



## ST. AUGUSTINE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

1421 "V" Street, Northwest  
Washington, DC 20009

"Love to Learn ~ Learn to Love"  
Father Patrick A. Smith, Pastor

Phone (202) 667-2608/Fax (202) 667-2610  
Sister Gloria Agumagu, HHCJ, Principal

### Theme 2019-2020:

"If We Live In The Spirit, Let Us Also Follow The Spirit."- Galatians 5:25

---

## UPDATE ON PLANS FOR REOPENING FOR 2020-2021

July 26, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Since before the end of school in June, as part of our planning for the upcoming 2020-2021 Academic Year, we have been carefully reviewing three learning scenarios or "models" that Saint Augustine Catholic School could operate within during the COVID19 pandemic. These models, outlined in the [Archdiocese of Washington Reopening Task Force](#) are – full time in-school instruction (Modified Classroom), full time online instruction (Distance Learning) and a hybrid model that combines both on campus and off campus instruction (Blended Learning). In each scenario, our top priority is the safety and well-being of our entire community of students, faculty and staff, and families and a great quality education. Today's letter is an update on our planning for the 2020-21 school year. We will make a final decision around how to begin the school year and share it with families the week of August 10. In the meantime, the critical factors contributing to the final decision is Archdiocesan Guidelines and Requirements, District officials, the American Academy of Pediatrics as well as the Center for Disease Control (CDC).

Last spring, St. Augustine's faculty, parents and students collaborated to make our distance learning experience successful but not without challenges. We have spent recent months using research and feedback from our faculty, students, and parents, to further improve our distance learning plans and we are preparing to implement them in conjunction with in-school instruction as required in the Blended Learning Model. Blended Learning allows distinct advantages for our community, namely the in-person relationships that teachers and students can form with each other and which facilitate their learning and growth while allowing for minimizing in person contact. The Distant Learning Model is the required option when local or state officials are enforcing a mandatory stay-at-home order (or **Phase I** in the District). This was exactly the case for the final three months of the previous academic year. Since the second week of June, the District of Columbia has been in **Phase II** which allows for the option to gather in smaller groups but with restrictions and safety measures in place. Currently we are still in **Phase II**. For this reason we believe that public health conditions in this region support our implementation of the Blended Learning Model while keeping in mind that the reality of battling a pandemic means being prepared to navigate unforeseen circumstances as they present themselves and working

toward timely and effective resolutions. Here we want to share the details of what Blended Learning will look like for our students, faculty and families at Saint Augustine School.

The Blended Learning Model permits students to learn either on campus with all required safety measures in place (e.g., thorough cleaning, social distancing, etc.) and remotely from home. We are making preparations for teachers to do instruction in their classrooms daily and plan to equip each classroom on campus with a camera (focusing on the instructor) which will allow students physically present in the school and students participating remotely from home to receive class instruction synchronously. This will also allow students to have safe, monitored interaction with their peers in a clean environment.

To achieve proper social distancing in all our classrooms and other campus spaces, we plan to limit the number of students on campus each day, using the following methodology:

- The size and sectioning model for our PreK3-2nd will allow us to invite all these students to be on campus each day.
- To accommodate the larger enrollment of grades 3-8 within a socially distanced model, we anticipate students in those grades rotating between on-campus and distance learning on a weekly basis. This will allow every student in those grades to regularly experience science labs, art and music time, and safe and sustained in-person learning and relationship building with their teachers and fellow students but while meeting local and Archdiocesan safety requirements.

As to our Aftercare and After School Activities, as you may know, we normally start our After School Activities in October. We will provide an update on After School and After Care activities by October 1<sup>st</sup>.

When school begins on September 8, and we are following the Blended Learning Model, there will be numerous new health and safety protocols in place for our students, employees, and families. Included in these protocols are:

- Rigorous nightly cleaning/sanitation of all workspaces and ventilating of the classrooms.
- Daily temperature checks and screening questions before students/employees come into the school.
- Face coverings indoors (except during socially distanced lunch times) and while outside when in close proximity to others.
- Dining areas used for “grab and go” (e.g. boxed lunches) food distribution, with students eating in small groups in designated low-density areas or delivered to the classrooms
- Outdoor recess and possible outside classes if weather permits.
- Outside visitors to campus to be limited and only allowed as warranted.
- Floor markings placed to indicate proper physical distancing.
- Adhering to physical distancing best practices in classrooms.
- Hand sanitizer dispensers available throughout the building.

- Closing or reducing use of indoor communal spaces and increasing safe use of outdoor spaces.

To meet the needs of the blended model, we may need to add aides to some classrooms. In addition, we will have a nurse or CNA on site as well as, on an as needed basis, mental health professionals to help students readjust.

All of the preparations and precautions described above depend on every member of the St. Augustine's community acting responsibly to protect their own health and the health of their fellow Saints. We are in this together as a community, and as a school we expect each student, family, and employee to use good judgement and proper health measures both on and off campus. In this way we will uphold a social compact that safeguards and respects the health and safety of every member of the St. Augustine's community.

Every year, students and parents sign the student handbook. This year, the handbook will contain a section on expectations of the community during the pandemic. Following those expectations will be a requirement for students and adults to be able to come to the school.

Finally, we value your input into our planning. To this end a survey will be sent out that will ask families for their intentions\* around coming to school if we are operating in a blended model. This survey is non-binding, but it is very helpful for proper planning and staffing that we receive a response for every family. [*\*Special Note: Parents who enroll their children at St Augustine Catholic School this fall for the 2020-2021 academic year will have the option, within the Blended Learning Model, to continue Distance Learning if, after given clear and accurate information regarding all of our safety protocols, they still choose to restrict their child to at home learning only. Our hope however is that the many advantages of in-school learning along with our rigorous commitment to onsite health and safety protocols will allay your fears as much as possible in order for your children to receive the full benefit of a the Blended Learning Model*].

We will be back in touch with you the week of August 10<sup>th</sup> with our finalized plans for the Fall. Until then, we hope you continue to stay healthy and safe and enjoy the summer months, and we remain grateful as always for your patience and understanding.

Sincerely,



Sister Gloria Agumagu, HHCJ  
Principal

And

*fr Patrick A. Smith*

Rev. Patrick A. Smith

Pastor Saint Augustine Parish