



*Office for Catholic Schools*  
*Diocese of Scranton*

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March 12, 2020

Dear Families,

We write to you with an update to our recent communication regarding the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) and the proactive measures we continue to take in our schools.

While there are reported cases of COVID-19 in the Continental United States, the current risk level of COVID-19 continues to remain low in our region. Additionally, there are no known cases of COVID-19 within our schools. As a measure of precaution and in an effort to remain prepared should the risk level change, we have been using this time to plan and prepare for any potential impact COVID-19 might have on our schools, including possible extended closure.

We understand the concern COVID-19 is causing, as well as the potential impact an extended school closure could have on all of our families. With that, we write to assure you that we will continue to make decisions for our families that are in the best interest of the health and safety of our students, faculties, and school families using the latest information provided from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and state and local health authorities. We have been meeting frequently with the heads of all Diocesan departments, local government groups, and the Education Committee of the PA Catholic Conference, who is in constant communication with the PA Department of Education and the PA Department of Health.

At this time, we are not closing school due to COVID-19 related issues; however, plans are in place should the need arise at any time. Specifically, administrators and faculties used time from yesterday's professional development to plan how they will continue to provide instruction for students in the event of an extended school closure. Using emails and phone conferencing, each teacher will be prepared to share daily lesson plans and materials with the parents of their students so students can continue working on assignments. There will be more detailed information specific to this communication if the decision to close a school for an extended period of time is necessary.

We remain committed to limiting the exposure to COVID-19 within our schools. As such, we continue to take additional sanitizing precautions in our classrooms and shared areas using cleaning solutions that kill the Coronavirus. We ask that you assist with these efforts in your homes, too. In order to support the prevention of viruses at all schools, we recommend that your child stay home from school if experiencing flu or cold symptoms. To decide whether or not to send your child to school, please consider the following guidelines:

**Guidance to keep student home from school due to illness:**

- Fever-greater than 100°F and your child should stay home until at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever. This should be determined without the use of fever-reducing medicines (any medicine that contains ibuprofen or acetaminophen).
- Vomiting (even once)

- Diarrhea
- Chills
- General malaise or feelings of fatigue, discomfort, weakness or muscle aches
- Frequent congested (wet) or croup cough
- Lots of nasal congestion with frequent blowing of nose

As mentioned in our previous communication regarding COVID-19, any student, teacher, or administrator who has traveled to a COVID-19 risk level three or risk level four location, as indicated by the CDC, or who has been exposed to COVID-19, will be required to stay out of school for 14 days. Students, teachers, and/or administrators will only be permitted to re-enter after the 14 day removal if they provide a medical doctor's note confirming they are free from flu-like symptoms. We will also be putting out guidance regarding all travel in the near future.

We ask that all members of our school community assist with the prevention of spreading viruses by following the CDC's recommendations:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Get a flu vaccine.

We acknowledge that we all need to do our part to limit the exposure of and to stay educated on this ever-evolving virus. To find the latest information from CDC, please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>. We will also include updates and information our website at [www.dioceseofscranton.org/catholic-schools](http://www.dioceseofscranton.org/catholic-schools).

Thank you for your cooperation with this matter!

Sincerely,

Jason W.S. Morrison  
Diocesan Secretary of Education/  
Chief Executive Officer

Kristen Donohue  
Superintendent of Schools