

Reopening Plan

2020-2021



Growing with God...



St. Michael Preschool Reopening Plan

2020-2021 School Year

St. Michael Preschool has developed the following reopening plan in collaboration with St. Michael Church leadership, the Diocese of Raleigh Catholic School's Office, the Diocesan Preschool Directors, and Cary Area Preschool Directors. The plan provides specific guidelines that will be implemented upon reopening in August should the K-12 schools open under Plan A or B. If K-12 schools open in Plan C, remote learning only, the preschool would remain closed and defer opening until schools move to Plans A or B. These guidelines follow the requirements and recommendations in the [NCDHHS ChildCareStrongNC Public Health Toolkit](#) last updated on June 26, 2020.

The St. Michael COVID-19 Task Force, comprised of church leadership, school administration, and teachers, contributed to the reopening plan by sharing valuable input for the most effective implementation of the CDC/NCDHHS and Diocese of Raleigh Catholic Schools safety guidelines. Every effort was made to minimize risk while maximizing learning and socialization, which are the hallmarks of a quality early childhood education. Enhanced health and cleaning procedures will be in place to protect all students, staff, and families.

The mission and developmental philosophy of St. Michael Preschool will remain the same: to provide a safe and loving environment where the development of the whole child and the joy of learning is nurtured through socialization and play as we grow in our love of Jesus and discover how God is a part of our everyday lives.

As early childhood educators, we teach children how to play with their peers cooperatively, read facial expressions and body language, learn self-control in social situations, and develop vocabulary and language skills by looking at a teacher's lip formation. These standards remain embedded as best practices and fall within the federal and state health recommendations.



Please note that this reopening plan is subject to change based on the directives of the Diocese of Raleigh and Bishop Luis Zarama, as well as the guidance and recommendations from Governor Cooper and the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS). Therefore, this document will be updated as necessary. Key points to the reopening plan can be viewed [HERE](#); however, you are encouraged to read the full plan in its entirety.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

- The calendar will remain as scheduled; however, special programs will be modified to avoid the congregation of large groups and virtual alternatives will be added as they can be scheduled.



PARENT COMMUNICATION

- The Parent Handbook will be updated to include a COVID-19 safety protocols section and policy for potential refund/credit in the event school does not open, is delayed, or there is an interruption to the calendar.
- Parents will be required to submit a Parent Handbook Signature Page acknowledging they read, understand, and agree to the plans being implemented by St. Michael Preschool and that they assume all risk of sending their child to the preschool.
- As always, St. Michael Preschool values accurate, clear, and timely communication. We will utilize our typical communication methods, such as email updates, director's newsletters, [preschool website](#), social media, and the Blackboard Connect notification system.

PARENT ORIENTATION

- Parent Orientation will be virtual. Information will be sent at a later date.
- Teachers will email parents a video to cover topics specific to their class that they typically address at Parent Orientation.
- The director and administrative assistant will record and share multiple short videos on topics such as the new COVID-19 safety protocols and procedures, preschool standards and curriculum, and new Realm parish software.
- The director will schedule a Zoom Q and A session following the release of these videos for parents to connect and ask questions.

MEET THE TEACHER/STUDENT ORIENTATION

- These programs will be redesigned to allow your child to meet their teachers and transition back to school in a supportive way while adhering to the recommendation of the CDC/NCDHHS to restrict parents from entering the preschool.
- More information along with a schedule will be emailed home.



VISITORS & PRESCHOOL OFFICE PROCEDURES

- Required [signage](#) will be posted at entrances. Social distancing reminders will be posted throughout the preschool and parish.
- We value our parents and volunteers and all they bring to our community; however, we will follow the current recommendation of the CDC/NCDHHS to restrict parents and/or volunteers from entering the building. The exception is to itinerant support for children with learning needs.
- It is expected that meetings with parents, wherever possible, will be conducted virtually.
- Opportunities for parents to "see" the meaningful learning occurring for their child will be available through class photo sites, recorded videos, or social media posts.
- Family members needing to check-in or check-out their child will need to call the preschool office at 919-468-6110. Items that are not time-sensitive can be sent to preschool@stmmary.org.

FACE COVERINGS/PPE

- Cloth face coverings (masks) must be worn by adults at all times while on St. Michael campus.
- Teachers may also use a clear face shield. During instructional time, when children need to see the teacher's mouth and lip formation, the mask may be pulled down while the face shield is on.
- Children will not be required to wear a face covering. If a parent requests the child wears a mask, it will need to be provided. Children wearing a mask need to be independently responsible for its use. During the school day, the teacher will not assist with the mask. Should the child remove the mask, it will be placed in a plastic bag with the child's belongings. Masks that are not worn properly pose a potential for germs to spread and do not help mitigate the virus.
- Guidelines on face coverings may change pending guidance from health officials.



ARRIVAL/HEALTH SCREENINGS

- St. Michael Preschool recognizes that one of the most critical components is getting the students safely in and out of the building at the start and end of the day. We ask for added patience as the process will look and feel different to ensure the health and safety of our community.
- CDC/NCDHHS guidelines recommend families **NOT** to carpool with other families.
- Arrival in the morning will begin no earlier than 9:15 a.m.
- At arrival, walk-up screening stations will be located at covered locations near the courtyard and playground doors. Families will be assigned a health screening station and parking location.
- A required daily health screening of children, staff, and any essential visitor will be conducted to identify symptoms, diagnosis, or exposure to COVID-19.
- Temperatures will be taken and recorded using a no-touch infrared thermometer. Anyone with a temperature reading of 100.4 or higher will not be permitted inside.
- Parents must not give a pain reliever at home to mask a fever, which could pose serious harm to others in our preschool family and could result in dismissal from our program. We must look out for each other's best interests and the common good.
- Following the health screening, the teaching assistant will escort the child to their classroom.

DISMISSAL

- At dismissal, parents will locate their child's class at an assigned outdoor location. The teacher or assistant will walk the child(ren) directly to the parent.
- The preschool office phone will not be monitored during arrival or dismissal periods. Parents must call the parish reception phone at 919-468-6100 to get in contact with the preschool.
- Detailed arrival and dismissal procedures including a map will be emailed in August.



MONITORING SYMPTOMS

- Parents and staff will be educated about the signs and symptoms of COVID-19. They will be responsible for learning this information and following the NCDHHS guidelines. If they or their child exhibit any of the symptoms, they are required to stay home.

No one may enter the preschool if they:

- Have tested positive for COVID-19, or have recently had close contact, defined as within 6 ft. for 15 minutes or more, with a person with COVID-19
- **Are showing any of the following COVID-19 symptoms:**
 - fever of 100.4 or higher
 - chills
 - shortness of breath
 - difficulty breathing
 - new cough
 - new loss of taste or smell
- The preschool will follow guidance from local, public health authorities as outlined in the [ChildCareStrongNC Toolkit](#) for appropriate steps following a suspected or positive diagnosis on campus, which may involve a certain class or all programs switching to a temporary distance learning model.



EXPOSURE/DIAGNOSIS

- If a child exhibits any symptoms of COVID-19, they will be given a mask (if age appropriate) and supervised while isolated in the Music Room (unused space). Parents will be called immediately and required to pick their child up, along with any siblings enrolled at the preschool. NCDHHS guidelines say that a child should not return to the preschool for a minimum of 10 days since symptoms appeared. Protocols listed in the NCDHHS Child Care Strong NC Public Health Toolkit will be followed for cleaning, notifying the health department, closure, etc.
- If a staff member, child, or parent has been determined to be in close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19, they must notify the preschool office and stay home for 14 days. They must complete the full quarantine even if their test is negative. However, if the person tests positive or develops COVID-19 symptoms, return to childcare must follow criteria listed in the [ChildCareStrongNC Toolkit](#).
- Any individual who spent a minimal time (15 minutes or less) around someone who tests positive for COVID-19 does not need to remain home for 14 days unless he/she becomes symptomatic.
- Parents will be notified of a confirmed positive case in our preschool community.
- As always, but especially this year, we must be able to reach you during the school day, so please make sure you keep your contact information up to date with the preschool office. Failure to be able to reach a parent or emergency contacts could result in dismissal from the program.



CLEANING/HYGIENE MEASURES

- St. Michael Preschool has increased the facilities budget for cleaning and sanitation to allow for the purchasing of additional EPA approved cleaning products and cleaning staff.
- Our cleaning service will conduct a nightly cleaning of the preschool, classrooms, and bathrooms to ensure everything is thoroughly disinfected.
- Teaching staff will disinfect their classrooms and bathrooms throughout the school day.
- Hard surfaces like tables and chairs, door handles, light switches, and high traffic areas will be disinfected frequently throughout the day.
- Sanitizing stations will be available at all entrances out of the reach of children. Hand sanitizer will be provided upon arrival for anyone entering the building.
- Children and staff will wash hands as soon as they arrive in their classroom, after the playground, before snack, and throughout the day as needed. Teachers will reinforce the need to wash hands for a minimum of 20 seconds.
- As always, teachers will instruct children on how to properly sneeze/cough into the elbow or tissue, followed by hand washing.
- Water fountains will be unavailable and marked as closed.



MODIFICATIONS TO CLASSROOM SPACE

- Teachers will remove unnecessary furniture or materials to increase learning space and opportunities for the children to spread out.
- Activities currently prohibited by the CDC/NCDHHS guidelines such as playdough, sandboxes, and sensory tables, will not be used. Also, stuffed animals, pillows, dress-up clothing, or anything that cannot be washed/sanitized daily, will be removed.
- Designated bins will be placed near the sink in each classroom to store toys/items that have been mouthed. These items will not be re-introduced during that same day and will be disinfected after school.
- Two and three-year-old classrooms will remove toys that tend to be more easily mouthed (cookie in kitchen play, etc.). These items may be introduced in January once detailed teacher instruction and modeling have occurred.



PRESCHOOL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- Each class will be considered a “bubble” with children and teachers not mixing with other classes on the playground or for programs.
- Within the classroom, teachers will limit the number of children in a play center and minimize the sharing of toys, when possible.
- Teachers will utilize outdoor space to provide further opportunities for learning.
- New procedures will be established for walking the hallways during transitions to prevent classes from passing each other.
- Each child will be provided with a pencil box for their own glue stick, scissors, crayons, and markers.
- Children will bring a labeled water bottle from home or teachers will provide a disposable paper cup. Water fountains will not be used.
- Children will bring a peanut/nut-free bagged snack closely following our allergy-sensitive policy.
- The director, administrative assistant, and float teachers will be assigned to support specific classrooms to minimize exposure to multiple groups of children.



MUSIC AND PLAYGROUND SCHEDULES

- The music teacher will conduct class outside, weather permitting, or inside the individual classrooms rather than the children going to the music room. Instruments will be thoroughly disinfected between uses.
- One class is permitted on each playground at a time. Children will exit the playground door and return through the courtyard door to avoid passing other classes in the hall.
- At this time, indoor and outdoor sandboxes are prohibited. The playground sandboxes will be tarped or screened off.



DISTANCE LEARNING

- If K-12 schools begin in Plan C, distance-only learning, the preschool will not open in August, but rather defer opening until we are permitted to operate in a more developmentally appropriate format.
- Should schools open, but need to close due to higher infection rates, or a positive COVID-19 case within our community, we will be prepared to offer temporary distance learning. Your child’s teacher will provide you with further detail in their orientation video.



EXTENDED DAY PROGRAMS

- Adventure Camp and Discovery Day programs will not begin until we are permitted to run programs that mix different age groups.
- We are still investigating ways we could potentially provide early arrival and/or lunch program to our school families who depend on these services. A survey to assess those needs will be emailed in the coming weeks.

TUITION PAYMENTS

- If after careful review of the reopening plan, you decide to withdraw your child, please ensure that you provide us with written notice by July 27, 2020, per our policy, to receive a refund of your tuition payment. The prepaid registration fee is nonrefundable.
- If a child is withdrawn without 30 days written notice, parents are responsible for paying an additional tuition payment.
- Should our preschool not be able to open as scheduled, a tuition refund or credit towards the first month we can open will be offered.
- If your child must stay home for a 10 or 14-day quarantine period, tuition will still need to be paid in full.
- If we are forced to close for an extended time as we did in the spring of 2020, we will assess the implications for tuition once the full extent of the closing is known.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT AND RESILIENCE

- We strongly believe it is in a child's best interest to form in-person relationships with their teachers, interact in meaningful ways with their peers, grow in their faith, and experience the joy of learning in a developmentally appropriate setting. We love your children, we love your family, and our sense of community will be stronger than ever.
- We want to offer support to our students, families, and staff during these challenging times, especially those who are dealing with hardships as a direct result of the pandemic. We will communicate with our clergy and Catholic Charities who can provide counselors for social and emotional support as needed.
- If more robust support is needed, staff and families are encouraged to seek support by dialing 211 or contacting the Hope4NC Helpline at 1-855-587-3463.



RESOURCES

[St. Michael Preschool](#)

[St. Michael the Archangel Parish](#)

[Diocese of Raleigh Catholic Schools Office](#)

[NCDHHS ChildCareStrongNC Public Health Toolkit](#)

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#)

