



## ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS

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Dear Colleagues in Catholic Education,

The Office of Catholic Education and Formation would like to take this opportunity to communicate with you as leaders in our elementary and secondary schools regarding our preparations for the possible spread of Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) to the geographical areas served by the Archdiocese of St. Louis. While the potential global public health threat posed by this virus is high, right now, the immediate risk to most Americans is low. However, seasonal flu is currently making a bigger impact in our communities. It is important to be prepared as the health and safety of all within our community is our top priority.

Please know that the archdiocese is taking the following steps to address this matter:

- The archdiocese is leaning on the strength of knowledge of our partners in the health-care community, including our doctors, nurses and hospitals such as SSM and Mercy, to help inform and advise us on all decisions regarding our children, faculty and schools.
- There are many factors being considered in the event of a pandemic here in the Archdiocese of St. Louis, but many of those decisions will be driven by what we learn from Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the St. Louis City and County Health Departments.

Suggestions for helping to protect our students, families, faculty and staff from the spread of illness at school include:

- Take extra-precautionary action to ensure all surfaces and classroom items are properly cleaned/sanitized, perhaps on a more frequent basis than usual, because germs may survive on surfaces up to 24+ hours.
- Caution faculty and staff to limit, temporarily suspend or modify classroom activities that involve holding hands, handshaking, passing around items, or other close proximity during the school day.
- Work to keep students at a distance of three feet from their nearest neighbor when possible. This may require desk/classroom adjustments.
- Encourage good hygiene, including alcohol-based hand sanitizer lotion in restrooms, classrooms, and lounges, and proper cough-and-sneeze etiquette.
- Students, faculty or staff with a respiratory infection, the flu, a fever or a serious cold should be encouraged to stay home.

While we hope that the following scenario will not come to pass, it is prudent to consider the possibility of an extended school closure. In such a situation, it will be extremely important to continue student learning. To prepare for the interruption of face-to-face instruction, please consider the questions below and how you will mitigate the challenges that this potential interruption could present:

- How will I instruct my students remotely?
- How will I modify my learning objectives but still be able to facilitate student learning?
- How will I assess my students?
- What plan needs to be developed to ensure smooth learning transitions?
- Will I want to make it possible for students to work together, virtually, to complete certain activities?
- What resources might I use?

We encourage you to review the [general Coronavirus-related fact sheet](#) here on the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) website. More information will also be available on the [St. Louis Review](#) website in the coming week.

Archbishop Carlson is advising archdiocesan priests and deacons of precautionary measures to protect our parish communities during Mass as well.

Please feel free to direct any questions or concerns to us as we together face this new challenge. As this situation continues to evolve, we will be in close communication.

Sincerely,



Maureen DePriest  
Superintendent for Elementary Education



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