



ST. STEPHEN'S SCHOOL

Via Aventina 3 00153 Rome, Italy

Tel. +39 06 5750605

www.sssrome.it

Reopening St. Stephen's

July 10, 2020

Dear St. Stephen's families,

Hopefully, everyone is getting some much-needed rest. Before commenting on next year, we want to celebrate the Class of 2020 and their teachers. We enjoyed a lovely (10-hour) graduation ceremony wherein local seniors came with parents, individually, and received their diploma, an advisor tribute, a yearbook, and a framed painting of the school. We also celebrate their IB cohort, who achieved a 100% pass rate and an average score of 35.2 – extraordinary results in these circumstances.

The coronavirus pandemic necessitates a new approach to teaching and learning at St. Stephen's. Our approach is based on these principles:

- honoring our core values: care, integrity, creativity, integrity, and scholarship
- prioritizing student, employee, and family well-being
- emphasizing personal responsibility

We have spent much of the spring and early summer making plans for reopening. We have consulted numerous organizations, including the *Council of International Schools*, *The Association of Boarding Schools*, the *Mediterranean Association of International Schools*, the *National Association of Independent Schools*, and, locally, the *Rome International Schools' Association*. We have also formed a *Medical Advisory Team*, composed of four doctors here in Rome, two of whom are epidemiologists.

Based on this extensive consultation, we can now share plans for reopening, which are in full compliance with the Italian decree (a more detailed description can be found on our website next week.) Given the variability of the situation, additional information will be sent to all families in mid to late August. [Please also remember that the first tuition installment is due August 1.](#) The school currently has a waiting list, and we may not be able to guarantee a space for your child if payment is not made on time.

Will school reopen in person?

Yes. Based on the current health conditions in Italy, we anticipate opening in person. [Here](#) is the revised school calendar.

Will students and employees need to be tested before entering school?

Current Italian privacy law prevents the requirement of testing. However, we are asking every student and employee to voluntarily test before returning to campus. More detailed information about testing options will be provided in August.



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What nursing and medical resources does the school retain?

We have added a third nurse, who will serve as a residential nurse, giving us round-the-clock presence, and who will staff the infirmary if there are admitted students. We also retain a licensed Medical Director who triages all moderate and serious cases of any nature. He is part of our Medical Advisory Team, which includes three other Italy-licensed doctors, who are helping us extensively with planning and will provide consultation if there is an emergency.

Will there be new cleaning procedures?

Yes. We will not only follow the Italian health ministry guidelines for sanification but will take additional steps to ensure cleanliness. Surfaces will be cleaned throughout the day, we are installing additional hand-washing and hand-gel stations throughout the school, and deep-cleaning of all spaces will occur on a scheduled basis.

Will thermal scanners be used at the entry point to school?

Yes.

Are masks required?

Yes. The current Italian health decree requires masks for everyone in our school. Day students will need to arrive with their own mask. Boarding students will be provided masks but are also free to bring a preferred mask.

How will the physical space of the campus be organized?

We will meet or, when possible, exceed the health decree for physical distancing in all settings. We have purchased additional furniture to assist with compliance. We are removing non-essential items from classrooms to allow maximum distancing. Where possible, hallways and stairways will be one-directional. To ensure smaller class sizes, we have rented two additional classroom structures on campus, created two new classrooms within the building, and divided some larger classes into smaller sections.

Will there be a revised daily schedule?

We are currently exploring minor modifications of our daily schedule, which will support both learning and health. Detailed information will be published in August.

Is there a plan for a government-mandated school closure?

Yes. All faculty and administrators have worked actively to develop an exciting blended learning pedagogy that allows a seamless transition from in-person to online learning. A side benefit is that this exploration has led to the inclusion of more digital resources for courses that meet in-person. Boarding students will receive separate information about how school closure will affect them.

How will meals be affected?

We will maintain a catering service. Research has shown that food prepared on-site provides the least health risk, and we will maintain social distancing requirements during mealtime. Additional spaces will be used for dining.

What about after-school activities?



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Sports will continue in a modified version, and there will likely not be competitions in the fall. Practices will focus on non-contact skill development. As much as possible, we will practice outdoors. Service-learning activities will be determined individually at the start of the year, in general, emphasizing outdoor activities like gardening and park clean-ups.

What about the arts?

All art courses will meet. Music classes will be moved to larger spaces. Performances are suspended until the local health decree allows such activity.

What about school trips?

We are exploring a one-day fall trip if conditions permit. Spring trips will remain Italy-based, but only if conditions permit (we will remain in classes if trips are suspended or postponed).

What about the residential program?

To reduce risk, boarders will live in singles. Older students will live in a beautiful and secure local setting formerly occupied by study-abroad university students. More details about boarding **are available [here](#)**.

Please check the **Reopening St. Stephen's** page on the School's website periodically throughout the summer for updates.

We very much look forward to seeing your child in September!

Eric Mayer

Head of School