

St. Joseph the Worker School June 1 Restart Questions and Answers

Thank you to all parents who filled in the school restart survey. We had 151 out of 162 families complete the survey, with many excellent questions asked. This letter will offer critical information in understanding to our at-school layout, starting June 1, as well as answer various questions asked online. The best way to offer this information is in a simple "Q&A" style. The various questions posed in the survey are intermixed with general questions and answers.

First and foremost - the driving factor in all our school's decisions is safety. This has been and will continue to be our #1 priority. If we cannot ensure what we are offering is safe to BOTH the students and our staff, we simply will not offer it. As is the case for our vibrant parish, we are proceeding cautiously at the onset of re-opening, and will adjust if the situation progresses safely.

We will continue to err on the side of safety with each and every decision made. For details on the parish re-opening, please see this morning's FlockNote announcement on a planned June 7 commencement of limited mass opportunities.

Q: Why are schools re-opening now? Why not just wait until September?

A: The provincial government has determined that the re-opening is important to restart our economy. The challenges of restarting under these conditions are being ironed out now, so that when we open schools in September, we may have learned something from this experience. For the time being, we are looking at our model of June re-entry will not be the expected model for September. All we can do is pray and hope that the caution exercised over the next 3 months will allow us to offer a more inclusive and teacher-centered school experience in September.

Q: Will my child(ren) be missing out if I have chosen to keep them home?

A: That depends on what you are worried about them missing out on. To be 100% clear, school for the month of June will **NOT** be the same as previous Junes, and any source saying it will be similar is delivering an unsafe and unrealistic message. Students who come in person will have the experience of potentially seeing some of their classmates and some school staff, but in a very restrictive way.

Q: Why did St. Joe's choose to use the gym only, and not use the classrooms?

A: Each school has a unique layout and St. Joe's is blessed to have a large attached gym that is well equipped to support students. Beyond having a large area that allows for safe travel of our students, we have excellent internet connectivity, separate bathrooms accessible through minimal travel, and excellent airflow in the building. In addition, the school has rented 3

commercial air purifiers which are capable of trapping potential airborne viral debris. This cannot be accomplished in the classrooms.

Q: Why aren't the teachers going to be teaching in the gym?

A: The proposed in-school support model allows teachers to continue to offer the high quality of learning to ALL students throughout the week, not just to a smaller number of students who are in the gym. Therefore, there is no advantage or disadvantage given to any particular group of students based on what their parents have deemed as the best decision for them. We are all aware that St. Joe's is a single streamed school and offering high quality online learning AS WELL AS in-school learning simultaneously will be impossible to do.

The support staff and administration in the gym will be supervising and offering limited support for the students' online learning in the morning. The afternoon schedule is weather dependent and social distancing projects and activities are presently being organized.

Q: We have heard that schools hoping to extend the 2-3 days per week for Kindergarten to Grade 5 students are NOT being allowed to extend this to Grades 6-7. Is this true?

A: Yes, this is (unfortunately) correct. WorksafeBC is being extremely stringent on this point of only allowing 20% (1 day per week) attendance to students in Grades 6-12. We are continuing to express our disappointment in this decision, given the situation regarding our many older siblings in Grades 6 and 7. If this decision is ever reversed in the future, we will inform our parents immediately.

Q: Will students be screened for symptoms before entering the school?

A: The responsibility rests on parents to make sure their children are symptom-free before entering the school. Exactly what measures the school may take beyond that are still being determined based on advice from health officials. At the present time, we are planning on having a staff member complete a verbal screen with parents dropping off their child(ren).

Q: If I don't want to start my child in school on June 1st, may I change my mind and send them later in the month?

A: It is possible that you may change your mind later on, but please give the school a minimum of two days' notice if you plan to send them to school after Week 1. If this is the case, we ask that you please call the school office at 604-277-1115.

Q: Can I drop my child off later than 8:50am or take my child earlier than 3:00pm?

A: The school needs to know how many children to expect each day and will ensure a good ratio of support and supervision is consistently offered. Therefore, if you have indicated your child(ren) will be attending school starting June 1, please communicate any such requests to the school at least two days prior to the request. For example: if you know that you are planning on sending your child for the mornings only Monday, Wednesday and Friday of Week 1, we will need to be informed of this and will anticipate your early pick-up accordingly.

Q: How will drop off and pick up take place?

A: To reduce exposure of students to more adults than necessary, parents will not be permitted to enter the school gym. Parents will use a customized drop off zone set up outside the gym door, or park in the parking lot and walk their child to entrance of the gym. A staff member will be present to go through a verbal check-list on each student's health.

Q: How often will students wash their hands?

A: Students will be required to wash their hands whenever they move out of their desks. Also, hand sanitizer will be dispensed to students several times during any outdoor exercise.

Q: Will the playground be open?

A: We will be able to use the inner field for student exercise and play, but at this time, use of the playground structure will not be allowed.

Q: What changes are being made to cleaning practices?

A: The school janitor and school staff are adhering strictly to the recommendations of WorkSafeBC. High touch surfaces will be disinfected twice per day and the gym facilities will be thoroughly disinfected each night.

Q: How is it possible to maintain social distancing when at school?

A: While we will do our absolute best to maintain social distancing at all times, there will be times, particularly during student movement, when a strict 2 meter separation will not be possible. Students will be constantly reminded of distancing measures, and students' movement will be limited.

Q: Will students and staff be wearing masks?

A: Based on the most recent statements made by the Government of BC, students will be strongly encouraged ~~but are not required~~ to wear masks. We encourage children to wear some sort of protective mask, particularly the younger students, for one simple reason: although we understand there is a risk that they will touch their face more if they wear a mask, extra face protection will also catch particles that would normally become airborne when they sneeze or cough. Children sneeze and cough for a variety of reasons, often with limited reaction time to cover their involuntary response.

It will be a requirement for all staff members to wear masks.

Q: What happens if a student or staff member gets sick while at school?

A: If anyone comes down with symptoms of respiratory illness, they will be immediately separated from others. A staff member will be sent home immediately. A waiting area will be set up outdoors for students who are ill to be picked up. Parents must pick their children up immediately. If the illness is respiratory in nature, all parents who have children attending school will be notified.

I hope the above information helps answer some of the questions being asked, whether from our online attendance survey, on social media forums, or after ever-evolving news updates. As more information is made available during upcoming weeks, it will be shared to the entire school community.

Finally, as directed by our CISVA Central Office, all CISVA Schools must deem two days next week as safety training and school preparation days. St. Joe's will be stopping its online learning on **Wednesday, May 27** and the morning of **Thursday, May 28** for staff training, COVID-19 school protocol creation and implementation, and WorksafeBC Safety Site Plan development. All safety related documents will be clearly posted for both staff and students in ALL areas of the school that either learning or working will occur.

Thank you for your amazing ongoing support during these surreal times. We are hopeful that, in following Dr Bonnie Henry's safety recommendations, our in-school student experience might offer all students a chance to say farewell to our classroom teachers in the final two weeks of June. Please continue to pray for us and for each other.

Warmest wishes,



Paul Fraser, Principal