



“ The Road Back to Visitation Academy”

Re-opening School for the 2020-2021 School Year

August 7, 2020

Dear Visitation Families,

We hope that everyone is having a peaceful summer and has had time to think about returning to school in September amongst the uncertainty and confusion that has become our “new normal”. This plan will guide you as to what our 2020-21 school year will look like.

As a parent and your principal, I understand your anxiousness and questions about returning to the classroom. Know that we are taking every precaution issued by the NJDOE, CDC, AAP, and Greely Center for Catholic Education to ensure a healthy and productive school year for all.

Please remember that communication between school and home will be essential at this time to avoid uncertainty and rumors. My door is always open to you so that we can discuss questions or issues that you may have about COVID preparation or any educational matter concerning your child.

Please read the following re-entry plan. This plan was compiled after reviewing the NJDOE “*Road to Recovery*” from the NJDOE with teachers, staff, parents, principals from adjacent schools, the Archdiocese of Newark, and health professionals. It will show you what the learning environment and delivery of instruction will look like at Visitation Academy for the 2020-21 school year.

This school year will look different than any other, but our dedicated staff and teachers are ready and preparing for the challenge. We will move forward to provide the quality education that we always have and our students deserve. The health and safety of our students, faculty, staff, and parents will be of utmost importance and we will respect your concerns and the decisions that you make for your child.

Delivery of Instruction for the 2020-21 School Year:

Students will have an opportunity to select from **two modes of instruction for the 2020-21 school year**. If you have any questions before making a decision, please contact Kim Harrigan, principal at principal@visitationacademyparamus.org

OPTION 1: In –Person Learning Module

In this option, your child follows the school calendar and reports to school every day for the 2020-21 academic school year during normally scheduled school hours. During the months of September and October there will be a 12:00 dismissal each Friday with aftercare available at an additional cost for working parents.

Drop-off and pick-up procedures will be finalized and listed in our COVID handbook addendum.

- Students will receive instruction via the classroom with social distanced desks (6ft.) and plastic desk shields as per CDC and NJDOE guidelines. They will remain in their class “pod” throughout the day.
- Class sizes will differ according to classroom size and social distancing allowances.
- We will open windows and doors for ventilation. Ionizers will be in parts of the school building. Air conditioning will be provide where needed. Filters will be cleaned and sanitized regularly as per CDC guidelines.
- All students are required to wear masks as per NJDOE and Archdiocesan guidelines. We will have mask breaks for snack and lunch in all grades. Students may be excused for a mask break in the bathroom or nurses’ office as needed.
- All teachers and staff will be required to wear masks.
- Students will participate in gym and recess activities outside in appropriate weather, in classroom, or socially distanced in the gym.
- Lunch will be held in classrooms. Desks and hands sanitized before and after eating, garbage disposed of after lunch concludes. Pre-packaged hot lunch available for purchase and delivered to classrooms through Simply Gourmet.
- Teachers for essential classes (art, music, gym, computers, Spanish) will rotate to the students.
- Subject area teachers will rotate to the students.
- All students from grades Prek3-8 will have Google accounts to facilitate remote learning shall it be needed at any time throughout the year. Training will be provided for students and parents.
- Please understand that classes will be videotaped DURING INSTRUCTION and facing the teacher ONLY for at- home remote learners.
- Students will have their coats, backpacks and lunch boxes bagged and labeled before hanging in the school closets.
- Each student in grades 5-8 will have a designated chrome book for use in school and it will be periodically wiped down.
- Students will use their labeled personal belongings and store them in desk and/or cubby for personal use. No sharing of personal items.
- Students will be dropped off and dismissed during staggered times at designated doors. Sibling pick-ups will be arranged. (more information to follow)
- Once you register for in-person classes, you may make a switch to remote learning at the beginning of the 2nd or 3rd trimester. No switching may occur during trimesters. If a child registered for in-person school becomes ill with COVID or an illness that keeps them out of school for two weeks or more, joining remote learning will be considered on a case by case basis with a doctor’s note.

Option 2: 100% Remote Learning at Home

As per the governor of New Jersey, each school must offer a remote, at home learning option for students. In this option, a student remains home 100% for their learning experience. The student is responsible for being available for all instruction during regular school operating school hours. Work must be completed with the same commitment that the in-person model is. School ends at 3:00 pm. Teachers will check in with students at 1:00 each Friday for questions or issues with remote learning. Students at home must be up and on time each day, wear school uniform shirt, and be ready to participate as if they were in class each morning. No eating or drinking during instruction except during designated snack/lunch times.

-Instruction will be delivered using LIVE streaming from the classroom with Google Meet and Google Classroom.

-All students will have Google accounts and this will be the form of communication that the teacher/child/parent uses for instruction. Schedules and any additional work will be posted in Google classroom.

-A commitment form will be required to be filled out by parents and students for this option. All students must be active learners in this process and expectations for quality teaching and learning are expected. Families who elect this option must oversee their child's instruction and communicate with the teacher. They are responsible to make sure that all work is turned in and tests/quizzes are completed.

- Families that choose this option will be enrolled in remote at-home learning for the entire school year. If your child would like to move in to the in-person class option, they may do so at the beginning of the 2nd or 3rd trimester. Changes may not occur at any other time.

- If a student is ill with COVID or any other illness that prevents them from returning to previously registered in-person class for more than 2 weeks, joining remote instruction at home will be considered on a case by case basis with a doctor's note.

- Remote learning families might be asked to pick up books, work or drop off completed projects to the school via the elevator table at the school which will be open from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm. weekdays.

Additional Protocols:

In addition to courses of study, additional precautions and plans have been made for a safe return back to Visitation Academy. Please remember as this health crisis changes, the governor of NJ may enact more mandates which would cause changes to the plans listed below.

1. Students, faculty, and staff will be required to participate in a simple health screening upon arrival each morning. Temperatures will be checked and anyone with a temperature of 100.4 or greater will not be allowed in the building for the day. Students whose parent is not still on site in the parking lot will be held in our quarantine room with the school nurse until a parent can be reached and the child can be picked up. Nobody will be admitted back to school without a doctor note clearing them to return.

2. Any student, faculty, or teacher who has traveled to a state location on the COVID travel advisory list, will be required to isolate for 14 days prior to returning to school. Any student in isolation will be provided with remote instruction during isolation.
3. Handwashing protocols and hand sanitizer stations will be located in classrooms and throughout the building. All students and adults in our school building will be required to follow posted handwashing rules. Students will receive hand sanitizer upon arrival, wash before and after snacks and lunches, wash after returning from the playground, and use hand sanitizer before leaving at the end of the day.
4. As per the governor's office, NJDOE, and Archdiocesan office, all staff, faculty, and students will be required to wear masks while school is in session. Masks will be removed for snack, lunch and to take water breaks as needed. Students may ask to have a mask break and they will be excused to do so in the bathroom stalls or nurse's office. If a child has a medical condition preventing the wearing of a mask, they must have a medical reason and doctor's note excusing them.
5. Classrooms and all learning spaces will be set up to meet social distancing requirements following the NJDOE, CDC, and AAP.
6. After school activities have been prohibited until further notice. After-care will be provided for working parents. Parents are asked to provide a note from their employer stating the need for child care as part of the after-care registration process.(more information to follow)
7. All common touch surfaces will be cleaned throughout the day. These include but are not limited to, light switches, doorknobs, stair railings, walls, etc. The school will be cleaned and fogged overnight by the night cleaning company.
8. All hallways will be routed with arrows, stickers and signs reminding students of directional flow, spacing requirements and COVID rules. We will allow 2 students at a time in the bathrooms. Students will use stalls for social distancing. Dividers are being installed to use between the sinks. If there are more than 2 students who need to use the bathroom a line will form outside in the marked circle areas until someone comes out.
9. Lunch will be eaten in classrooms for social distancing purposes. Student's desks will be wiped and they will wash hands before and after lunch. Garbage will be thrown in a separate receptacle and will be collected at the conclusion of the lunch period. We will be offering a lunch program through Simply Gourmet. Parents would order the lunch via website monthly and it would arrive pre-packaged to your child's classroom. (more information to follow)
All other lunches and snacks will be brought from home.
10. All back to school nights, HSA meetings, additional help from teachers, and parent meetings will be held via telephone or zoom until further notice.
11. Entrance to our building during school hours will be extremely limited. Parents needing to drop off lunches or school items during the day may do so via the church elevator and leave items labeled on the drop-off table.
12. There will be no class party food or items brought into the classroom for holidays or birthdays until further notice. Teachers will work out arts and craft projects or games for holidays with class parents.
13. There will be no out of school field trips planned until further notice. Teachers will look into virtual field trips to coincide with learning.
14. Communication will be primarily through the use of school reach phone and email and our school newsletter on each Monday. PLEASE check these venues daily! We will soon release a **new school website!** Look for it in September ☺ it will be updated weekly with new school news.

If and when restrictions can be lifted on any of the items mentioned above, parents will be notified via school messenger. Although the list seems restrictive now, please remember that things will improve! Please remember that our teachers are taking on a huge undertaking by teaching in-person and remotely. I am asking for your commitment to be flexible and understanding as we begin this journey together in September.

In order to work with teachers and allow them to continue to receive professional development to enhance their in-person and remote teaching, during the months of September and October, we will have a half-day each Friday and dismissal will be at 12pm. We will reassess this at the end of October. I commend our faculty and staff for stepping up and planning what I believe will be a different, but special school year for our Visitation students!

Registration:

If you are opting for in-person learning for the 2020-21 school year, you are already registered.

If you are opting for remote at-home learning, you must email:

principal@visitationacademyparamus.org NO LATER THAN Monday, August 17th to let me know this. I will then send you the registration for remote learning.

September Calendar Dates:

2,3,8,9 -Teacher PD Days

10- First Day of School Grades 1-8 / Supplies and Summer Work Due... 12pm dismissal

Prek3-K Virtual Orientation 10:00 am 12pm Dismissal Grades 1-8

11- 12pm Dismissal Grades Prek3-8

14- Pre Registered Students Aftercare Begins/ Lunch Program Begins

15 - 8th Grade Virtual Mandatory Parent/Student Meeting 7:00 pm

18- Dismissal 12:00

25- Dismissal 12:00

29- Virtual Back to School Night (More information to Follow)

We are fully committed and here to support you and your child's academic and religious needs through both options of instruction that we are offering this school year. I personally want to thank you for your continued support each year and especially during this pandemic year! We will get through this together! Speak to your child about returning to school and embrace this "New Normal!" They are resilient and ready to learn!

God bless,

Ms. Kimberly Harrigan, Principal