

**The following article is a reprint from the Chicago Tribune.*

Please visit their [website](#) to read related stories.

Fenwick, Trinity high schools announce reopening plans, will offer in-person, virtual instruction

By STEVE SCHERING

PIONEER PRESS |

AUG 03, 2020 AT 6:13 PM



Fenwick High School students will begin the 2020-21 school year in a 'hybrid' learning model, with half of the students attending in-person classes on any given day. (Steve Schering / Pioneer Press)

Students attending private high schools in Oak Park and River Forest are expected to begin the school year with a combination of in-person and virtual instruction, officials recently announced.

Fenwick to operate with ‘hybrid’ learning model

Fenwick High School in Oak Park said its students will have a “hybrid” approach when its school year begins, with half of the students attending classes on campus while the other half take virtual classes on any given day. Trinity High School in River Forest said its students would attend classes in-person four days each week and take part in virtual classes the remaining day.

Father Richard Peddicord, president of Fenwick, said the classes would be synchronous, with half the students engaging in e-learning and watching the in-class lesson the other half are receiving at the school.

“Let’s say there are 30 kids in an algebra class,” Peddicord said. “Fifteen would attend on Monday while the other 15 participate through technology. Then the virtual students are in school the next day, while the other group is [attending virtual classes]. We are really envisioning five full days of instruction, but some of it will be remote and some of it will be in-person.”

Peddicord said the split model is needed due to space limitations at Fenwick, which is not able to have adequate social distancing of students to allow for full class participation. The school’s expected enrollment for 2020-21 is about 1,085 students, he said.

Students and staff who are inside the building will be required to wear face coverings. Prior to entering, everyone will be required to undergo a symptom screening and will have their temperatures checked.

The hybrid model was approved by the board of directors at Fenwick, and included input from two task forces that focused on academics, as well as health and safety.

“[Principal Peter Groom] and I had been in communication with other Catholic high schools and the Archdiocese weekly,” Peddicord said. “There was lots of great sharing of best practices on how to come back. Other Catholic schools are coming back with five days a week of full attendance, but they’re the ones who have smaller enrollments and bigger

facilities. We all want to do our best and the safety and well-being of our students, faculty and staff has to be top of mind every day of the week.”

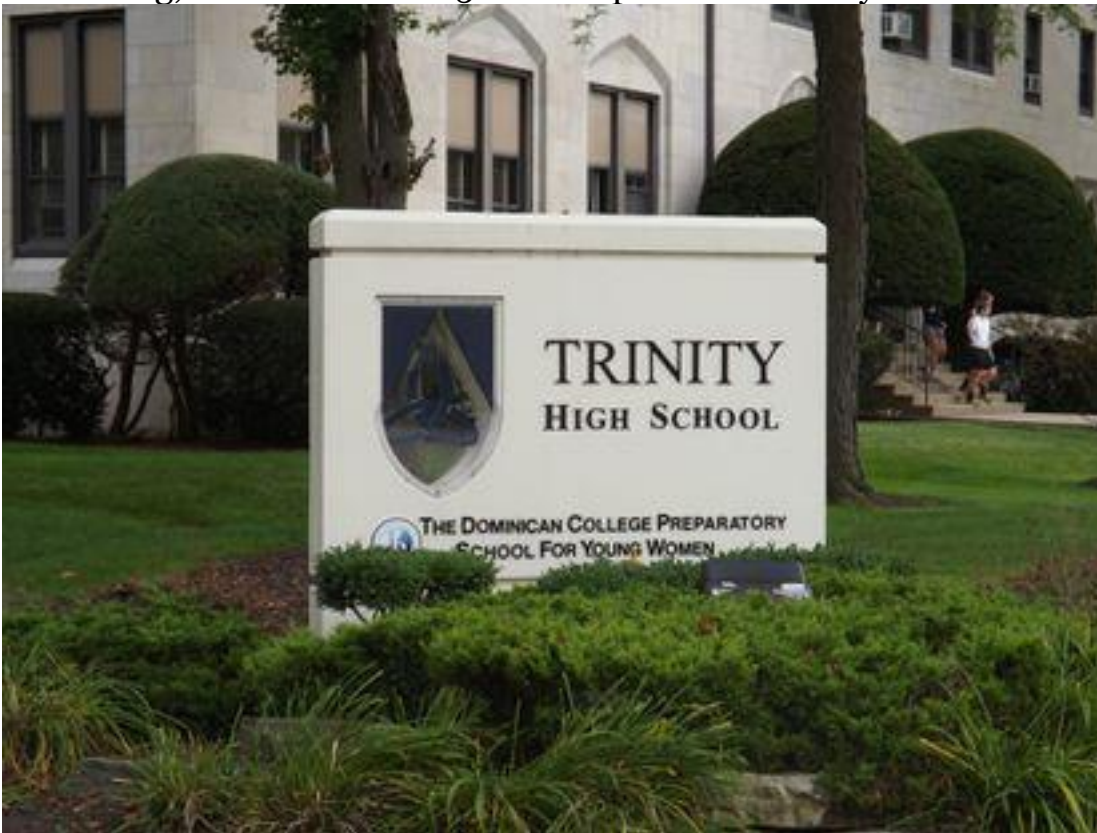
The school also has two full-time nurses on staff, both of whom have completed professional development and contact tracing courses around COVID-19, Peddicord said. The school’s social workers will also be available to all students to address any emotional or psychological needs as the school year progresses.

As scheduled, incoming freshmen are set to return to Fenwick on Aug. 19, while the semester will begin for half the student body in-person on Aug. 24.

Trinity to offer in-person classes, ‘Our size is kind of our strength’

In River Forest, Trinity High School is planning to welcome back its 400 students and 75 employees to the building on Aug. 24, with students being on-campus for classes on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Students would take remote learning courses on Wednesdays.

Vice president of student life Susan Bedell said students will follow their traditional block scheduling, which has four 85-minute periods each day.



Students at Trinity High School in River Forest will attend classes on-campus four days a week when the 2020-21 school year begins Aug. 24. (Steve Schering / Pioneer Press)
“We shortened the lunch hour because they won’t have an activity period,” Bedell said.

“We’ll put students in a 10-person or less lunch group facilitated by an adult. Every single student desk in a classroom will have a 360 degree separation of six feet. Our size is kind of our strength here where we can keep students safe and stick to their traditional schedule.”

Students will be assigned a specific entrance to enter the building each day, and five infrared scanners will take the temperature of everyone entering the building.

“A staff member will be standing there, but not using a thermometer on each student,” Bedell said. “Prior to arrival on campus, we’re asking students to take their temperature at home first so they can spare themselves the travel if they’re over 100.4 degrees.”

All water fountains at Trinity have been converted to touchless and refillable water bottle fountains and hand sanitizer has been placed in every room. Prior to leaving their classroom, students will be required to sanitize their own desks, and students will have the option to sanitize their new desk in their next classroom.

When students return, they’ll have to bring their own lunches as lunch service will not be offered, and students will have the option to eat lunch or take part in classes outside, weather permitting.

The school will still have passing periods and one-way stairways; however, access to lockers will be prohibited, with students being allowed to carry a book bag throughout the day.

Trinity families wishing to have their student attend only virtual learning courses will be able to do so, but must commit to e-learning for an entire quarter, Bedell said.

“For our students who opt for e-learning to stay at home, they will be able to watch a live video feed from inside the classroom,” Bedell said. “Their day will start at 8 a.m., they’ll take attendance and go in and out of class periods. We have installed cameras and microphones in all of our teaching spaces so students can follow along with live instruction.”

Both schools said they are prohibited from allowing more than 50 people in any given space, and officials said they will continue to work with the Illinois State Board of Education, the Cook County health department and other agencies in monitoring their reopening plans throughout the new school year.