

ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

P.O. Box: 52232, DUBAI - U.A.E.

Tel. : +(971) 4 3370252

E-mail : maryscol@emirates.net.ae

Fax : +(971) 4 3368119

website : www.stmarysdubai.com



مدرسة القديسة مريم الكاثوليكية الثانوية

ص.ب. ٥٢٢٣٢، دبي - الإمارات العربية المتحدة

maryscol@emirates.net.ae : بريد إلكتروني

هاتف : ٣٣٧٠٢٥٢ ٤ ٩٧١ +

www.stmarysdubai.com : موقع ويب

فاكس : ٣٣٦٨١١٩ ٤ ٩٧١ +

OUR REF :

TRN : 104153998000003

Friday, 01 May 2026

To: Parents of students in ALL YEAR GROUPS

**A return to in-person learning at St. Mary's
(Years 1- 13 : those who have opted for in-person learning.)**

The only amendments made to this document (shared last week) have been put in a **yellow box**. (Information relevant to this has been updated in the circular).

Dear Parents,

Greetings from St. Mary's. Firstly, we would like to extend our sincere gratitude for your patience and support over the last many weeks. You have journeyed with us in a spirit of empathy and resilience and for that we want to say, *"Thank You."*

It has been a very rewarding experience to have been able to welcome the children back to in-person learning. We have seen happy faces all around the school campus and we are grateful that the school is once again filled with a "cheerful noise".

While the current phase is being managed through a flexible approach allowing for hybrid learning options, we strongly believe that students greatly benefit from in-person learning for a host of reasons that we all know as adults but particularly in the current context where students have missed direct instruction and the company of their peers. In addition, we would like parents to understand that the **KHDA** has currently adopted a flexible option to assist families who are still out of the country while they plan their return in the current phase. However, families in Dubai should have no reason not to send children back for in-person learning.

The education sector affirms that schools are fully equipped and ready to receive students providing a safe, structured and well organised learning environment. The education sector continues to monitor the situation on an ongoing basis, implementing the necessary measures to maintain readiness and respond effectively to evolving developments.

At St. Mary's, we have conducted a comprehensive assessment of school facilities in line with the mandated health and safety standards to ensure operational readiness. All our staff have been fully trained in line with the new set of protocols set by KHDA to include training in Psychological First Aid as well as certified CPR and First Aid Training for All teaching staff. Our teachers are therefore equipped to handle a wide range of situations effectively.

School transport services through STS are delivered through well-defined operational mechanisms that ensure efficiency, consistency and seamless service provision, in line with the highest safety standards.

The following have been updated from the General Regulations for the Use of Outdoor Areas and the Continuity of Educational, Extracurricular Activities and School Events.

Organisation of the School Day

- Students shall enter the school in a normal and orderly manner (already in place).
- Morning Assemblies will continue as part of regular school operations (We have indoor class assemblies in the summer months).
- Organised gatherings in outdoor areas are permitted under the supervision of school staff (breaks will be rotated so there is no crowding).

Activities and Events

- Extracurricular activities and school events may be conducted in outdoor spaces and areas in an organised and expanded manner.
- Break periods shall be structured within designated outdoor areas to support students' wellbeing and safety (breaks will be rotated so there is no crowding).
- School events shall continue, ensuring the smooth and orderly handover of students to parents.

General Regulations

- Outdoor extracurricular activities shall be implemented according to plans approved by the school administration.
- Clear evacuation routes from open areas to safe zones must be identified and approved.
- Regular drills on evacuation and emergency procedures shall be conducted.
- Outdoor activities shall be immediately suspended upon issuance of any official alert to ensure a prompt and safe response.
- In the event of any official alert, these guidelines shall be suspended, and schools shall revert to the main approved guidelines to ensure unified action and rapid response.
- Overcrowding in outdoor and open areas must be avoided to ensure student safety.

1) Our Foremost Priority: **Safety First**

The safety and wellbeing of every student and staff member remain our foremost priority. In any situation, we act swiftly to protect lives, maintain calm, and keep all students safe.

In any emergency:

- Lives come first – belongings are not important.
- Students kept safely in safe zones designated in a majority of classrooms or in safe corridor areas.

In the current phase:

- ~~No outdoor assemblies~~
- ~~No outdoor sports~~
- ~~No outdoor breaktime~~ (**Canteen not operational**)

2) Safe School Environment


What is a Safe Zone?

Safe Zone Rules as defined in the KHDA reopening protocols:


- Designated away from windows and glass
- If no safe zone exists, the room must not be used
- Reachable within 1 minute from any location
- Easy access without crossing outdoor or exposed areas
- Multiple safe zones per building to cover all areas

At St. Mary's, the vast majority of classrooms and corridors are designed to be secure spaces where students can shelter in place when required.

Classrooms with safe zones within:

- All safe zones in classrooms have been marked by a **GREEN TAPED LINE** – 
- These safe zones are away from windows
- Safe zones map available in every classroom
- Fire and evacuation route map in every classroom (has always been there)
- Clear signage available in ALL classrooms
- An emergency Grab Bag available in every classroom

Corridors with safe zones:

- Corridors with safe zones are also marked by a **GREEN TAPED LINE** 
- They are reachable within 1 minute from any room that needs to access them
- They are kept clear of obstacles and safe for movement
- Clear coloured arrows marked in corridors to show emergency exit routes

Staff Training

- All staff have been fully trained in line with the KHDA reopening protocols
- All teaching staff have received certified CPR and First Aid training
- All staff have been trained in Psychological First Aid

3) Following Official Alerts (Red Alarm)

We rely only on verified information government alerts to make decisions, so you can trust that our actions are always timely and followed correctly. The school strictly follows official government alerts only.

Parents are strongly urged:

- To **NEVER** rely on social media or rumours
- To wait for official school communication only from the Principal's office
- To always keep your SIMS PARENT APP handy

4) Guidelines for Parents, Teachers and Students (Before and After school)

Your collaboration and readiness before, during and after school hours is very important. Please follow these important rules as outlined for parents in the KHDA school reopening protocols.

PHASE 1: Before Arriving at School (Before leaving home)

- If no alert - Send your child to school as usual
- **If an alert is issued – DO NOT send your child; wait for official updates**
- Once the 'All clear' is received from official government channels- proceed to send your child to school.
- **If alert is received while en route-Proceed to the nearest safe, covered location**
- Wait for the 'All clear' from official government channel -proceed to school.

PHASE 2: At Drop Off

- If no alert – Parents drop off their children at the respective gates as usual
- No gathering or lingering at the school gates or in the quadrangles at all
- Students must enter the building immediately
- ~~NO ASSEMBLY~~
- **If an alert is issued – Parents and students to enter the school building (if entry is safe) and move to the nearest SAFE ZONE.**
- No waiting outside the school

PHASE 4: During Dismissal and Return

- If no alert- Dismissal proceeds normally in an organised, swift, and gradual manner. (We will be undertaking a staggered dispersal)
- **If alert is issued – Dismissal is suspended immediately**
- **Students are not allowed outside the building**
- **If there is an alert during dismissal-Parent and student proceed to a safe covered location**
- **No standing in open areas**
- **If the student is alone-proceed to a safe covered place immediately**
- **Do not leave the covered place until alert is lifted**
- When alert is lifted dismissal resumes in an organised and gradual manner
- Students handed over to parents/ carers in an organised way
- No gathering in front of gates and sidewalks

5) Guidelines for Parents, Teachers and Students During School Hours

PHASE 3: While Inside the School

- If no alert- Classes continue as normal
- ~~No morning assembly, No sports outside~~
- ~~No activities in quadrangles, open areas or near windows/glass~~
- ~~No outside break time –students will be in class during the break time~~
- **If an alert is issued-Stop all activities immediately**
- **Move to nearest safe zone**
- **Students sit in low, calm position away from windows and glass**
- **If staff are outside any building, proceed immediately to the nearest safe zone**

Parents should

- **NOT** rush to school
- **WAIT** for official communication via the SIMS PARENT APP or email

6) Student Wellbeing and Emotional Support

A calm, caring and nurturing environment helps students feel safe. Our teachers are trained to support every child's emotional needs.

The school ensures:

- A calm and supportive environment
- Continuous monitoring and supervision of children
- Regular wellbeing check ins
- Regular Mindful activities conducted with students
- Wellbeing resources also shared with parents to be used at home

Teachers and staff are trained in:

- Psychological First Aid (PFA)
- Supporting anxious or distressed students

7) Support for Students of Determination

We carefully support Students of Determination, and our counsellors have been checking in on them regularly throughout the last few weeks. We have individual plans and dedicated staff to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students with additional needs.

Individual support plans are in place for those with:

- Mobility needs- Evacuation chairs are kept in those rooms where students with mobility needs will require them.
- Visual/Auditory needs
- Autism and sensory needs
- Dedicated buddies and assigned staff for safety

8) Emergency Response Actions

In an emergency, we follow either of two clear actions: **SHELTER IN PLACE** (within a safe zone) or **EVACUATE**. Both will be practiced regularly.

- Shelter in Place (Stay safe within a Safe Zone)
- Students remain inside safe zones
- Students sit low and calm until further instructed
- Evacuation (If required to safer zones)
- Students move safely to Assembly Points
- Emergency services are contacted immediately



9) Risk Levels

A simple colour -coded system is in place so everyone understands what to do

- **GREEN** (Normal Conditions) ●
- School operates normally (indoors only)
- **NO OUTDOOR** Sports/ Assemblies/ Breaktime
- **RED** (High Risk) ●
- Immediately shift to distance learning
- School will reopen only after official approval



10) Rapid Response – The First 3 Minutes

The first three minutes are the most important. Our staff will act swiftly, staying calm and will account for every student.

- Immediate decision (Shelter in Place or Evacuate)
- Safe and calm student and staff movement
- Headcount and reporting

11) Communication with Parents

SMCHS, Dubai is committed to maintaining clear and effective communication with families in an emergency or disaster situation.

Our communication policy during an emergency is guided by KHDA regulation directives:

- The School Principal is the sole authorized voice. All other staff refer parents to management- NO EXCEPTIONS
- While an incident is underway, the principal's focus will be entirely on the students and MUST not answer any individual parent calls.
- **The school will only use official channels to communicate and particularly during an Emergency, will use the SIMS Parent App and parent e-mail.**
- The school does not use Social Media channels and WhatsApp messaging for communication is strictly prohibited.

During Emergencies:

- Do not call teachers directly.
- Do not share unverified information.
- Do not visit school unless instructed to do so.
- The Principal is the sole voice in an emergency.

12) Important Reminders for Parents

- **Do not take or share photos/videos during emergencies.**
- Always follow school instructions carefully and strictly.
- Ensure that your contact details are updated with the school.
- Keep your SIMS PARENT APP ACTIVE AND ACCESSIBLE

13) Learning Continuity

Learning continues no matter the varying situations. We are fully ready to switch between in-person and distance learning as the government authorities mandate us to do. Distance learning continues for families still abroad but will look different since we are now in revision phase for the final examinations.

Our Commitment: At St. Mary's, we endeavour to care for every child entrusted to our care. We have made sure that all protocols have been adhered to, in order to keep your child safe, calm and learning every day. Your trust and collaboration are essential in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the children in this new phase of reopening. Let us work together to welcome the children back to school.

For Parents of In-person students – An overview of what next week will look like.

Monday, 4th May to Friday, 8th May 2026

Morning Arrival at School: The school gates will only open at **6:35 am** and not before. Parents who drop their children to school are strongly reminded that children **MUST NEVER** be left waiting outside the school gates. If you arrive early, please wait with your child in the car in a secured parking sport until 6:35 am. Kindly do not park your car in front of the gate or on the road. **THE CHURCH GATES ARE NOT TO BE USED FOR ENTRY TO SCHOOL ON ANY ACCOUNT.**

School begins at 7:10 am and children should go directly to their respective classes as they arrive at school. Children must be in school latest by 7:05 am.

Please remind children that:

- They should not linger at the gate or in the quadrangles.
- They must move directly to their classes.

Things to be brought to school through the week.

- Regular stationery and their refill pad
- All timetabled books and revision sheets
- Enough water and snacks (The canteen will not be operational)
- Any books that they would like to revise from.
- A fully charged laptop or tablet on days when they have the NGRT exam.

Afternoon Staggered Dismissal from school in the current phase (To prevent overcrowding):

- Students from Years 1-4 who are collected by their parents or carers **MUST BE** collected by **1:20 pm SHARP**. Please go directly to your child's class to collect them. Please wear a lanyard with a badge that clearly states **YOUR NAME, YOUR CHILD'S NAME AND CLASS (For Example: Joe Blogg, parent of Sue Blogg Year 5A)**
- If an older sibling collects a younger sibling from Years 1-4, they too must wear the same badge, and they will be allowed to collect their sibling at 1:20 pm and leave with them at the same time.
- All children who leave by themselves (those who walk, use public / private transport or the metro) will leave at 1:30 pm.
- Children who use the STS buses will leave at 1:40 pm to board the buses.

Friday Staggered Dismissal from school in the current phase: (To prevent overcrowding)

- Students from ALL cohorts whose parents pick them up or who use public / private transport will be dismissed at **11:00 am SHARP**.
- STS Bus users will be dismissed at **11:15 am SHARP**.

7th and 11th May 2026 are examination days with the regular school timings 7:10 am to 1:50 pm.

8th May, Friday is also an examination day with the regular Friday timing of 7:05 to 11:15 am.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. Paul Asir Joseph
(Principal)

