March 13, 2020

Prepare, Prevent, and Pray

Dear Catholic School Families and Employees:

As we continue to monitor the circumstances surrounding COVID-19, the Catholic Schools Office continues to receive recommendations from the CDC, World Health Organization, New Hampshire Department of Health (NHDH), and the New Hampshire Department of Education (NH-DOE). Currently, we do not have a reported case of COVID-19 in one of our Catholic schools. With this in mind, we will continue operations of our schools, however, given the fluidity of the situation, we are proceeding with extreme caution and we will continue to reassess our plan on a daily basis.

In the meantime, our plan includes preparing for the remote instruction of our students, preventing contact with this virus as best we can, and praying as a Catholic community of Faith. First we have been preparing as a system of schools in the event that one school, multiple schools, or all of our Catholic schools need to transition to the remote instruction of students at home. We have already developed a system-wide *Remote Instruction Plan* for submission to the NH-DOE, so that the state will recognize our days of remote learning as actual school days. Please be aware that this is the reason students will be taking all their academic materials home each day. This will ensure that students and parents have the materials necessary if the decision to transition to remote instruction is made at any given moment.

This Monday and Tuesday teams of teachers will be receiving intense professional development on the implementation of Google Classroom and remote instruction. Professional development will continue throughout next week as schools and teachers begin organizing their plans for the potential of providing lessons via remote instruction.

When and how will we make the decision to transition to remote instruction? Today the CDC has released the attached decision-making tool for schools and school districts to use when discerning whether to close or move to remote instruction due to COVID-19. We will use this tool in our decision making process moving forward.

Second, we will continue the following protocols and preventative measures in the schools.
- No school related business or academic trips before April 30, 2020
- Schools will reinforce "Stay home if you are sick" policy for students and staff

- No large meetings/assemblies for the next four weeks
- Postponement of fundraising events such as galas and auctions will be considered
- 14-day quarantine of students and employees who have immediate family who returned home from level 1, 2 or 3 countries as identified by the CDC or have any household member quarantined for possible exposure to COVID-19
- Best practices for disinfecting and sanitizing the schools including common areas
- Proactive measures at home including keeping students home if exhibiting ANY signs of cold or flu, washing student clothing daily, reduce/monitor the interaction of children with the elderly and those whose health and immunity are compromised
- Refrain from handshaking, hugging, or personal contact of any kind.
- Frequently washing hands with soap for 20 seconds (the time it takes to pray the Hail Mary twice) at every opportunity.
- Refrain from touching any part of the face, especially the eyes, nose and mouth
- Respect the individual decisions made by families and support them in the education of their children

Finally, and most importantly, in such times the Church and her faithful must pray, fast, and do penance for those most vulnerable and most affected by this virus. We are asking every school community to remember to pray, especially through the intercession of our Blessed Mother, for the health and safety of all our school communities and all those most vulnerable to the effects of this virus.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

David A Thibault

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