



March 13, 2020

Dear St. Mary's Families,

Spring Break is officially here! I hope your family has a restful and enjoyable Spring Break and that you are able to enjoy time, fresh air, and sunshine together. If you were not able to attend a parent-teacher conference for your child before Spring Break and would like to do so when school resumes, please reach out to your child's teacher to find a time to schedule a conference. We have conferences two times a year because a child's academic growth and development, especially at the early childhood and elementary levels, is significant and we want to ensure that parents are not only aware of advances in learning and development, but also aware of any of concern that continues or may have arisen since first quarter conferences in October. In addition, St. Mary's parents are welcome to schedule a conference with their classroom teacher or myself anytime during the school year.

As health concerns continue, including information and the impact of the coronavirus, I want to reassure you that the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau and JACS are closely monitoring the situation. **The health and safety of our students, families, faculty and staff, and entire school community is our highest priority.** Bishop Rice and diocesan administrators are watching the situation closely and issued a change of practice and plans for schools last week (this letter was included in your Communicator Envelope March 6th) as a proactive step. In addition, the diocese and JACS are paying close attention to all information and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and state and local health departments, including the Jasper County Health Department.

During Spring Break:

- A deep cleaning and disinfecting of St. Mary's school building will be performed next week and afterwards, the school will be closed to everyone except the custodial service and administrators.
- As stated above, Bishop Rice and the diocese have developed a proactive plan to diminish risks for spreading illness and are closely monitoring the situation. As situations unfold and may change, the diocese and JACS will follow the CDC and state and local health departments regarding illness, including coronavirus (COVID-19).

After Spring Break:

- St. Mary's is cleaned by a professional cleaning service each evening, and the school will continue to implement disinfecting procedures when school resumes.
- Faculty and staff will continue to emphasize good hygiene practices to students, and the school will provide additional time and disinfecting supplies for students and classrooms.
- Faculty, staff, and administration at St. Mary's will strictly enforce the school's illness policy as stated in the St. Mary's Family Handbook (page 20). For your convenience, part of the illness policy is provided below:

The classroom presents a prime opportunity for the spread of illness. **In the event of any contagious illness, such as chicken pox, pink eye, head lice, Fifth's disease, ringworm, impetigo, or a temperature of 99.6° or higher, parents should notify the school to prevent the spread of the condition, and the child should remain at home until he/she is no longer contagious. Students who have a temperature of 99.6°, are suffering from diarrhea or vomiting, or who have been placed on antibiotics should remain at home until they are free of symptoms or until they are been on medication for 24 hours.** Please note that the above-mentioned list is not all-inclusive. Children should not attend any school related activities, including parties and field trips, while contagious. Children should also not attend any school-related evening activities if they have been out of the school the same day for illness.

For the health and safety of our entire community, please notify the school immediately and keep your children home if they fall into any of the categories above. The absences will be excused, and St. Mary's will provide missed materials during their absence.

- St. Mary's will notify parents and modify our instructional program when and if determined by the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau and JACS. We will minimize the risk of spreading illness by limiting access to the school by non-community members and limiting group gatherings and field trips.

As always, please stay informed with school activities and events by reading each week's Communicator Newsletter and any other emails that I or JACS may send. **News sources are currently expounding a plethora of illness information, please ensure that you are monitoring conditions and updates from reputable sources as they evolve.** Conditions and information surrounding the coronavirus are constantly evolving and we will continue to communicate with our JACS school community (including emails from me about St. Mary's) as school plans may change as a result.

God bless and take care,

Joanne Lown