



### **RE & YM Social Distancing Guidelines for the Diocese of Green Bay Fall 2020**

*These are the guidelines for Religious Education and Youth Ministry events in our diocese. Please follow all federal, state, county and local directives and guidelines related to safety and to the mitigation of the COVID-19 pandemic as these will supersede our diocesan guidelines. The ability of RE and Confirmation preparation and of youth ministry events to be held in person will be subject to the guidance and recommendations of federal, state, county, and local health authorities. If there are subsequent waves of COVID-19 before an effective vaccine is developed, we will need to revise these guidelines significantly and with little notice.*

The following applies to Catechetical Leaders, Youth Ministers, Catechists, Volunteers, Chaperones, Parents/Guardians (or any other adults involved in RE or YM related activities) and to students.

#### **Criteria for Religious Education and Confirmation Preparation Reopening**

We encourage all Religious Education (including Confirmation preparation) programs that are able to do so, to resume in person classes this fall, at their regularly scheduled times. The only restriction on the number of students and adults involved in your program (parents, catechists, etc.) gathering in person will be:

- (i) Your ability to have everyone social distance 6 feet away from each other.
- (ii) Your ability to sanitize your meeting space(s) before people arrive and after people have left.
- (iii) Your ability to make sure that the meeting space(s) are well ventilated.
- (iv) Your ability to ensure that frequently touched surfaces are sanitized as often as necessary.
- (v) You are able to ensure that restrooms are sanitized periodically during the time the building(s) is(are) being used.
- (vi) You are able to make sanitizers and disinfectant wipes readily available in all classrooms and common areas.
- (vii) You have sufficient catechists and volunteers that are not most vulnerable to COVID-19 (those 65 years and older and those with underlying conditions).
- (viii) As much as possible, are able to arrange your classroom seating so that everyone, including the catechist (if seated while students are working) is facing in the same direction. [While addressing the class the catechist would of course be facing the class]

### **Face shields cannot be used as a substitute for a face covering**

After further consultation with our Human Resources Team, the COVID-19 Monitoring Team, Catholic Health Care Leaders, and upon further clarification by the CDC. Effective, Tuesday July 28, 2020 employees or volunteers of the Diocese of Green Bay **may not** use a **face shields** for normal everyday activities as a substitute for cloth face coverings. This is due to the fact that they ultimately do not serve as source control to protect others from the spray of respiratory particles.

### **Recommendations and best practices for RE, Confirmation prep and YM**

1. ***If your parish shares meeting space with a parish school or a system school***, a plan is needed to sanitize the building – If your program meets in a day school you and parish leadership will need to partner with the principal or other senior staff at the day school to come to an agreement on who will be responsible for sanitizing before and after RE ( including Confirmation prep and youth ministry). One possibility is that the school sanitizes at the end of the school day and RE at the end of RE for that day. Or RE sanitizes before the start of RE classes for that day and the school sanitizes before the school day begins. The Office of Catholic Schools is recommending to all their parish and system schools that the Catechetical leader be part of the ReOpening Planning Team. Please plan on participating.
2. Per Governor Evers' July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Executive order, **face coverings are required for all students ages five and older** when they are indoors or in an enclosed space with anyone outside their household or living unit. Face coverings are strongly recommended if they are outdoors and maintaining physical distancing is not possible. Exceptions to the requirement include activities such as when an individual is eating, drinking, or swimming. Individuals with health conditions or disabilities that would preclude the wearing of a face covering safely are also exempt from the requirement. The order is effective at 12:01 a.m. on Saturday, August 1, 2020, and will expire on September 28, 2020 or by a subsequent superseding order.
3. Parish employees, volunteers and visitors are required to wear a face covering when in common or public spaces. Exceptions to the requirement include activities such as when an individual is eating, drinking, or swimming. But while engaging in these activities a minimum of 6 feet of social distancing from others must be observed.
4. All employees and students should minimally wash or sanitize their hands as appropriate. Hands should be scrubbed with soap for twenty or more seconds. Hand sanitizers and/or disinfectant wipes should be readily available in all classrooms and Common areas.  
*Adults must make certain younger students are using these properly. The high alcohol content of hand sanitizers means younger students cannot be licking or chewing on their hands. If a student, catechist, or aide leaves a classroom, he or she needs to sanitize their hands when reentering the classroom if they have not already done so.*
5. Catechist and aides should consider evaluating the way students are sent to the restroom to limit the number of people in the small space at once.
6. The building(s) in which you meet should ideally be deep cleaned once a week. Parishes may consider using a fog chemical that is safe for accomplishing this deep clean.
7. Employees and volunteers should try to limit physical contact with students and other staff (no handshakes, high fives, fist bumps etc.).

8. Students need to be instructed that they should do their best to always cough or sneeze into a tissue (discarded) or their elbow. At all times, this needs to be modeled well by parish staff, catechists and other volunteers.
9. Instruct students on proper hygiene of blowing nose or coughing. The student should discard the used tissue and wash or sanitize their hands. Adults working or volunteering in the program must model this practice.
10. Catechetical leaders and youth ministers should post appropriate sanitary methods for the students to have a visual reference on how to stop the spread of germs. Consider holding mail and packages for 72 hours.
11. Be aware: Some parents and employees will be very sensitive to cleanliness. Anything that looks disorganized or dirty will translate to unclean in their minds. Every classroom and work area should be kept tidy.
12. Ventilation systems should be reviewed to determine if adequate air supply is occurring in the classroom. Building filters should be checked and cleaned as appropriate.
13. Establish controlled entrances and exits as needed.
14. Programs should consider developing procedures to limit the number of students passing in a hallway.
15. Evaluate the need for guest speaker(s) and whether there is another way to achieve the same outcome including a virtual presentation.
16. All Visitors (including parents) permitted inside must wear a face covering while in the building.
17. Smaller rooms (bathrooms, offices, maintenance work areas, etc.) should be limited based on total space. For employees, volunteers and visitors, masks are required. Per Governor Evers' July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Executive order, face coverings are required for all students ages five and older when they are indoors or in an enclosed space with anyone outside their household or living unit. Students with health conditions or disabilities that would preclude the wearing of a face covering safely are exempt from the requirement. The order is effective at 12:01 a.m. on Saturday, August 1, 2020, and will expire on September 28, 2020 or by a subsequent superseding order.
18. Programs should consider having students sanitize their hands when sharing books, materials, or equipment.
19. Whenever possible, hold ice breakers or games outside. Catechetical leaders and youth ministers should plan for best practices in activities that minimize personal contact and practice distancing in the best way possible. If possible, avoid the handling of equipment by multiple people, and sanitize each shared item after being used by each person.
20. Students will wash or sanitize hands before and after any meal or snack.
  - a. Students should be socially distanced in line.
  - b. Food must be served by one or two designated individuals.
  - c. Students should not serve themselves.
  - d. Those serving must wear face coverings and gloves.
  - e. If possible, students should sit with one seat in between the next student and stagger across from each other. (a zig-zag pattern)
  - f. Avoid shared salt and pepper shakers, water pitchers, condiments, etc. Consider

- Obtaining individual condiment packages.
- g. All dishes, utensils, etc. must be thoroughly cleaned after each use.

**All the other COVID-19 guidelines and best practices for safety and hygiene apply.**

### **Indicators that parents should keep their children at home**

It is the responsibility of the parent (guardian) to check their child's temperature and make certain a child is healthy and able to attend in person RE classes (including Confirmation prep) and YM events. Parents should only send their child to in person RE, Confirmation prep or a youth ministry event if they have answered NO to all of the following questions:

- (i) Have you been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19?
- (ii) Have you had a fever in the last 48 hours?
- (iii) Have you had new loss of taste or smell?
- (iv) Have you had muscle pain or chills?
- (v) Have you had a new headache?
- (vi) Have you had nausea, vomiting or diarrhea?
- (vii) Do you have a temperature above 100 degrees?

If, during RE, a student appears to have an illness, the catechetical leader or other appropriate parish staff will help the student and proceed with a standard medical response like taking the student's temperature. Any student who seems ill, for any reason, will be placed in a separate area (be sure to be safe environment compliant) and parents immediately notified. Contact your local health department for additional guidance.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html>

### **Specific restrictions for Youth Ministry and other Youth gatherings**

Until further notice, in keeping with the recommendations of the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) and the Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC), all youth ministry events, whether indoors or outdoors, will be limited to a total of no more than 50 people (adults included) with the required social distancing of six feet. If your youth ministry gathering is indoors then the limit to the number of persons in a room will be determined by the number of people who can be in that room safely 6 feet apart, but will still be no greater than 50 individuals. All the other COVID-19 related guidelines below apply.

<https://www.wiaawi.org/Portals/0/PDF/Health/Covid/WIAA-Reopen-School-Sports-Summer.pdf>  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/youth-sports.html>

## **The possibility of having to adjust numbers or suspend in-person classes and events**

The ability of RE and Confirmation preparation and of youth ministry events to be held in person will be subject to the guidance and recommendations of federal, state, county, and local health authorities. If there are subsequent waves of COVID-19 before an effective vaccine is developed, we will need to revise these guidelines and may need to significantly reduce the number of people that can gather for in person for RE, Confirmation preparation and youth ministry. We may even need to cancel all such in-person gatherings. A best practice would be to have an online or other distance learning options for such an eventuality. Online resources to assist in your planning can be found at: [www.gbresources.org/athome.html](http://www.gbresources.org/athome.html). This has recently been updated.

## **Homeschooling option for RE and Confirmation prep**

For those students whose parents who do not wish their children to participate in live instruction due to safety concerns; and for those students with underlying health issues, homeschooling is a workable and viable alternative to in person RE or Confirmation classes.

The following are guidelines which allow for these families and parishes to work collaboratively.

1. Parents will register for Religious Education in the parish and declare their option for home schooling in the proper registration timeframe of the parish.
2. Parents will meet with the parish Director/Coordinator of Religious Education (in person preferably or if necessary, by conference call or a video conferencing platform) to discuss their homeschooling program and together create an agreement including but not limited to the following:
  - Name of a textbook that will be used throughout the year that has been approved by the Bishop of Green Bay in order to provide a scope and sequence for learning. This does not exclude the use of supplemental textbooks or resources.
  - The approved number of hours of religious education totaling at least 30-35 hours per year (Policy #6007).
  - Assessment of knowledge and faith development determined by the Pastor and/or Religious Education Director/Coordinator according to the student's year of study (Canon 777)
  - Participation in family retreats, family liturgies, diocesan events and youth retreats according to the parish Religious Education Director/Coordinator. However, during this pandemic this can happen if necessary, via streaming and video conferencing platforms.
  - Expectations regarding the reception of the sacraments which are to take place in the parish in which the family is registered.
  - Tuition depending on use of parish resources.
3. Children are to participate in the **immediate** sacramental preparation (classes specifically pertaining to the preparation of the sacrament and the rite) as required or approved by the pastor and Religious Education Director/Coordinator which includes on site preparation, interviews for sacramental readiness, practice for sacramental celebration, retreats, and

appropriate rites. However, during this pandemic this can happen if necessary, via streaming and video conferencing platforms.

4. Parents and parish religious education programs are to teach the truth, beauty, and goodness of the true faith that Christ passed onto the Church.
5. The pastor or parish religious education director/coordinator should invite the parents to be involved in the catechetical certification process (Foundational Catechetical Certification).

## **ACRE**

The ACRE assessment will be waived for 2020-2021 academic year.

## **Additional guidelines and best practices**

- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer, especially after touching frequently used items or surfaces.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Sneeze or cough into a tissue, or the inside of your elbow.
- Disinfect frequently used items and surfaces as much as possible.
- Per Governor Evers' July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Executive order, **face coverings are required for all students ages five and older** when they are indoors or in an enclosed space with anyone outside their household or living unit. Face coverings are strongly recommended if they are outdoors and maintaining physical distancing is not possible. Exceptions to the requirement include activities such as when an individual is eating, drinking, or swimming. Individuals with health conditions or disabilities that would preclude the wearing of a face covering safely are also exempt from the requirement. The order is effective at 12:01 a.m. on Saturday, August 1, 2020, and will expire on September 28, 2020 or by a subsequent superseding order.
- Parish employees, volunteers and visitors are required to wear face coverings.
- If you do not feel well stay home. If you exhibit any symptoms of COVID-19 (including cold, flu or allergy symptoms or if you have a fever or a cough) stay home.
- Staggered drop offs of students is preferable if possible.
- Continue social distancing: Maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from others who are not part of your immediate household.
- In the course of ministry, avoid contact with those who are most vulnerable to COVID-19 (those over 65 years old and with those with underlying medical conditions).
- If you or someone in your immediate household has tested positive or has come into contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 please self-quarantine (do not participate in person at any RE or YM classes, meetings or activities for 14 days after exposure).
- Avoid being in tight enclosed areas that make social distancing impossible. A best practice at this time would be to have students transported by their parents or guardians.
- Make sure that permission forms and waivers are up to date- consider having parents sign new ones designed for the specific event or activity. A "per-event" liability form has been adjusted with COVID-19 wording and can be found at [www.gbresources.org/dre.html](http://www.gbresources.org/dre.html) or <https://www.gbresources.org/formspolicies.html>.
- Out of state trips, out of state mission trips and out of state youth trips and service trips are strongly discouraged at this time.

- For travel by bus the limit is 25 people on a bus that can hold 50 or more, allowing for staggered seating so that people are at least 6 feet apart. Temperatures must be taken prior to embarking, and face coverings are required for students through September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and are strongly recommended thereafter. For smaller buses, vans or other smaller vehicles, the number of people will be limited to the number of people that can be safely seated while allowing for social distancing of at least 6 feet between each person if possible. Temperatures must be taken, and face coverings are required for students through September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and strongly recommended thereafter. Parish employees and volunteers are required to wear a face covering.
- All these guidelines are in addition to our diocesan Safe Environment and Field Trip policies.

### **On Virtual Safe Environment training for RE students**

The diocese had purchased the VIRTUS safe environment lesson plans for children in 2016. The expectation is that these lesson plans are the basis for all children's safe environment training. All the lesson plans per grade level can be accessed from the diocesan website. Hovering over the Protecting Our Children tab across the top, click on Lesson Plans and Resources for Children. All of the lesson plans are downloadable and all the videos are available to all. The leader of the virtual learning experience can pull pieces of information from the various lesson plans to address the different grade levels that may be present. It's also a great opportunity for adults to have the information shared with them as a reminder of what they learned in their safe environment training and to support enforcing it. Here is a link to the lesson plans: <https://www.gbdioc.org/protecting-our-children/safe-environment-lesson-plans-and-resources-for-children>

### **On Virtual Instruction/Youth meetings in light of Safe Environment**

As long as teachers/catechists are using a delivery platform approved by the school/parish and the invitation to the session either goes through or copies parents, and parents are invited to sit in and the site leader (Principal, DRE/CRE or Pastor) is invited and occasionally joins that is pretty similar to how the physical classroom works from a Safe Environment standpoint. There should be an expectation on the part of the teacher/catechist that the DRE or RE coordinator or some other Virtus trained adult may pop in to the virtual session at any point during the session. It would be a best practice for the DRE/CRE or the pastor to pop in to each session/breakout room if possible. It would be better still, to always have another Virtus trained adult in the session with your teacher/catechist.

### **THE NUMBER ONE THING YOU CAN DO FOR RETURNING THIS FALL**

If your Catholic School has not already done so, we **highly recommend** that you form a group of staff and parents and parish council members, parish maintenance and if possible someone from the medical field, to meet on a frequent basis to discuss your RE and Confirmation preparation communication strategies. Having input from various groups means that nothing is overlooked and that all concerned parties are represented. We also encourage you to designate one staff member as your COVID Leader so that all communication can flow through them. There is an excellent planning tool on the Diocese Reconnect to Inspire website (<https://www.gbdioc.org/front-page/reconnect-to-inspire>) under the School Resources section from Loyola University Greely Center, Leading with Hope: A Reflective Guide for Catholic Schools in a New Reality. There is also a document created by the Office of Catholic Schools, Guidelines for ReOpening. While these documents focus on the more extensive issues for day school there are several resources that will prove helpful information for your RE and

Confirmation programs, especially if you eventually have to move instruction online or to a distance learning model.

Please refer to the Diocese and RE & YM websites for a detailed list of resources. The web addresses are [www.gbdioc.org/front-page/covid19response](http://www.gbdioc.org/front-page/covid19response) and <https://www.gbdioc.org/front-page/reconnect-to-inspire> and <https://www.gbresources.org/athome.html>

For any questions or clarification please contact the Child and Youth Faith Formation Director Maximus Cabey ([mcabey@gbdioc.org](mailto:mcabey@gbdioc.org), or 920-272-8288) or the Child and Youth Faith Formation Assistant Director, Callie Kowalski ([ckowalski@gbdioc.org](mailto:ckowalski@gbdioc.org) or 920-272-8285).