



BACK TO SCHOOL
GUIDE

St. Augustine School
2021-2022 Academic Year

August 28, 2021



JMJ

Dear St. Augustine School Families,

In my end-of-year letter to the school community, I shared how I believe that it is critically important that we as a school never become satisfied with the status quo - that we constantly seek ways of improving our students' experience when they step through the doors of St. Augustine School.

While the months of September through June provide our administration, faculty, and staff with countless opportunities to grow spiritually and professionally in more subtle ways, the summer months provide our school with a unique opportunity to purposefully reflect on potential areas of growth for our school and to make bold, innovative, and strategic decisions in light of those reflections.

As such, this summer, we worked diligently to make several key improvements to our school that we are confident will have a direct impact on your children's academic success and well-being. Although supply chain delays have set back the installation timeline of several of our more tangible school improvements, I wanted to be sure to share the details of these enhancement projects in this Back to School Guide.

This Back to School Guide also contains the COVID-19 policies which our school will be implementing to begin our school year. As we did last year, St. Augustine School will continue to prioritize (1) keeping your children and our community safe during the COVID-19 pandemic and (2) providing your children with as normal, consistent, and distraction-free of an education as possible. While continuing to monitor our entire school community's health and safety, we are making an effort to return to a greater state of normalcy in our classrooms and throughout our school by lifting several of last year's COVID-19 policies.

We look forward to welcoming your children back to school on September 7th so that we can continue our mission of educating the next generation of saints and scholars here at St. Augustine School.

In Christ,

Mark Daley
Principal

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A. St. Joseph the Worker STREAM Lab

Thanks to the generosity of countless members of our school community, our STREAM Dream is well on its way to becoming a reality! STREAM stands for Science, Technology, Religion, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics, and our new STREAM Lab will offer students opportunities to engage in hands-on, collaborative learning experiences in which they will be challenged to create, design, innovate, and solve real-world problems. In the St. Joseph the Worker STREAM Lab, our goal is that our students will “do the work” of the scientist, engineer, architect, computer programmer, graphic designer, and more!



The construction of the STREAM Lab began earlier this month, and the work will likely be completed around mid-September. At that point, we will begin setting up the STREAM Lab, installing new technology, and providing the proper training for our faculty. We hope to officially open up the St. Joseph the Worker STREAM Lab to all of our students in November.

For all K-5 classes, STREAM will become a fifth “Integrated Arts” or “Specials” course along with Music, Art, Physical Education, and Technology. All homerooms will have a weekly STREAM block in their schedules of which teachers can take advantage. Our Nursery and Pre-K students will also have a reserved STREAM block that their teachers can utilize at

their discretion. In Middle School, our Science and Math teachers will predominantly be incorporating STREAM into their curriculum. We cannot wait to see all that our students will achieve in this new space!



B. Promethean Panels

This summer, our school also invested in Promethean panels (shown above) for all of our Nursery through Grade 8 classrooms. These 70 inch panels, often referred to as “smart boards,” are interactive displays designed specifically for educational settings. These panels constitute a significant upgrade over our classrooms’ current television monitors, and they will allow our teachers to deliver even more engaging, dynamic, collaborative, and interactive instruction. We are confident that our students will be in awe of these magnificent panels when they are installed later this fall. Although our school purchased the panels in July, there have been significant supply chain delays that have unfortunately pushed back the installation timeline.

C. Security and Access Control System

School security is of the utmost importance. We are pleased to share that this fall, we will also be having new security cameras professionally installed at each entrance and exit of the K-8 school building and the main entrance at St. Julie’s. These cameras will improve our school’s overall level of student safety, allow school

administrators to monitor all school visitors, and enable school administrators to review security camera footage if necessary.

Along with these new cameras, we will also have a new access control system installed, which will allow faculty and staff members to receive key cards that will grant them access to both the front and back entrances.

D. St. Julie's House Playground

Later this school year, our littlest learners at St. Julie's House will be able to enjoy a new playground! Our Nursery and Pre-K teachers worked hard to design a larger playground structure that would accommodate the needs of their students. Although we purchased the playground in July through Little Tikes with an expected installation date of October, we have recently been informed that our installation date has been delayed until December.

E. Water Bottle Filler Stations

Lastly, our school will be replacing its traditional water fountains with water bottle filling stations in an effort to decrease the spread of germs and accommodate the many students who seek to refill their water bottles throughout the school day. We are grateful to Mike Rivers, a parent of our school and owner of Rivers Plumbing and Heating, for installing these new stations.



A. Special Education Program

One of our primary academic focuses this summer has revolved around making key improvements to our school's special education and student support programs. In light of feedback from faculty and parents, this past spring our school began a thorough review process of the Special Education Program, and throughout the summer, we have been working diligently to redesign the support structures that we have in place. Among the many improvements that we have made, our school has moved from having one part-time Special Education Teacher to two nearly full-time Special Education teachers, one for Grades K-4 and one for Grades 5-8. We are very excited about the increased amount of in-classroom support that we will be able to provide to our students who require special education support this year.

For all parents who are interested, we would like to have the opportunity to share with you some of the ways in which we will be redesigning our Special Education program. On Tuesday, September 28th at 6:30pm, we will be holding an informational meeting in the gymnasium for all parents to attend. As we onboard our new Special Education teachers and begin implementing our new plans during these first few weeks of the school year, we kindly ask for your patience and understanding.



B. St. Augustine School Family App

We are very excited to announce that we are officially launching our very own St. Augustine School Family App! This app will contain a variety of school information available in one easy-to-access place. Parents will be able to receive push notifications from the school, read school announcements, see the school calendar, view student grades, monitor their tuition payments, order lunches, read the weekly newsletter, and even read the Daily Mass Readings!

We truly hope that this app will help to streamline some of the many ways in which we seek to partner with you as parents. A separate email will be sent shortly with instructions on how to download and access the app on your iPhone or Android.



III. Preparing for the School Year

A. Student Drop-Off

Students may be dropped off either on School Street or Central Street beginning at 8:30am. Please do not drop off students on Chestnut Street, and please do not drop off students prior to 8:30am as there will not be a teacher on duty. All students should arrive no later than 8:45am for Morning Prayer.

When students arrive, they should proceed directly to the School Yard behind the school building where we will gather for outdoor Morning Prayer. When there is inclement weather, students will be directed to proceed into their classrooms and Morning Prayer will be led over the loudspeaker.

B. Morning Prayer

Morning Prayer is a wonderful St. Augustine School tradition which all parents are welcome to attend! It begins at 8:45am. We begin our school day with the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance - led by our students! Any students who are celebrating a birthday receive a much-coveted birthday shout-out, and any special announcements are made at this time. Mr. Daley also enjoys sharing about the saints' feast days and other messages of faith!

C. Pick-Up Procedure

Please reference the chart below for our student dismissal and pick-up schedule:

D. Lunch Ordering

We are pleased to be able to offer in-school lunches again this year. This school year, we have partnered with a new lunch service provider, ETC Food Service, to provide a hot and cold lunch option daily to our students. ETC makes their lunches off-site and in accordance with the National School Lunch Program health and nutrition standards. The lunches are then delivered fresh every day to our school for our students to enjoy. Our lunch program will begin on Monday, September 13th, so all students will be asked to bring a lunch for the first week of school.



Pick-Up Procedure				
Time	Students	Location	Students	Location
2:50pm	Bus Students	Chestnut Street	Nursury & Pre-K	School Street
3:00pm	Grades K-1	Central Street	Grade 2-3	School Street
3:05pm	Grades 4-5	Central Street	Grades 6-8	School Street

Please note that like last school year, if you have multiple children in the school, all of your children will be dismissed by their classroom teachers at the same time as your youngest child. For example, if you have both a Pre-K and a Grade 2 student, you will pick up both of your children at 2:50pm on School Street.

Approximately two weeks prior to each month, we will circulate a school lunch calendar and ask parents to log into Renweb to indicate which lunches their children will be purchasing that month. Both hot and cold lunches cost \$4.00, and this will be billed via FACTS. Sylwia Kohut, Administrative Assistant, will be providing further information via email on how to order lunches for the month of September. For any questions on how to order school lunches, please contact Sylwia Kohut at skohut@staugustineandover.org.



E. Before and After School Care

Before School Care begins at 7:00am. Students who have registered for Before School Care with Donna Canning, Tuition Manager, may be dropped off at the cafeteria entrance behind the school. Before School Care will begin on the **second day of school**, Wednesday, September 8th.



After School Care begins at 3:00pm and runs until 5:00pm, and it will begin on the **first day of school**. All students will be picked up at the cafeteria entrance door behind the school. If you have any questions regarding Before or After School Care scheduling, registration, or billing, please contact Donna Canning, Tuition Manager, at dcanning@staugustineandover.org.

F. Upcoming Dates

DATE	EVENT
<i>Wednesday, September 1st at 3:00pm</i>	Parent Information Session for Nursery, Pre-K, and Kindergarten
<i>Wednesday, September 1st at 4:00pm</i>	New Student Orientation for Gr. 1-8 Students
<i>Tuesday, September 7th</i>	First Day of School
<i>Wednesday, September 22nd at 6:30pm</i>	Parent Information Session for Grades 1-5
<i>Thursday, September, 23rd at 6:30pm</i>	Parent Information Session for Grades 6-8
<i>Tuesday, September 28th at 6:30pm</i>	Special Education Informational Meeting
<i>Wednesday, September 29th</i>	Student Picture Day

IV. COVID-19 Policies

A. Two Overarching Objectives

In the 2021-2022 school year, our school remains committed to achieving two overarching objectives. These two objectives have guided our decision-making to this point, and they will continue to do so throughout the school year. They are as follows:

1. To continue keeping your children and our community safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. To provide your children with as normal, consistent, and distraction-free of an education as possible.

As we begin this new school year, we firmly believe that these two objectives are not mutually exclusive. We recognize a danger in weighing either one of these objectives too heavily over the other, and for this reason, it is our goal to maintain the most appropriate balance between these two priorities at all times.

B. Masking

Thank you to all of those parents who participated in our masking survey. Over the past month, our school has worked diligently to gather as much expert guidance, faculty input, and parent input regarding the question of masking in preparation to develop



a policy specific to St. Augustine School. On August 25th, however, the Archdiocese of Boston Catholic Schools Office implemented universal indoor masking through October 1st for all students age five and older. This requirement applies to all K-12 students, faculty, and staff regardless of vaccination status. St. Augustine School will be complying with this indoor mask requirement, and we will be awaiting further guidance from the Archdiocese of Boston with respect

to whether or not this Archdiocesan-wide policy will be adjusted after October 1st. Masks are not required when students are outside.

At St. Augustine School, Nursery and Pre-K students are exempt from the indoor mask requirement, and parents may choose to mask their Nursery or Pre-K child at their own discretion. Parents of Nursery and Pre-K students should communicate with their children's teachers regarding whether or not they would prefer their child to be masked during the school day.

C. Policies that Have Been Lifted

Given that there will be universal masking in all of our K-8 classrooms to begin this school year, we believe that we can safely rescind several policies that caused significant disruption and an overall lack of normalcy for our students throughout last year. Beginning this fall, we will be lifting the following policies:

Desk Spacing

We will no longer be requiring desks to be spaced three feet apart in all classrooms. This will enable students to work together in groups, collaborate on projects, receive small group support from qualified instructors, and forge greater social connections. Our classrooms will *look* like preschool, elementary, and middle school classrooms again.



Cohorting

Whereas last school year, students only interacted with those peers who were in their homerooms, we will not be placing students in strict cohorts again this year. At recess, for instance, students will be able to play with their classmates from the other grade-level class.



Mandatory Classroom Shutdowns

Last school year, our policy was to automatically transition the entire classroom to remote learning whenever there was a positive case in a class. We will be lifting that policy this year. Please see the section below on close contact protocols for more information.

Travel Policy

Our school will no longer be enforcing any travel policies.

Classroom Lunches

Students will no longer be eating lunches in their classrooms. Students will be returning to the school cafeteria for lunches, and they will be able to enjoy a hot or cold lunch prepared by our new lunch service provider. See Lunch Ordering.



D. COVID-19 Testing & Close Contact Protocols

Three types of COVID-19 testing have been made available to all Massachusetts schools this year through the Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Safety (EOHHS) and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). St. Augustine School has been accepted into this testing program and is partnering with CIC Health to help keep students in the classroom. We will begin the school year with two types of test options: Symptomatic Testing and Test & Stay Testing (close contact testing). To begin the school year, the school has opted not to participate in the third type of testing, known as Pooled Testing. If this changes at any point, we will notify all parents.

Both the Symptomatic and Test & Stay Testing will be performed using the BinaxNOW rapid antigen test, which is a shallow nose swab. Tests will only be administered if a signed parental consent is in place. Additional information regarding this testing, including online sign-up and consent forms, will be forthcoming.

Symptomatic Testing

Symptomatic testing may be performed when a student/staff member becomes symptomatic during the school day. When a student presents to the health office with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 during the school day, the nurse can administer the BinaxNOW test. Parents/guardians who consent to have their student tested will receive an automatic notification of the result through the testing software platform. A follow-up call with instructions will be made by the nurse for any positive results.

Close Contact Testing

The Test & Stay option will be offered to school-based close contacts only if there is a positive classroom case. This option allows students to remain in school, in person, without the need to quarantine provided that they continue to:

- Remain asymptomatic
- Wear masks in school at all times (except when eating or drinking)
- Take a rapid antigen test on each school day and receive a negative result for 7 days
- Conduct active monitoring for symptoms through day 14 and self-isolate at home if symptoms develop

If the school identifies a student as a close contact and a family chooses not to participate in the Test & Stay option, the student may either a) remain at home for 7 days and return to school on day 8 if they continue to be asymptomatic, receive a negative COVID test (PCR or antigen) on day 5 or later, and continue active monitoring of symptoms; OR b) quarantine for at least 10 days from date of exposure, returning on day 11 if they have not experienced any symptoms; no test required.



We are grateful to be able to offer this Test and Stay Option to our students this year in an effort to safely keep our students in school as much as possible. Please note that given that our school plans to offer the Test & Stay Option for all school-based close contacts, we do not plan to offer a remote learning option this school year. If a student is to be absent from school due to a close contact situation from either inside or outside of school, teachers will send work home electronically or via paper to that student. Whenever close contact situations arise from outside of school, parents should be in touch with our School Nurses immediately to inform them and to discuss the particular circumstances surrounding their child's return to school.

E. Visitors

Visitors will be allowed into the school building if an administrator, faculty, or staff member has informed Sylwia Kohut, Administrative Assistant, that they will be visiting ahead of time. All visitors will be required to wear a mask while the school's mask requirement is in effect, regardless of whether or not the visitor is vaccinated.

Please note that any and all of the above COVID-19 policies are subject to change if circumstances require, or if local or state authorities mandate such changes.

