

FOCUSED PREPARED FLEXIBLE



Bringing Back the Pack:
The Plan to Reopen Campus



ST. FRANCIS
Episcopal School

FOCUSED

Months of focused planning will help us welcome our students back in the fall.



Dear St. Francis,

While the reality we find ourselves in is one filled with uncertainty, you can be certain that St. Francis will always put the health and safety of our community first. Our preemptive spring closure prioritized our community's safety and allowed time for our students, faculty and staff to prepare for online learning. Today, school administration continues to plan for an on-time start on August 19, 2020.

The inherent uncertainty of this pandemic means we must carefully plan for multiple scenarios. We know that school will look different this year, and though the information outlined in these pages may change in response to circumstances, our goals will remain the same—to provide continuity of instruction and to deliver the St. Francis experience in a safe learning environment that fosters passion, imagination, and connection for our students.

I would like to thank our parents for their partnership and continued dialogue; our faculty and staff for their willingness to remain lifelong learners and embrace the opportunity to reimagine the educational experience; and, finally, our board of trustees who have supported the school and community with vision, strength of character, and resolve. Despite the challenges we may face, I am confident that we will fulfill our mission and ensure the best possible educational experience for each of our students in the year ahead.

In partnership,

Stephen M. Lovejoy, MEd
Head of School

A COMMUNITY CONNECTED

In February 2020, St. Francis began responding to the threat of a global COVID-19 pandemic, forming multiple task forces and teams that evaluated all aspects of operations—from health and safety to continuity of instruction. Every St. Francis employee plays a part in ensuring a safe St. Francis, and we pledge to continue learning, meeting, planning, and preparing for the 2020-21 school year.

We understand you will have questions as we navigate this together. For the most accurate and up-to-date information, please direct your questions to HealthResponse@StFrancisHouston.org. Questions sent to this e-mail address will be monitored and routed to the most appropriate team member, who will respond to you as quickly as possible.

As we continue to plan and prepare for our students' return, families can expect to attend Zoom meetings and hear more specifics from their divisions in early August.



PREPARED

Being prepared will ensure we are agile and able to make informed decisions while prioritizing the health and safety of our community.

RE-ENTRY PLANNING

In consultation with St. Francis's Safe School Task Force, COVID-19 Task Force and local/state health officials, St. Francis is able to execute the physical campus modifications needed to support students safely returning in August 2020.

YES

The State of Texas and Harris County have lifted the school closure mandate and government policies allow for students to meet on campus.

NO →

YES

As a family, your household does not have health circumstances or other concerns* that prevent your child from returning to campus.

NO →

YES

1 ON CAMPUS LEARNING

Your child(ren) may begin the 2020-21 academic year on campus with the expectation that specific health and safety procedures will be required. In the event that local authorities close school or initiate a stay-at-home-order, or if school administration and the Safe School Task Force deem it necessary, students will transition to comprehensive distance learning.

2 COMPREHENSIVE DISTANCE LEARNING *

Your child(ren) will continue with a blend of synchronous (live instruction) and asynchronous (recorded) remote learning. Teachers will make regular modifications to ensure that students are receiving a well-balanced and academically fulfilling experience. This model provides flexibility for students to work independently with support from St. Francis teachers.

* Comprehensive distance learning is available for families at any time. See page 16 for details.



ASSESSING RISK AND OUR APPROACH

Future planning and decisions depend on the spread of the virus and risk levels as determined by school, state, and local officials. Learning models would be enacted in response to these risks. In preparation, we are having daily conversations about conditions in Houston, operational measures on campus, and adjustments to schedules.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

St. Francis identified two guiding principles to inform our decisions and define how we return to campus: **1) Health and Safety and 2) The St. Francis Experience.** These guiding principles are grounded in our experience with distance learning this spring, feedback from our parent survey, our school's mission, and the goals identified in our strategic plan.



NO. 1: HEALTH AND SAFETY

The health and safety of our school remains our utmost priority. We will always act in the best interest of our students, families, faculty, and staff, and—as *people for others*—we also believe we have an obligation to support the health of the broader community.

St. Francis will continue to take guidance and recommendations from the World Health Organization, Centers for Disease Control, American Academy of Pediatrics, and both local and state officials. Additionally, our ongoing partnership and collaboration with the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), the Houston Area Independent Schools (HAIS), and colleagues at our peer schools will allow us to work toward a safe St. Francis.

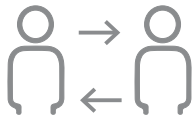


Screening and Mitigation Strategies

LIMITED CAMPUS ACCESS

In an effort to reduce infection exposure within the school facilities, visitor access will be extremely limited, with protocols in place for all visitors. Only faculty, staff, employees, and approved maintenance and service personnel will be allowed inside campus facilities.

- Piney Point Village Campus: Parents signing students in late or checking out early will enter through the main reception entrance on the Piney Point Village Campus,
- Couper Campus: Parents signing students in late or checking out early will enter the administration building (Primary School students) and Upper School Office (Upper School students).



SOCIAL DISTANCING

In consideration of social distancing in classrooms, hallways, and other common areas, we have made the following changes:

- Appropriate spacing of desks and furniture
- Adding desk dividers for small group work, where developmentally appropriate
- Suspending use of lockers
- Limiting bathroom capacity
- Establishing clear paths for transitions when necessary



SCREENING PROCEDURES

- All people accessing campus will undergo a temperature screening.
- Anyone with a temperature of 100.0° F or above will not be allowed to enter the facilities on either campus.
- Any person denied access to campus due to a high temperature is asked to self-monitor and only return after being fever-free, without medication, for 24 hours.
- Students: A faculty or staff member will take a student's temperature with a contact-free thermometer prior to the student exiting their vehicle. If a student has a temperature of 100.0° F or above, the vehicle will proceed to a second temperature check station to verify the initial reading. If this second reading is also 100.0° F or above, the student will remain in their vehicle and exit campus.

- Faculty and Staff: All faculty and staff members will be screened when entering campus. Any faculty/staff member with a temperature of 100.0° F or above will not be allowed to enter the facility.



FACILITIES AND PROTOCOLS

- Updating ventilation systems, replacing filters, and circulating outdoor air as much as possible
- Directional signage
- Adjusted spacing of desks in the classrooms
- Desk dividers as appropriate
- No locker use for Middle and Upper School students
- Hand sanitizer stations throughout campuses
- Continuous education and reinforcement of proper hygiene with students, faculty, and staff
- Designated handwashing times throughout the day; regularly scheduled cleaning of hard surfaces
- Modified dining procedures that limit contact—including most lunches occurring in the classroom.
- Protocols for containment if a student, teacher, or staff member becomes sick (further details will be provided in August)



PPE (PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT)

- All adults, and students from Kindergarten-grade eleven, will be required to wear a face covering while indoors on campus.
- The school will provide a solid-color mask for faculty, staff, and students.
- Families are encouraged to purchase additional masks so students have access to more than one piece of on-campus personal protection attire and can launder the items appropriately.
- Teachers may remove their masks during lessons where a mask would hinder the educational process (i.e., reading to students). They will replace their mask with a face shield and ensure they are socially distanced by at least six feet.



NO. 2: THE ST. FRANCIS EXPERIENCE

Whether on campus or online, we are committed to delivering the authentic St. Francis experience—one that emphasizes academics, enrichment programs, faith, and connection while addressing the varied and individual needs of our students. We recognize the ideal learning environment involves face-to-face interaction between teachers and students, and we will facilitate this interaction as long as it is safe to do so.

When St. Francis transitioned to remote instruction last spring, one of our priorities was to keep the strength of our community intact. We created “St. Francis Connections,” a series of live, online events featuring speakers who offered insight, expertise, and tips for coping during quarantine. We promise to continue facilitating the home-school connection and partnering with our families.

Undoubtedly, COVID-19 will impact schools and our lives until a vaccine or therapeutic drug becomes widely available; until then, we will assess risk level and adjust operational procedures and practices depending on the impact of the virus in the community.

FLEXIBLE

Being flexible will allow us to transition seamlessly, if needed, while maximizing live instruction and classroom time for our students.

FLEXIBLE LEARNING MODELS

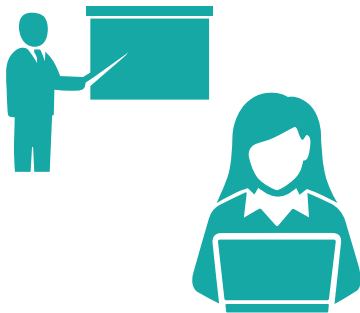
As St. Francis prepares to resume classes on campus in August, having risk-segmented protocols in place will allow us to respond quickly to situations—first and foremost within the St. Francis community, and also in Houston and Harris County. Our task forces will continue to evaluate adjustments that may be needed based on grade level, classes, exposure, or changing risk levels.



I. ON CAMPUS

STUDENTS SAFELY LEARN IN SCHOOL

All students have access to in-person instruction in accordance with public health requirements.



II. HYBRID

STUDENTS SAFELY LEARN IN SCHOOL AND AWAY FROM SCHOOL

Students groups have access to in-person instruction using staggered schedules and/or prioritizing certain grades, courses, and/or programs, in accordance with public health requirements. On-Site instruction is supplemented by Comprehensive Distance Learning.



III. COMPREHENSIVE DISTANCE

STUDENTS SAFELY LEARN AWAY FROM SCHOOL

All students are engaged in learning through Comprehensive Distance Learning. Instruction occurs remotely.



I. ON-CAMPUS LEARNING

We believe school can and should involve interaction with both teachers and peers. Our students will continue to have outdoor time together, eat lunch together, and socialize while taking appropriate safety precautions.

What to Expect with On-Campus Learning

- All students on campus with distance learning available
- Campuses are open with risk mitigation and social distancing strategies enacted; limited visitor access
- Some student movement throughout campus
- Employees and students screened before entry
- Enhanced cleaning procedures
- Scheduled handwashing times
- Daily outdoor time
- Face coverings for students in grades K-11
- Modified student schedules; staggered arrival and departure times (see schedule below)
- Modified or limited extracurricular activities
- Modified dining protocols
- No shared materials (i.e. manipulatives, etc.)

DIVISION SPECIFIC

Onsite instruction will look different depending on division, student needs, and classroom format.

- Primary School—will remain in classrooms and student movement will be limited. Enrichment teachers will rotate between cohorts.
- Lower School—will have some student movement to enable differentiation. Enrichment teachers will rotate between cohorts.
- Middle School—grade level classes and advisory cohort, limited movement, no athletic or student locker usage.
- Upper School—Normal schedule with social distancing strategies enacted, no athletic or student locker usage.

ON-CAMPUS SCHEDULE

When we ended the 2019–20 school year, we communicated different start and end times for some of our divisions in an effort to deliver student choice and optimize instruction time. We have since changed our start times to enable all of our divisions the opportunity to maximize instruction time on campus and minimize the negative effects of COVID-19. While we have set the following on-campus schedule, we know we must remain flexible and that the schedule may need to be adjusted due to changing circumstances.

Division	Early Drop Off	Morning Carpool	Start Time	Dismissal	Afternoon Carpool	Athletics
Primary School	7:00–7:40 a.m. Early Birds	7:45–8:15 a.m.	8:15 a.m.	2:30 p.m.	2:30–3:00 p.m.	
Lower School	7:00 a.m.	7:40–8:10 a.m.	8:15 a.m.	3:05 p.m. (K-1) 3:25 p.m. (2-4)	3:05–3:50 p.m.	
Middle School	7:00 a.m.	7:20–7:50 a.m.	8:00 a.m.	3:50 p.m.	3:50 p.m.	3:50 p.m. (Students dismissed from PE, or athletics)
Upper School	7:00 a.m.	7:30–8:00 a.m.	8:00 a.m.	3:45 p.m.	3:45–4:15 p.m.	4:00 p.m.



II. HYBRID LEARNING

We may transition to a hybrid learning model, which combines on-campus and distance learning, if the spread of COVID-19 has moved to a higher risk level within the community, has been mandated by state or local officials, or if we cannot be on campus safely.

- Distance learning would include synchronous (live) and asynchronous (recorded) lessons.
- On campus, we will consider the needs of the school community, divisions, and students. Safety protocols would include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Reduced campus population
 - Smaller class sizes
 - Restricted extracurricular activities



III. COMPREHENSIVE DISTANCE LEARNING*

In the case of a campus closure, students would transition to the comprehensive distance learning model for all divisions. This would only occur if there is a widespread, uncontrolled outbreak or a shelter-in place order. Teachers and administrators will continue to enhance instruction delivery, engagement opportunities for students, and ways to deliver the St. Francis experience.

Key shifts across divisions would include the following:

- Students wearing uniform tops
- More small group meetings
- More manipulatives that the students could use at home
- More synchronous lessons
- Established grading policies
- Smaller classes in certain divisions
- Meeting with students and parents regularly for feedback and check-ins
- More opportunities for enrichment classes, electives, clubs, councils, and additional student collaboration time for older students.

* Comprehensive distance learning is available for families at any time. See page 16.



ONGOING CONSIDERATIONS



Calendar: At this time, we do not anticipate changing the calendar, including school breaks or the first day of school. However, our calendar could change depending on circumstances and any school closure mandated by local or state authorities. The calendar may be extended to June 11, if needed.



Visitors and Events: We will make decisions based on risk level and COVID-19 severity. As of now, campus access remains restricted and events will be modified to accommodate the situation.

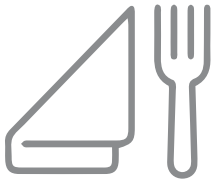
- **VISITORS:** Welcoming visitors and parents into our school for events and volunteering is a vital component of our community. We will continue to seek ways to involve the parent community, no matter which learning model we find ourselves in.
- **EVENTS:** We are committed to maintaining as many of these opportunities as possible by holding them remotely, postponing them, or rescheduling events for a later time. For example, our first major event is "Meet the Teacher" right before school starts. These will be conducted virtually on Monday, August 17, and Tuesday, August 18, before school starts on Wednesday, August 19. You will receive more information in early August about signing up for a time for you and your child to meet your advisor or homeroom teacher. Detailed information regarding other school and divisional events will also be communicated in early August.



Athletics and Fine Arts: Athletics practices and fine arts rehearsals will not begin before the start of school on August 19. Athletics offerings will be made in partnership with HJPC and other organization recommendations or requirements along with the safety of our athletes and community risk level. TAPPS/UIL/SPC and TEA guidelines are in flux and we will adjust as necessary when information becomes available. We will continue to evaluate and refine best practices for music, visual, and performing arts.



Chapel: Worshiping together is a cherished part of life at St. Francis. Our services will continue with students participating in their classrooms through video streaming as well as some grade levels taking turns worshiping in Chapel at a live service. Parents will be able to virtually attend chapel with their students.



Food Service: We will continue to partner with Sage Dining to practice safe food distribution and provide healthy lunch options for our students.

- Breakfast service will be suspended at this time to avoid large gatherings and allow students to travel directly to the classroom.
- We will not use family-style dining to serve any of our students.
- Primary School will be served hot lunch by teachers and teacher assistants in their rooms.
- While initially, students will remain in their classes for lunch, we plan to have Lower and Middle School students rotate days in the Dining Hall so they can have a hot lunch each week. The rest of the week will consist of box lunch offerings.
- Upper School will have pre-plated lunches.



Explore and Extend: It is our plan to offer Explore and Extend programs for students while minimizing vendors or visitors to campus and using the talent within our community.

- Explore and Extend care will be available to students in Pre-Primary through eighth grade, and short-stay care will be available to students in kindergarten through fourth grade.
- Additional details regarding safety measures and course offerings will be provided when we send our back-to-school information to families in August.



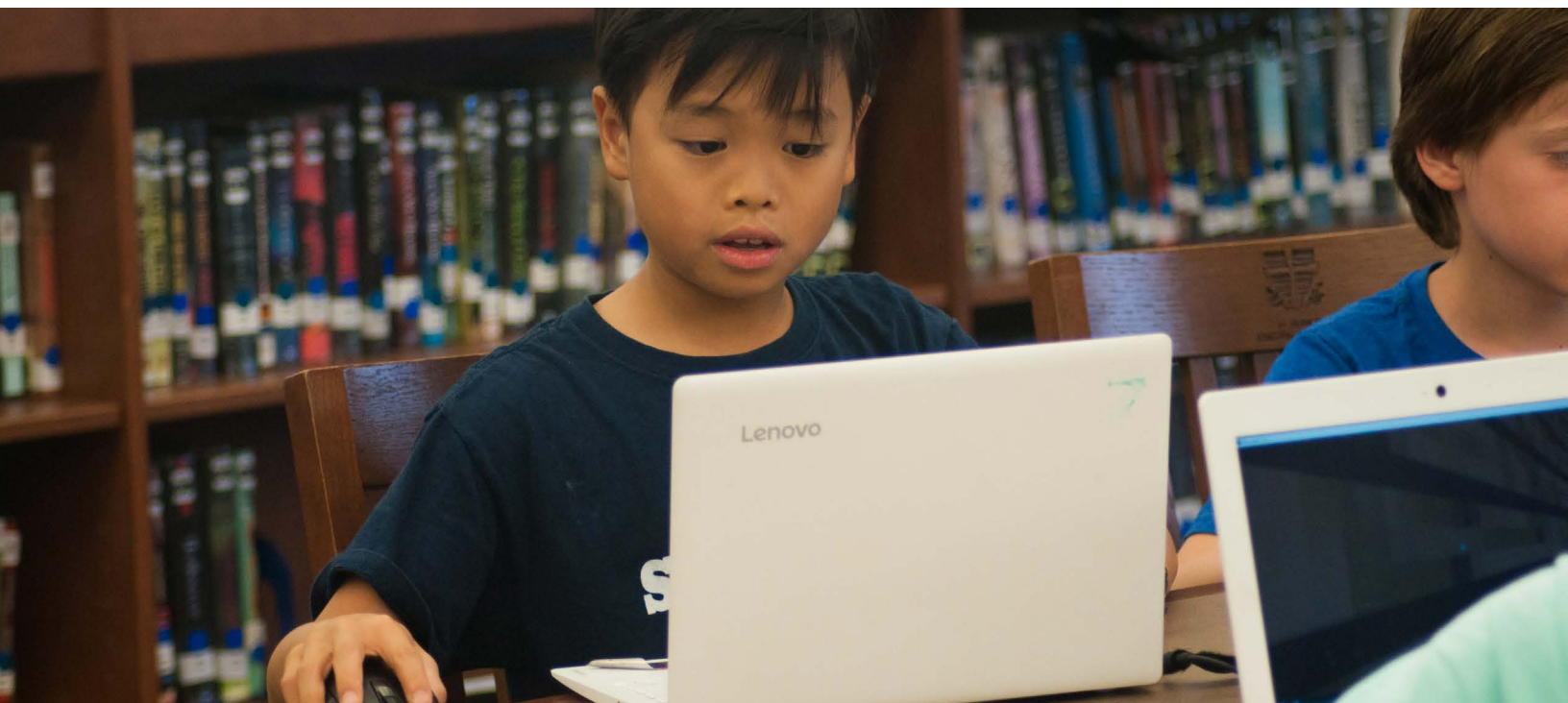
Uniforms and Dress Code: Given the unique challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, we will be very lenient at the beginning of the year regarding uniforms.

- Components of the dress and regular uniform (except socks and tights) can be from Parker, Tommy Hilfiger, or Dennis Uniforms. Uniforms will be available from Dennis beginning on July 25, 2020 (we will send a separate e-mail with details and a discount code). Please reference the student handbook for additional details. The handbook will be made available in August.
- Primary and Lower School: If you have trouble acquiring uniforms for your student, please reach out to your division's office manager.
- Middle and Upper School: As locker rooms will not be in use, students in grades 5-11 may wear their PE uniforms or other appropriate athletic wear to school in lieu of regulation uniforms for the first trimester. Students may wear appropriate length athletic shorts, sweat pants, or yoga pants, and any St. Francis spirit wear t-shirt. Athletic shoes are required. Students will be able to purchase approved PE/athletic wear [online](#). Additional communication will be provided later this month.



Comprehensive Distance Learning: Families may choose the Comprehensive Distance Learning model at any time. If you select Comprehensive Distance Learning, your child must remain remote for two weeks (14 days), after which your child may return to campus. You must notify your division office in writing 48 hours prior to your child's return.

Students who remain home will be able to access every class and lesson remotely. The classroom teacher will launch a Zoom meeting at the start of each class and classrooms will be equipped with a conference camera that will allow students to participate in the class from home. All lessons will be recorded so students who are in class and home can review the lesson.



DIGITAL PLATFORMS

St. Francis will continue to use technology to improve the student experience. The following platforms will be available to our community:



SeeSaw—Used by our Primary and Lower School divisions, SeeSaw facilitates home to school communication and teacher to student communication through the app. It also provides an opportunity for collaboration and feedback between teacher and student.



Veracross—The Veracross SIS (student information system) connects parents and their students in an easy to use platform, making information accessible and streamlined.



Google Classroom—Through this platform, teachers can assign and students can submit work in Lower, Middle, and Upper School divisions.



Zoom—This online platform is used by all divisions for video conferencing and synchronous learning.



PARENTS: OUR PARTNERS IN SAFETY

Parents and families play a vital role in maintaining safety on campus. The number one safety measure is to keep a child home if they are sick. We want to work with families to support their child's adherence to safety measures while they are on campus as well as at home.

We understand that some families may have higher risk members in their households. As a community that prioritizes health and safety, we must all do our part to adhere to state health recommendations and regulations to control transmission and potential future outbreaks. Moreover, there may be times when we ask families to comply with broader safety measures, and we greatly appreciate your cooperation in this regard.

We ask for your partnership in the following areas:



Follow federal, state, and local orders—This includes adhering to directives of government health departments in areas of public safety and measures that reduce the spread of COVID-19.



At-home screening—Parents will screen their child(ren) at home and send assessments electronically to St. Francis each day via SchoolPass. We cannot overstate the importance of keeping your child home if they are sick. Please be mindful of their condition and stay home if they experience two or more of the following symptoms:



- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea



COVID-19 testing and notification—If your child or someone in your household tests positive for COVID-19, you must notify the school nurse for your student's division as soon as possible.



Stay home if sick and stay home if exposed—if anyone in your household has been notified by the health department of contact with a confirmed individual with COVID-19 you are asked to notify the school nurse. Based on the circumstances surrounding exposure you may be asked to keep your child home from school for the recommended 14-day self-quarantine period. Your child would be able to continue classes via distance learning.



Face coverings—your child should have a mask every day they are on campus for classes. Label their face mask if it is reusable, and help teach your child how to properly use and remove their face covering. If you are using a fabric mask, ensure the mask is cleaned daily and a fresh one is sent with your student. Masks should not reference drugs, sexual emblems, tobacco, alcoholic beverages or politics, and design should be school appropriate. We will have plenty of disposal masks on hand should your student misplace their mask.



Hygiene—practice and reinforce good hygiene at home and proper handwashing.



Water Bottles—please send your students to school with a labeled water bottle. They will have access to refill the water bottle at stations throughout both campuses.



Response time—In the event your child becomes ill at school or is showing symptoms of illness, we ask that you or a designated guardian picks up your student within an hour.



SAFETY, FINANCIAL RESOURCES, AND COMMUNITY

SAFETY

The COVID-19 pandemic is a world-wide health crisis that has also had significant financial impact to families and businesses. St. Francis Episcopal School is committed to providing a safe environment for the health and safety of our employees.

In an effort to support the safe re-entry of school, St. Francis has invested significant resources across a broad range of efforts, including PPE for staff and students, enhanced cleaning procedures, and enhanced sanitizing stations; we will also be upgrading hardware throughout the year.

FINANCIAL AID

In an effort to support our families who have been adversely affected by COVID-19, St. Francis has expanded our financial aid pool for the 2020-21 school year. The amount may change depending on the availability of resources and the state of our local economy and the hardships that families are facing.

We understand that these are difficult times and we will do our very best to help families who may be adversely impacted by these events. If your family is experiencing a hardship, please contact Head of Enrollment Management Jennifer Glover:

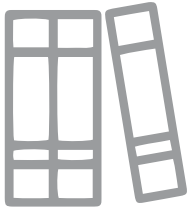
JGlover@StFrancisHouston.org

COMMUNITY

Understandably, the reality and uncharted waters in which we find ourselves is frustrating. As we have said from the start, we are in this together. Please feel free to contact us at HealthResponse@StFrancisHouston.org if we can help you with specific concerns.

We know you may have questions, and we will do our best to address those as we hear from our parent community. You can visit our re-entry website at StFrancisHouston.org/ReEntry for updates and answers to frequently asked questions.

We have confidence in our community and a steadfast faith in our ability to remain vigilant and persevere. Thank you again for being part of the St. Francis family.



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Understanding these common terms may be helpful as we navigate potential distance learning scenarios.

Asynchronous Learning: Online learning that is recorded and later viewed by students.

Cohorts: A class or group of students who stay together for learning. Students stay together with their class or group as much as possible, with the same staff, in a limited number of locations to reduce exposure to as many others as possible.

Distance Learning: Teaching and learning that is delivered online. This learning may be synchronous or asynchronous.

Hybrid Learning: Also known as blended learning, this model combines face-to face learning with online learning. The number of students present on campus is reduced each day, to reduce exposure to as many others as possible.

Synchronous Learning: Online, distance learning that happens in real time (live).

A LETTER FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Dear St. Francis Community:

With prayerful consideration, the board of trustees fully supports the reopening plan presented here. We believe that this plan will allow students to spend as many days as possible having in-person instruction while taking precautions against community spread of COVID-19 and providing remote learning options for those who are not on campus.

While it is *impossible* to predict what the next months will bring for our city and our nation, we feel this plan gives the school flexibility to determine the safest path forward for the entire St. Francis community. We recognize that this plan will result in changes to our everyday experience that we love at St. Francis. As *people for others*, we all need to model a servant's heart for our children and our community, particularly in this environment, and support the staff and administration who have worked tirelessly over the course of this spring and summer to draft this thoughtful plan.

Navigating a global pandemic is new ground for each of us, and we appreciate the work that the school has done to ensure that the education of our children continues whether in-person or remotely. Rest assured the board will continue to monitor and assess the situation and work in partnership with the school administration to fulfill the two guiding principles of the plan: 1) Health and Safety and 2) The St. Francis Experience.

With appreciation,

St. Francis Episcopal School Board of Trustees



BOARD MEMBERS 2020-21

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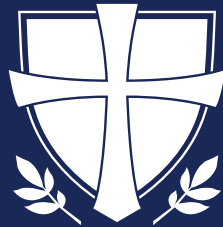
Taylor T. Tipton

Robert M. Zorich

Wallis T. Marsh (*Vestry Representative*)



In the Anglican tradition, St. Francis
Episcopal School challenges and
motivates students in an academically
and spiritually stimulating
environment to become imaginative,
critical thinkers and *people for others*.



ST. FRANCIS
Episcopal School



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StFrancisHouston.org

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