



ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON

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NEWS RELEASE

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Archdiocese of Washington Catholic Schools Office Releases Reopening Guidelines, *Onward Together In Faith*

Document summarizes plans and guidance for 2020-2021 School Year

WASHINGTON, D.C. – In realizing the need for a measured and thoughtful approach to school reopening for the 2020-21 school year during this time of crisis and pandemic, the Archdiocese of Washington Schools Office today released [*Onward Together in Faith*](#), a document summarizing the reopening plans of the 62 Archdiocesan high schools, elementary schools, and early learning centers (ELCs), and the 29 independent Catholic schools in the archdiocese.

Working with the archdiocese’s Reopening of Schools Task Force, and with their staff, students, parents, and stakeholders, each school and learning center developed their own reopening plan, unique to their school and community. Three operating models were offered as options for learning this year: distance learning, in which all learning and formation will take place virtually; blended learning, which combines the distance and in-person learning models; and modified classroom learning, in which school/ELC campuses are allowed to open for in-person instruction with preventative safety measures in place.

Approximately 49 percent of archdiocesan schools and ELCs opted for the blended learning model, 28 percent will offer distance learning only, and 23 percent will be opened for modified, in-person learning.

“Because the pandemic is a health matter, a great deal of consideration was given to thoroughly research safe practices for return,” Washington Archbishop Wilton Gregory said in a video to teachers and staff. “As we move to reopen schools for the new school year in a variety of models, we will take a careful step toward normalcy in our daily lives. This will be a long journey – one that will rely on our perseverance and our commitment to the new health and safety guidelines that will govern how schools operate.”

Plans were submitted to and approved by the Catholic Schools Office in July. Each school/ELC utilized information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Academy of Pediatrics, National Association of School Nurses, and state health departments as a part of planning to develop protocols for students and staff to promote good health and safety.

“As I have reviewed each of the campus reopening plans submitted by our schools, I am particularly moved and impressed by their thoroughness and all of the factors considered by our pastors and principals in making their reopening decisions,” said Kelly Branaman, Secretary for Catholic Schools and Superintendent for Schools. “Each has recognized the unique characteristics of their community and sought the input of their stakeholders, as a whole, into consideration.”

Furthermore, for families that prefer for their child(ren) to receive faith formation and instruction virtually, archdiocesan schools will support families with the temporary transfer to a school offering

distance learning. The temporary transfer program will provide families support for transition to a different archdiocesan school on a temporary basis.

The end of the document includes links to the websites of the archdiocesan Catholic schools and ELCs, where individual reopening plans for each campus can be found. Please refer to these links for information and plans of individual schools.

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The Archdiocese of Washington is home to over 655,000 Catholics, 139 parishes and 91 Catholic schools, located in Washington, D.C., and five Maryland counties: Calvert, Charles, Montgomery, Prince George's and St. Mary's.