



DIOCESE OF KANSAS CITY - ST. JOSEPH

One Family: RESTORED IN CHRIST - EQUIPPED FOR MISSION

OFFICE of CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

January 28, 2021

Dear Parents,

We are now in the tenth month of the pandemic and life is still not back to the normal we hoped and prayed for in March of 2020 when it started. However, a light is appearing at the end of this deadly tunnel as the vaccination process starts. As we notice on the news, infections and deaths are at an all-time high across the country and we cannot discontinue the safety protocols in our schools and community that have minimized infections. This fall, the Kansas City-St. Joseph schools opened for in-person instruction implementing various procedures and protocols to ensure the health and safety of students entering our schools. Most schools have had to quarantine or isolate either small groups or whole classes because of close contact (within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes) with someone who had tested positive or the student or staff had tested positive. In one school where the number of students in close contact rose to over 60 students, the decision was made to move to virtual learning for a week followed by another week of hybrid learning. That school then returned to in-person learning afterwards. Whenever quarantined, all students continued to learn virtually. This has become our new normal.

As we approach spring break, some parents may consider taking their family on a trip. While taking a family trip is not inherently "unsafe", meaning it does not necessarily expose those on the trip to the virus any more than traveling to the grocery store, it can unnecessarily expose our school community depending on the circumstances of the trip. For instance, if a family travels by plane to Florida, where few precautions are required by the local civil authorities, and then spends time in Disney World with hundreds of other persons enjoying the rides and exhibits, there is a much higher chance of exposure to the virus than driving to Colorado and spending time in a cabin where there is little or no exposure to others.

I highly encourage parents to wait on taking any trips for the rest of this year where exposure to the virus is potentially high. If a family decides to take a trip which has a moderate to high chance of exposing the children to the virus, parents should expect the school may require the children to be placed in quarantine after returning from the trip and attend school virtually. This minimizes the exposure to the rest of the school community.

I know we have been under the COVID restrictions for a long time, but if we stay the course and maintain the protocols for just a bit longer, our community will be all the stronger for it. The safety of our students, faculty, and staff, as well as their families and friends, is a value we all share. You expect we will keep our children both physically and emotionally safe in the schools/centers. There have been very, very few, if any, transmissions of COVID within our schools because we continue to faithfully follow the precautionary protocols of cleaning shared surfaces, wearing masks, and maintaining social distance. It is our collective responsibility to keep the infection from the members of our community which includes all we make contact with, including the students and families of the school our children attend.

Thanks for your support of Catholic schools. The mission we share to get all students to heaven is even more important during such trying times.

May the Peace and Love of Christ be with you,

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