



**ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE of ORANGE**

PASTORAL CENTER: DEPARTMENT OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
13280 CHAPMAN AVENUE, GARDEN GROVE, CA 92840

March 12, 2020

Dear Catholic School Parents:

May God's blessings be with you during this Lenten season. Because of the spread of COVID-19 in our state and following the recommendations of the California Department of Public Health, we may need to take the necessary step of temporarily closing a school or schools and implement distance learning. I am writing to tell you about the circumstances under which we would close a school, and the steps we will take to ensure continuity of learning for students while they are home using technology.

Circumstances Under Which We Would Close a School

Our policy for the temporary closure of a school follows the recommendations of the California Department of Public Health from their document "School Guidance on Novel Coronavirus or COVID-19" dated March 7, 2020. In the section "Scenario III: Measures to be taken if one student, teacher or staff member tests positive for COVID-19 and exposed others at the school," the document reads:

"If one student, teacher or staff member tests positive for COVID-19 and exposed others at the school, CDPH recommends that school administrators implement the following steps:

- In consultation with the local public health department, the appropriate school official may consider if school closure is warranted and length of time based on the risk level within the specific community as determined by the local public health officer.
- In consultation with the local public health department, school officials may determine readmission criteria after the school closures."

In short, if a student, teacher, or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, I will contact the health department and move to initiate a two-week closure of the campus, effective immediately.

In a subsequent section entitled "Scenario IV," the same document provides for the closure of more than one school in a region. I would make such a decision in consultation with the appropriate public authorities and Bishop Kevin Vann.

Preparation for Distance Learning

To keep our students engaged, learning, and in community with each other during a trying time, we are preparing all of our schools to support distance learning for all students. Our teachers and principals are creating and preparing plans for remote instruction. We have provided our principals with a vast amount of resources related to distance learning. On Friday, March 13th my team and I will meet with principals to discuss the resources and plan for a potential school closure. Your individual school principal and I will communicate with you about next steps should we have to close your school.



In terms of distance learning, the intent is not to replace the experience a student would have in his or her classroom, but to support them with continued learning while away from campus. The lesson plans and activities the teacher has organized will help them to progress to the end of the year goals. If a school does need to suspend on-campus instruction, teachers and principals will be available during the time of school closure to help answer any questions you may have regarding the assignments.

Please know that we will work together with the appropriate public health officials to return students to school as quickly and as safely as possible in the event of a closure. We know that the uncertainty of potential school closures is stressful for all involved, but we remain focused on the health and wellbeing of our students, faculty and staff, and all of their families.

Our Lady of Guadalupe, pray for us.

In mission,

Erin C.O. Barisano, Ed.D.
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