

# DISTANCE LEARNING

Plan and Protocols  
Fall 2020



St. Columba School  
*Established 1962*

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## Principal's Message

Dear St. Columba School Families,

I hope this finds you all safe and well.

Five months ago, St. Columba School transitioned to virtual instruction, adapted new technologies, and effectively deployed a distance learning program for its students in close collaboration with the Archdiocese of Washington's Catholic Schools Office. St. Columba School faculty and staff have worked tirelessly over the summer preparing lesson plans, class schedules, and online teaching coursework for the 2020-2021 School Year with the aim to provide the rigor, structure, and quality of academic offerings offered in an in-person and/or virtual context.

As shared in July, survey data and comments, as well as input received through telephone and email conversations gathered from within our community, indicated that a significant majority of our families preferred a distance learning option for Fall 2020. Based on this information, St. Columba School will begin the school year by employing a distance learning plan for the first quarter and will reevaluate our status in October before the end of the first quarter.

Thank you all for your continued patience, support, and insights. As always if you have any questions or concerns please reach out.

Together we are #StColumbaStrong!

Peace and blessings,

*Christine Patton*

Christine Patton  
Principal, St. Columba School

## OVERVIEW

The Distance Learning Plan and Protocols document represents months of planning and preparation by the faculty and staff to safely begin the 2020-2021 school year and is presented with the understanding that guidance will continue to evolve throughout the first quarter and the school year.



The plan and protocols outlined in this document have been developed in alignment with the St. Columba School Parent/Student Handbook which is intended to provide guidance and assistance to students and parents regarding school policies, procedures, and regulations in alignment with the standards of the Archdiocese of Washington Catholic Schools Office. The Plan and protocols also reflect guidance provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the State of Maryland's Department of Education, and the Prince George's County, County Executive Office, as it relates to academic program delivery, policies and procedures, and protocols for visiting the school campus.

## DISTANCE LEARNING PLAN

This plan provides an overview of the distance learning plans and protocols that have been reviewed and approved by the ADW Catholic Schools Office with an aim to provide a cohesive and comprehensive academic learning experience for our students. The Archdiocese of Washington Catholic Schools Office document, [School Year 2020-2021: Onward Together in Faith](#), and the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards recommendations were used as guides for developing the school's distance learning plan.

The ADW document provides a framework for planning, developing, and reopening of schools and provides guidance on topics that includes academics, operational policies and procedures, Catholic identity and faith formation, health and safety, and mental health awareness. The National Board of Professional Teaching Standards recently provided recommendations and guidance for academic structures for distance learning and recommends, for example, elementary grades (PreK-5) have one to two hours online each day while middle school grades (6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>) have two to three hours online each day and one hour outside each day for recreation and physical movement

Due to the expedited nature of the transition to distance learning that took place in March 2020, families took on additional roles and responsibilities because of the need to situate our students to this new teaching context. This document demonstrates St. Columba School's enhanced efforts, plans, and protocols for providing a distance learning program for our students -- we are eager to get started and welcome your children back for the fall.

St. Columba School's Fall 2020 Distance Learning Program provides the following:

1. **School and Class Schedules:** St. Columba School has ensured that school and class schedules that have been created align with grade-level requirements, facilitate learning, and minimize disruptions. Faculty and staff will provide classroom instruction as detailed in the school schedule beginning at 8:30 a.m. from Monday through Friday.
2. **Structured Curriculum and Lesson Plans:** Our qualified and trained teachers have developed lesson plans that can be adapted to an in-person and/or distance learning context and are in alignment with the standards of the Archdiocese of Washington Catholic Schools Office. Teachers are responsible for ensuring that curriculum concepts are being met and students are being assessed in consideration of these standards.
3. **Faith-based Learning:** Catholic education principles remain an integral part of the curriculum and our community.

4. **Socialization Opportunities:** Providing students with opportunities to connect as a community is an important element of the teaching methodology and student social and emotional growth; this will be done virtually until the community transitions to in-person activities.
5. **Assessments and Standardized Testing:** Assessments and standardized testing continue to be a priority for keeping our students current and positioning St. Columba School as an academic frontrunner.
6. **Communication:** Student and parent communication with teachers continues to be an important element of our community and has been enhanced through the use of online learning tools.

### **School Schedule**

Routines and procedures are the backbone of a successful classroom and St. Columba School recognizes the importance of having a school schedule to facilitate learning and minimize disruptions. During this school year, we will use block scheduling for our Middle school students, an approach that promotes cooperative learning and personalized instruction.

Classes are scheduled from Monday through Friday and will begin at 8:15 a.m. each morning. Each school day will begin with prayer, the pledge of allegiance, birthday wishes, and morning announcements, followed by four class periods. Each class period will include live instruction with the student's assigned teacher and breaks will be built in throughout the day. Fridays will begin with mass and an adjusted schedule. Considerations for the time students need to do classwork and use online applications, including the routine use of software programs such as IXL (which now includes Math, Languages Arts, Social Studies, Science, and Spanish) and BrainPop, have been factored into the school schedule.

With a block schedule of 90-minute periods, which is equivalent to two traditional class periods, students can focus on the subjects offered on a particular day. For example, if work is assigned on Monday, students have until Wednesday's class to complete the assignment. It also provides the instructor time to correct the assignment and return it to the student in time for the next class discussion. During the spring, teachers received messages throughout the day from students on Google Classroom and answered questions, clarified instruction, and provided personalized instruction for assigned problems.

## St. Columba School Daily Schedule (based on Middle School Grades 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>)\*

TIME	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:15-8:30	Prayer/ Pledge of Allegiance/ Birthdays/ Announcements	Prayer/ Pledge of Allegiance/ Birthdays/ Announcements	Prayer/ Pledge of Allegiance/ Birthdays/ Announcements	Prayer/ Pledge of Allegiance/ Birthdays/ Announcements	8:15-8:50 Mass
8:30-10:00	Class Time**	Class Time	Class Time	Class Time	9:00-9:50 Class Time
10:00-11:30	Class Time	Class Time	Class Time	Class Time	10:00-10:50 Class Time
11:30-12:15	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	11:00-11:50 Class Time
12:15-1:45	Class Time	Class Time	Class Time	Class Time	11:50-12:30 Lunch Break
1:45-3:15	Class Time	Class Time and/or Office Hours	Class Time	Class Time and/or Office Hours	12:30-2:00 Class Time and/or Office Hours
* This daily schedules provides a general framework; each teacher will provide a specific schedule at or during Back to School Night.					
** Each class block is 90 minutes, so each Class Time refers to two classes (classes were 45 minutes with the traditional schedule).					

The daily schedule included here provides a general framework for the school day. Each teacher will provide information about their specific class schedule at or before Back to School Night. Grades PreK through 5<sup>th</sup> will follow schedules created by their Homeroom teachers. Each teacher's schedule can be found on the teacher's Weebly page.

### School Entry and Exit Procedures

During Fall 2020, there will be no students on campus for classroom instruction on a daily basis. For events scheduled in Father Dewan Hall, parents should park in the basketball court parking lot (next to the playground) and enter the building through designated entrances.

When students are on-campus all CDC and ADW guideline and protocol safety precautions will be taken. Student temperatures will be taken upon arrival and all students will be required to wear a mask or face covering while in the building. No food, drinks, or cell phones are to be brought into the building.

### Books and Supplies

Books and school supplies for Grades 5 – 8 will be distributed a week prior to the first day of school during Scantron testing dates and times. Books and supplies for Pre K-4<sup>th</sup> graders will be distributed on September 1<sup>st</sup>.

Students were provided a list of required school supplies with their summer packets. Lists are also available on the school website under the Parent Corner tab.

## Fall 2020 Important Dates

Some important dates for Fall 2020 include:

ACTIVITY	DATE
Standardized Testing (Scantron Performance Series® Express)	August 24-27
Book and Supplies Distribution Grades 5-8	August 24-27
Back to School Night Grades 5-8 (Virtual)	August 25
Back to School Night Grades PreK-4 (Virtual)	August 27
First Day of School (Virtual)	August 31
Book and Supplies Distribution Grades PreK-4	September 1
First Friday 8:15 Mass (Virtual)	September 4
School Closed (Labor Day)	September 7
First Friday 8:15 Mass (Virtual)	October 2
School Closed (Columbus Day)	October 12
School Closed (Collaboration Day)	October 30

## ACADEMICS

### Assessments and Standardized Testing

Due to scheduling changes that took place in the spring, St. Columba School was unable to administer standardized testing for our students. Per instructions from the ADW Catholic Schools Office, St. Columba School will administer in-person standardized testing for Grades 2-8 from August 24-27 in Father Dewan Hall.

To reduce testing time and avoid test overload, students will take the Scantron Performance Series® Express assessment this fall. Student attendance and participation will be critical in providing us with the data necessary to support the needs of your child as we begin the school year. The results of these assessments will help us immediately determine program placement and identify areas in reading and math that are not at grade level.

Families with children in Grades 2-8 were provided an opportunity to sign up for standardized testing. On the selected date, students should use the entrance by the Eighth Grade classroom to enter the school and arrive 15 minutes prior to the start time selected, *e.g., students with a 9 a.m. start time should arrive at 8:45 a.m.; students with a 1 p.m. start time should arrive at 12:45 p.m.* **No one will be admitted after the posted start time.** Parents will receive a text message if your student is finished 30 minutes or more before the 2-hour testing window expires. **Eighth graders must bring a calculator for their math test.**

All CDC and ADW guideline and protocol safety precautions will be taken before, during, and after the tests. Student temperatures will be taken upon arrival and all students will be

required to wear a mask or face covering while in the building. No food, drinks, or cell phones are to be brought into the building.

## **Online Learning Tools**

### **Google Suite for Education**

St. Columba School will continue to use the Google Suite for Education (Google Suite) in grades 3-8. The Google Suite is a set of online education tools that include Classroom, Drive, Docs, and more. St. Columba students will use their Google Suite accounts to sign into their personal devices, communicate with their teachers, and complete assignments. Teachers will set up a classroom on their Google account and students will be able to view assignments and submit classwork and homework. Students will be able to use their account to do the following:

- Use Google Classroom, Drive, Docs, Sheets, and Slides. These applications are web-based services that enable the user to create, edit, share, collaborate, draw, export, and embed content on documents, spreadsheets, presentations, and forms.
- Other educational applications that have been pre-approved by the school, including Prodigy and IXL learning software applications.
- Students will **not** have access to email, chatting, YouTube, Hangouts, Blogger, web store, or other applications that have not been expressly identified by the school administration. The chat collaboration feature in Google Classroom, however, can be enabled by the teacher.
- Students will **not** be able to collaborate with users outside of the St. Columba School domain, *e.g., anyone that does not have a St. Columba School (stccatholic.org) email address.*

### **Zoom Video Communications**

Zoom communications and conferencing tools will continue to be used for classroom instruction, meeting, and activities.

## **Grading**

Grades will continue to be entered into Rediker and grading policies set forth in the Handbook will continue to apply to distance learning.

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

The Distance Learning Plans and Protocols have been developed in alignment with the St. Columba School Parent/Student Handbook, which provides guidance and assistance to students and parents regarding school policies, procedures, and regulations in alignment with the standards of the Archdiocese of Washington. The enforcement of school policy is directed by the Principal and carried out by the Staff. The information provided in the Handbook and identified in the Distance Learning Plans and Protocols are not intended to cover every factual situation or circumstance and will be handled at the discretion of the Principal and/or the Pastor. These protocols are to be followed whenever children are online with teachers and classmates in a school-related capacity.

Students are expected to follow the Handbook and behave accordingly whether on campus or in a distance learning context.

### **Attendance**

Attendance in virtual classes is mandatory; attendance will be taken and recorded. Guidance regarding absences can be found in the Handbook.

### **Tardiness**

Students (and parents/guardians) should make every attempt to log in to class on time. Students will be marked tardy if they are late to their first class of the day.

### **Dress Code**

The St. Columba School dress code is applicable to distance learning. For all virtual sessions, the school polo shirt or PE shirt can be used on any day; however, students are encouraged to use the P.E. uniform on P.E. days. As stated in the St. Columba Parent/Student Handbook, the following is not permitted, “undershirts, t-shirts, crop tops, tank tops with inappropriate messages or symbols” -- nor are pajamas. Parents of children not adhering to the dress code will be notified by the teacher of the infraction.

### **Technology**

All students and parents will agree to comply with the Archdiocesan guidelines for acceptable use of the Internet as detailed in the Parent/Student Handbook and must sign a user contract stipulating their agreement with this policy. Students who do not comply with usage rules will forfeit their usage privileges.

### **Discipline Code**

Appropriate behavior is expected of every student at Saint Columba School. While we are not on campus, it is still important to maintain strict discipline guidelines while interacting online. Student behavior is expected to continue to comply with St. Columba School behavior guidelines.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

These questions/answers were formulated based on responses to the technology survey and inquiries made to teachers and school administration. We will continue to add to this list as common requests for information arise.

### **Instruction and Access to Teachers for Lesson Clarification**

Teachers will generally be available via e-mail during normal school hours and will hold live “office hours” via Zoom. Please check your teacher’s web page or email through Google Classroom. All staff emails can be found on the school website in the Staff Directory under the “About Us” tab.

### **Delivery System for Instruction**

This will vary by teacher. Fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) to eighth (8<sup>th</sup>) grade teachers are using Google Classroom. Please check your teacher’s webpage.

### **Due Dates for Assigned Work**

Due dates are indicated on the teacher’s web page or in Google Classroom.

### **Login for Access to Teaching Resources**

Students have been supplied with all login information. If you are lacking login information for assignments, contact the appropriate teacher. The log-in for Bookflix, because it is a subscription software, cannot be posted to the website. If you wish to log in, please contact Mrs. Cobleigh at [cobleighc@stccatholic.org](mailto:cobleighc@stccatholic.org) and she will send it to you.

### **Notification of Illness**

We are requesting that you notify the office if any family members test positive for the coronavirus. You will also be notified if we are alerted that an active case may have been in contact with our school community.