



# SAINT DOMINIC ACADEMY

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**September 1, 2021**

**Dear Parents and Students,**

I would like to start by referring to a “Bored Teachers” Facebook post that I responded to, which asked to “name something you fear, in four words”. I said “repeat of last year” which, as we all very well know, was a school year like no other. Yet, I praise and thank our good Lord for enabling us to navigate it as best as we were able. More so, for blessing us with the opportunity to start SY '21-'22 in person! Yes! Students, teachers, staff, and administrators are expected to be in school for live instruction each day. Now, doesn't that sound wonderful?

The challenges, though, remain real. We must be prepared to protect our students, teachers and staff from Covid-19, while also addressing a wide array of other pandemic-related concerns we will be facing as we return. We need to make every effort to provide a safe and supportive environment that will continue to promote everyone's well-being.

Following are guidelines which we will be implementing to help ensure a safe and successful school year:

**VACCINATION** is the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. Promoting vaccination can help schools safely return to in-person learning as well as extracurricular activities and sports.

- We will require vaccination for all SDA teachers, staff, and administrators. Any unvaccinated teacher or staff will be required to undergo weekly screenings, i.e. negative Covid-19 test results, for admission in school.
- We encourage all students to get vaccinated and to report this information to Ms. Butto, our School Nurse.

**SELF-SCREENING.** Students, teachers, staff, and administrators should take temperature checks before leaving home. If anyone has signs of any infectious illness, they should stay home and be referred to their healthcare provider for testing and care.

**MASKS.** Due to the circulating and highly contagious Delta variant, we will require indoor masking for all students, teachers, staff, administrators, and visitors, regardless of vaccination status. The mask mandate will be lifted during Breakfast and Lunch periods, and only while students are eating. Guidelines for keeping Lunch periods safe will be discussed with students during Homeroom on Day 1 of school.



**SOCIAL DISTANCING.** In addition to indoor masking, we will maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms to reduce transmission risk.

#### **ADDED LAYERS OF PROTECTION**

- The school building will be open to students at 7:30 AM. They will go straight to the Cafeteria and stay there until the first bell rings at 8:15 AM. Our food service, Four Seasons, will be serving breakfast and lunch everyday. Once students are in the building, they will NOT be allowed to leave until dismissal, unless they are signed out by a parent.
- We will be strictly observing ventilation, hand washing, and respiratory etiquette.
- We will utilize contact tracing in combination with quarantine and isolation.
- Cleaning and disinfection will be done on a daily basis.
- Parents are NOT allowed to drive in to the school parking lot for drop off/pick-up, for safety reasons, between the hours of 7:00 AM and 3:30 PM.
- All visitors, including parents, must make an appointment prior to any school visits.

**ABSENCES.** Students who are not in attendance in school, for illness or any other reason, will secure assignments via the Google Classrooms or through their Guidance Counselors. There will NOT be any Zoom or Google meets unless the entire school is in remote-learning mode.

Apart from keeping SDA physically safe, we are also addressing the social and emotional needs of both our young ladies. We recognize that we have all experienced additional trauma and stress due to Covid-19 and its surrounding factors. Providing consistency, predictability, and safety through nurturing relationships and supportive environments will help all of us with the transition back to school. Following are a couple of tips from *The National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness* that our teachers, staff, and administrators, will continue to use as a guide:

**We will start with relationships: Connect, Connect, Connect.** We will continue to use responsive relationships to help every SDA constituent feel safe, secure, and valued. We will continue to provide positive descriptive praise and feedback across the day, find times to connect with individual students, and keep families in the loop. We recognize that, for students who have experienced trauma, one nurturing and responsive adult relationship can make all of the difference!

**We will be ready for behavioral changes:** COVID-19 has been hard for all of us. We are prepared to see behavioral changes in students, keeping in mind that behavior always communicates a message/a need that we will try our very best to address. Feel free to reach out to Guidance Counselors and/or Administrators for any instances where our assistance is needed.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE:** We have been advised that there will be road construction to replace the water main on Duncan Avenue. We do not yet know when this project will actually start, but we will keep you informed. Please be aware that this will reduce available street parking during the daytime for any Seniors that plan on driving themselves to school.

Let us continue to prayerfully lift up Saint Dominic Academy to God and ask Him to bless us with another great school year. He has taken really good care of us for the past 143 years and we have the confidence that He always will. He is our faithful Promise-Keeper!

**Most sincerely,**

**Mrs. Guen Farrales  
Dean of Academics**

**Sister Mary Lou Bauman, O.P.  
Dean of Students**