will follow air quality guidelines from the CDC as much as we possibly are able. This includes opening windows, utilizing air conditioning when available, increasing humidity, and keeping blinds open. HVAC filters will be changed frequently. Sunlight reduces the survival of many viruses. In addition, sunlight has other positive health benefits. Weather and safety permitting, opening windows is the easiest way to deliver outside air directly to a room. This increases the total air change rate thereby decreasing the time viral particles are in the air. According to the CDC, a relative humidity rate above 40% has been shown to decrease the survival of coronaviruses.

Safety Equipment and PPE:

Safety is our main concern for the students and staff. St. Thecla Preschool will be following the requirements set in place by the MI Safe Schools Reopening Roadmap

https://www.michigan.gov/documents/whitmer/MI_Safe_Schools_Roadmap_FL_NAL_695392_7.pdf

Masks:

- Staff is required to wear masks and face shields during the day and in the classroom. Preschool students are required to wear face masks throughout all common use areas such as hallways and bathrooms. They are asked to arrive with face masks on daily so that they can be worn through the halls to the classroom. Please be sure to send an extra face mask for your student to keep in their backpack similar to a change of clothes. Please ensure the print and language on the masks are school appropriate.

- Facial coverings may be homemade or disposable level-one (basic) grade surgical masks. **Homemade facial coverings must be washed daily.**
- Disposable facing coverings must be disposed of at the end of each day.
- Students who have supplied the required documentation by a medical doctor indicating they cannot wear a mask for health reasons will not be mandated to wear a mask. They are required to wear a plastic face shield unless a medical provider indicates that health reasons prohibit the use of a face shield. Please provide documentation if your child cannot wear a face shield or mask.

Communication and Isolation Protocol:

In the event you or your child are exposed to a possible case of COVID-19, please contact the school office immediately. Families and staff are asked to report possible illness if anyone in their household shows symptoms or has tested positive for COVID-19, including the child or family members if they or their children experience possible symptoms or have a positive test. The school office will contact the local Health Department. **DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL.**

- If your child is infected with COVID-19, immediately contact your doctor for additional instructions.
- If a student tests positive for COVID-19, the student must isolate and not return to school until they have met CDC's criteria to discontinue home isolation. This includes the following:
 - Three or more days without a high fever;
 - A reduction of other COVID symptoms by at least 75 percent; and
 - at least 14 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
 - There has been a negative COVID-19 test, or they have been released from isolation according to CDC guidelines.
- If someone in your household is infected with COVID -19, immediately contact St. Thecla's main office. We will contact the local Health Department, and they will provide you specific instructions on how long your child should be kept home.
- If a teacher or staff member has COVID-19 symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19, we will follow the same protocols used for students and make all parents aware that a teacher has tested positive. All students taught by that teacher will be closely monitored for COVID-19 symptoms, and schools will follow local Health Department guidance.
- If a student exhibits COVID-19 symptoms at school, parents will be contacted immediately. The student will be moved to a designated

quarantine area and a staff person will monitor the student. Masks will be worn by the student and staff member.

- Education on COVID-19: Teachers and staff will be trained on the signs, symptoms, and protection protocol of COVID-19 prior to school starting.

Guidelines for Returning to School or Work:

Staff members and children should stay home and self-isolate if they show symptoms of COVID19. It can be challenging to determine when to isolate young children because they are ill more often than adults, and the cause of a fever is sometimes unknown. If a staff member or child has a fever or a cough, we will be following the St. Thecla child and staff illness policy. At this time, it is recommended that children be fever free for 72 hours before returning to care (even if other symptoms are not present). If a staff member or child exhibits multiple symptoms of COVID-19, please see the guideline above before returning to school or work. For more information about safe practices, please see the CDC and Macomb County Health Department websites:

CDC information:

<https://www.cdc.gov>

Macomb County Health Department:

<https://health.macombgov.org/Health-Home>

Required Staff to Child Ratios:

According to the State of Michigan LARA, the preschool required ratio is 1:10 for students 3 and under, while it is 1:12 for students age 4 and above. St. Thecla is committed to maintaining the proper quality of care by keeping within ratio limits. In the event a staff member becomes ill, proper staffing will be obtained by acquiring substitute teachers and/or involving the principal to fulfill the necessary coverage.

Please understand that these plans are for reopening purposes under the phase 4 guidelines of the MI Safe Schools: Michigan's 2020- 21 Return to School Roadmap. The AOD- Phase 5 plan has not been released yet. It will be shared with you as soon as it is available.

It is important to note that due to the need to monitor our state's status in managing COVID-19, specifics to this plan may be subject to change.