



DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT

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OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

November 23, 2020

Dear Catholic School Administrators, Teachers, Staff and Families,

As we prepare for the Thanksgiving holiday, I want to express my sincere gratitude to each of you. Against a backdrop of uncertainty and apprehension I have witnessed incredible efforts by parents, administrators, board members, priests and philanthropists to ensure that the over 7000 young people in our Catholic schools received a faith-filled and academically challenging educational experience. Please accept my thanks on behalf of all the students who benefit from your dedication and commitment.

One of the challenges that has come up these last few weeks revolves around the availability of Covid testing. I am happy to say that the Diocese has partnered with a local company to help increase Covid-19 testing accessibility. Progressive Diagnostics will be offering testing at several diocesan locations. Currently they are using the Catholic Center in Bridgeport, but in the coming weeks, I am told they will have locations in Danbury, Stamford, and Norwalk. The Covid tests they use are PCR tests but rather than using a nasal swab, they use a saliva sample. This makes the test much less invasive and much easier for children. Further, to make testing more accessible, they have agreed to make a number of test kits available at the school so that parents can pick them up, collect the sample at home and drop it off at one of the testing locations. I hope to have these delivered to schools after the Thanksgiving break. Of course, you can also go directly to the testing site to get the test administered.

The first step to mitigating the spread of the virus is identifying those who are infected and so we encourage you to watch for symptoms or potential exposure and get family members tested as you or your doctor deem appropriate. Of course, please make sure you keep children home if there is any potential exposure or appearance of symptoms. With that said, please know we are not mandating every student be tested, nor are we recommending this diagnostic lab over another, we are simply sharing the information and providing another avenue of accessibility.

Included with this communication is a flyer that was distributed to Catholic Center employees and which contains information about the test. Appointments are made through the company's website which will be updated with new locations as they are added.

Again, please accept my gratitude for all you do. Know you will be in my prayers this Thanksgiving and counted among the many blessings for which I am thankful. May God Bless you and your family and may Our Lady continue to shower Her blessings on our Catholic school family.

Sincerely,

Dr. Steven F. Cheeseman
Superintendent of Schools
Diocese of Bridgeport