

Goal: Our goal is to safely begin school in our building at St. Catherine Labouré with in-person instruction on September 3, 2020. Some students will need to be learning at home for health or quarantine reasons, and we will provide for them to remain on track with their class. Even as we prepare for in-person instruction, we will continue planning for the possibility of closing the building entirely and providing remote instruction to all students, should state guidance or our own medical advisors advise it. This document lays out our risk-reduction strategy for students returning to school as soon as safely possible. *Risks, however, cannot be reduced to 'zero', especially during a pandemic.* Children generally have less severe symptoms but are not immune to the disease and can transmit the virus among themselves and to others.

Why we want to return to our building as soon as possible: *Our boys need to be in school.* Physically attending The Avalon School makes for healthier, happier, better educated boys and young men and improves boys' learning, engagement and friendships. Keeping schools closed creates significant short- and long-term problems for society, families, and individuals. Research has consistently found fully online virtual schools to produce less effective outcomes than those for students who are in brick and mortar school settings (MSDE Recovery Plan June 2020).

Our Advantages: Being a small school, we face fewer challenges maintaining the recommended physical distances; adjusting our class schedule; changing how we use the building; taking advantage of opportunities to be outside before, during and after the school day with masks off (and distancing); and even holding classes outside. We will closely monitor changes in guidance at the county, state, and federal levels and research which safety procedures are most effective. Our in-person summer camps have provided us the opportunity to practice safely being at school while following all relevant state guidance.

### School Health and Safety Policies

- I. Transportation: Unfortunately, we cannot safely offer our normal shuttle van transportation while maintaining recommended physical distances. If this is a hardship for any families, they should contact the front office and we will try to find a way to help.
- II. Arrival at school:
  - 1) Students and Faculty are asked to perform the following self-evaluation at home before leaving for school: Have I been in close contact with anyone who has COVID-19 or flu symptoms in the past week? Have I had a fever or felt feverish in the last 72 hours? Am I experiencing any new respiratory symptoms including a sore throat, cough, or shortness of breath? Am I experiencing any new muscle aches or chills? Have I experienced any change in my sense of taste or smell? Do I have congestion, runny nose, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea?

*If the answer to any question is yes, you, your child, and any siblings are to stay home and contact your doctor for guidance on next steps.*

Staff or students should not enter the school if they have symptoms of COVID-19 (even if not tested or confirmed) or have been in contact with someone with COVID-19 or with COVID-19-like illness in the last 14 days. Families should self-report to the school if they or their students have symptoms of COVID-19, a positive test for COVID-19 or were exposed to someone with COVID-19 in the past 14 days.

- 2) Maintain six feet distance between students, staff and others who are not living in the same household. Distancing guidelines apply both indoors and outdoors.
- 3) Each student will be assigned an entrance to use throughout the day and scanning thermometers will be used to check temperatures upon arrival. Following CDC guidance, a student exhibiting symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or with temperatures above 100.4° F will be brought to a designated sick room until the student can be picked up from school. The student and siblings are to remain home until cleared to return to school by a medical professional with documentation of the clearance provided to the school.
- 4) Families will be responsible for providing masks for their children to wear at school. Please send your child to school with two masks each day. The school will maintain a supply of disposable masks for emergency use.
- 5) All students, faculty, and visitors entering the building are to wear masks covering their mouths and noses. Masks may be removed when outdoors as long as physical distancing of six feet is maintained. Please know that we will closely examine research and guidance as it becomes available, especially concerning younger students and the wearing of masks.

III. During the school day:

- 1) Hand-sanitizing stations will be found at the main entrances to the building and hand sanitizer bottles in each classroom. Staff will encourage frequent hand washing and review proper hand washing technique with students.
- 2) We are arranging student work areas to be spaced six feet apart.
- 3) When possible, students will minimize time in hallways by accessing different sections of the building from outside, as directed.
- 4) Class groups will be kept together for as much of the school day as possible, and schedules will minimize interactions between grade divisions.
- 5) Lunch will be eaten in smaller groups, as we do not plan to gather the whole school in the lunchroom. Students should plan to bring their own water bottles and prepared lunches and not share food or drink. Lunch service will consist of individually packaged meals that must be preordered.
- 6) We will sanitize desk surfaces and frequently touched items such as door handles throughout the day.
- 7) Professional daily cleaning of frequently touched surfaces will occur, using disinfectants approved by the EPA for coronavirus cleaning.
- 8) Outdoors, students and teachers may remove masks when people are appropriately distant from one another.
- 9) Use of playground equipment with social distancing is permitted. Only one classroom of children may use the playground at a time. Children should wash their hands immediately after playing on the playground.

IV. After the school day:

- 1) Building hours will be limited this year and the building will close at 5pm to permit extra time for daily cleaning.
- 2) Outside the building, masks may be removed if physical distancing is maintained.
- 3) Middle School and High School Sports: Fall interscholastic competitions have been canceled, but we are planning for sports training workouts following state and county guidance.

V. Sickness:

- 1) If someone who has been in the building has a laboratory confirmed case of COVID-19 or has COVID-19-like illness with COVID-19 symptoms:
    - a. We will contact the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to inform them of the situation and to seek guidance and we will assist with contact tracing efforts by DHHS. While the contact tracing process identifies when a person attends or works in a school setting, families, educators or other school staff members who have tested positive should inform the school, as soon as possible to begin the contact tracing process.
    - b. The sick person and family members in the house should isolate at home and may return to school after the sick person has been cleared by a medical professional with documentation of the clearance provided to the school. This would be after at least 10 days have passed since symptom onset, AND at least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications, AND other symptoms have improved.
    - c. Possible advice to the school from MoCo DHHS may include that part or all of the school close for 1-2 days for deep cleaning of all classrooms and public spaces used by the infected person, AND close contacts of the infected person would need to remain home for 14 days after their last interaction with the infected person. [Per CDC guidance, a close contact is defined as someone who was within six feet of an infected person (laboratory confirmed or probable) for at least 15 minutes, with or without a mask.]
  - 2) When can a person who is quarantined at home due to a household member with laboratory confirmed COVID-19 or COVID-19-like illness return to school? Close contacts of a person with COVID-19 or COVID-19-like illness who was in the school building should be identified by the school and the local health department for the purpose of making quarantine recommendations. Close contacts of a person with COVID-19 or COVID-19-like illness should not attend school, work in or visit a school building for 14 days after the date of their last exposure according to CDC and MDH guidance.
- VI. If a student or staff member is exposed to someone with COVID-19 outside of school: If a student or staff member has close contact with a person who is diagnosed or presumed sick with COVID-19, that student or staff member shall remain home in quarantine for 14 days from the date of exposure.

VII. Faculty and families are asked to sign the following waiver:

*By my signature below I acknowledge and accept the risks to myself, my child(ren) and my family of exposure to severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), which is responsible for Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19), and any mutation or variation thereof. I further acknowledge and accept that these risks are shared by all students, faculty and their families, and we pledge to follow all rules and guidelines set out by The Avalon School and state and local authorities.*

<i>Date</i>	<i>Student(s) Name(s)</i>	<i>Student(s) Name(s)</i>
<i>Parent/Guardian Name</i>	<i>Parent/Guardian Signature</i>	

Sources: We have consulted many sources of information in assembling this plan. The sources we have relied upon the most are:

- 1) The CDC's guidance for schools from March 2020.
- 2) Maryland's Recovery Plan for Education, July 2020.
- 3) Covid-19 Guidance for Maryland Schools, August 27, 2020
- 4) Harvard's School for Public Health's Schools for Health, Risk Reduction Strategies, June 2020