



ST. MARY'S ACADEMY

Dear St. Mary's Academy Community:

I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and holiday and that you were able to share some special moments with close family. I write to give you a couple of important updates, and please know there will be additional communication in the days ahead.

As you may be aware, [Governor Brown announced](#) on December 23 that beginning January 1, Oregon schools will no longer be required to follow the health metrics outlining the various phases for returning to in-person learning. While these metrics are now advisory, schools will still be required to follow the guidelines in the Oregon Department of Education's [Ready Schools, Safe Learners](#). These protocols outline mandatory guidelines for physical distancing, cohort sizes, and other specifics. ODE is scheduled to provide additional guidance before January 19. School leaders were encouraged to make decisions that best suited their communities, which would take into account the school's preparedness, building size and capacity, and student numbers.

St. Mary's plans to implement our hybrid-learning model beginning second semester. The semester begins on February 1, and we will have a modified schedule for the first week as we work out logistics. We will coordinate our planning with the Multnomah County Health Authority, and we will continue to make decisions that are thoughtful and true to our mission. In the coming days, we will update the current St. Mary's Academy Operational Blueprint for Re-Entry on our website, as is required. In the meantime, here are a few details of what to expect:

- We will use the model we developed over the summer with Cohort A attending school Monday and Tuesday, and Cohort B attending Thursday and Friday. The start time will remain 9:30 a.m., and Wednesdays will be reserved for professional development, clubs, activities, and co-curriculars. We will pilot this for the first few weeks in February and make adjustments as needed. Please look for additional communication from Liane Rae, Assistant Principal, in the days ahead.

Families will still have the option of remote learning until St. Mary's is able to have all students on campus. Below is a survey for you to indicate whether your

student will continue to learn from home or if she will participate in the hybrid model. The survey will also include a few questions regarding cohorts, carpools, etc. **Please Note: Every family needs to complete this survey to assist in our planning:** [Parent Survey](#).

- As was true when we embarked on remote distance learning, we should expect there to be an adjustment period for both staff and students when we transition to hybrid learning. Teaching using the Swivl technology is completely different from teaching using only Zoom. Our faculty were trained over the summer, and we will provide additional professional development in the next few weeks so that they will be as prepared as possible. We continue to be grateful for their creativity, flexibility, and resiliency throughout this journey.
- Hybrid learning will be an adjustment socially as well. Students will probably be excited about coming back to school; however, the reality of physical distancing, closed campus, no access to lockers, and restrictions about where they can be before and after school and during breaks might not be what they imagined. We know that many of our students have been isolated and have suffered, and returning to school will only work if we all resolve to honor our commitment to following the CDC's guidelines, both when in the building and when at home. This is critically important. Families will be required to take their student's temperature each morning before leaving home and to fill out a health questionnaire before she can enter the building. We have four automatic temperature stations, and her temperature will be taken again before she enters. Please look for additional health and safety specifics in the upcoming weeks from Patty Gorman, Dean of Students.
- For safety of the community, we will not offer food service for the first few weeks and our water fountains will not be available. Please ensure that your student comes to school with enough food and water to last throughout the day. We will update you if this should change. Please contact Patty Gorman, Dean of Students, if you have concerns about meals and/or need assistance in providing your student's meals.
- Safety and security are always the top priority, and we are happy to report that the area in which St. Mary's is located is looking more like the downtown we know and love. That said, we will provide additional security for the near future and will continue to monitor our surroundings and communicate as necessary.

Please know that our commitment to the health and well-being of our students and faculty/staff is our top priority. While this will be challenging, we know that together we can safely re-open school so that our students can begin to make important connections and regain a bit of normalcy in their lives. In addition to continuing our strong academic program, we will be creating additional opportunities for some much needed social-emotional learning as well. Together we are stronger, and we are so grateful for the strength and support of our community.

Happy New Year, and may God bless the St. Mary's Academy community.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nicole Foran". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "N".

Nicole Foran
Principal

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