

**Virginia Private Schools Phase III COVID-19  
Mitigation Health Plan for  
St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School**

The design of this health plan is for the safety and well-being of the students, faculty and staff of St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School, rooted in the Catholic faith and our mission of Faith and Reason.

**Section 1: Contact Information**

**Name of School:** St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School

**Principal:** Sister Mary Sheila, O.P.

**Physical Address:** 13750 Mary's Way, Woodbridge, VA 2219

**Person Responsible for School's Mitigation Plan:** Sister Mary Sheila, O.P. **Email address:** [smsheila@aquinastars.org](mailto:smsheila@aquinastars.org) Consultation with the Health Department

**Section 2: Intent to Vary:**

St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School is submitting an "intent to vary" according to the allowance of the Phase Guidance for Virginia Schools, which allows for 3 feet of social distancing, with masks.

**Section 3: Phase 3 Program Offering:**

Instructional Schedule: Plan A - Full Time, In-Person Attendance

**Plan A: 100% in-person**

1. All students on campus all day, Monday-Friday.
2. Modified social distancing (3 feet), masks indoors, health checks at entry.
3. Alternative arrangements for morning arrival (go to classrooms vs. gym) and afternoon dismissal, changing classes (moving teachers vs. rooms, only one grade in the hall at a time), lunch in classrooms, staggered times for recess.
4. Students phase-in for the first weeks of school, allowing students to discuss the past trimester, learn new procedures, and adjust to being together in small groups before joining together as a whole class.
5. Sensitivity to students' social/emotional adjustment when planning assessments and addressing disciplinary issues.
6. School Mass offered for one grade each week, with the remainder of the school viewing via live stream.
7. Same length school day (3:00pm), with scheduling arrangements to allow time for changing classes, cleaning, and staggered dismissal.
8. Emphasis on using 1:1 devices and training students in Schoology during the first weeks of school to prepare for possible changes to Plan B or Plan C.
9. Visitors must seek administrative approval in advance to access student areas.
10. Assistant principal serves as contact for parents/staff with requests to stay home for health reasons (concerns of high risk or cases of illness).

11. In-Class and Homework Assignments posted on Schoology. Students needing to stay home provided books and a 1:1 device to access assignments, assisted by an eLearning tutor live online 2x/week, and meeting with their teacher and classmates online on Fridays for a live, 20-minute session of prayer, check in, and an activity. Excused from some assignments.
12. Families keep students home if the student or a family member is showing signs of illness or tests positive.
13. Extended day program available, with modified social distancing.
14. Sports offerings adjusted for outdoors only, intramural.

While St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School provides full-time, in-person instruction, the students, teachers and faculty will be adhering to the 3-foot physical distancing requirement allowed through special variation of the Virginia Guidelines.

The administration, teachers and instructional assistants will work closely with the student support staff, including the nurse and counselor, to maintain all safety protocols and ensure the best possible learning environment for all students.

#### **Section 4: Planning to Reopen**

- Continuity of Mission Task Force (COVID-19 Committee): The team consists of six members of the faculty, staff and administration.

Sister Mary Sheila, O.P. (Principal) [smsheila@aquinastars.org](mailto:smsheila@aquinastars.org)  
Janelle Ferguson (Assistant Principal) [jferguson@aquinastars.org](mailto:jferguson@aquinastars.org)  
Kim Perroots (School Counselor) [kperroots@aquinastars.org](mailto:kperroots@aquinastars.org)  
Anne Planchak (Nurse) [aplanchak@aquinastars.org](mailto:aplanchak@aquinastars.org)  
Stella Puglise(Teacher)[spuglise@aquinastars.org](mailto:spuglise@aquinastars.org)  
Julie McNulty(Extended Day Director)[jmcnulty@aquinastars.org](mailto:jmcnulty@aquinastars.org)

\*\*Prior to the start of school opening, the committee recommends parents help their child practice wearing masks for extended periods of time. Because we understand many children will not have worn a mask regularly during the summer, parents should acclimate students with the understanding that masks may need to be worn up to two or more hours at a time before they have an opportunity to go outside or have lunch. Masks will be worn throughout the school day when students are inside and unable to maintain appropriate social distancing.\*\*

- Health Department Contact:

The Prince William County Health Dept. COVID 19 Telephone number is: 703 872-7759 Monday- Friday 9am-5pm.

- Plan for Health and Absenteeism Monitoring:

- a. Assistant Principal serves as the contact for parents/staff requests to stay at home for health reasons due to concerns of high risk or cases of illnesses. She also monitors requests for Elearning.
  - b. Parent notification within 24 hours.
  - c. All faculty and staff and students will be screened each morning.
  - d. School nurse monitors rates of illnesses and the school receptionist manages absenteeism. The receptionist will report to the nurse on a daily basis.
- Communication Strategy:

The nurse will educate staff, students, and their families about signs and symptoms of COVID-19, when they should stay home and when to return to school:

- PowerPoint presentation made for staff and families-posted on the nurse website.
- In-service week.
- Faculty and staff training (nurse).
  - In service training to include:
    - The mandatory and non-mandatory recommendations in any CDC guidelines or State of Virginia guidance documents the employer is complying with, if any.
    - The characteristics and methods of transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus; The signs and symptoms of the COVID-19 disease;
    - Risk factors of severe COVID-19 illness with underlying health conditions;
    - Awareness of the ability of pre-symptomatic and asymptomatic COVID-19 persons to transmit the SARS-CoV-2 virus;
    - Safe and healthy work practices, including but not limited to, physical distancing, disinfection procedures, disinfecting frequency, ventilation, non contact methods of greeting, etc.
    - PPE:
      - When PPE is required;
      - What PPE is required;
      - How to properly don, doff, adjust, and wear PPE;
      - The limitations of PPE;
      - The proper care, maintenance, useful life, and disposal of PPE;
      - Heat-related illness prevention including the signs and symptoms of heat-related illness;
    - The anti-discrimination provisions of this standard in §16VAC25-220-90; and
    - The employer's Infectious Disease Preparedness and Response Plan, where applicable.
  - Prior to reopening faculty, staff, parents provided new policies and procedures.

- If COVID is suspected in the school community, the administration will coordinate with the health department and nurse to notify faculty, staff and parents via email or school messenger.
  - The principal will regularly monitor the health data reports for the school.
- Community Response:  
St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School will participate in the community response efforts of Prince William County and assist as required by the CDC.
- Student Health Services:  
Our school will follow the CDC, the Virginia Department of Health and the Office of Catholic Schools guidelines regarding the health and safety of our staff and students.
- PPE Inventory meets foreseeable needs.
- All non COVID health services will remain in place in nurses' office (excluding nebulizers.):
  - We evaluated the current space in the nurses' office and moved the school nurse area to a larger location with a separate space for students having symptoms of illness.
  - We will conduct regular screening for symptoms and ongoing self-monitoring throughout the school day to help reduce exposure to COVID-19.
  - Student Mental Health services:
    - STARS has a full time school counselor providing direct services to students and lessons in classrooms promoting positive student behavior
    - School administration, the counselor and nurse will work in tandem to monitor the staff and provide on-going support services designed to promote self-care, coping with working in a high stress environment, and the fostering of positive morale among the entire team.

## **Section 5: Promoting Behaviors that Reduce the Spread of COVID-19**

- The nurse and counselor will provide education and training during in-service week to the faculty and staff.
- The most important way to prevent the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19 is through promoting healthy behaviors. We will do this by educating staff and parents to monitor for symptoms and staying home when ill. We will promote physical distancing, wearing cloth face coverings, and practicing hand hygiene.
- The nurse will continue to provide information to students and parents related to health and hygiene while in school. A PowerPoint presentation will be provided for staff and parents to review important information.
- Visual reminders for staff and students will be posted in school.
- Adequate supplies will be provided to support healthy hygiene behaviors.

### **Training will include the following topics:**

Physical Distancing:

- Classroom layouts have been modified to ensure that all desks maintain a minimum 3-foot separation.
- Markings will be placed on floors noting 3 ft distancing or directional flow in hallways
- All students will remain in their homerooms with teachers rotating in and out.
- Middle school will have limited exchanges in the hallway.
- Additional spacing will be observed when students remove their masks to eat.

### **Supplies:**

A weekly inventory will be conducted to ensure an adequate supply of the following is on hand

- Hand sanitizer
- Hand soap
- Clorox wipes
- Disinfecting wipes
- Disinfectant

### **Signage:**

The required Centers for Disease Control (CDC) signage promoting healthy hygiene will be posted throughout the building with guidance on the following:

- Temperature checks
- Face covering
- Hand washing
- Movement throughout the school while maintaining physical distancing

## **Section 6: Maintaining Healthy Environments and Operations**

### **Water Systems and Ventilation:**

- St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School is currently on the Prince William County Service Authority water supply line. In the event of a prolonged water shutdown, all water features will be sanitized and water lines will be periodically flushed. Students will be encouraged to bring water bottles to class which can be refilled in the filtered, water bottle refill stations to minimize exposure to germs.
- We will take steps to ensure that all water systems and features (e.g. sink faucets, drinking fountains) are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown by following the CDC's 'Guidance for Reopening Buildings After Prolonged Shutdown or Reduced Operation' to minimize the risk of diseases associated with water.
- We will ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors, and using fans when necessary.

### **Gatherings, Field Trips & Volunteers:**

St.Thomas Aquinas Regional School will adhere to any published Executive Order related to COVID-19. In addition, we will do the following:

- Mass- For the purpose of maintaining appropriate distancing, school Mass offered for one grade each week, with the remainder of the school viewing via live stream.
- Limited volunteers to minimize contact with the outside community. If volunteers are needed, they would be required to wear face coverings while preparing meals in the kitchen. The lunch director will deliver the food to students.

#### **Daily Health Screening:**

All faculty, staff, and students will be health screened each morning. Any individual showing any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 such as a fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, or has been in contact with someone who is COVID-19 positive within the past 24 hours, will be sent to the COVID-19 isolation room and sent home within 1 hour of being contacted. During that time the individual will be excluded from school while in that condition in accordance with Virginia Department of Health regulations.

- Visitors will have health screening
- Required to wear face-covering

#### **Cleaning and Disinfection Protocols:**

At the end of each school day the classrooms will be cleaned by a contracted cleaning company. During the school day, teachers, faculty and staff will clean surfaces at regular intervals and whenever necessary per the following guidelines.

- After school cleaning-After school, classrooms and restrooms will be cleaned and disinfected daily through an outside cleaning company. Classrooms cleanings will include light switches, desks, chairs and doorknobs. A sanitizing fogger will be used daily.
- During the day –disinfecting wipes will be made available to all teachers and disinfecting surfaces will occur at proper intervals throughout the day. Extra supplies will be stored in a locked cabinet in each classroom.
- Additional cleaning supplies will be stored and locked in larger storage cabinets in the building.

#### **Hand Sanitizer Stations:**

- Classrooms: All classrooms will have hand sanitizer stations
- Throughout the building:
  - Hand sanitizer will be available at the entrance areas of the building
  - At the reception area of the school
  - In the nurse's clinic

**Student Supplies:** All supplies will be individualized for personal use to avoid cross contamination

Students will maintain their own school supplies, books, coats, lunches and other items they need to handle during the school day. Items will not be shared. If a student is missing something necessary during the school day, the teacher will assist in contacting the parent or obtaining the item if available in the school.

**Continuity of Instruction:** Students will be offered in-person instruction 5 days a week. Students unable to attend on campus will receive online assignments and the help of an online tutor. In the event of local or state illness, the school has a Plan B for students to attend 2 days/week with 6 foot distancing and masks as well as a Plan C for all students to remain off campus and meet teachers online for regular instruction.

**High Risk Members of the Community:**

Aquinas faculty, students and staff will wear masks, use appropriate social distancing, hand-sanitizer, hand washing, and extra cleaning precautions in order to protect those who may come into the school including the following:

- Older adults
- High risk students, faculty and staff
- Health conditions

**Transfer of New Students: Restrictions**

- They must be from other Phase 3 areas
- Students current health and travel history
- 14-day quarantine if necessary
- Transfer from other countries according to CDC travel guidelines

**Sick Leave Policy:**

- If a member of the community is exposed to COVID-19 they must follow guidelines set by CDC. With classrooms live streaming, teachers who have no symptoms or those whose symptoms allow them to continue working may continue to teach virtually to the Active board in the classroom where students are able to be monitored and assisted by teacher aide or substitute teacher.
- Follow sick leave policy and procedures from the Diocese.

**Section 7: Protecting Vulnerable Individuals**

Telework, co-teachers, and substitute teachers will be arranged by the administration as needed for staff.

The nurse will review all current health plans for accommodating students with special healthcare needs and update their care plans as needed to decrease their risk of exposure to COVID-19.

We have a process in place for students/families who self-identify as high risk for severe illness due to COVID-19. E-Learning is a choice for a family if needed.

Staff who self-identify as high risk will wear a face mask and face shields are available to minimize face to face contact. If needed, the administration in school is available to modify job responsibilities that limit exposure risk.

#### **Flexible Sick Leave Policy & Student Absenteeism:**

- Administration will work with the Diocese of Arlington Office of Human Resources to address any requests for use of sick leave for reasons related to COVID-19, acknowledging the unique aspects of each request.
- Students who are unable to study or work may be excused from some assignments with a note from home or doctor. Students would have two days after illness to make up missed work which is not excused.
- Students who are home due to quarantine requirements but who show no symptoms of illness may continue to work on lessons posted by teachers on Schoology with the help of an online tutor.

### **Section 8: Preparing for When Someone Gets Sick**

#### **Isolation Plan:**

- All faculty, staff, and students will be health screened each morning.
- Individuals identified with possible COVID-19 symptoms will be isolated in a specific room designated for that purpose. The symptomatic person will be required to wear a cloth face covering or a surgical mask. The student will remain under visual supervision of a staff member who is at least 6 feet away. A parent or guardian will be called to take the student home. Once the individual leaves to go home safely, the room will be ventilated to outside air. The person cleaning will wear a disposable gown, gloves, mask and face shield. Cleaning first and then disinfection with an EPA registered product. Hand hygiene will be done after removing PPE .

#### **Transportation Plan:**

- Students will be escorted from the COVID-19 isolation room directly to either their personal vehicle or an emergency vehicle.
- Staff and faculty may drive themselves home if they are having minor symptoms and feel well enough to drive. If they are not well enough, the person will be isolated in a designated area and provided support to get home or to medical care.

#### **Cleansing and Disinfection Procedure:**

After an individual has utilized the COVID-19 isolation room, the room will be ventilated to outside air. The person cleaning will wear a disposable gown, gloves, mask and face shield. Cleaning first and then disinfection with an EPA registered product. Hand hygiene will be done after removing PPE.

**Communication Plan:** When there is a confirmed case of COVID-19

- When there is a confirmed case of COVID-19, the school nurse will cooperate with the administration to communicate confirmed cases with our local health department who will provide guidance for our school to follow.
- Contact the Diocese Office of Catholic Schools.
- Implement required strategies to prevent spread of the virus.
- Notifications will be given to teachers, staff, and parents of a laboratory confirmed case of COVID-19. This will be done in a manner that protects the confidentiality of the ill individual and will clearly explain what our school is doing in response to the diagnosis and what the recommendations are for teachers, staff, and parents.
- The Principal, COVID-19 Committee Chair, and school nurse will work closely with the health officials to initiate a public health investigation, and contact tracing.

**Section 9: Planning to Close**

Following guidance of the State of Local Health Department, the school is prepared to implement the following strategies.

**A. Reduction in in-person classes:**

Decisions about dismissal and/or cancellation of classes or events will be made in consultation with Prince William County health officials. With guidance, appropriate measures will be taken to slow or stop further spread of COVID-19. Substantial transmission may require extended time away from school. E-Learning will continue through the use of prepared lessons online, communicated to parents via Schoology.

**B. Complete School Closure:**

If there are confirmed cases of COVID-19 or conditions deteriorate, meaning a substantial transmission of the virus in the greater community, the school will rely on the State and Local health department for guidance which may include complete school closure. Information will be shared as soon as decisions are made and all students will begin online learning.

**Section 10: Submission of School Health Mitigation Plan**

A copy of the St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School COVID Mitigation Health Plan will be available for review on the school website: [www.aquinastars.org](http://www.aquinastars.org).