



Return to School Questions and Answers

July 28, 2020

Q. When is the first day of school for 2020-2021?

A. School begins for students on Tuesday, August 25, 2020. The calendar can be found here: [Sacred Heart 2020/2021 School Year Calendar](#)

Q. Does Sacred Heart Academy have to follow the governor's executive orders, including the MI Safe Start Plan requirements?

A. Yes; these requirements apply to all schools in the State of Michigan.

Q. I hear about phases. What does this mean?

A. The MI Safe Start Plan (economic engagement phases and guidance) has 6 phases. Phases 1, 2, 3, dictate that schools are closed and remote learning is required for everyone. Phases 4 and 5 allow for school to be open with varying degrees of guidance and restrictions. Phase 6 is essentially post-pandemic.

Q. Is Sacred Heart Academy going to be in-person or online?

A. At this time, Sacred Heart Academy is planning for five days per week of in-person learning, as our region is currently in Phase 4.

Q. Will the time of the school day change?

A. Yes, the school day will be increased by 10 minutes at the end of each day (7:40 a.m. - 2:50 p.m.). This will add two minutes per day to all core classes. This will increase our school day by 50 minutes per week. This will help us in the event that we need to close school unexpectedly.

Q. I am considering options for my children. I don't want my kids to have to wear a mask.

A. This is a very real concern for many parents. In Phase 4, masks are required for students in grades 6-12 unless a student cannot medically tolerate wearing a mask. Younger students have to wear masks when moving throughout the building, but not necessarily in their self-contained classroom. Please provide medical exemptions signed by your child's physician to the elementary or high school office by August 19, 2020.

Q. Will masks be provided?

A. One washable, reusable mask will be provided to each student before school begins. Please label it with your child's name. Students may wear masks from home that follow the student handbook for appropriate color-day wear, do not have words or symbols, and follow the CDC guidelines.

*Mask Guidelines include: fully cover nose and mouth and secure under chin; fit snugly against the side of the face; may not contain valves, mesh material or holes of any kind; cannot be costume masks.

Q. What will lunch look like?

A. Hot lunch will continue to be served at Sacred Heart Academy. Kindergarten through second grade students will be served and eat in their classrooms. Third through twelfth graders will go through the serving line (with appropriate social distancing). All elementary students will eat in their classrooms and all students in grades seven through twelve will eat in the parish hall, with appropriate social distancing.

Q. Will there be latchkey?

A. Latchkey will reopen in Phase 5. Integrating children from multiple grade levels during latchkey allows more opportunity to spread illness and less flexibility during the school day in Phase 4, therefore, it will not be open during Phase 4.

Q. Will students attend Mass?

A. Due to the current restrictions on the number of people who can attend Mass at one time, all students will not be able to attend Mass together. We are working in conjunction with Fr. Loren and the Diocese of Saginaw to put a plan in place for students to participate in online Masses or attend Mass in small groups at Sacred Heart.

Q. What additional supplies will my child need?

A. A supply list will be emailed to all parents the week of August 3. Because students cannot share supplies in large groups at school, additional supplies (crayons, markers, pencils, calculators, etc.) will be needed. Extra masks, small bottles of hand sanitizer and a water bottle will be required for all students.

Q. What are my options to have my child do online learning even if school is open?

A. We want our Sacred Heart Academy students to remain Sacred Heart Academy students. Sacred Heart Academy is working in partnership with the Diocese of Saginaw to provide distance learning for our families who do not want their children in the school building at this time. We will share more information about this as it becomes available.

Q. What happens if we start school and then return to Phase 3?

A. We are prepared to return to distance learning for all students, if necessary. Sacred Heart Academy was prepared in March to offer distance learning and we will be prepared to offer excellent instruction under any scenario this year.

Q. If we must return to Phase 3, what will distance learning look like?

A. Teachers and administrators will work together to provide the best distance learning program possible for each grade level/content area. We are continuing to learn and implement best practices in concurrence with teacher collaboration and consideration of student/parent feedback. We will be providing specific distance learning policies, procedures, and requirements in the 2020-2021 SHA Student/Parent handbook. Our foundational procedures will include:

- All teachers using Google Classroom as the delivery platform
- Teachers will have access to Boardworks to develop lessons
- Video lessons or live streams (Required Viewing)
- Whole class, small group and individual virtual sessions (Required Participation)
- Assessment, deadlines, and grading will adhere to standards/SHA grading policies
- Scheduled teacher office hours

Q. Why would I pay tuition at Sacred Heart Academy instead of just enrolling in an online school?

A. We believe in Sacred Heart Academy and our strong relationships with our teachers, families, and community. We know, love, and care for and about your child. If students have to transition between in-person and distance learning, Sacred Heart Academy is prepared to do this seamlessly.

Q. What sanitation measures has Sacred Heart Academy put in place?

A. The following protocols will be in place :

- We have hired additional custodial staff, trained and supervised by our maintenance director, Andy Theisen, Sr.
- Hygiene and hand washing lessons will be built into the daily schedule.
- Desks, chairs and high-touch surfaces will be wiped down after every 2 hours in the elementary school and after every class period in the high school with a hospital-grade sanitizer.
- Hand-sanitizing stations will be installed throughout both buildings and in every classroom.
- Required protocols will be followed to ensure that SHA facilities exceed the standards required for cleaning and sanitation in all areas.

Q. What social distancing measures has Sacred Heart Academy put in place?

A. The following protocols will be in place :

- Social distance markings will be placed on the floors in the hallways and all common areas.
- Classroom tables are being replaced with desks to appropriately social distance, wherever possible, and all students will face the same direction in all classrooms.
- Class seating will be spaced to provide the most social distancing possible

- Specials' teachers will serve KP-5th grade students in the classrooms to limit movement throughout the building. Physical education will take place outside, whenever possible.
- The lunch line will be appropriately socially distanced.
- Locker times will be staggered in the high school
- Elementary recess will take place in class or grade level cohorts (in groups no greater than 25 students)
- We are currently determining the appropriate arrival and departure protocols for students.
- Guests to the building will be limited based on health department guidelines.

Q. What preventative measures are necessary?

A. Teamwork is of utmost importance in preventing the spread of disease.

- Families will need to check their child for symptoms each morning.
- Families are asked to follow the current guidelines from the local health department.
- Students showing any symptoms must stay home and the school must have a minimum of three current emergency contacts for each student, in case symptoms arise at school.

Q. What will happen if a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19?

A. Students and staff who display symptoms during the school day will be quarantined until they may be safely transported off-campus. We have been working with the Central Michigan Health Department and will continue to work with them to follow their recommendations as these are continually being updated. They have committed to being ready and available to help guide schools with addressing COVID-19 cases and exposures, including testing and quarantining requests.

Q. Are there going to be co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, including sports this year?

1. A. As of now, we remain hopeful. We will offer as many of our normal extracurricular activities as possible, using the guidelines provided by the state and our local health department. Regarding sports, we are waiting for the governor and the Michigan High School Athletic

Association (MHSAA) to release a plan on return to competition.

Q. Will my child still be able to ride Mt. Pleasant school buses?

A. All transportation requests for morning and afternoon busing through MPPS will be handled through their transportation office and follow their guidelines for phase 4. The number for the MPPS transportation department is 989-775-2323.

Q. I have specific questions about how things are going to work in each building.

A. Principals will be meeting with teacher groups to outline details. This work is on-going and we'll be making specifics available as we near the start of school. The changing nature of this

virus means we are learning new things and adjusting our decisions weekly and sometimes daily.

Q. How is Sacred Heart Academy planning for the 2020-2021 school year?

A. Our administrative team has been planning throughout the summer, but this planning sometimes creates more questions than answers. Using information and resources provided by our diocesan task force, we are in the process of developing our COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan. Our administrative team has been in contact with our teacher team leaders and will continue to collaborate with our faculty and staff to complete our plan. As circumstances and guidelines continue to change and evolve, we appreciate the patience, flexibility, and resilience of our students and families.