

Catholic Diocese of Saginaw

6/26/20

Dear Catholic School Community,

On Tuesday, June 30, Governor Whitmer is scheduled to release a statement related to the 2020-21 school year. It is likely that the statement and related documents will include specific mandates that all schools must meet to return to in-person instruction, as well as recommended (but not required) guidance and best practices for schools. Once the full documentation has been released, I will begin a thorough review to determine the necessary and appropriate actions to ensure that our schools are well positioned to resume in-person instruction in the fall.

In anticipation of this review process, meetings have already been scheduled for June 30 as well as July 1, with fellow non-public school leaders across the state and with principals throughout the diocese to discuss next steps. The Back to School Task Force will also meet next week to discuss possible modifications and adjustments to pending recommendations. Once the task force is able to update its guidance, it will be released to our schools. Each individual school will then need to review the task force document in light of its own educational setting and plan accordingly. Once a school has completed this process, I fully expect that the principal will communicate with his/her school community. We will work diligently to complete this important work in a timely fashion. Your patience is appreciated as we work through this crucial portion of our process. Please note that given the diversity among our schools in terms of enrollment, building footprint, and community needs, plans may vary from school to school.

Regardless of what is released on June 30, changes and revisions are likely as we move through the summer. Furthermore, even if we begin the year with in-person instruction, school closings related to local cases of COVID-19 and/or future executive orders closing schools, are possible. We must be prepared for virtual instruction. Our schools are reviewing various learning management systems (LMS) and will be providing training for students, parents, and faculty to ensure that we are well positioned for virtual instruction should that be necessary.

I am grateful for the work that the Back to School Task Force has completed over the past few weeks. Each focus group has identified crucial issues that they feel must be addressed to ensure a safe return to school. You will find a brief summary of their work below. The task force is in the early stages of identifying possible solutions to these key challenges.

FAITH and WELLNESS

1. All School Mass: how can our larger schools continue to provide Mass
2. Illness Policies: updates, revision, enforcement
3. Social-Emotional Health of Staff and Students: who can, should, and will lead this process on the individual school level
4. Support for Teachers and Families: being prepared for possible hybrid/virtual instruction; how can we support all stakeholders
5. Mental Health: identifying possible supports/resources

FACILITIES

1. Janitorial changes/modifications: cleaning process, equipment
2. Signage, notification, and communication of new policies and procedures
3. Social distancing in classrooms, shared spaces/resources, and before/after school care
4. Shared resources/spaces: cafeteria, gyms, restrooms...
5. Food Services and cafeteria: lunch process, food distribution

INSTRUCTION

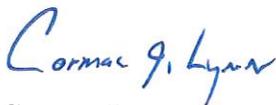
1. Identifying safe, appropriate, and effective communication platform(s) - learning management system (LMS)
2. Providing training for teachers, parents, and students on LMSs to prepare for online learning and teaching
3. When and what will we assess to gauge student learning during the closure / establish learning goals
4. Mitigating academic consequences from COVID-19
5. Format options: hybrid. virtual, in-person; alternative scheduling
6. Safely providing hands-on exploration and instruction for our youngest learners

OPERATIONS

1. Building Flow: Arrival, Dismissal, changing of classrooms/recess, visitors
2. School Policy/Procedure for illness and wellness checks: recording temps, threshold for staying home & how long before returning to school, contact tracing/self-check forms, attendance policy
3. Communication protocol related to COVID-19 notifications
4. Athletics: transportation, social distancing for spectators, cleaning, and disinfecting equipment
5. Shared Resources: changing of rooms/ computer/art/science labs, libraries, music class. How to disinfect/share resources

Thank you for your continued support as we move forward. I will work diligently to keep you informed of our progress as we forge ahead. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions, comments, and/or concerns.

Respectfully,



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