



DIOCESE OF KANSAS CITY - ST. JOSEPH

One Family: RESTORED IN CHRIST - EQUIPPED FOR MISSION

OFFICE of CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

March 13, 2020

RE: Coronavirus

Dear Parents,

Keeping students and staff healthy is a top priority for the Kansas City-St. Joseph Diocese and each of our schools and early educational centers. As with many other things in a school and centers, it is critical for the parents, students and staff partner to minimize the impact a communicable disease can have on our community. The Kansas City-St. Joseph Catholic schools and centers will provide the best education for its students even during the challenges provided by the coronavirus pandemic. The following should help schools, centers, and parents during a communicable disease outbreak as we could be experiencing in the next few weeks.

Stay At Home: The fear of exposing our student population to the virus is particularly acute considering some families are planning to travel during their school's spring break next week. **Let me make an appeal in the strongest possible terms.** If parents, their children, or relatives have been in contact or might have been in contact with someone who has been exposed to the coronavirus, parents should immediately notify the principal or director of their child's school or center and be prepared to self-quarantine entire family. Any child self-quarantined will be provided the opportunity to complete the required schoolwork and stay on track with the rest of their class. Preventing others from being exposed to this disease or any disease is always the right thing to do. Please think of the greater good of our community and stay at home.

School or Center Closure: If governmental officials (local school districts, local county health departments, or the CDC) or the Diocese determine the need to close all or part of the Kansas City-St. Joseph Catholic schools or centers, we are preparing to provide home-based education for all our students. Each school or center is in the process of developing lessons students can complete at home during a school closure which are as close to a face-to-face school experience as possible. The delivery system and other components of the system will be slightly different at each school. Some schools or centers will extensively use technology while other schools or centers will provide paper lessons or a combination of the two. We are committed to doing the best that we can if school or center closure happens.

Prevention Steps at School/Center: The diocesan schools/centers will adhere to the following precautions to ensure student and staff health:

- School administrators and nurses monitor and track student illnesses, and review [CDC and state health department guidance](#).
- Schools will use both routine cleaning methods and extra disinfection efforts in classrooms and school/center buildings that have reported an uptick in illnesses.

- To ensure a proactive approach, schools/centers will evaluate their current crisis and emergency procedures related to health and illness in collaboration with local health departments and law enforcement partners.

Prevention Steps at Home: Respiratory viruses, such as the coronavirus, are transmitted from person to person when an infected person coughs or sneezes, or when a person touches something that has the virus on it and then touches his or her mouth, eyes or nose. While most of the population is at a greater risk of contracting seasonal influenza than coronavirus, it is essential that we partner to prevent the spread of all illnesses by embracing the following practices:

- Stay home if you are sick with the flu or are presenting symptoms of the flu to prevent spreading it to others at school and in the workplace. If you believe you or your children are becoming ill with influenza-like symptoms (such as fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue), contact your local healthcare provider. Home-based school work will be provided.
- Practice frequent hand washing using soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. You may also use hand sanitizer when it is difficult to wash your hands.
- Avoid touching your mouth, nose and eyes because the virus can spread when your hands touch surfaces infested with germs.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing and sneezing. If a tissue is not available, sneezing or coughing into the upper portion of your shirt sleeve and avoid sneezing or coughing into your hands (which are more likely to touch surfaces and other people and spread the disease).
- Don't share drinks, water bottles, eating utensils or cell phones with others.
- Practice "social distancing," especially in the case of a pandemic. Stand at least three feet away from others if you or the other person is infected with the flu.
- Ensure children and adults are fever-free for 24 hours without medication before returning to work or school.
- Get a flu shot.
- More information can be found at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus or health.mo.gov/coronavirus.

If parents have concerns about what is being done to prevent children or staff from being infected, please feel free to contact your child's school or center. It is important that parents and the schools/centers work together to make the most of a difficult situation.

Sincerely,



Dr. Dan Peters
Superintendent of Schools
Kansas City-St. Joseph Diocese