

08/06/2020



Dear St. James families,

This year has been a very different and interesting journey. This journey is going to continue to explore more uncharted territory as we begin this school year. Many things have changed and will continue to change as the year goes on. Please be patient and understanding with the school staff and Board of Education. We are working hard to do what is best for St. James. We have spent many days and nights working through a plan to get students back in the classroom. We believe that face to face instruction is the best way for us to teach students. It is our intention to keep students in the classroom unless the Governor gives a lawful order shutting down face to face instruction, or we have a 30% or higher student body absence for 5 consecutive days.

There are many questions, concerns, and opinions about the current situation. We have made the reopening plan based on the best information that we had at the time. The information and guidelines may change often. We will continue to monitor and amend our procedure as the conditions change.

One guideline that has been questioned is the requirement to wear face coverings. This requirement comes from Emergency Order #1 from the Governor. It is a lawful order created under Executive Order #82. I have attached the links for each of those orders, as well as the FAQ page, for you to read for yourself. Here is what that means for St. James.

1. This is a lawful order
2. St. James is not exempt from this mandate
3. We will obey this mandate until it is removed by one of the following: The legislative process, the end date of September 28, 2020, or by order of the North Wisconsin District or the Wisconsin Council of Religious and Independent Schools
4. <https://evers.wi.gov/Documents/COVID19/EmO01-FaceCoverings.pdf>
5. <https://evers.wi.gov/Documents/COVID19/EO082-PHECOVIDSecondSpike.pdf>
6. <https://evers.wi.gov/Documents/COVID19/FaceCoveringFAQ.pdf>

Exceptions to the mandate

1. For people with health issues (a Doctor's note will be required at the school office)
2. For individuals addressing hearing impaired persons that need to read lips to communicate
3. For one religious speaker at a time addressing a large group from a safe distance.
4. Face coverings may be removed while eating and drinking

St. James has the mission to provide a Christian education to our students. Part of the education is teaching them to follow rules and understand the democratic process. A lawful order has been given and we have the duty to follow it. Even if we don't necessarily agree with it, or no one is around to enforce it. We would not be setting a good example for our children if we show them that they don't need to follow the rules that they don't like. There is a right way to change a lawful order through the legislative process. There are currently many groups petitioning our state representatives to do just that.

One way that you can help is talk with your students about wearing masks. Find one that fits them well. Remember that St. James Lutheran School does have a supply of 100% cotton masks and a few mask

extenders to offer families. There are many styles and each person seems to have one style that works better for them. Have them start using them now so that they are used to the feel when school starts. This will help them to not touch the mask as much. Make sure that they are washing their hands properly for 20 seconds. Talk to them about respecting students' and teachers' space and work areas.



As I said at the beginning of this message, we want to keep our school open with students in the classroom. We will need your help and support to accomplish this goal. I hope that this has helped you to understand our reopening plan a little better. We look forward to seeing all of our students back in class in a few weeks.

Thank you,

Ross Beversdorf

Director, St. James Board of Education