



Catholic Diocese of Saginaw

8/21/20

Dear Catholic School Community,

Over the coming weeks, all of our Catholic schools across the diocese are scheduled to welcome students back to school for in-person instruction. The ability to provide in-person instruction is based on specific guidelines established by the MI Safe Start Plan, the Return to Learn Roadmap, and county health departments. In phase 4 or higher of the MI Safe Start Plan, in-person instruction is permissible. All of our schools are located in regions that are currently in phase 4. Decisions to resume in-person instruction are and will continue to be guided by:

1. Consultation with county health departments.
2. The MI Safe Start Plan, the Back to School Roadmap, and the phase under which your region is operating.
3. The recommendations of the Diocese of Saginaw Back to School Task Force
4. The school's ability to establish and maintain a safe and healthy school/classroom environment.

Many public schools across mid-Michigan have opted to begin the year virtually or in a hybrid model. There are a number of conditions that influence the operation of our Catholic schools significantly different than many public schools such as class size, ability to social distance, and student density. It is our hope that these conditions, along with the strong efforts we have undertaken from a health and safety standpoint, will continue to allow for in-person instruction. In the coming weeks and throughout the academic year, our schools will continue to monitor key health metrics and engage with appropriate medical experts to ensure that we provide a Catholic education in a safe and responsible fashion. If at any time we feel in-person instruction is not appropriate, we will move to a virtual/alternative model of instruction.

I am grateful for the dedication and commitment that our support staff, teachers, and principals have displayed over the summer as they have worked to make in-person instruction a possibility. Prior to the first day of school, I will conduct an onsite review and walkthrough each building with the principal. As we begin the school year, I ask for your patience and support as we all adjust to the many new procedures in place to promote a safe and healthy environment for students, staff, and faculty. Student arrival/drop-off, lunch, recess, movement through the building, classroom layouts, and dismissal will be different. Our schools will continue to refine practices and procedures as we identify opportunities for improvement in efficiencies and effectiveness.

Strict protocols and mitigation strategies are in place within our schools to maximize our ability to provide in-person learning. You can aid our efforts by refraining from sending your child to school if there is any sign of illness as well as by continuing to engage in social distancing and masking protocols outside of the school day. Should in-person instruction not be possible for any reason, our schools remain committed to providing a sound Catholic education. Professional development has been provided to our teachers on a diocesan and individual school level to support virtual teaching and learning.

On behalf of all staff, faculty, and administrators across the diocese, we are excited to welcome your child back to school. We look forward to working with your family throughout the school year.

Respectfully,

Cormac Lynn

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