



St. Paul Westlake

Christ-Centered • Compassionate • Cutting-Edge

Christian School 3-year-old through 8th Grade

A Path Forward: Reopening St. Paul Westlake Amid a Pandemic

Updated August 17, 2020

Overview

In March 2020, St. Paul Westlake, along with all schools in the State of Ohio, were forced to close due to the uncertainty of the coronavirus pandemic, a virus which causes COVID-19. Schools were forced to abruptly adapt, rethink, relearn, and teach students in a manner they may have previously never considered. St. Paul Westlake excelled in the eLearning space and was a local leader in the quality of the program and delivery of content to its families. Now, as schools prepare to open for the 2020-2021 school year, St. Paul Westlake again looks to become a leader, demonstrating how a school can reopen while considering guidance from local, state, and national leaders, health experts, teachers and staff, community members, and families we are dedicated to serve.

Sources of Guidance

The administration and reopening group of St. Paul Westlake has considered many different sources of information regarding Reopening Schools from medical and education experts, as well as government entities. Some of the most widely used guidance in the construction of this Reopening Plan has come from the following sources:

- State of Ohio *“COVID-19 Health and Prevention Guidance for Ohio K-12 Schools”*
- American Academy of Pediatrics *“COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-entry”*
- Center for Disease Control *“Considerations for K-12 Schools: Readiness and Planning Tool”*
- Ohio Department of Education *“Early Learning and School Readiness”* and accompanying documentation
- Ohio Department of Education *“Reset and Restart Education Planning Guide for Ohio Schools and Districts”*

Authority Hierarchy

There are many different sources of guidelines, mandates, and information that affect Ohio Schools and the plans, procedures, protocols, and policies that are put in place to reopen a school. St. Paul Westlake plans to abide by all mandates, rules, and laws as it pertains to Ohio Schools and the reopening process. Generally speaking, the hierarchy of authority is as follows:

Highest Level: Mandates, rules or laws issued by the Ohio State Legislature, Department of Health Director, Ohio Governor, or similar level authority.

Secondary Level: Mandates or rules issued by Cuyahoga County Board of Health

Tertiary Level: Mandates or rules issued by the Ohio Department of Education specifically pertaining to Ohio public and non-public schools.

Local Level: Mandates or rules enacted locally by the St. Paul Westlake administration

Guiding Principles

While the manner in which the school operates will look, and possibly feel, different than pre-March 2020, the goal of St. Paul Westlake Administration, School Board, Faculty, and Staff remains the same: to provide an education for all of the students in an environment that is “Christ-centered, Compassionate, and Cutting-Edge.” For 162 years St. Paul Westlake has shared the love of Christ with all students who have learned in our classrooms. Throughout our history St. Paul teachers taught, and students learned, in the midst of Civil War, a first World War, the 1918 Pandemic, a Great Depression, a second World War, civil strife and the push for equality for all people in the 1960’s and beyond, the Vietnam War, a terrorist attack within our country, a Great Recession, and now the Coronavirus Pandemic. Throughout all of this, St. Paul teachers and staff, and the supporting congregation, continued to shine the light of Jesus, to “make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28) through our day school. In 2020, that mission remains unchanged.

The goal of those involved in the creation of this plan is to safely open St. Paul Westlake for 5-day, in-person learning for all students while keeping a balance between the health concerns the current pandemic situation provides and the educational needs (including social/emotional well-being) of the students entrusted in our care within the allowances of our physical facility and current educational programming. We believe that families should, and do, have the ultimate responsibility to assess and consider all factors that would contribute to their decision whether or not to return their student(s) to 5-day, in-person learning at our school for the upcoming school year. We also believe the policies, procedures, and protocols for our school, created using the guidance and recommendations of health experts and government officials, will help us to maintain a school environment that encourages positive health practices, takes the situation at hand seriously, and allows us to continue the educational, social, and spiritual development of all our students.

Finally, St. Paul Westlake acknowledges that COVID-19 policies are intended to mitigate, not eliminate, risk. No single action or set of actions will completely eliminate the risk of SARS-CoV-2 transmission, but implementation of several coordinated interventions can greatly reduce that risk. (*American Academy of Pediatrics*)

Review and Updates of Reopening Plan

Throughout the school year, the Administration, Faculty, Staff, and School Board members will continually review, evaluate, assess, and adjust the plan as dictated by the ever-changing nature of the pandemic. Families should regularly check email, the “COVID19” page of the St. Paul Westlake website, and St. Paul Westlake social media, for up-to-date information and updates.

School Calendar

It is the plan of St. Paul Westlake to operate our day school with 5-day, in-person classes according to the previously released “2020-2021 Academic Calendar.” The academic calendar can be found on the St. Paul Westlake website under the “Family Portal”.

In the event of prolonged school closure during the year, St. Paul Westlake will communicate the plans to all families in a timely manner and transition to an eLearning (remote learning) program to continue our educational program. Specifics of the program will be announced as appropriate.

Daily Health Precautions, Procedures, and Policies

Hand Hygiene

St. Paul school staff will continue to promote and encourage proper habits pertaining to hand hygiene. There is ample scientific evidence that handwashing and other common prevention methods are some of the most effective ways to reduce the spread of infectious disease. All persons on campus should wash their hands for at least 20 seconds, using soap and water, when hands are dirty, before and after eating, and after using the restroom. Soap is available in all restrooms throughout the church and school facility. Supply levels are checked daily. Teachers and staff will also work to build in time throughout the school day in which students will have the opportunity to wash or sanitize their hands.

St. Paul Westlake has also made arrangements to install hand sanitizing stations at the entrance of each classroom. Other hand sanitizing stations will be placed in high traffic areas such as around facility entrances, hallways, atrium, the gymnasium, and cafeteria. All hand sanitizing stations will be filled with alcohol-based (60% minimum), foaming hand sanitizing solution, per the guidelines established by the CDC. All persons will be required to sanitize their hands upon entering the building. Students and staff will sanitize their hands upon entering the classroom at the beginning of the day and anytime they leave and then re-enter a classroom space.

Health Screenings

All staff members and students (parents/guardians should assess their student at home) must complete a daily health assessment before arriving to campus (see instructions below). Anyone with a fever above 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit and/or experiencing other symptoms associated with the COVID-19 illness, must stay home. Random temperature checks of students will be completed by school staff during the school day using non-contact, infrared thermometers. Any student or staff member who becomes ill while at school will be sent home, particularly if they demonstrate symptoms of COVID-19. While waiting to go home, persons will be required to wear a face mask and be placed in a separate isolation area overseen by school or church personnel who are wearing appropriate PPE.

Daily Health Screening Instructions

1. *Check temperature – if temperature is 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit or above, person must stay home.*
2. *Assess for other symptoms of COVID-19*
 - i. *Loss of Taste and/or Smell*
 - ii. *Difficulty Breathing*
 - iii. *Cough*
 - iv. *Sore Throat*
 - v. *Headache*
 - vi. *Other symptoms here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>*
3. *Answer the following question:*
 - a. *Have I been exposed to someone with diagnosed or presumed COVID-19?*

If a student or staff member has a fever (#1), one of the listed symptoms (#2) or answers “Yes” to the question in #3, they must notify the school office and stay home for the day to further assess and monitor symptoms. See page 7 for Quarantine and Non-Quarantine Return to School Policies.

Physical Distancing Efforts / Use of Dividers

St. Paul Westlake recognizes physical distancing as a potential measure to help mitigate community spread of the coronavirus. The widely recognized standard of 6 feet is desired, but we also recognize in a school setting, particularly among very young students, this standard is difficult to consistently achieve. However, the administration and staff of St. Paul Westlake will use different strategies and resources to continually work to achieve safe social distancing distances. Such strategies may include, but are not limited to: Signage, Verbal Reminders, and Practice of routines and procedures to reinforce physical distancing.

Within Classrooms

- *In classrooms with individual student desks, the desks will be spaced apart as far as possible in the classroom while also maintaining the ability for the educator to maintain the attention of the student while presenting the instructional material. This will vary classroom to classroom.*
- *In classrooms with tables, students will be spaced as far apart as possible in order to achieve the maximum distance between each person.*
- *In all K-4 classrooms, students will be provided with individual, student-specific, plastic carrels (dividers) that will form a three-sided barrier within which the student can work. These carrels will be used as often as possible within the classroom and are sanitized each evening.*
- *In the Upper Grades classrooms, plastic carrels are installed at each table and desk in all classrooms.*
- *Group work will only be completed when using the plastic carrels to reinforce distancing standards.*
 - *Teachers should work to limit the amount of group work activities in the classroom setting during this time.*
- *Students may be assigned seats within each classroom to help ensure maximum physical distancing within that specific classroom.*

In Hallways

- *Floors will be marked with directional arrows/signage, as well as markings to delineate the side of the hall students should stay on when travelling.*
- *6th-8th grade students with assigned lockers will not be able to stop at their locker during transition periods.*
 - *Students will be allowed to carry the bookbag with them to each class.*
 - *Students should have all needed materials, books, and supplies for their entire day in the bookbag and prepare the bag at the before the start of the school day.*
 - *On rare occasions, individual students may be allowed to return their locker during class periods to get materials at the discretion of the classroom teacher.*
- *Students transitioning in the hallways will be reminded to keep adequate distance between each other while also considering the need for student supervision during these times.*

Lunch Periods

- *PreSchool 3-year-old and PreKindergarten 4-year-old students will eat lunch in their respective classrooms.*
- *Kindergarten and 1st grade classes will be divided by class using the foldable wall in the cafeteria.*
 - *Students will be spaced appropriately to maximize physical distancing while in the cafeteria while also taking into consideration the positive developmental benefits of student socialization.*
- *Grades 2– 5 will use a monthly rotating schedule for lunch periods.*

- *Two classes at a time will use the cafeteria in the same manner as described above for Kindergarten & 1st grade classes.*
- *The other two classes not in the cafeteria will eat lunch in their respective classrooms.*
 - *Students who order hot lunch will be permitted to go to the cafeteria and get their hot lunch and then return to their classroom to eat.*
- *Grades 6-8 will be spaced around the cafeteria by homeroom through a reduced number of seats available at each table.*

Physical Education Classes

- *Where possible, class activities and procedures will be designed to facilitate physical distancing.*
- *Physical Education classes will take place outdoors as much as possible, weather permitting.*
- *6-8th grade students will enter the locker room 5 at a time as instructed by the teacher.*
 - *Students will wear a mask while in the locker room and while changing and then leave their mask on the provided hook within their assigned locker. Masks will be put back on during changing after the class is completed.*

Playground / Recess Time

- *Class recess times will be scheduled throughout the day to minimize the number of students using the playground at one time.*
 - *Classes will go outside for recess as much as possible, weather permitting*
- *When multiple classes are outside simultaneously, the outdoor recess area will be split to ensure classrooms stay within their own area and will not mix with other grade level classes.*

Library

- *Students will still be allowed access to the Library to check out books.*
 - *Physical distancing will be maintained; floor markings will reinforce such measures*
- *Books which are returned after use will be kept from returning to circulation for a minimum of 72 hours.*

Music Classes

- *Music classes will take place in the Sanctuary to help ensure proper physical distancing*

Restrooms

- *Preschool 3, PreKindergarten 4, Kindergarten, and 1st grade classes will also use the restrooms within their classrooms.*
- *2nd, 3rd, and 4th grade classes will use the restrooms attached to the Church Narthex area*
- *5th and 6th grade classes will use the restrooms across from the Activity Center*
- *7th and 8th grade classes will use the restrooms outside of the cafeteria*
- *Faculty and staff will use the restrooms located in either the Faculty Workroom or the School Office*

Chapel

- *Chapels will continue as scheduled for the 2020-2021 school year.*
- *The following policies are in place until further notice:*
 - *Visitors will not be permitted to attend chapels*
 - *All-school chapels will not be held*
 - *Students will be socially distanced during chapels*

- *Pre3 & PreK4 students will watch live-streamed chapel services from their classrooms*
- *Students will be spaced throughout the sanctuary as much as space and limitations allow*
 - *Classes will be spaced out with an empty row in between each occupied row*

Before School Care (“Tiger Time”)

- *Before School Care will be held in the Cafeteria and/or Extended Care Room Room.*
- *Communal supplies and toys may not be available. Students are encouraged to bring their own materials to read, play with, color, draw, etc.*
- *Students will be assigned seats upon entering Beforecare*
- *Student seating assignments will be given to maintain physical distancing*
- *Parents are asked to use the Before Care Program only when absolutely necessary*

After School Care (“Tiger Time”)

- *After School Care will be held in the Cafeteria*
- *Communal supplies and toys may not be available. Students are encouraged to bring their own materials to read, play with, color, draw, etc.*
- *Students will be assigned seats upon entering AfterCare*
- *Student seating assignments will be given to maintain physical distancing*
- *Students will be taken outside for organized activities and play*
- *Parents are asked to use the After Care Program only when absolutely necessary*

Mask Policy

Per the Public Health Order from the Ohio Director of Public Health, dated August 13, 2020, regarding wearing face coverings in schools, all students K-12 and all faculty, staff, and any administration-approved visitors to the campus must wear a mask while on campus. Exceptions to the requirement are provided in the Health Order and will be facilitated and monitored by St. Paul school staff as allowed per the Order. Students or teachers who are unable to wear a mask, due to a medical reason, must provide written exception to this requirement by a licensed medical professional. Classroom teachers, when able to maintain a physical distance of 6 feet or more from students, or when a mask might provide a safety hazard (e.g. – Science Labs), may use a face shield as a temporary alternative to a cloth face covering. These shields should wrap around the face and extend below the chin.

Visitor Policy

Visitors to campus will be limited to delivery personnel, admissions visitors, essential school volunteers with prior-approval and outside educational support staff. All visitors to campus will be screened at the school office through temperature checks and visual symptom checks, will maintain physical distancing guidelines, and are required to wear masks at all times.

Parents will not be permitted to enter the school building without prior approval from the school office unless in the event of emergency or when conducting pickup of a sick child. Parents will be screened and wear masks per the details above.

Disclosure of Exposure or Diagnosis; Quarantine and Return to School Policies

Diagnosis or Confirmed Exposure of COVID-19

Families and staff must notify the school if any of the following are true:

- The student, or co-habitant of the student's household, has been diagnosed with or medically presumed to have COVID-19.
- There is reason to believe a student has had close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19.
 - According to the CDC, close contact is defined as:
 - Within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19 for at least 15 minutes
 - You provided care at home to someone who is sick with COVID-19
 - You had direct physical contact with someone who has COVID-19 (touched, hugged, kissed, etc.)
 - You shared eating or drinking utensils with someone who is sick with COVID-19
 - A person with COVID-19 coughed, sneezed, or someone got respiratory droplets on you

St. Paul Westlake will notify the local health department of all cases of COVID-19.

Non-Quarantine Return to School Policy

School staff or students who stay home from school due to demonstration of one, or more, of the symptoms of COVID-19 (listed pg. 3) but do not have reason to believe the symptoms are due to exposure to known or medically presumed cases of COVID-19, may return to campus after being symptom-free for a period of no less than 48 hours. *(Exception to the 48-hour rule may be possible with written documentation from a physician).*

Quarantine and Return to School Policy

School staff and students who test positive for or have a medically presumed case of COVID-19, or those with known exposure to someone with diagnosed or medically presumed COVID-19 must quarantine for a period of no less than 10 days. Quarantined persons must meet the following criteria before returning to campus:

- 72 hours of improvement of symptoms
 - Fever-free without use of fever-reducing medication
 - Any respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath) have improved
- Student or staff member must receive confirmation from the school administration for an allowed return to campus

St. Paul administration reserves the right to require further quarantine or absences as deemed necessary even when the above requirements are met.

Facility Sanitization & Cleaning Protocols

Hard Surface Cleaning

While recent data and medical advice acknowledges the primary transmission of the coronavirus is through airborne respiratory droplets, secondary transmission, though more unlikely, can still happen through contaminated hard surfaces. Therefore, the school administration, in consultation with the church Board of Trustees and custodial staff, have designed a thorough, and intensive, daily and nightly cleaning protocol for the campus facility.

All hard surfaces will be regularly cleaned and sanitized throughout the school day and overnight with a focus on high-touch areas including, but not limited to, light switches, handrails, door handles, desks, chairs, computer keyboards, sinks, and toilets. Nightly sanitization of student chairs, plastic carrels, and desks will take place with a specialized sprayer and disinfectant designed for public spaces.

School staff will have a regular supply of disinfectants and sanitizing agents available to clean and sanitize any surfaces that become contaminated throughout the school day. The school janitorial service will also constantly monitor the needs of the campus and respond appropriately and in a timely manner to any area in need of cleaning and/or sanitization.

HVAC System Air Filters

St. Paul Westlake has taken steps to improve the air filtration units installed on our forced air HVAC systems. The following is a summary of current measures that have been implemented:

- Bi-polar air ionizers purification system installed in Sanctuary
- Improved HEPA filters installed on all forced air HVAC units on campus
- Ionizing individual room air purifiers with HEPA filters used in all classrooms
- Ionizer filtration and purification system to be installed in Activity Center

Morning Dropoff Procedures

Regular morning parent drop-off will start at 8:25am and be available until 8:45am. After 8:45am, doors will close and all late students must enter through the school office entrance on the North Side (front) of the building and check in at the school office. Parents will not be allowed inside the school building during morning drop-off.

- Preschool 3 & PreK 4 students and older siblings or student sharing a ride with a younger student will be dropped off at the Church Sanctuary Entrance.
- All other K-8 students will be dropped off at the Activity Center Entrance (Southeast Door #5)

Preschool 3-year-old & PreKindergarten 4-year-old Morning Dropoff (and older siblings)

All PreSchool 3-year-old and PreK 4-year-old students will be dropped off at the Church Sanctuary entrance. Parents of 3- and 4-year-old students will not be able to enter the building during morning drop-off. Per the requirements for this age group established by the State of Ohio, all students will be visually screened for symptoms of COVID-19 as well as receive a temperature check. Once students are cleared for entry after the health screening process, students will wash their hands and then be assigned a location in the narthex (lobby area) of the church or in a pew until they go to class, escorted by their teacher, at 8:45am.

Older siblings of, or any student sharing a ride with, any 3- or 4-year-old student should also be dropped off at the Church Sanctuary entrance. These students will also go through the same health screening process. Upon completion of the screening, these students may go directly to their classrooms.

Kindergarten – 8th Grade Dropoff

All K-8th students (except those dropped off with a younger Pre3 or PreK4 student – see policy above) will be dropped off at the Activity Center Entrance (Southeast Door #5). These students will be visually checked by St. Paul staff members for signs of illness and may be randomly screened for fever. All students will use the hand sanitizer available at the entrance and then immediately continue to their classroom and/or locker. All K-8 students are required to wear a mask upon entering the building.

Bus Dropoff / Bus Room Procedures

Students who use school bus transportation are dropped off on the North (front) side of the school. Upon entering the building, these students will be visually checked by St. Paul staff members for signs of illness and may be randomly screened for fever. All students will use the hand sanitizer available at the entrance and then immediately proceed to the cafeteria for supervision. All K-8 students are required to wear a mask upon entering the building. *Reminder: All families utilizing district bussing should check with their local transportation department for rules and regulations particular to that specific school district.*

Morning Care (“Tiger Time) Dropoff Procedures

All students using the Morning Care / Tiger Time program will be dropped off at the Activity Center Entrance (Southeast Door #5). Parents may accompany these students to the door and then use the intercom system to alert the staff of the student’s arrival. The extended care staff member will then unlock the doors for the student to gain access. Parents should not pass through the 2nd set of doors into the building. These students will be visually checked by St. Paul staff members for signs of illness and may be screened for fever. All students will use the hand sanitizer available at the entrance and then immediately go to the proper Extended Care location as directed by staff. All K-8 students are required to wear a mask upon entering the building and while in the Extended Care room. Students will be dismissed from Tiger Time at 8:25am.

Afternoon Pickup Procedures

Regular afternoon pickup will start at 3:20pm and be available until 3:40pm. At 3:40pm, any students still on campus will be checked in to the After Care / Tiger Time program. Parents will then follow the pickup procedures for this program – see below. Parents are to stay in their vehicle at all times during afternoon pickup.

During afternoon pickup, students will be socially distanced throughout the hallway and in the gymnasium. Upon arrival of the parent, students will be called and will wait on a socially distanced, pre-defined spot on the curb. Parents will pull up to the spot where their student is waiting for the student to enter the vehicle.

We emphasize and ask that everyone display patience during this process. It is possible our afternoon pickup will take longer than usual given some of our adjustments. At all times, please follow the instructions and directions of school staff who are operating the afternoon pickup process.

Reminder: All families utilizing district bussing should check with their local transportation department for rules and regulations particular to that specific school district.

Other Preventative Measures

- Drinking Fountains will not be accessible for student or staff use on campus
 - Students will be allowed to bring their own water bottles for use
 - The bottle fill stations in the hallways will be available for refills at the discretion of the classroom teachers
- A separate, isolated location has been established for any student who is demonstrating symptoms related to COVID-19. When using such location, the student will be required to wear a mask while waiting for a parent or authorized guardian to pick them up from school.
- Other scheduling and facility considerations have been put in place throughout the St. Paul campus to provide further support to the measures already listed in this plan.

Campus Closure Decisions

St. Paul Westlake plans to be open for the entire school year with 5-day a week, in-person learning for all students. However, given the ever-changing nature of the pandemic and directives from state and local authorities, it is possible that the campus, or a specific classroom / grade level, will have to cease in-person learning for a period of time. We have identified potential reasons for when such a closure or suspension of in-person learning may be required:

- 1) State level directive closing all Ohio schools or schools within a certain geographic region of the state
- 2) Cuyahoga County Board of Health directive closing schools within a certain geographic region
- 3) Cuyahoga County Board of Health directive specifically closing St. Paul Westlake School (or a specific grade level / classroom)
- 4) Increased Staff illness or required quarantine in which we are not able to adequately continue an in-person educational program.
- 5) 10% or higher COVID-19 infection rate among the students enrolled at St. Paul.

All campus closure decisions will be announced via email, on the school website, and on school social media pages.

Temporary Attendance Policy

Students will not be penalized when, due to the necessity to follow the policies set forth in this document, they stay home from school as long as the absenteeism is documented daily through the school office. Parents and guardians must daily communicate absences due to COVID-related symptoms with the office 440-835-3051 or (acoulter@stpaulwestlake.org). When absent, students are still required to meet all expectations of work completion set forth by the classroom teacher. Communication with the classroom teacher regarding struggles and needs of the student is essential in order for the school and teacher to fulfill their obligation in partnering with the family for the success of the student.

For extended absences due to quarantine requirements, the school will work with the family and the student, on a case-by-case basis, to work to continue the educational program while the student is in quarantine.

PSALM 46 (NIV)

God is our refuge and strength,
always ready to help in times of trouble.
So we will not fear when earthquakes come
and the mountains crumble into the sea.
Let the oceans roar and foam.
Let the mountains tremble as the waters surge!

A river brings joy to the city of our God,
the sacred home of the Most High.
God dwells in that city; it cannot be destroyed.
From the very break of day, God will protect it.
The nations are in chaos,
and their kingdoms crumble!
God's voice thunders,
and the earth melts!
The Lord of Heaven's Armies is here among us;
the God of Israel is our fortress. Interlude

Come, see the glorious works of the Lord:
See how he brings destruction upon the world.
He causes wars to end throughout the earth.
He breaks the bow and snaps the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.

"Be still, and know that I am God!
I will be honored by every nation.
I will be honored throughout the world."

The Lord of Heaven's Armies is here among us;
the God of Israel is our fortress.