

# Re-opening Plan

## 2020-2021 School Year

August 28, 2020



Immaculate Heart of Mary School  
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## Immaculate Heart of Mary School

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August 27, 2020

IHMS Families,

I want to start by welcoming all students, staff and parents back to the 2020-2021 school year. While this year certainly will be unlike any other with all the changes, we are going to attempt to make this school year as normal as possible. Of primary importance is making sure our students and staff are safe, and then ready to learn.

This *IHMS Re-opening Plan for the 2020-2021 School Year* is a live document and will be changing as we go. Please look for updates on our school website. In this guideline, we will discuss many procedures and protocols, and explain the help we will need from students, staff and parents.

At we begin this new school year, our Kindergarten to Grade 8 students will be back full time in class. We request everyone's cooperation. Students will need to adapt to changes in how they move within the school, how many times they wash their hands, and their ability to physical distance as much as possible. Staff, will be needed to help beyond their usual roles. Parents, we need you to help out by screening your children in the morning and not sending them if ill; please stay familiar with the health and safety protocols; and for your understanding and patience with all of these changes.

This, without a doubt, is going to be a challenging year for all of us and I am sure you will have questions regarding the changes. Our goal is to follow the provincial guidelines given, and be as safe as possible while also bringing some normalcy to your child's learning.

Looking back, our return to school this past June (in a limited capacity) was a success due to the cooperation and teamwork of everyone in our school community. September has arrived and COVID-19 is still here ... there is no control we have over that. What we can do is be innovative, be creative, adapt, and make the best of the situation for the good of all.

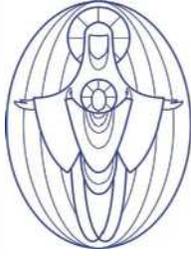
As always, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call.

Regards,

R. Picklyk, Principal

*"Let us be alert and protect ourselves and one another, but especially let us remember that the best protection from all epidemics is faith in the Lord and acts of love, for when we think about and strive to help those around us, God Himself looks after us!"*

*Sr. Sofija Lebedowicz, SSMI - General Superior*



## Immaculate Heart of Mary School Re-opening Plan for the 2020-2021 School Year COVID-19 Global Pandemic

### Planning for Re-opening

In June 2020, the province indicated its strong desire for students to return to school in the fall and announced re-opening dates. Manitoba schools will re-open for teachers and staff on September 2, 2020, with students returning on September 8, 2020.

As part of this announcement in June, schools were tasked with planning for different scenarios, for the fall:

Scenario 1 – In-class learning resumes for all; near normal, with public health measures.

- In-class learning resumes for all K-8 students, five days per week.

Scenario 2 – In-class learning resumes with additional public health measures.

- In-class learning resumes for all K-8 students with possibility of some remote learning.

Scenario 3 – Limited Use of Schools

- In-class learning is suspended. Teacher led remote learning for all K-8 students

Depending on how the pandemic evolves this fall, schools may need to pivot between the three response levels. This may be done at the class, school, or broader community level and will be determined by Public Health and Manitoba Education.

### General Planning Considerations

This *IHMS Return to School Plan for the 2020-2021 School Year* is based on the most current information available and is subject to change. IHMS will follow existing public health requirements and educational priorities as identified by Public Health and Manitoba Education. Existing guidelines, considerations and conditions of preparedness outlined in *Welcoming Our Students Back: Restoring Safe Schools*, as well as those previously established for *Limited Use of School Facilities and Day Camps* have helped inform this plan.

### Pandemic Response Team

An IHMS Pandemic Response Team has been established (March, 2020) which includes representation from the school's administrative team, instructional staff, support staff, IHMS Parents' Guild, IHMS Board of Trustees and Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate. The school principal, in collaboration with the Pandemic Response Team, will stay current with evolving Public Health Orders and communicate these to the school community as necessary.

## Welcoming Our Students Back

Immaculate Heart of Mary School will be working to provide our students with the rich learning opportunities they deserve and we will limit risks to their health.

- IHMS Staff will be provided with specific training on existing Public Health Orders, symptom management and sanitizing protocols prior to the start of the 2020-21 school year.
- Information on home screening and safety measures in place will be communicated to parents in August 2020 with direction on reviewing these protocols with their children.
- As classes return to school, classroom teachers will teach new processes to students and reinforce these messages frequently.

### Re-Opening Timeline

- IHMS Staff will have a full day of planning meetings on September 2 and September 3, 2020.
- IHMS Staff will finalize campus preparations on September 4, 2020.
- Orientation Day for K-8 students and their parents will be on Tuesday, September 8, 2020 (by appointment using online Sign-Up).
- Grades 1-8 students will begin classes on Wednesday, September 9, 2020.
- Kindergarten students will begin the school year with a staggered start date. Half the class will attend on Thursday, September 10, 2020. The other half of the class will begin on Friday, September 11, 2020. All Kindergarten students will begin attending on a regular schedule, full time, commencing Monday, September 14, 2020.

### Attendance at School

- Manitoba Education and IHM School expects that students attend school for classroom instruction beginning in September, 2020.
- Children in Kindergarten through Grade 8 will be in class, full days, 5 days per week.
- Remote learning is not an option.
  - Exception: Medical circumstances may warrant that a child stay home and remote learning be provided in some fashion. Remote learning will only be emplaced for students who are *medically advised not to return to in-class learning due to COVID-related risk factors*. Parents with a medically advised request for remote learning are asked to contact IHMS Administration by September 1. Situations will be assessed, and planned for, on a case-by-case basis.

### School Hours

- For Kindergarten to Grade 8 students, classroom life will be as close to normal as possible.
- K to 6 classes will run from 8:45AM to 3:15PM. Students will enter and exit the school using assigned doors designated for their grade level.
- Grades 7 & 8 classes will run from 8:45AM to 3:05PM. Students will enter and exit the school using assigned doors designated for their grade level.
  - Kindergarten students must be in their classroom by 8:25AM (using the front door).
  - Grades 1-3 classes must be in their classroom by 8:40AM (using the front door).
  - Grades 4-6 classes must be in their classroom by 8:40AM (using the back door).
  - Grades 7 & 8 classes must be in their classroom by 8:35AM (using the back door).
- Recess and lunch breaks will be staggered so there will be restricting contact between cohorts.
- Opening exercises will be held over the PA system every morning. The National Anthem will be played (not sung), a morning prayer will be prayed, and the morning announcements will be shared (including regular COVID safety reminders).

### **Prayer**

- As a Catholic school, IHMS has the good fortune of being able to connect with each other through our faith and spirituality. During these challenging times, opportunities for prayer and faith discussions are even more integral to the well-being of students, families and staff.
- IHMS will incorporate prayer and faith practice as much as possible.
- Please see the reflection article 'A Faith Response to the Coronavirus': [https://5df2b469-f3ce-4765-8ef2-4f35f284dd6d.filesusr.com/ugd/7eb69d\\_29d92f7ad44e42a6b1e7deca83f051fc.pdf](https://5df2b469-f3ce-4765-8ef2-4f35f284dd6d.filesusr.com/ugd/7eb69d_29d92f7ad44e42a6b1e7deca83f051fc.pdf)

### **Communication**

- The school has strong mechanisms in place to communicate information to parents and will utilize them to educate and inform parents as school reopens in the fall. If there are families that are not responsive via the normal mechanisms, the school will look at other ways of reaching out to them.
- The Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate, IHMS Board of Trustees, IHMS Parents' Guild and school staff will be consulted and engaged to assist in communication with parents and the general community.

### **Student Cohorts**

- Students will be organized into specific cohorts (groupings) of not more than 75 children. Contact between the cohorts will be minimized to the greatest extent possible.
- Kindergarten will form a cohort; Grades 1-3 will form a cohort; Grades 4-6 will form a cohort; Grades 7 & 8 will form a cohort.
- The grouping by cohorts helps reduce the risk of transmission among the school population and would assist Public Health in contact tracing should a probable or confirmed case of COVID-19 be detected in a student or staff member.

### **Before and After School Care**

- Childcare is essential for many families. In order to accommodate this need, and in light of the size of the Before and After School Child Care Programs, the participants will be split into smaller, age-based groups and dispersed into multiple spaces in the school.
- The Before School Program will operate from 7:15AM - 8:30AM.
- The After School Program will operate from 3:30PM - 5:30PM. All students who are not picked up by 3:30PM will automatically become part of the After School Program.
- Families using the Before School Program will drop their children off at the front door and the student will proceed to the gymnasium (between 7:15-8:15AM).
- Families using the After School Program will use the back doors of the school (between 3:45 - 5:30PM). Parents will wait in the back landing until supervisors bring the child(ren) to the parents.
- IHMS will use the gymnasium, Kindergarten classroom, Grade 1 classroom, Music Room, Art Room and main floor corridor to accommodate those who participate in the Before and After School Child Care Programs.
- Students will be required to sit within an assigned area in the Before and After School programs.
- The supervisors assigned to the Before and After School Programs will supervise the rooms.

### **Screening**

- Parents will be expected to screen their child for symptoms of COVID-19, or flu-like symptoms, each day before bringing them to school.
- Staff members will self-screen for symptoms of COVID-19, or flu-like symptoms, each day before coming to school.
- Symptoms to look for include: cough, headache, fever/ chills, muscle aches, sore throat/ hoarse voice, shortness of breath/ breathing difficulties, loss of taste or smell, vomiting and/or diarrhea for more than 24 hours, runny nose, fatigue, nausea or loss of appetite, conjunctivitis (pink eye), skin rash of unknown cause
- The Province of Manitoba provides the following screening tools:
  - Self screening tool is available online at: <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool/>,
  - A screening poster is available at: [https://www.gov.mb.ca/asset\\_library/en/coronavirus/COVID-19-poster-1.pdf](https://www.gov.mb.ca/asset_library/en/coronavirus/COVID-19-poster-1.pdf).

- An up-to-date list of symptoms can be found at: <https://manitoba.ca/covid19/updates/about.html>
- School staff may conduct screening for children while they are at school if the child appears symptomatic. Parents will be advised of any observed symptoms, and will be required to pick up their child should there be cause for concern, as per the screening tool.
- All students and staff will need to stay home if symptomatic.

### **Physical Distancing**

- Individuals are to maintain a physical distance of 2 meters.
- Classroom furniture will be arranged so there is more social distancing (a meter or more of space between students).
- Extraneous furniture may be removed from classrooms and moved into temporary storage to allow for increased space within the classroom for increased physical distancing.
- Signage and floor decals have been installed around the school encouraging physical distancing.
- All traffic flow through the building will be “keep right” as students and staff move through the building in the corridors and up and down the staircases. Review of this practice will be part of the education for students.
- Each homeroom will be assigned a specific entrance / exit door. This will reduce congestion and allow for physical distancing and time to sanitize hands upon entry to the building.
- Pavement markings are in place outside each entrance to remind students of spacing as they arrive and line up.
- Teachers will set up routines for coat hook access to avoid crowding in these areas.
- Departure time will be staggered, with each grade having a designated exit door. Staff members will escort students outside.

### **Cleaning and Disinfecting**

- IHMS building staff have increased their cleaning and disinfecting regimen. High touch surfaces will be disinfected frequently (desktops, doorhandles, keyboards, table tops, light switches, washrooms, etc.).
- Student desks/tables will be disinfected daily.
- Doors of washrooms will be set open to allow for less contact.
- Interior doors will be set open to allow for less contact.
- Hand sanitizer and a surface spray disinfectant will be provided to each classroom teacher for their use in the classroom as needed (person sneezing or coughing without effectively cover with their sleeve, etc.).
- Hand sanitizer, cleaning supplies, and disinfectant have been secured for this purpose and will be restocked as needed.

### **Hand Hygiene**

- Hand sanitizer stations are installed in every classroom throughout the school.
- Anyone entering the building will be expected to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer.
- Students will wash hands/hand sanitize before snacks/lunch.
- Students will wash hands/hand sanitize before and after recess breaks.
- Hand hygiene education will be reviewed and reinforced with students.

### **Personal Protective Equipment**

- Masks offer an added layer of protection.
- Masks will be required for students in grades 4 to 8 every day.
- Kindergarten to Grade 3 students are encouraged to wear a mask.
- School staff have non-medical masks. Face shields are also provided to school staff when physical distancing cannot be maintained in order to support additional student needs.
- Should visitors need to be in the school, a mask is required.
- Families are to provide their child(ren) a reusable mask from home.
- If necessary, disposable masks will be provided for students who forget to bring their mask.
- The school has a supply of non-medical masks for any staff or students who exhibit symptoms while at school.

- While wearing a non-medical mask or face covering, it is important to avoid touching your face. If you do touch your mask or face, you should immediately wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds, or use a hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
- Non-medical masks should be laundered daily.
  - Putting on a Mask
    - Ensure the face covering is clean and dry.
    - Wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds before touching the mask.
    - If none is available, use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
    - Ensure your hair is away from your face.
    - Place the face covering over your nose and mouth and secure to your head or ears with its ties or elastics.
    - Adjust if needed to ensure nose and mouth are fully covered
    - The mask should fit snugly to the cheeks and there should not be any gaps.
    - Wash your hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer after adjusting your mask.
  - Removing a Mask
    - Remove the face covering by un-tying it or removing the loops from your ears.
    - Avoid touching the front of the mask when removing it.
    - Store the face covering in a paper bag, envelope, or something that does not retain moisture if you will be wearing it again.
    - After removing the face covering, wash your hands or use hand sanitizer.

### **Education on Safe Practices**

- Teacher and parents must work consistently together to reinforce with the children the importance of the safe practices: hand sanitizer use upon entry into the school, hand washing for 20 seconds with soap and water when directed by their teacher (or as needed after sneezing or coughing), sneezing/coughing into your elbow, identifying to the teacher/parent if they are feeling unwell or have any symptoms to be checked, no sharing of items or foods, etc.
- Especially important will be the education of children on the importance of socially distancing and remaining only with their grade cohort. All persons must maintain a 2 metre distance from others whenever possible; a minimum 1 metre distance may be implemented for students as they are seated at their desks in the classroom. No hugs, handshakes or fist-bumps; these should be replaced with a wave, nod or smile.
- Hand sanitizer and a surface spray disinfectant will be provided to each classroom teacher for their use in the instance of a person sneezing or coughing without effectively cover with their sleeve.

### **Signage**

- The school has increased signage. Banners, floor decals and posters are placed throughout the school reminding all visitors of hygiene, physical distancing and listing symptoms of COVID-19 for all to be aware.

### **Parent / Visitor Access**

- Although IHMS values parent involvement in our school community, provincial guidelines are to limit visitors and volunteers in school facilities for the time being.
- Non-essential visitors will not be permitted into the school building unless they have been pre-authorized for entry by school personnel.
- Should an instance absolutely require an in-person meeting, the parent/guardian will be required to contact the appropriate school personnel by email or phone in advance, and a specific meeting date and time will be arranged with instructions for entry into the school.
- At the start of school in September, parents are to refrain from coming into the school (with the exception of Kindergarten parents/guardians).
- Business with the school office:
  - All business with the school office, teacher or principal must be conducted via telephone or email wherever possible. If this is not possible, an appointment should be made with the office staff/teacher/principal prior to coming to the School Office.

- Visitors to the school must first self-screen and adhere to physical distancing and hygiene practices.
- Visitors must enter the school through the front doors.
- **All visitors to the school must sign-in at the front doors.** The School keeps a daily record of anyone entering the building. These records are kept up to date, and available to facilitate contact tracing if necessary.

### **Kindergarten Families**

- Kindergarten families should arrive at school no later than 8:25AM. This will alleviate congestion at arrival time as the school day begins.
- At arrival and dismissal, Kindergarten students will enter and exit the school through the front doors.
- Kindergarten students will be brought by their parent/guardian to the Kindergarten room where the child will be dropped off with the teacher / supervisor.
- Parents are asked to have only one caregiver accompany the Kindergarten child to their room.
- The parent/guardian will not be allowed to enter the classroom, and to only hand over the student to the school staff at the classroom door.
- Parent / guardians are to maintain a social distance of 2 metres from other individuals while in the school.

### **Contact Tracing / Sign-In**

- All staff, parents and visitors (not students) must sign-in upon entering the school. These same individuals sign-out when exiting the building. This information becomes critical should virus tracing be necessary. The sign-in sheet is located in the front foyer of the school.

### **Entrance and Exit**

- At arrival and dismissal, Kindergarten students will enter and exit the school through the front doors.
- During the school day the Kindergarten students will use the Kindergarten door on the east side of the school.
- Grades 1-3 students will line up near the gymnasium wall (using the pavement markings for physical spacing) and enter / exit the building through the front doors of the school.
- Grades 4-8 students will line up on the east side of the school (using the pavement markings for physical spacing) and enter / exit the building through the back doors of the school.
- IHMS staff will enter / exit the building through the front doors of the school.
- At arrival and dismissal the large gate at the back of the school will be open to allow more space for entering and exiting the school yard.

### **Arrival**

- Parents/guardians may accompany their children onto the schoolyard.
- Parents/guardians are to refrain from coming into the school at arrival time.
- Kindergarten parents can escort their child to/from the Kindergarten classroom at arrival and dismissal.

### **Dismissal**

- At the end of each school day, a staff member will walk the children onto the playground.
- Parents/guardians will pick up their child from the playground, or students will load their vehicle in the back lane.
- Drivers can park on adjacent streets and walk onto the schoolyard to pick up their child(ren).
- There is no drop-off or pick-up of students permitted on Flora Avenue in front of the school.
- Parents/guardians are to refrain from coming into the school at 3:15PM dismissal time.

### **In-Class Learning**

- At the beginning of the year teachers will pay a lot of attention to the basics of keeping safe (staying home if symptomatic, social distancing, hand washing, wearing a mask, cough etiquette, etc).
- As the year progresses teachers will focus on the essential skills students need to progress academically and the social skills they need to get along in the world.
- Creative use of community spaces and timetabling may be implemented, including re-assigning staff and identifying alternate locations. Outdoor activities will be planned as much as possible.

- For the majority of the school day students will be taught in their homeroom.
- Specialist teachers will move from room to room according to the schedule.
- Manitoba Education has indicated reporting for the Provincial Grade 3/4 and Middle Years assessments for the 2020/2021 school year is suspended to ensure the focus is placed on supporting students' return to in-class learning and recovery learning needs.
- Recovery Learning
  - IHMS is fortunate to have reported a high rate of student engagement through the remote learning period in the spring. There still remains students who will need additional supports as they re-enter school.
  - Recovery learning needs have already been identified in student report card comments this past June.
  - Transition meetings took place in June to communicate information on students' academic, social and emotional needs to the receiving teachers.
  - Supports will be provided to all students who have been identified as in need.
  - Recovery learning discussions among teachers will continue, with both Administration and Resource being involved in the discussions/planning for the 2020-2021 school year. Support will be provided to teachers from both Administration and Resource as needed.
  - Teachers will take time to assess all of their students at the beginning of the new school year, to identify where the needs/gaps are.
  - Acquisition of extra materials for recovery learning, we will be considered on a case by case basis.
  - Support staff will be called upon to help with supporting both teachers and students in the recovery learning process.

### **Remote Learning**

- Remote learning is not an option. Public health has determined that it is safe to resume in-class learning while following public health guidance for screening, enhanced hand hygiene, physical distancing, the use of cohorts and outbreak management, which is paramount in keeping as many students as possible in schools this fall and throughout the pandemic.
  - Exception: In some circumstances, there may be students who must remain home for short or long periods of time during the pandemic. Remote learning will only be emplaced for students who are medically advised not to return to in-class learning due to COVID-related risk factors.
- Parents with a medically advised request for remote learning are asked to contact IHMS Administration by September 1. Situations will be assessed and planned for on a case-by-case basis.
- When possible, IHMS will livestream lessons, so that students at home can participate with their class.
- Teachers are able to send and receive assignments electronically. If internet connectivity is a persistent issue, teachers and administration will strategize to find alternatives for families.
- Teachers may also prepare learning packages as needed for pick-up or delivery.
- Frequent email and phone communication with students and parents will be in place to ensure engagement in remote learning. This will be facilitated by the classroom teacher, but may also require involvement from support staff.
- Classroom teachers will support the development and provision of at-home learning packages for students who are isolating or quarantined.

### **Technology Education**

- IHMS implemented the use of Google Websites and Google Classrooms for remote learning in the spring. These platforms will continue to be the base for instructional support and communication. Students will be receiving tutorials on additional features of Google Suite.
- All individuals will sanitize hands before using a school device.
- The iMac Computer Lab will follow a 'clean hands in, clean hand out' protocol.
- A class set of iPads was acquired over the summer. The iPads will follow a 'clean hands before, clean hands after' protocol.
- Staff and students will be instructed on the method to disinfect devices between users.

### **Music Education**

- The Music program will focus on activities that present less risk for students, including: body percussion, non-movement activities, individualized manipulatives, etc.. Smaller class groupings, use of larger spaces (gym), assigning instruments to individuals or classes, and students traveling with personal supplies will all be taken into consideration. To reduce travel within the building, some music classes will be held in homerooms.
- Wind instruments will not be used. Percussion and/or string instruments that are used will be disinfected between classes.
- The IHMS Music Program will follow guidelines set out for best music protocol as per:
  - *'Returning to Manitoba Music Classrooms: Recommendations for school reopening September, 2020'*
  - recommendations of the Manitoba Music Educators' Association.

### **Physical Education**

- Allowing students to be physically active will be an important part of the school's re-opening, as it is important for mental health and social emotional connection in addition to physical well-being.
- The IHMS Physical Education program will incorporate activities that allow for increased distancing and will endeavour to allocate equipment to particular cohorts to reduce the amount to disinfection necessary between classes.
- Physical Education classes will be held outdoors whenever possible.
- Students will be expected to wash/sanitize hands before and after gym class.
- Changing for gym class will be held off and gradually reintroduced, beginning with the Grade 5-8 students, once a process has been developed to ensure distancing and sanitation.

### **Library**

- The school library will offer opportunities for books to be signed out, but the students will not physically visit the library to do so.
- The Librarian will visit each class, on a scheduled basis, with an age appropriate selection of books that can be borrowed.
- Once the books are returned to school they will be taken out of circulation for a minimum of 96 hours before being available again.
- If necessary, the library space may be needed as an instructional space to accommodate physical distancing of students.

### **Extra-Curricular Activities**

- IHMS offers a variety of extra-curricular options for students. As long as Public Health orders can be maintained, IHMS will offer extra-curricular activities in small group situations.
- All extra-curricular athletic activities, will be reintroduced according to the Public Health mandate in place at the given time.
- As of August 13, 2020 interscholastic competition for volleyball is not permitted.

### **Assemblies and Other Gatherings**

- Public Health orders will be followed for gatherings (smaller groups at a time).
- Smaller groups will gather for assemblies and have the remaining students / parents participate via livestream (projectors in each classroom, or viewing on device at home).
- Larger gatherings may occur outdoors when the weather allows.
- Special consideration and planning will be necessary for the celebration of Divine Liturgy.
- Some assemblies (normally scheduled throughout the school year) will be cancelled.

### **Field Trips**

- All field trips for the 2020-21 school year will need additional evaluation before they are approved. The Field Trip plan will include information of the venue's physical distancing and other health and safety measures.

### **Lunch, Snacks**

- Kindergarten to Grade 8 students will remain at school for lunch and will bring their own lunch from home.
- Students can bring a snack to enjoy during their recess break.
- Students will wash/sanitize hands before snacks/lunch.
- The school has a policy on “No Sharing” of foods brought from home, originally set as an allergy measure. Students will be reminded of this rule and its increased importance during the pandemic. Holiday food treats will not be permitted (birthdays, Halloween, Valentine’s Day, etc.).
- Tables and desks will be disinfected before and after lunch.
- The milk program will be available for students at lunch. The procedures for the program will be reviewed to ensure that there is little risk involved to the students and staff.
- Special lunches, as hosted by the Parents’ Guild or Student Council, will be on hold until the process of distributing food has been evaluated and protocols put in place to ensure safety of students, staff and volunteers.
- Staggered lunch break times will be implemented.

### **Recess, Personal Items**

- Lunch and recess breaks will be staggered throughout the day and whenever possible children will be kept together with their class, or cohort, during these breaks.
- Outdoor activities are encouraged and outdoor spaces and playground structures can be used. Public Health advises that playgrounds and play structures are low risk for transmission.
- Separate containers of equipment will be maintained for each class or cohort and equipment will be cleaned between recess periods.
- Students will be required to use hand sanitizer before and after using playground equipment.
- Specific groups of students will be assigned play areas on the playground to minimize the crossover between groups. The schedule will permit rotating access to the soccer field, playground structure, basketball court and asphalted areas of the school yard.
- Children are not permitted to bring in non-essential items from home (sports equipment, toys, stuffed animals, etc.).

### **Water Fountains**

- The touch buttons for drinking water at the fountains will be off limits.
- IHMS water fountains are all equipped with touchless water dispensers for filling water bottles.
- Students should bring a filled water bottle from home to use during the time they are at school.
- Water bottles will go home for families to disinfect at the end of each learning day.

### **Toys and Other Shared Learning Equipment**

- Play is an integral part of the learning in the early years, as reaffirmed in Manitoba Education’s publication *Learning and Joy in the Pandemic: Manitoba Kindergarten Practice Resource*. Consideration will be given to how to mitigate the risks of interactive play.
- Staff will assess the toys and other items used in the classrooms and put away items that are not easily disinfected, including: stuffed toys, costumes, hats, etc.

### **Outdoor Learning and Play**

- Outdoor learning and play is considered by Public Health to be one of the safest of choices and will be part of teachers’ planning in the fall, at least until winter weather arrives.
- Students must come to school prepared to go outside for Physical Education, other classes, and recess breaks.
- Hand hygiene will take place before and after outdoor play.

### **School Supplies**

- Teachers are actively planning on ways to avoid sharing items and school supplies.
- Although families have always been asked to label personal items, this will be of increased importance.
- Teachers will plan for student access to lockers (for Grade 8), coat hooks and cubbies to minimize crowding in these areas.

### **Photocopier**

- The photocopier will be disinfected after each use.
- Staff will sanitize their hands before and after using the photocopier.

### **IHM School Uniforms**

- All students will wear their full Immaculate Heart of Mary School uniform at all times they are in the school.
- N.U.T. Days (No Uniforms Today) will continue to occur as scheduled on the monthly calendar.
- Students will not change for physical education classes until further notice.
- The IHMS Uniform Shop will continue to be open for in-person shopping with the following protocols:
  - Visiting the Uniform Shop is through appointment only (no drop-ins). An electronic sign-up system has been established for families to book a time-slot at times the Shop is open.
  - There will be a limit of one adult and their child(ren) permitted in the Shop at one time (not entire family).
- An online ordering system has been established for families to purchase the school uniform attire remotely.

### **Illness at School**

- Parents will be expected to screen their child at home prior to bringing them to school.
- If the child is already at school when symptoms are observed, the School Office will contact the parents to pick up their child immediately.
- Parents are encouraged to have contingency plans in place to care for an ill child.
- Parents will be advised to contact Health Links at (204-788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257), or the child's health care provider for direction, if required.
- If a child should become ill or symptomatic while at school he/she will be isolated away from the group.
- Students who exhibit symptoms will be given a mask to wear while they await pick-up.
- An isolation area has been set up near the Office.
- An additional space in the Conference Room will act as a reserve isolation area if needed.
- Staff will care for the child until the parent is able to pick up the child. A medical mask is to be worn by the staff person caring for the child.
- Caregivers are to be mindful of hand hygiene and avoid contact with the respiratory secretions of the student.
- A sick student's desk, chair, etc. will be sanitized immediately and their departure due to illness/symptoms will be recorded should it be required for their doctor or public health.
- The quarantine room will be sanitized immediately after the child is picked up.
- The parent is asked to call the office once they arrive at school. A staff member will escort the sick child to the school yard where the parent will pick them up.
- In the event of the confirmation of a case of COVID-19 connected with the school, public health will lead the response and ensure appropriate direction and supports are in place to coordinate the response.

### **Outbreak Management**

- In the event of confirmation of a case of COVID-19 connected with the school, Public Health will lead the response and provide guidance, including ensuring appropriate supports are in place to coordinate the response.
- Contact tracing involves identifying the contacts of a positive case and contacting those individuals who may have been exposed. Public Health may:
  - request records that identify cohorts/groups of staff, students, volunteers and visitors in the school for a specified timeframe;
  - offer testing following established guidelines to staff, students, volunteers and visitors that may have been exposed to a positive case; and
  - assess the need for the school, cohort or specific class to be closed for a period of time.
- Public Health will advise staff and students if they have been in close contact, if they need to self-isolate or self-monitor and when they can return to school. Public Health will take the circumstances of the individual situation into consideration and provide direction on a case-by-case basis.

### **Students' Mental Health**

- In the days before classes begin, all school staff will be discussing approaches to helping children at all levels talk about, and cope with their concerns arising from the pandemic.
- Homeroom teachers will be holding regular opportunities for their students to talk about their experiences during the pandemic, and if comfortable, about their fears, concerns and strategies for adjusting to the "new normal".
- The IHMS Guidance Counsellor, will provide opportunities for students to connect individually for guidance and support.
- Parents are also asked to watch for stress/anxiety in their children, with parents and the teacher/counsellor/administrator to be in contact by email or phone to identify and address any noted concerns.
- Parents and staff are advised to consult with the excellent resources indicated below:
  - *'Resources for Supporting Children's Emotional Well-being during the COVID-19 Pandemic'*. This site provides guidance, recommendations, and resources from child trauma experts at Child Trends and the Child Trauma Training Centre at the University of Massachusetts.
    - <https://www.childtrends.org/publications/resources-for-supporting-childrens-emotional-well-being-during-the-covid-19-pandemic?>
  - *'How Teachers Can Talk to Children about Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)'*. This UNICEF site provides tips for having age-appropriate discussions to reassure and protect children.
    - <https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/how-talk-your-child-about-coronavirus-covid-19>
  - *'Seven Simple Tips on How to Talk to Kids About the Coronavirus.'* As the world's leading expert on childhood, Save the Children has provided parents, schools, and communities with these tools and tips about COVID-19 and kids.
    - <https://www.savethechildren.org/us/what-we-do/emergency-response/coronavirus-outbreak/coronavirus-outbreak-how-to-explain-children?>

### **Community Mental Health and Well-being**

- Attention to the mental health and well-being of our school community will be a priority over the coming months. Supports will be provided during the transition back to school.
- Teaching staff will be monitoring the well-being and mental health of their students, and reporting any concerns to Administration.
- Administration will be monitoring the mental health and well-being of the entire school community.
- The IHMS Guidance Counsellor is available for students who need counselling. Students will be given strategies on how to deal with remote learning and isolation issues.
- Resources will be accessed through school clinicians if necessary.
- Families that are struggling will also be offered support, including clinician support if necessary.
- Other supportive measures include: Religion program, daily prayer, health and safety reminders on morning announcements, etc.

### **Community Group Facility Use**

- At times the school facility is used on weekends/evenings by a community group. Currently, all facility bookings have been put on hold until appropriate safety measures can be implemented and maintained.
- In the future School Administration will contact the group and outline the protocols for the use of the school gym during the pandemic, including: mandatory self-screening for any participants, marking used areas for proper sanitation, and ensuring that all attendees for each session are recorded.
- School committees will be able to use the facility to meet at their discretion and in consultation with the school administration. These groups will be made aware of the current Public Health rules.

## **IHMS Staff**

### **Symptom Management**

- All staff must remain at home when they are ill, or have any respiratory or COVID-19 symptoms.
- Staff will continue to follow the school's policy of contacting the principal if they are unable to be at school.
- Lesson plans will still be the responsibility of the teacher.
- If a staff member becomes ill while at school, they will immediately report to the Principal. The staff member's workspace will be cleaned and disinfected immediately. The Principal will arrange coverage and the staff member will be sent home.
- Different personnel may be arranged as required to cover the unexpected illness of school staff members, for those who may need to self-isolate. This may involve the re-assignment of teachers, educational assistants, as well as substitute teachers .

### **Personal Risk Factors**

- Staff members who have personal risk factors or require medical accommodations must advise the Principal of the issue. Each case will be handled on a case by case basis.

### **Staff Well-being**

- Emphasis on personal well-being and stress reduction will be a feature of professional dialogue throughout the school year and beyond.
- Staff have access to reusable masks, and as well face shields, provided by the school.
- Staff have access to resources through the Blue Cross - Employee Assistance Program (EAP).
- Staff have access to spiritual support through Faith Development sessions, as well as, one to one contact with a Sister or the School Chaplain.

### **Professional Development**

- Professional development sessions will be planned for early September for all school staff, including substitute teachers. The sessions will focus on: recovery learning, remote learning, mental health and well-being.
- IHMS will align professional learning and continuous improvement planning with these themes.

### **Attitudes and Role Modelling**

All persons in our school community are called to be good citizens and to care for each other during these difficult times.

"Book learning" about the coronavirus, the pandemic, and prevention strategies are important, and will be introduced at school in age appropriate ways, at all levels. However, it will be equally, if not more important, that everyone make efforts to teach by example, and gentle correction, some of the virtues which will help us all get through the challenges ... patience, empathy, prayer, consideration, and love.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought challenges, restrictions, fears, and disappointments, but we should try to focus on a great number of other things which have also arisen from this crisis. Please reflect on the following, which have also become realities in our COVID experience: adaptability, flexibility, strength, resilience, creativity, teamwork, inspiration, lifelong learning, charity, compassion, faith and family. Be sure to work some of these positives into your regular conversations with your children ... our students.

*"Do not worry about what might happen tomorrow. The same loving Father who cares for you today will care for you tomorrow and everyday. Either he will shield you from suffering or He will give you unfailing strength to bear it. Be at peace then and put aside all anxious thoughts and imaginings." (St. Francis De Sales)*