



Calumet Christian School

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Calumet School Reopening This Fall

On September 8, Calumet Christian School will reopen with in-person classroom learning for all students while providing an online option for those uncomfortable with in-person school.

While almost everyone agrees that an all in-person learning environment is best for children's academic, mental and social development, there are risks involved. As such, many schools in Central Ohio will begin the school year all online or in a blended learning environment. Know that we do not want to minimize the uneasiness that many parents feel about in-class learning. The following points summarize why Calumet is offering an all in-class learning environment while outlining the numerous safety strategies which will be employed.

Schools Play a Critical Role

Many medical authorities claim the cost of keeping children away from school might be more costly than having them in school.¹ According to a recent CDC publication, "Schools play a critical role in supporting the whole child, not just their academic achievement. In addition to a structure for learning, schools provide a stable and secure environment for developing social skills and peer relationships. Social interaction at school among children in grades PK-12 is particularly important for the development of language, communication, social, emotional, and interpersonal skills."²

What Some Health Experts Are Saying

In addition to the importance of having kids in school, recent studies indicate that children are less likely to become infected, have severe infections, and spread the COVID-19 virus.³ The

¹ See The American Academy of Pediatrics, COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-entry. "Similarly, reducing classmate interactions/play in elementary school-aged children may not provide enough COVID-19 risk reduction to justify potential harms" <https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools>

² See the CDC publication, The Importance of Reopening America's Schools this Fall, July 23, 2020 "<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/reopening-schools.html>,

³ In the same CDC publication, "Based on current data, the rate of infection among younger school children, and from students to teachers, has been low, especially if proper precautions are followed. There have also been few reports of children being the primary source of COVID-19 transmission among family members.^{[6],[7],[8]} This is consistent with data from both virus and antibody testing, suggesting that children are not the primary drivers of

American Academy of Pediatrics writes, "...the preponderance of evidence indicates that children and adolescents are less likely to be symptomatic and less likely to have severe disease resulting from SARS-CoV-2 infection. In addition, children may be less likely to become infected and to spread infection. Policies to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 within schools must be balanced with the known harms to children, adolescents, families, and the community by keeping children at home."⁴ Of course, we realize the risks of spreading infection to vulnerable family members at home, so that is why we are offering an online option for families.

We should also point out that a vast majority of Calumet parents prefer to send their children to an all in-class learning environment. Our most recent survey indicated that 94% of parents have decided to send their children to the in-person class learning environment while only 6% decided to use the online option. While most students will be driven to school by parents or guardians, those attending the Calumet campus will have access to socially distant busing. Unfortunately, bussing will not be available for students attending the north campus location.

Private Schools Have Flexibility

Private schools often have more flexibility than public schools. In general, private schools are not part of a larger school district, so they can be more flexible. In larger districts, decisions must be uniform and must accommodate thousands of constituents rather just a few hundred.⁵ Private schools will often have more room to adjust for social distancing and more means to provide transportation rather than depending on school busing.

In addition, most private schools are not under the union pressure which public schools face. Districts must work with the unions because failure to meet union demands can lead to protests and teacher strikes. Thus, we see many Central Ohio private schools, similar in size to Calumet, opening to all in-person classes.⁶ Several families from other districts have applauded our plan and are requesting enrollment at Calumet because their school districts are only offering online school.

The Calumet teachers are motivated to see and teach the kids in person. They are excited to return to the classroom. We also believe our model is flexible because it allows all families the option to choose whether to send their students to school or have them attend online.

COVID-19 spread in schools or in the community.^{[9],[10],[11]} No studies are conclusive, but the available evidence provides reason to believe that in-person schooling is in the best interest of students, particularly in the context of appropriate mitigation measures similar to those implemented at essential workplaces."

⁴ See the American Academy of Pediatrics, "COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-entry," <https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools>

⁵ In the 2018-19 school year, enrollment in Columbus City Schools was 48,982.

⁶ At the time this paper was written, the following schools were going to an in person format. Wellington, Tree of Life, Clintonville Academy, Worthington Christian schools and many other private and parochial schools. But the schools listed here are those with whom Dwell families might be most familiar.

After touring our schools and evaluating all of our safety precautions, our school nurse, who works with many schools in Columbus, said our precautions have far exceeded any schools she has visited.

Please know the decision to return to in-person classrooms was not a decision made in a vacuum. The Calumet school board and Dwell Board of Elders have approved this plan with careful examination and prayer. If Franklin County moves to a Level 4 Public Health Emergency, then Calumet will go to an all online learning environment. Fortunately, Franklin County was recently downgraded to a level 2 public health emergency and the Columbus Public Health Commissioner recommended that schools districts can resume in-person learning⁷

Schoolwide Strategies to Minimize COVID-19 spread

Two Buildings

In order to reduce the possible COVID load at the Calumet building, the school is going to split between two locations, the Dwell Main Campus facility and Calumet School. That means the number of students in each building location will be much fewer, far fewer than most public and private schools in Central Ohio which house several hundred in each building. Being split between two buildings provides more flexibility to create space inside, more room outside for mask breaks and additional recesses, and more room for outdoor education. It is well attested that outdoor transmission of virus is known to be much lower than indoor transmission.

Grades 3, 6, 7, and 8 will be at Calumet while Preschool, K, 1, 2, 4, and 5 will be at Dwell Main Campus classrooms. Please know this two-building approach may not be needed for the full academic year, The Calumet school board and Dwell Elders will give input as to when to move back to one building.

Symptom and Temperature Checks, Face Coverings, Sanitation

Students and staff will be temperature checked and screened for COVID-19 symptoms before entering the buildings. We want parents to keep children at home if their student exhibits symptoms. In the event a student or staff member is showing symptoms of COVID-19 or a fever of 100 degrees or more at school, they will be escorted to an isolation room. The staff member will be sent home and the student will stay in the isolation room until a parent or guardian is able to pick them up.

If a parent or guardian notices symptoms in their child and decides not to send them to school, the parent may send the child back to school as soon as the symptoms are no longer present. If the symptoms are similar to COVID-19 symptoms, we want parents to get their child tested. If a student or staff member is showing symptoms at school and has to be sent home, they will be able to return if they have a doctor's note accounting for their symptoms or if they have been

⁷ An interview with Columbus City Health Commissioner Dr. Mysheika Roberts <https://www.nbc4i.com/news/coronavirus-cases-dropping-in-columbus/>

away from school for 10 days. During these at-home periods, students may utilize the virtual learning option.

Students and staff will be required to wear a face mask while inside. Because we do not expect students or staff to endure a face covering hours at a time, they will benefit from several outside mask/recess breaks per day. Teachers will also offer outdoors classes as is feasible. Students and staff will be required to wash and sanitize their hands several times per day.

Our teachers received training from a medical professional on COVID safety precautions and how to best help students follow these precautions. Teachers also received resources from a mental health professional on helping children cope with anxieties connected with COVID-19.

Our facilities department will disinfect each classroom multiple times per day as well as the playground equipment. The risks of high-traffic zones will be minimized by strategies including open doors, personal water bottles instead of fountains, some car-pools if bussing isn't available or not chosen, a no-locker policy, outdoor lunch whenever possible (inside the classroom during inclement weather), one-way hallways, and staggered arrival, exit, and transition times. Student travel will be limited to the gym, bathroom, and outdoors.

The HVAC systems are set to pull in fresh air filtered through a MERV13 filter which captures any COVID-19 droplets. The office will have a plexiglass barrier between the public and our admin staff. More detailed safety and mitigation strategies are listed near the end of this document.

Extra Outdoor Time

We will implement a modified schedule that has 45-50 minute periods of class time followed by 20 minute periods of outdoor recess rotating throughout the day. Being outdoors is known to heavily decrease COVID risk, and it gives students time to socialize in-person. Unfortunately, to create scheduling space and due to the shared resources and amount of expelled air in some of our specials classes, we will not be offering Art, Music, Band, or Spanish to start off the school year. We hope to restore these when COVID risk diminishes. PE will take place outside, and teachers will have multiple outdoor locations to do outdoor lessons if they so choose.

Social Distancing

Individual classrooms will be arranged so that students will be sitting 6 or more feet apart. The American Academy of Pediatrics indicated that 3 feet spacing might be adequate.⁸ All desks will be positioned so that students are not facing each other. Recommendations from the World

⁸ See AAP News, June 26, 2020. "As schools prepare to reopen, the gap between 3 and 6 feet is feeling hard to bridge." "In many school settings, 6 feet between students is not feasible without limiting the number of students. Evidence suggests that spacing as close as 3 feet may approach the benefits of 6 feet of space, particularly if students are wearing face coverings and are asymptomatic."
<https://www.aappublications.org/news/2020/06/26/schoolreopening062620#:~:text=%E2%80%9CEvidence%20suggests%20that%20spacing%20as,%2C%E2%80%9D%20according%20to%20the%20guidance.&text=Physical%20distancing%20may%20have%20a,19%20among%20secondary%20school%20students.>

Health Organization and an analysis published by The Lancet that examined 44 studies on distancing measures. The analysis found that a little more than 3 feet of social distancing (assuming masks are used) provided a good degree of protection from the coronavirus, although 6 feet was better...Joseph Allen, director of the Healthy Buildings Program at Harvard's Chan School of Public Health, who signed the WHO letter, said the updated guidance shouldn't be used broadly as a reason to keep school buildings closed. Loosening social-distancing standards in classrooms should be OK if other measures, such as masks and good air ventilation, are part of the strategy, said Allen, who supports the state guidelines.

Some authorities point out that 3 feet is preferable to blended or remote learning models as the alternative would result in students being in school only two to three days a week or entirely at home for online learning.⁹ Fortunately, our spacing will give students at least 6 feet distancing from to side and a little less between rows. All classes will have assigned seating and all students will be facing the same direction, which will help mitigate against virus spread.

Testing Positive for COVID-19

The Ohio Department of Health recently issues orders for parents to notify the school if the child has tested positive for the coronavirus, and to do so within 24 hours of the diagnosis.¹⁰ The Calumet COVID-19 coordinator will then report case information to the Ohio Department of Health each week.

In the event a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, the local health officials will be consulted for direction concerning that particular class. The infected student, as well as the student's siblings, will be required to do online instruction from home and may return to class after a two-week period. Families of students in the classroom will be notified as soon as possible. Depending on what local health officials advise, Calumet might require evidence of a negative COVID-19 test for all students in that class before any student returns to an in-class learning environment. In either case

Please know that we want parents or guardians to keep their child home if the child does not feel well. We are more than happy to offer online learning resources to students in this case and our current absence policy provides flexibility for COVID-19 cases.

Other Safety and Mitigation Strategies

Arrival and dismissal

1. To minimize students bunching up at arrival and dismissal times, the school will have staggered times and grade specific entry and exit doors. Parents will be advised on their FACTS communication platform.

⁹ The Boston Globe, "As Schools Prepare to Reopen, the gap between 3 and 6 feet is feeling hard to bridge." <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2020/07/12/metro/tug-of-war-over-social-distancing-schools-torn-between-difficult-trade-offs/>

¹⁰ <https://abc6onyourside.com/news/coronavirus/ohio-schools-must-report-covid-19-cases-starting-september-8-gov-dewine-says>

2. Once students arrive, they will go directly to their classroom and wash or sanitize their hands. Teachers will ensure social distancing at the sink and sanitation stations.

Sanitizing

1. Hands must be washed or sanitized when entering the building, before and after recess, and before and after lunch or after using the restroom. If a student blows his nose or sneezes, we will ask the student to wash hands or use the hand sanitizer. Each room will be stocked with hand sanitizer. Handrails will be sanitized several times throughout the day as well as bathrooms and classrooms.
2. Students should practice proper handwashing and hand sanitizer use as a normal practice throughout the day.¹¹
3. Playgrounds will have designated masking areas for those kids who are playing but might not get enough social distancing. Only two to three classes will have recess and mask breaks at the same time.

Required masking

All students, except for pre-school, will be required to a face mask in classrooms and in any other area of the building. All staff will be required to wear a mask inside as well.

1. Exceptions will be made with a documented medical situation. Students or staff who have a medical exception will be allowed to wear a face shield in lieu of a mask. We require a doctor's note for those cases.
2. We recommend facemasks for pre-school children, but will not require them.
3. Face coverings must cover the nose, mouth, and chin. It must fit snugly against the sides of the face.
4. Homemade face coverings using fabric layers are often compliant with health standards. Face coverings with holes are not acceptable. We do not permit neck gator masks or bandanas as those have proven to be ineffective and perhaps more harmful.¹²
5. We will be providing lanyards for all students on the first day they attend in person. These lanyards attach to the loops of the mask and hang around student's necks to prevent masks from being lost.
6. If you have any questions about compliance, please contact the school office.

Remote Learning

All online students will be given the necessary links for online learning. Parents will be receiving a paper on how to maximize zoom learning as well. Teacher's aids can help students with online learning as needed.

Parents, Volunteers, Visitors

¹¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/index.html>

¹² Washington Post, Aug 11, 2020. https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/wellness/mask-test-duke-covid/2020/08/10/4f2bb888-db18-11ea-b205-ff838e15a9a6_story.html

For safety reasons, we want to limit the number of parents, volunteers and visitors in the building and the time they spend at school. Parents and visitors must report at the school office, but must social distance and wear a mask.

FAQ's:

1. What if a student is out for a long period of time due to illness related to COVID-19?
 - a. Just like in any previous year, we will work with families to provide the best option for continued education for that individual student.

2. Is Calumet's reopening plan aligned with standards put forth by the State of Ohio?
 - a. Yes. We regularly review updates from ODH, ODE, FCPH, and CDC.

3. I am concerned that younger students will not be able to keep their face masks on for each class period (45 to 50 minutes). I am also concerned that they touch their face a lot more than older kids.
 - a. We are very encouraged by reports from educational peers who have seen children follow strict face masking requirements. "Kids are quite resilient and adaptable," says Lauren Faubel, Certified Child Life Specialist at Children's HealthSM. "While every child is different, a lot of the time, kids may have an easier time adjusting to wearing a face mask than adults do. They tend to get distracted and may not even notice their mask after a while, especially in a situation where wearing a mask is normalized."¹³

 - b. Masks will be the reality for the foreseeable future as we await a vaccine. We encourage you to review the resources on the Web about how to build stamina with mask-wearing. Also, Children's Health article is helpful.¹⁴ We are confident that with consistent practice, this will become second nature to all of our students.

4. Are face shields an option?
 - a. Studies show that face shields alone might not be as effective as masks. Research is ongoing. For Calumet, face shields will only be reserved for documented medical exemptions. Jennifer Veltman, MD sites the FDA and CDC, "The FDA and the CDC recommend wearing face masks... There has been extensive research on face masks stopping the spread of the virus."¹⁵

 - b. In those instances where students need to see mouths for instruction, particularly with very young children learning language, teachers may use face shields for those particular times.

5. When an FDA approved vaccine becomes available, will it be required for all students?
 - a. We strongly recommend all families get an FDA approved vaccine when it becomes available. We are currently reviewing our vaccine policy for this pandemic.

6. If a family member of a student or staff member is awaiting COVID-19 test results,

¹³ See Children's Health, <https://www.childrens.com/health-wellness/7-tips-to-help-your-child-wear-a-face-mask>

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ <https://news.llu.edu/health-wellness/face-masks-versus-face-shields-which-one-better>

should those students or family members stay quarantined away from the school?

- a. Yes. They may return if the tests come back negative and there are no symptoms being shown.

7. How will outdoor breaks look when it rains?

- a. We recommend all families send their children to school prepared for the weather. We recommend sending students with rain ponchos and rain boots if it looks like it will rain because we will likely still go out in light rain. In the cold months, it is likely we will still be going outside unless it is under 20 degrees Fahrenheit. So please send your child with a proper coat, gloves, hat, and boots.
- b. If there is a thunderstorm or heavy rain or it is under 20 degrees Fahrenheit, the Calumet building may still do socially distant breaks under the covered porch near the main entrance and/or in the multipurpose room and/or in classrooms. The North Campus building may still do socially distant breaks in their classrooms.

*All plans are subject to change based on changes in conditions, policies, or guidance from various public authorities.