



# Redeemer Classical Christian School Reopening Plan

(Updated 8/21/2020)

(These plans are subject to change at the direction of the school board and/or administration)

## Principles:

**Independence:** RCCS is a ministry of Redeemer Presbyterian Church and is a Maryland church-exempt school, accredited by the Middle States Association. As such, RCCS will make its own determination regarding reopening, and closing. Public school district decisions may be taken under advisement but are in no way binding. Our school is ultimately answerable to God, our board, the session of Redeemer Presbyterian Church, the parents of our students, and lawful civil authorities.

**Submission:** As Christians, we are subject to lawful, God-ordained authorities (Romans 13:1-7). Thus, in all things that do not violate God's law, we will submit to government regulations. Nothing in the plan that follows should be understood to imply that RCCS will defy government ordinances related to Covid-19.

**Christian Unity and Charity:** There is a diversity of opinions and circumstances in our school community. We are called by God to consider others ahead of ourselves. (Philippians 2:4). Therefore, we will be sensitive to the concerns and comfort of others in our school. We will be willing to sacrifice our own preferences to serve others. Moreover, we will be united in our adherence to the guidelines we set whether or not we agree with them personally. Administration and teachers will set the example by complying willingly with our plan and refusing to argue concerning the requirements of this plan. Moreover, parents and students will be expected to follow this plan without argument.

**Parental Authority:** God gives the primary responsibility for children to their parents. Parents must ultimately make the decision to send their student to school or not. Parents must also take

responsibility for reducing risks, and adhering to school policies, even when they may personally disagree. RCCS will do everything reasonable to accommodate and empower parents in making what they believe are the best decisions for their children, provided they are in accordance with the plan set forth below.

**In-Person Instruction Preferred:** While many students will learn well remotely, in-person instruction is preferable, particularly for students in grades K-5. Research shows that student learning has suffered over the last three months of remote instruction and that students, already saturated with “screen time,” have increased hours in front of screens many times over. We must consider not only the medical risks associated with this pandemic, but also the loss of learning, the mental and emotional toll of isolation, and the strain that children and young people are under in our current circumstances. Therefore, we will allow in-person instruction and continue to do so for as long as civil authorities and conditions permit.

**Community:** One of the greatest responsibilities which God has given to adults is to prepare children and young people for adulthood. Included in that preparation is the reality that we live in community with other people who have different needs. Every one of us has to sacrifice our comfort and preferences as a result of this pandemic, and our children, to a lesser extent also must do the same. By regularly reminding them to consider others, to be thankful for God’s blessings, and to persevere through adversity, we will better prepare them for the lives of obedience and service to which all Christians are called. Moreover, for the good of our school community it is essential that parents exercise caution. This may require parents to limit travel, keep students home from school when you might normally send them, honestly and promptly report exposure to the school, and generally consider the circumstances, needs, and concerns of others.

## Background:

RCCS closed on March 13<sup>th</sup> in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Distance instruction began on March 17<sup>th</sup> and continued through May. Redeemer’s teachers and students responded admirably and worked diligently to complete the school year remotely.

After peaking in April, cases, hospitalizations, and testing positivity rates for Covid-19 in Maryland have steadily declined. In June, RCCS convened its first meeting of its reopening committee composed of educators, medical practitioners, and other professionals. With their input, and under the direction of the RCCS administration, the following plans have been compiled to allow for RCCS to reopen for in-person instruction on September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Currently, both the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Center for Disease Control recommend that schools consider reopening for in-person instruction.\*

As stated above, these plans are subject to change as circumstances demand. While current case numbers have risen slightly, these fluctuations should be expected. It is unlikely that Covid-19

will be eradicated in the short term. Thus, we should anticipate operating under various circumstances over an extended period. While this virus is serious, we must all make decisions weighing risks and obligations. We make these decisions daily and must apply the same logic to the important work of our children's education.

## Policies:

**Arrival-** Employees will be temperature checked and required to report out-of-state travel and any Covid-19 symptoms, or fever. No visitors or volunteers will be allowed on campus. Vendors who may need to access to the building will be required to answer the same questions and be temperature-checked. Before-school care will not be offered for the coming school year. All students will be checked for temperature and answer screening questions before exiting the vehicle. If a student in the vehicle has a temperature above 100.4 no students in the vehicle will be admitted to school. **Parents are expected to screen students at home before arriving. Students with any of the following symptoms must not be brought to school:**

- Fever of 100.4 or higher
- Loss of taste and/or smell
- Persistent, unusual headache
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Diarrhea
- Nausea or upset stomach
- Body aches or chills

If any of these symptoms are observed, parents should consult the latest policy from the school on what steps to take next. Regular updates will be provided to this policy as recommended by the CDC.

**Dismissal-** Students will be dismissed in the same manner as in the past. Students and staff waiting outside for pick-up will be distanced and masked. Students will not be permitted to congregate in hallways or at lockers. Thus, dismissal to lockers will be staggered.

When waiting to pick students up, drivers should remain with their vehicle. Congregating on the playground before or after student pick-up is not allowed.

**Cohorting:** Students will not be mixed outside of their grade level. Upper School teachers will move to the homeroom of the class they are teaching. Students will move for classes that may be held outdoors, scheduled science labs with adequate cleaning between classes, classes that are split at the grade level (math), and for scheduled locker visits. Otherwise, students will need to remain with their class group inside the building. Chapel, lunch, and recess will be held by grade level. To the greatest

extent possible, the Grammar School and Upper School buildings will be separated. Therefore, Grammar School students will be dismissed directly from the grammar school building or from designated, spaced areas in the parking lot.

**Cleaning and sanitizing:** In addition to enhanced cleaning from our janitorial service, hand sanitizing stations will be added to all entrances and anyone entering the building must sanitize before entering. All bathrooms will be sanitized mid-day. Handwashing and sanitizing will become a regular part of the school day. School supplies, including art supplies, will be provided by individual students. Touchless, water-bottle fillers will be available, but drinking-fountains will be turned off. Thus, all students will be expected to bring a water bottle to school every day. Playground equipment will be sanitized using a sprayer between each grade level use.

**Air Flow:** The HVAC system will be modified to maximize airflow. When possible, open windows and fans should be used in the classroom. Each room will be equipped with a UV Light air purifier.

**Events and Athletics:** At this time, it is not possible to predict what events, including athletics may be able to proceed. It will be necessary for parents to watch closely for announcements from the school and for the school to plan creatively to accommodate the social and athletic needs of students in a way that is safe.

Athletics will take place in accordance with state and Maryland Association of Christian Schools guidelines. Specific guidelines for athletics will be attached when available.

**Face Covering:** As of July 27<sup>th</sup>, Baltimore County has an order in place requiring face coverings while indoors. Employees and students will be expected to comply with this order. Teachers will provide students with breaks from face covering whenever possible. **Expectations about face covering may vary depending on developmental ability.** Face covering will always be required in common areas such as hallways and bathrooms and any time social distancing cannot be maintained. Face covering will not be required outdoors. In general, everyone at Redeemer Classical Christian School will be expected to cover their face when requested to do so. **PreK students will only mask upon entering the building. Masks will not be required for PreK students during the school day, however, they may be required when accessing shared, indoor spaces.**

**RCCS does not allow vented masks. Furthermore, students are not permitted to wear masks with slogans, or that feature offensive or inappropriate images.**

**Physical Distancing:** Maintaining distance between people is a critical factor in preventing transmission of Covid-19. Students and employees are expected to maintain 6ft of distance

whenever possible. Guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend 3ft-6ft of distance.

Classrooms will be rearranged and managed to maximize distance. Students will not be permitted to congregate in hallways and bathrooms.

**Covid-19 Related Absences:** Students in grades 6-12 who must stay home due to exposure to the virus or Covid-19 symptoms will be expected to maintain the same daily schedule as in-person students. **Students in grades 6-12 will log in to their Teams account at the beginning of the school day, appear on camera in each class, and participate.** Parents of students who are ill or otherwise unable to participate will be expected to contact the office to report their student as “absent.” Students in grades K-5 will be supported by the teacher in accordance with our normal sick-day policies. If the K-5 student is asymptomatic but must stay home due to exposure, parents should contact the office and student will be marked “present.”

**Covid-19 in the Community:** A confirmed case of Covid-19 in the school community will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Parents and staff will be notified and a decision on response will be made in consultation with local health authorities and with guidance from the CDC. This response may include a change to distance education or temporary building closure.

**Symptom Checks and utilizing the Decision Matrix for attending school:** Parents and staff are required to do home symptom checks according to the staff/grade level guidance and matrix provided in RenWeb Resource Documents. Symptom or exposure related student absences must be emailed to [reporting@rccs.org](mailto:reporting@rccs.org) (or called to the school nurse directly at **ext. 221** – phone hours are between 8:30 am and 3 pm- *do not leave a school nurse mailbox voicemail message*). Staff related symptom or exposure related absences should be called to school administration as soon as possible according to employee policy.

**Covid-19 Reporting:** Parents must report a Covid-19 test (positive, or awaiting results) or suspected exposure to Covid-19 to the school office by calling the school nurse at **ext. 221** during school hours (*do not leave voicemail message*) or by emailing [reporting@rccs.org](mailto:reporting@rccs.org). While information will remain confidential, it is essential that parents communicate with the school office so that necessary steps can be taken to protect the school community.

**Distance Learning:** Students in grades 6-12 who wish to learn from home will be offered all regular classes live-streamed. When livestream is interrupted, classes may be recorded. These recordings are solely for instructional purposes and will not be used for promotional purposes. Students and parents in grades 6-12, who are learning from home, will be expected to do the following:

- Log into Teams when classes begin at 8:30am using a device with a camera and microphone and a reliable internet connection

- Be properly dressed for the day, appear on camera, and remain on camera for the duration of the class period
- Demonstrate engagement in their learning through asking questions and contributing to the class discussions
- Avoid eating on camera, or engaging in any other distracting or inappropriate behavior
- Report their student as “absent” if they are unable to participate in distance learning for the day by contacting the school office by phone or email by 8am

Please note that while we will make every effort to keep livestream students connected to the classroom, we may experience technical difficulties and limitations which could interfere with the student’s live streaming experience.

Students in grades K-5 will be offered support for home learning through Teams, but K-5 classes will not be livestreamed.

Classroom Policies: Staff will be masked in all shared spaces and when teaching except when teaching from more than 6ft from students. In this case, teachers may wear a clear face shield but must wear a mask anytime they are closer than 6ft to a student.

Teachers should minimize the distribution of paper and other class materials.

Shared books must be left for 72 hours before use by another student.

Students will be expected to regularly sanitize their hands.

Students may uncover their face for eating or drinking at designated times only. When doing so indoors, desktop shields will be used.

Birthday “treats” should only include small, non-edible items such as pencils, erasers, or stickers.

**Conclusion:** While there are risks associated with reopening, in person learning is important to student well-being. The effort to reopen will require the cooperation of all parts of the school community. Staff, parents, and students will be expected to take precautions to preserve the health of the community so that schooling can continue. Parents **MUST NOT** send students to school if they show symptoms or have been exposed to the virus. Parents may need to cancel or alter travel plans to avoid virus hot-spots in the coming year. This must be a community effort to limit transmission and allow our students and teachers to learn and teach in person. Please join us in praying that God will bless our efforts to reopen by preserving the health of our community and strengthening us to continue working for his glory even in difficult circumstances.

\* <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/reopening-schools.html>

<https://services.aap.org/en/news-room/news-releases/aap/2020/pediatricians-educators-and-superintendents-urge-a-safe-return-to-school-this-fall/>