



Office for Schools

March 5, 2020

Dear Diocese of San Diego Catholic School Families,

Thank you for your shared belief in the value of a Catholic education for your children. With the recent outbreak of respiratory illness caused by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), you understandably have questions and concerns about our Catholic school response. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is closely monitoring the outbreak first identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, and cases of COVID-19 are now being reported in a growing number of countries internationally, including the United States. Be assured that the health and safety of our students and faculty/staff are our priority.

As you are now aware, 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.

At present, the San Diego County Health & Human Services Agency is not recommending any school closures or restricting student attendance outside of normal seasonal flu activity.

According to our 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. All children and staff members with respiratory symptoms and a fever (>100 F / >38C) should remain home from school and other activities until they have had no fever for 24 hours (without fever medication). Students and staff who have severe productive coughs (i.e., spewing respiratory droplets) that are not typical for them should also stay home; however, those with only mild, dry coughs and sneezing may come to school if feeling well and no fever.
- 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.

These stated 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 regularly 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 a webpage addressing global case numbers as reported by the World Health Organization (WHO) and 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 on COVID-19 from local, state and national agencies:

- [San Diego Health & Human Services Agency](#)
- [Imperial County Public Health Department](#)
- [California Department of Public Health](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [San Diego County Office of Education](#)

It is important to reiterate the safety and wellness of our students, faculty/staff, and families remain our top priority. 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, as 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.

May God continue to bless you and your families.

In Mission,



John Galvan
Director, Office for Schools
Diocese of San Diego