



Office of Catholic Education
222 North 17th St.
Philadelphia, PA 19103-1299

November 11, 2020

+ Dear Parents:

As of this week, four of the five counties comprising the Archdiocese of Philadelphia (Bucks, Delaware, Philadelphia, and Montgomery) are now at the “substantial” level of COVID-19 transmission rates according to health department statistics.

We have remained in constant contact with local health departments throughout the pandemic. After consulting with them about recent trends, we will continue to operate with the hybrid model of instruction at this time. Many public school districts have also made the same decision.

In August 2020, the PA Department of Education developed metrics for instructional methodologies based on the level of COVID-19 transmission in a particular county. At a substantial level of COVID-19, these state metrics would have originally had us move to fully virtual instruction.

Health departments believe that school safety protocols are working well and that there are very few instances of transmission linked to time spent in school settings. Every time there is an instance of COVID-19 in one of our schools we immediately consult with the county health department for guidance. We then communicate broadly with the entire school community regarding the circumstances of the case, the advice provided by the county health department, and the plan of action moving forward.

Our state-of-the-art classroom camera system will enable us to quickly switch to fully virtual instruction if necessary. A move to fully virtual instruction would occur if any of the following conditions were present

- a large number of COVID-19 cases in an individual school;
- a large number of students or staff at a school need to be quarantined;
- mandated by the county health department due to the number of cases in the community.

We remind parents that there is also the option in all our high schools for students to participate instruction remotely only.

Please emphasize with your family the importance of wearing masks, social distancing at all times and avoiding large gatherings. These three simple steps are very effective at reducing the transmission of the virus. We are very grateful for your understanding and support during these challenging times.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sister Maureen L. McDermott, IHM".

Sister Maureen L. McDermott, IHM, PhD
Superintendent for Secondary Schools