



## DIOCESE OF OAKLAND

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### DEPARTMENT OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

February 28, 2020

Dear Diocese of Oakland Catholic School Families,

The health and safety of our students and faculty/staff are our priorities. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is closely monitoring an outbreak of respiratory illness caused by the novel coronavirus first identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. Cases of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) are being reported in a growing number of countries internationally, including the United States.

COVID-19 is an infectious respiratory disease that seems to be spreading much like the flu. The symptoms include a cough, runny nose, sore throat, fever, difficulty breathing and, in more severe cases, pneumonia. People with other medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease) or compromised/weakened immune systems may be more vulnerable to this virus.

We understand with the growing number of diagnosed illnesses, likelihood of further cases being identified and increased media coverage, concerns are heightened, and our students, families and faculty/staff may have questions. Please note to date, there is no evidence COVID-19 is circulating in the communities of Alameda or Contra Costa Counties. As such Alameda County Health Services and Contra Costa Health Services are not recommending any school closures at this time or restricting student attendance outside of normal seasonal flu activity.

According to these public health officials, our students and faculty/staff should continue their regular routines and take the same precautions they would during cold and flu season:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- If soap and water are not available, use at least a 60% 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 sick or with a fever. The CDC defines a fever as 100.4° F [37.8° C] or greater using an oral thermometer.
- Communicate all health concerns with your physician.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- The flu vaccine will not protect against COVID-19, but it is highly recommended to help keep you healthy.

The above good hygiene routines will be emphasized with our students as appropriate for their grade level.

Our school communities are taking precautions to keep their sites disinfected and clean. Commonly shared surfaces will be wiped down every day with disinfectants and chlorine containing cleaners. Please know we will continue to actively work with our school leadership and consult with local, state and national health agencies to protect the health and well-being of our school communities.

The CDC has also posted an Affected Geographic Areas with Widespread or Sustained Community Transmission information identifying those countries with possible travel restrictions. These affected areas may change, and we will continue to monitor the CDC site. Students and their families traveling to and from these areas may be asked to self-quarantine for 14 days upon returning home. Our schools will follow the directives of the CDC. Please be assured our schools will work with each student, on a case-by-case basis, should this decision be warranted.

The links below provide further information from local, state and national agencies:

[Alameda County Health Department](http://www.acphd.org)

[www.acphd.org](http://www.acphd.org)

[Contra Costa Health Services](http://www.cchealth.org)

[www.cchealth.org](http://www.cchealth.org)

[California Department of Public Health](http://www.cdph.ca.gov)

[www.cdph.ca.gov](http://www.cdph.ca.gov)

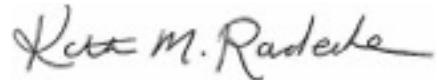
[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](http://www.cdc.gov)

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

It is important to reiterate the safety and wellness of our students, faculty/staff and families remain our priorities. We are in regular contact with local health officials and are monitoring the situation closely. We will keep you updated appropriately as we take proactive steps to prepare for the possibility of cases in our community. In the meantime, please join us in holding those infected with the virus in prayer. We also pray in thanksgiving for the scientists, researchers and medical personnel dedicated to caring for the sick.

Please contact your school principal if you have any questions.

*Christ's peace and joy surround you,*



Kathleen Radecke

Superintendent

Diocese of Oakland