



Dear families,

I pray you continue to stay healthy and in good spirits. I thank you in advance for your continued partnership and for your patience as we finalize our reopening plan. Mater Dei's Leadership Team has spent the past months meticulously planning for a safe reopening of our campus. We know the importance of being thoughtful and flexible when it comes to adjusting to changing protocols and recommendations by the San Diego County Health Department and CDC, and we will be sharing all the details with our parent community shortly. In the meantime, I am happy to share more updates with you regarding MDJDA's plan for the fall. This is a long one, so bear with me and take your time to read it carefully.

As you may have heard, Gov. Gavin Newsom [issued an order](#) last Friday about reopening and closing schools. In the order, he is requiring all schools, both public and private, that are located in counties on the state's public watch list to start the school year with distance learning until certain conditions are met. Unfortunately with the rising Covid-19 cases in our region, San Diego County is currently on the monitoring list. The county would have to be off the monitoring list for 14 days for the school to reopen for in-person instruction. Since our first day of school is scheduled for August 18th, we should know by August 4th how we will start the school year. In addition, the new order clarifies some of the state-level expectations around face coverings and physical distancing, and when schools would close and reopen.

Ready for All Possible Scenarios

As we finalize our reopening plans, we want to assure you that we continue to be committed to our Catholic identity, the academic excellence of our dual language program, and the health and wellness of our school community. Mater Dei is prepared for both possible scenarios. We are actively working on both our Distance Learning Plan and our On-Campus Hybrid Plan. At the same time, if a full return to campus becomes a possibility, we will be excited and are prepared for that as well.

MDJDA is prepared to deliver a structured, rigorous, high-quality distance learning experience that focuses on the whole child while staying committed to our dual language program and our Catholic identity. At the same time, Mater Dei is ready to

reopen and move forward with our hybrid plan, in which 50% of the students are on campus at a time, as soon as the county gives us the clearance.

Supporting our Teachers with Professional Development

Regardless of how we start the school year, all of our teachers have participated and will continue to participate in professional development to support their distance learning or hybrid instruction. As part of our partnership with Boston College, ten of our teachers were able to participate in the Two-Way Immersion Network for Catholic Schools (TWIN-CS) Summer Academy, along with Mrs. Torres and I. All teachers will also be participating in the *Distance Learning Playbook* training. Based on Douglas Fisher, Nancy Frey, and John Hattie's NEW title, *The Distance Learning Playbook*, this Institute, led by Douglas Fisher, provides a clear plan for educators to be intentional and purposeful as we begin to re-open schools—whether that be physically or remotely.

High Quality, Rigorous Distance Learning Focused on the Whole Child

MDJDA leadership has spent recent months carefully reviewing teacher and parent feedback from our distance learning experience in the spring as well as research on best practices related to distance learning. We have been making adjustments and preparing for the possibility of distance learning. Rest assured that if we have to start the school year via distance learning or have to jump back into it after reopening in person, your students will take part in an unmatched distance learning experience. Our highly qualified teachers will deliver live instruction daily. We will provide parents with all the necessary textbooks and supplies so that their student can successfully continue learning from home.

The goal of MDJDA's Distance Learning Plan is to keep your children engaged so they can learn and grow, while also affording them with meaningful opportunities for connection and community. We will provide opportunities for them to read, write, share ideas, explore, create, play, and move. Perhaps most importantly, we will continue to provide them a sense of community and normalcy with a structured school day that continues the planned learning program five days a week.

Hybrid Reopening with 50% of Students on Campus

After participating in a couple of meetings last week with several key agencies, including San Diego County's Health and Human Services Agency, the San Diego County Office of Education, as well as the San Diego Diocese, Mater Dei Juan Diego Academy remains committed to safely reopening in the fall using a hybrid model with 50% of our students on campus at a time, five days a week, with weekly rotations. Once San Diego County is off the monitoring list, this is the plan we will move forward with. We have settled on weekly rotations based on the input from the parent community, faculty and

staff and taking into consideration health and safety guidance. The weekly rotations will provide an added layer of protection as we take the weekend to thoroughly disinfect in between cohorts, in addition to the enhanced cleaning and sanitization that will take place daily. All siblings have been scheduled on the same rotation. While we understand that we cannot mitigate all risk to our community, we have done our best to put in place policies and protocols that will address virus transmission risks on our campus.

Although our plan is to reopen with 50% of students on campus, MDJDA will offer a full on campus experience for students in grades TK and K, recognizing the special needs of this sector of the student population.

Please see the table below for more detailed information.

Mater Dei Juan Diego Academy Hybrid Reopening 2020-2021	
<p style="text-align: center;">Grades TK-K</p> <p style="text-align: center;">100% of Students on Campus</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Five Days a Week</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Monday-Thursday 8:00 am to 2:30 pm</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Friday Dismissal at 11:30 am</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">MDJDA will provide a superior on-campus experience five days a week, adhering to physical distancing guidelines, where students learn and grow through daily face-to-face interaction with teachers.</p> <hr style="width: 50%; margin: 10px auto;"/> <p>STUDENTS IN TK & Kindergarten will attend daily. Recognizing that daily face-to-face interactions are essential for students in TK & K, and given that most of these students are new to our school, MDJDA will offer a full on campus experience for these students. In addition to learning how to read and write, young children develop social skills by observing, mimicking, and interacting with their peers and adults around them.</p> <p>In order to maintain the required physical distance, we are moving to larger classrooms. Students will remain in their homeroom class and teachers will switch classrooms to continue to deliver a rigorous bilingual experience. All students will continue to participate in enrichment activities weekly.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Grades 1st-7th</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">MDJDA will provide a superior hybrid learning experience five days a week, where students continue to develop as bilingual and biliterate</p>

<p>50% of Students on Campus</p> <p>Five Days a Week</p> <p>Weekly Rotations</p> <p>A/B Track by Week</p> <p>Monday-Thursday 8:00 am to 2:40 pm</p> <p>Friday Dismissal at 11:40 pm</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">citizens through a combination of in-person and simultaneous virtual instruction.</p> <hr style="width: 50%; margin: 10px auto;"/> <p>STUDENTS IN 1st- 7th GRADE will be part of an on-campus A/B track. Through this hybrid learning model, students will spend a week on campus followed by a week at home receiving simultaneous instruction using Swivl technology. Students on campus will be divided into two smaller groups. They will remain in their homeroom class and teachers will switch classrooms to continue to deliver a rigorous bilingual education.</p> <p>Group A and B will alternate weeks on-campus. All students will continue to participate in enrichment activities weekly.</p>
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Option to Choose 100% Distance Learning

We understand there may be some families who would prefer to continue with distance learning even when we are able to reopen in a hybrid or full capacity. If your family decides distance learning is the best option, students will participate in live streamed classes for the first semester. You can make adjustments as necessary for second semester. We will provide parents all the necessary textbooks and supplies so that their student can successfully continue learning from home. [Please let us know if you would prefer the 100% distance learning option for the first semester by completing this form.](#) We also understand some families may want to be considered for 100% on campus if space permits. There is no guarantee that this accommodation is possible, but you may submit a request, along with an explanation for your request by completing the same form. We ask that you complete the form by July 27.

Keeping our Community Safe On and Off Campus

Let’s remember that we are in this together. We are a tight knit school community and at the same time, we are part of the larger San Diego community. It is our collective responsibility to do our part to help keep everyone safe. If we all do our part, our county will start to see the numbers of positive cases decrease. This way we can move out of the monitoring list and be given the green light to reopen schools.

What follows is a series of descriptions regarding the preparation that Mater Dei has undertaken for a safe reopening of the campus once San Diego County schools are

allowed to reopen. We have carefully examined all the local, state and CDC guidance to ensure we meet and exceed their guidance.

Campus Upgrades

In order to keep our community safe next year, Mater Dei has invested in a number of campus upgrades. Last week, we purchased plexiglass dividers for all desks to better protect students in the classroom. These dividers will add another layer of protection in addition to all of the other enhancements we have already made, including spacing out student desks to enhance physical distancing, HVAC cleaning and upgrades for improved ventilation and cleaner air in all indoor spaces, and purchasing no-contact, temperature screening kiosks and EmoCha Health access to facilitate speedy and effective health screening before entering campus (read more about this below).

As you know, we have also taken the critical step of hiring a school nurse who will be on campus daily. We are switching all the air dryers in restrooms to touchless paper towel dispensers and will be adding a water bottle filling station to Guadalupe Center. We are also placing several hand-washing stations around the campus. Finally, we have also purchased cloth face masks and face shields for every student and employee.

Investments in New Technology

Every MDJDA classroom will be equipped with the latest live-streaming technology called [Swivl](#). With this special technology, a Swivl robot is able to capture high-quality audio and video of the classroom, creating an experience that best emulates an in-classroom setting. Our IT team has been working tirelessly to make sure that our network can handle all of the additional traffic. We have recently increased our internet bandwidth to 4GB to allow for the increase in traffic on our network due to live-streaming classes. In addition to increasing our bandwidth, we have purchased a new Cisco Meraki Firewall to provide increased security to our network and we have also repaired our underground fiber connections.

Implementing New Health & Safety Protocols

We have signed a contract with [Emocha Health](#), which will assist us in tracking COVID-19 symptoms for our students, faculty and staff upon our return to campus. Every member of our community who enters campus daily will be asked to answer a few short questions as part of a self-check assessment that will be monitored by our school nurse. The Emocha assessment will take less than one minute to complete each day on a smartphone. Upon entering campus, all students, faculty and staff will also have their temperature taken by one of our seven no-contact, temperature screening kiosks.

We continue to work closely with Aramark, our custodial and maintenance provider to ensure a safe return to campus. Aramark's HVAC technicians have performed extensive predictive and preventive maintenance to ensure that all building ventilation systems are well maintained and running properly. In addition, HVAC technicians are ensuring that all building ventilation systems are operating according to the American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) recommendations to mitigate the risk of the transmission of COVID-19.

Our facilities team has implemented a protocol for deep cleaning classrooms each night. They are using Virex 2, a sanitizer that is EPA registered and approved for use in medical hospitals and schools. In addition, portable hand-sanitizing stations and hand washing stations will be placed at all high-traffic locations on campus. We will also provide hand sanitizer in every classroom.

Socio-emotional Wellness

We realize that COVID-19 has impacted students in different ways. We will be instituting a daily socio-emotional block where we can specifically address Social-Emotional Learning (SEL). In grades TK-5 we will be using Sanford Harmony and in grades 6th and 7th we have adopted School Connect. Faculty and Staff will receive professional development prior to the start of the school year to ensure a successful implementation.

Recess and Lunch

Recess and Lunch will take place outdoors. Students will remain in their small group cohorts for lunch and recess and physical distancing will still take place. There will be no sharing of equipment between students during recess. We have purchased individual picnic blankets for all students as well as individual-use recess equipment by grade level.

Daily Schedule

We will have staggered arrival and staggered dismissal times. However, siblings can still arrive and leave together. TK-1st graders will enter the campus starting at 8:00 am. 2nd-7th graders can enter the campus starting at 8:10 am. To allow extra time for screenings and temperature checks, prayer and pledge will start at 8:25 am. Students will make their way straight to the classroom. No parents will enter the campus. Parents can drop off their student at the gate or use the roundabout for drop-off. During this "soft start" period between 8:00-8:25 am, students will get themselves settled and start working on a simple warm-up activity as they enter the classroom and wait for all their classmates to arrive.

Similarly, we will have a staggered dismissal. Monday through Thursday, dismissal will start at 2:30 pm for TK-1st and 2:40 pm for 2nd-7th. Similarly, siblings can be picked up at the same time. Since no parents can enter the campus for pick-up, MDJDA will be using a dismissal app that will make it possible for parents to use the roundabout for pick up. Upon arrival, parents will check-in using the app to notify the school that they are in line for picking up their child. Students will be escorted to the roundabout for pickup. An MDJDA employee will check out the student(s) to the designated adult in the car.

On Fridays, students will have an early dismissal. TK-1st grade will be dismissed starting at 11:30 am and 2nd-7th will be dismissed starting at 11:40 am. Due to the earlier release time, students will bring a healthy snack to school on Fridays, but will not have a full lunch on campus on these days. The earlier release time will allow our teachers the additional time necessary to prepare their lessons, collaborate with their partner teachers, and provide office hours for students who are participating in 100% distance learning.

Child Care

OpenMinds will be back this fall to support you with your before and after school needs. You can enroll your child with OpenMinds for the days that he/she is on campus. You can reach out to Christine D'Amico with questions at 619-665-1264 or [click here for more information](#).

School Supplies

Anyone that may have missed the deadline to purchase school supplies will be able to pay the school directly for their child's kit. The school ordered kits for all students based on enrollment to ensure every child has its supply kit. We are setting up a store on our website and will contact anyone who missed the deadline so they can pay the school directly online.

Distance Learning Plan & Safe Reopening Plan

Our Reopening Plan document will provide more detailed information regarding the safe reopening of our campus. Our Distance Learning Plan document will similarly provide more detailed information regarding our Distance Learning program. We hope to share these documents with you in the coming weeks.

I would like to once again thank you for your flexibility and support. These continue to be unprecedented times. We couldn't do any of this without your support. Your emails and words of encouragement have meant a lot to our team over the last few months.

We are truly blessed to be part of such an amazing school community. I am grateful for your continued commitment and trust. You all remain in my prayers.

Blessings,