



Timeline and Procedures for Resumption of Ministry Activity

Archdiocese of Oklahoma City

Issued on May 22, 2020

Most Reverend Paul S. Coakley, Archbishop of Oklahoma City, issued the following “Timeline and Procedures for Resumption of Ministry Activity” in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City based upon the recommendations and guidelines from medical professionals, state civic leaders and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Given the fluidity of the COVID-19 situation, these procedures can be updated as needed. The Procedures contain requirements and suggested options. Given the variety of parish and school ministry activities, the Procedures will need to be adapted to different environments. Priests and parish staff will learn from each other and parishioners as these Procedures are implemented and will adjust them accordingly. A package with COVID-19 posters and safety materials will be mailed to all parishes.

Parishes, schools, employees, volunteers and participants are not required to resume activities, and accommodations should be made to serve people who have health concerns about returning and choose to temporarily opt out. For more information on pay, time off, sick leave and other employment issues, contact Nancy Largent, human resources director for the archdiocese. Pastors have the right and responsibility to determine what and when ministry activities will resume within these guidelines. Resumption will take careful planning and will be implemented at the pace each pastor determines appropriate and wise.

The key to implementation is common sense social distancing (to the extent possible given the activity), sanitizing, screening and healthy hygiene practices. Masks are strongly encouraged. Patience and a spirit of charity toward ourselves and our neighbors, particularly the vulnerable, will greatly assist in a well-ordered transition back to ministry activities.

For questions, contact the office of Father William Novak, Vicar General, at (405) 721-1811 or molivera@archokc.org.

1. Timeline for the resumption of parish and archdiocesan activities in accord with these Procedures:

- a. Faith formation or educational ministry activity may resume May 25, 2020;
- b. Activities include all regular parish-sponsored and school-sponsored activities, provided appropriate precautions of social distancing (to the extent possible given the nature of the activity), sanitizing and healthy hygiene practices take place;
- c. Parishes and schools should delay opening ministry activities until requirements can be met;
- d. All local and national social distancing guidelines should continue to be followed, including maximum participants for each gathering. In addition, groups should be limited to 33 percent of the meeting space occupancy capacity;
- e. Consider providing an option to attend an activity or meeting via Zoom, Skype or other electronic means;
- f. Nurseries will remain closed until further notice;
- g. Parish-sponsored Mother's Day Out programs can begin with precautions and a liability waiver in place. coronavirus.health.ok.gov/child-care-facilities;
- h. Large social gatherings (50+), including receptions or those that exceed the 33 percent occupancy limit, are not allowed until further notice. This includes wedding receptions and funeral meals;
- i. Overnight outdoor camps such as scouting are permitted;
- j. Groups are permitted to meet as long as they practice social distancing guidelines. These groups include, but are not limited to:
 1. Knights of Columbus
 2. Prayer groups
 3. Bible studies
 4. Parish Council/Finance Council
 5. Youth groups
 6. Staff meetings
 7. Scout meetings

2. Requirements for resumption of parish or archdiocesan activity

- a. Social Distancing
 - i. Prepare for six feet of space in all directions between household groups or individuals;
 - ii. Space seating six feet apart;
 - iii. If running a multi-day activity, consider keeping the same group of participants and volunteers together;
 - iv. Consider staggering arrival and drop-off times or put in place other protocols to limit direct contact with non-participants as much as possible;
 - v. All activities (in particular sports camps) that require permission slips, consent forms or waivers must include the following: "RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH CORONAVIRUS/COVID-19: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) has sickened thousands and killed hundreds in Oklahoma. There is substantial evidence of community spread of COVID-19 throughout Oklahoma and most other states. [Ministry/Activity] is

following guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Oklahoma State Department of Health and other agencies, and has implemented social distancing measures, increased hand-washing and other hygienic practices, and frequent cleaning of common surfaces. Despite such precautions, the risks associated with transmission of COVID-19 remain high. Individuals travel from all over the state [adjust for individual ministry] to participate in [Ministry]. In addition, the nature of many activities [adjust for activity or ministry] makes it impossible to observe all of the recommended precautions all of the time; for example, individuals will not always be six feet apart, surfaces will not always be free of viruses and other infectants, etc. As a result of participation in the activities of the ministry and proximity to other participants, you or your child will be exposed to the risk of infection of communicable diseases, including COVID-19. Symptoms associated with COVID-19 range from mild to severe, and include fever, cough, difficulty breathing, headache, nausea, severe respiratory distress and death. By signing this form and allowing your child to participate in this [camp][ministry], you knowingly and voluntarily assume the risk associated with participation.”

- vi. Parishes must include the following on their websites and post in the parish near where activities will take place. It also must be included with any e-mail or communication about the resumption of parish activities: “[name of parish] is beginning the resumption of parish activities. **RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH CORONAVIRUS/COVID-19:** Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) has sickened thousands and killed hundreds in Oklahoma. There is substantial evidence of community spread of COVID-19 throughout Oklahoma and most other states. [Name of parish] is following guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Oklahoma State Department of Health and other agencies, and has implemented social distancing measures, increased hand-washing and other hygienic practices, and frequent cleaning of common surfaces. Despite such precautions, the risks associated with transmission of COVID-19 remain high. Individuals participating in an activity may have traveled from other cities or states to participate. In addition, the nature of some activities makes it impossible to observe all of the recommended precautions all of the time; for example, individuals will not always be six feet apart, surfaces will not always be free of viruses and other infectants, etc. Even where the activity allows social distancing, it will be impossible for the parish to ensure that all participants are observing all the recommended precautions. As a result of participation in parish activities, you or your child will be exposed to the risk of infection of communicable diseases, including COVID-19. Symptoms associated with COVID-19 range from mild to severe, and include fever, cough, difficulty breathing, headache, nausea, severe respiratory distress and death. By participating in parish activities or allowing your child to participate you knowingly and voluntarily assume the risk associated with participation.”

- vii. Do not shake hands, hold hands or hug;
- viii. Due to the nature of many sports, maintaining distance at all times is not possible. Distancing should still take place when possible. Camps or activities that include sports must clearly communicate that distancing will not take place at times and be vigilant in screening, sanitizing and promoting healthy hygiene practices.

b. Sanitizing

- i. Clean and sanitize frequently touched surfaces (for example, playground equipment, door handles, sink handles, drinking fountains) multiple times per day and shared objects between use;
- ii. Remove all plush items (for example, soft or plush toys) that are not easily cleaned, sanitized or disinfected;
- iii. Ensure safe and correct application of disinfectants and keep products away from children;
- iv. Ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high-touch materials to the extent possible (art supplies, equipment, missals, etc.) or limit use of supplies and equipment by one group of children at a time, and clean and disinfect between use;
- v. Consider keeping communal use spaces closed such as game rooms, playgrounds and dining halls or stagger use and disinfect between uses;
- vi. Parishes and schools will provide a form of sanitizer at the entrances and high traffic areas to disinfect surfaces;
- vii. Those attending are encouraged to bring their own sanitizer and follow any instructions issued by the parish or camp;
- viii. If food is offered at an event, have pre-packaged boxes or bags for each attendee or serve plates individually. Do not use buffet or family-style distribution;

c. Screening

- i. Each church and school must establish a screening routine upon arrival for all volunteers, staff, children and participants;
- ii. Implement health checks (e.g. temperature checks and symptom screening) that are done safely, and respectfully, and with measures in place to ensure confidentiality as well as in accordance with any applicable privacy laws or regulations. Confidentiality should be maintained;
- iii. Options for daily health check screenings for children are provided in the CDC's supplemental "Guidance for Child Care Programs that Remain Open" (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html>) and in the CDC's "General Business FAQs" (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/general-business-faq.html>) for screening staff;
- iv. Make known that staff, volunteers and participants must stay home if they are sick or have a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher;

- v. Those who have frequent and close contact with others (e.g., health care workers, hairdressers, food service employees), should take extreme precautions to remain physically distant from other members of the community;
- vi. Inform anyone exposed to a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to stay home and self-monitor for symptoms. They must follow CDC guidance if symptoms develop. www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html.

d. Healthy hygiene practices

- i. Teach and reinforce washing hands for at least 20 seconds and covering coughs and sneezes with the inside of the elbow;
- ii. Train and reinforce use of face coverings among all staff and volunteers. Staff and volunteers should be reminded not to touch the face covering and to wash their hands frequently. Information should be provided on proper use, removal and washing of cloth face coverings. Masks are not required, but are strongly encouraged;
- iii. Participants who have coughs and sneezes associated with allergies are required to wear a mask out of charity for others;
- iv. Participants, volunteers and staff should sanitize their hands before entering;
- v. Have adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer), and tissues;
- vi. Post signs on how to stop the spread of COVID-19 such as proper handwashing, promote everyday protective measures, and properly wear a face covering;
- vii. Hand sanitizer dispensers should be placed at the doors of the church or in gathering spaces;
- viii. Restrooms will remain open and must have soap. Provide hand sanitizer dispensers, if possible.

3. Other considerations

- i. Each parish or organization should provide training for staff and volunteers on sanitizing procedures, social distancing and health screenings;
- ii. Frequent communication and training should be provided to all participants;
- iii. Have a roster of trained back-up staff or volunteers to maintain sufficient staffing ratios;
- iv. Designate a person or team to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns. Employees and volunteers should know who they are and how to contact them;
- v. Ensure that ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors, using

- fans or other methods. Do not open windows and doors if they pose a safety risk;
- vi. Check state and local health department notices about transmission in the area and adjust operations accordingly;
 - vii. Safe Environment protocols must be maintained.

4. Have a plan for when a staff member, child or participant becomes sick

- 1. Identify an area to separate anyone who exhibits COVID-like symptoms during hours of operation, and ensure that children are not left without adult supervision;
- 2. Establish procedures for safely transporting anyone sick home or to a health care facility, as appropriate;
- 3. Notify staff and families immediately of any possible case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA);
- 4. Close off areas used by any sick person and do not use them until they have been cleaned. Wait 24 hours before you clean or disinfect to reduce risk to the individuals cleaning. If it is not possible to wait 24 hours, wait as long as possible;
- 5. In the event a person diagnosed with COVID-19 is determined to have been in the building and poses a risk to the community, programs may consider closing for a short time (1-2 days) for cleaning and disinfection.

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