



*Be Who You Are and Be That Well*

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## Plan for Our Lady of Good Counsel School 2021-2022

### **Introduction:**

Our Lady of Good Counsel was blessed with a successful school year for 2020-2021 despite the numerous challenges presented from the Covid-19 pandemic. Our goal last year was to try to keep everyone as healthy and safe as possible. We knew we had to be flexible, and we tried to make accommodations that allowed everyone to be as comfortable with our plan as possible. We wanted to employ proper mitigations strategies that would enable us to offer in-person instruction for as long as possible and minimize the spread of the virus as much as possible. We are proud of what we, as an entire OLGC community, were able to accomplish last year as we truly were – In Christ – Stronger Together!

While things look a bit different this year, the threat of the Covid-19 virus is still very apparent. We want to continue to employ mitigation strategies that will allow us to achieve our goals of having our entire community as healthy and safe as possible and provide for in-person instruction. Our goal is to minimize the need to transition to online learning for cohorts or large groups of students. We are looking forward to welcoming everyone back on campus for our 2021-2022 school year. We appreciate your support in following our plan and your flexibility, as things will surely continue to change as we progress throughout the year.

This document has been created in collaboration with our Covid-19 Safety Task Force comprised of school and parish members along with input and consultation with other crucial community members and in conjunction with guidance from the Diocese, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), and the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). On July 21, 2021, the *Interim Guidance for Covid-19 Prevention in Virginia PreK-12 Schools* was published and has guided many of our decision making as we approach the beginning of our new school year. These decisions are not made lightly and the task force will continue to meet to adapt and change as needed as the year unfolds. We reserve the right to make changes as necessitated by changes in our larger community and we will continue to work closely, in partnership with you as families, to ensure proper communication throughout.

### **General Outline:**

At OLGC, we will continuously monitor three sources of data to make any necessary changes to our protocols or mitigation strategies throughout the year. For example, the rules and regulations about face coverings could be changed or modified as the data changes.

Communication will be primarily made through email communications such as the Wildcat Weekly so please make sure to read announcements carefully.

1 – [School Metrics](#) – located on the Virginia Department of Health website. If our school community falls into low or moderate levels, we will examine the potential for our mitigation strategies and protocols to be loosened a bit or on the opposite end, a substantially higher risk may require us to increase our guidelines and/or transition to remote learning if absolutely necessary. Extra-curricular activities and athletics may be impacted as well.

2 – [Covid-19 Vaccine Demographics Dashboard](#) – located on the Virginia Department of Health website. Age-group vaccination information will be used to help estimate the numbers of those individuals vaccinated at OLGC. While most of our mitigation strategies will be consistent school-wide, there may be some protocols that are necessary for younger students who are not eligible for vaccinations that are not necessarily a necessity for our older middle school students or adults who are vaccinated. However, it is important to remember that as a school which serves Preschool – 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, there are numerous times and ways that various grade levels may interact with each other (lunchtime, Mass, after-school activities, etc.).

3 – **Our Lady of Good Counsel School Data** – information collected at our school specifically will help us determine whether the mitigation strategies we are employing are working effectively. We will be monitoring how many Covid-19 cases affect our students and staff, overall student wellness by examining student absenteeism, and our ability to maintain adequate staffing of teachers and administrative staff to successfully run our school days. If our school community falls into low or moderate levels, we will examine the potential for our mitigation strategies and protocols to be loosened a bit or on the opposite end, a substantially higher risk may require us to increase our guidelines and/or transition to remote learning if absolutely necessary.

Our plan is to open our school year, on August 25, 2021, with masks (no gators allowed) mandatory for all staff and students when indoors for the first two weeks of the school year. This two-week period ensures a level of safety in case anyone has traveled before returning to school and will allow us to start the year in a safe and cautious manner. After the two weeks, provided things are going well at school and in our local community according to the metrics above, vaccinated staff and students will no longer be required to wear masks except when traveling in the hallways or in any situation where mixing of grades occurs (such as ECAP or to and from the Counsel Room for lunch). Also, after the two-week period, provided things are going well at school and in our local community, according to the metrics above, any student regardless of vaccination status, will be permitted to remove their mask when the three-foot distancing is in place. If small group work or other cooperative learning is in place, or the distancing cannot be ensured, then masks will be required. Visitors or volunteers will be asked to wear masks in situations where three-foot distancing cannot be maintained.

The classrooms and all specialty areas at OLGC will adhere to three-foot distancing guidelines. The Counsel Room will be utilized for lunch this year, with students sitting three feet apart and wearing their masks when they are not eating. If the weather and space permits, we will allow children to eat outside in small numbers as well. In addition, classes may be conducted outdoors to allow for further distancing and increased access to fresh air. Windows will be open and fans used to circulate the air throughout the building as appropriate.

We will continue to utilize individual supplies and materials as often as possible with very rare occasions of common or shared supplies being utilized. Consistent and proper cleaning will also be employed on these occasions as necessary.

ECAP and our Preschool Extended Day Program will be back in operation this year. However, as the cohorts will be mixed during these times, masks must be worn by all when indoors in these programs unless the three-foot social distancing can be maintained adequately during the activities.

We will also be returning to School Mass on Wednesdays at 8:30am for the entire student body population (preschool students come on rare occasions). As we cannot maintain three-foot distancing at Church, masks will be required by all students and staff until further notice.

Daily health screenings will not be required this school year however, we ask that each parent make sure to ask a list of questions of their child prior to bringing them to school each morning. Keeping a sick child at home will be a big help in preventing the spread of any illnesses throughout the school year. Drop-off may begin at 7:30am, and children will be allowed to remain outside, in specific sections as outlined in our handbook, until we meet for school-wide prayer and pledge each morning promptly at 8:00am. Each student will be asked to wear their mask when entering and exiting the school each day due to the overlapping of cohorts and inability to maintain three-foot social distancing consistently during these times. Please make every attempt to have your child arrive to school on time to minimize disruptions and ensure a positive start to the day.

We will continue to employ a cleaning crew member throughout the entire school day to provide increased cleaning and disinfecting of highly touched surface areas and any other areas of need. Students will continue to have increased opportunities to utilize hand sanitizing stations, hand-washing, and refilling of reusable water bottles from several water bottle filling stations throughout the day.

Should a child become ill at school, the parents will be notified immediately, and all necessary precautions will be taken. If a student or staff member should contract Covid-19, or display symptoms of the virus, they will remain home until necessary documentation is provided to the school nurse to ensure a safe return to school for the student. The school nurse will be in contact and communication throughout this process as necessary.

### **Conclusion:**

We understand that the situation involving the spread of Covid-19 is ever-changing, and we aim to remain flexible and adjust our protocols and guidelines as necessary throughout the year. We will remain in consistent communication with everyone as often as appropriate and encourage you to reach out to our administrative team (Nurse Bliven, Mrs. Williams, or Mrs. Jewett) as needed with any questions or specific concerns and we will do our best to address them. We will utilize Schoology as our platform for class assignments and due dates so that if your child is sick at any point or your child is staying at home for any reason, the student can try to keep current with assignments to the best of their ability. Concurrent eLearning opportunities will only be offered this year should the need arise for a large group or class to learn from home for any reason. We will continue to do our very best to provide a warm, welcoming, nurturing environment to all of our students, families, and staff. We look forward to working together as the amazing Our Lady of Good Counsel community that we are to ensure a successful 2021-2022 school year!