



DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT

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OFFICE OF THE
SUPERINTENDENT
OF SCHOOLS

March 2, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We all have seen the rising concern surrounding the current outbreak of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). While the risk for transmission of COVID-19 at this time remains low, the Diocese of Bridgeport is taking the COVID-19 issue very seriously. I am writing to assure you that our schools are working in close collaboration with their local school health officials to take appropriate steps to reduce the risks to our community.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is working hard to learn as much as possible about this new strand of the coronavirus so that we can better understand how it spreads and its associated illness. There are a small number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the U.S. and none in the State of Connecticut to date. We will continue to keep up with the information that is being provided by the CDC as well as state and local health departments.

In the meantime, the Office of the Superintendent has been making policy changes regarding travel outside of the United States. A policy modification went into effect on January 29, 2020 which stated **anyone returning from mainland China from this point forward will not be permitted to return to their school for 14 days after re-entry.**

Furthermore, **effective March 2, 2020** for students and school personnel returning from international travel, the following policy change takes effect for Catholic schools in the Diocese of Bridgeport:

All students and personnel returning from international travel to a country identified by the CDC as a Level 3 Health Risk are required to get written medical clearance from their physician before returning to school. The written letter of clearance should indicate that no symptoms of infection by the Coronavirus are present and that they (or their parent) have been informed of possible symptoms that could present themselves.

The list of countries can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html> and currently includes China, South Korea, Italy and Iran.

In addition, out of an abundance of caution, **all previously planned and approved school-sponsored trips outside of the United States are to be reviewed and reauthorized by the Office of the Superintendent and may be subject to cancellation. No additional school-sponsored trips outside of the United States should be planned until further notice.**

In the event that a case of the Coronavirus is identified in Connecticut, we may take additional steps.

As always, we encourage all our school families of students, staff and faculty to continue to practice good hygiene and healthy practices such as:

- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue or sleeve
- Wash your hands regularly
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Get your flu shot – it's never too late
- Stay home if you're feeling sick. If you've had a fever, stay home until you are fever free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication.

We understand that keeping your child home when he/she is ill may be an inconvenience, however it not only prevents the spread of illness in the school community but allows your child an opportunity to rest and recover.

We will continue to provide updates as we learn new information. Please contact your school nurse with any questions or concerns. You may also visit the CDC website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention-treatment.html>

May God bless those whose lives have been touched by illness and those who work every day to find treatments and cures.

And may Our Lady shower our community with the blessings of Her protection.

Sincerely,



Steven F. Cheeseman
Superintendent of Schools