



November 20, 2020

Dear St. Mary's Families,

Happy Thanksgiving! I hope your family has a happy and healthy Thanksgiving Break. Our holidays may look a little different this year due to Covid, but our thankful and grateful hearts should be as full as always. Even in the reality of a pandemic we have so many things to be thankful for in our lives. One of the many things I am thankful for is our wonderful school filled with loving students, families, and faculty and staff. I hope you are able to spend time treasuring memories of Thanksgiving and enjoy making new ones with your family and friends.

When we return to school from Thanksgiving Break a new mask mandate will be in place at St. Mary's and all Joplin Area Catholic Schools for students, faculty, and staff. Starting Monday, November 30th all Preschool – 5th grade students at St. Mary's will be required to wear a face mask during the school day. It is with careful thought, guidance, and prayer that our schools will be making this change. Our current mask policy requires students to wear masks during times of transition and at times when close proximity cannot be avoided during the school day. With updates from Missouri Governor Parson, the Joplin City Council, and continuing spikes of Covid cases in the Joplin area, we feel this is the responsible and respectful thing to do at this time. How does this change your child's day at St. Mary's? Here is some additional information:

- St. Mary's students in Preschool – 5th grade will be required to wear a cotton face mask or approved gator wrap during the school day. This includes arrival to school,

during instruction in the classroom, and during dismissal. Students will continue to wear masks during times of transition but will also be wearing them continuously throughout the school day. Exceptions to these times are during snack, lunch, recess, and outdoor classes when weather permits.

- Any Preschool – 5th grade student who attends After School Care will also be required to wear a face mask until she or he is picked up and signed out by a parent or guardian.
- Please ensure that your child has a **properly fitting face mask (child sized)** when they arrive to school and at least 2-3 other face masks in their backpack (a small Ziploc bag works well) as spares in case one is left at home or in the car. In addition, please make sure your child's masks are washed on a regular basis.
- Early Learners students in Miss Teresa's class do not need to mask during the school day or if attending After School Care.
- Requiring students to be properly masked throughout the school day has several benefits:
 - ❖ If a student and/or teacher happens to test positive for Covid, the class and close contact group will not be required to quarantine. The student/teacher testing positive will still be required to isolate at home, but other students and teachers in close contact may continue to attend school as long as they are monitored for symptoms and stay home at the first sign of illness.
 - ❖ Students no longer need to sit in alphabetical seating groups in the classroom and may move around the classroom a little more freely. Teachers will be able to rearrange seating arrangements in the classroom and work in small groups. Social distancing practices will still be in place.

I have attached Governor Parson's updated School Quarantine Guidelines to this email. In the new guidelines Governor Parson states, "schools that are consistently implementing COVID-19 strategies remain among the safest places for our students" and I am proud that our efforts at St. Mary's have been successful. Since school started on August 20th, we have had only 3 student and 4 adult Covid cases in our school, a reflection of our school's commitment to help keep everyone safe and healthy. Please take the time to read Gov. Parson's document thoroughly to ensure you are aware of the changes and that your child is prepared when school

resumes on Monday, November 30th. Sister Julie will be sending an email announcing the change in school guidelines to the entire JACS community, but I wanted to ensure you had the information early enough to visit with your child and make any needed purchases before November 30th. Thank you for your continued effort and support, together we are keeping St. Mary's a safe, healthy, and happy school!

Thanksgiving is quickly approaching, and 5th grade is sponsoring Gobble Grams this year as a fund raiser for their annual spring trip. Each Gobble Gram will include a bag filled with candy and a personal note. If you would like to send a Gobble Gram to your child, some of your child's friends, or a staff member please fill out the attached form and return them in your family's Communicator Envelope with payment or drop them off at the school office. Gobble Grams are \$3.00 each or 2 for \$5.00. Be sure to include the recipient's name and teacher's name. Additional order forms are available in the school office. **Orders will be taken through Monday, November 23rd and Gobble Grams will be delivered to students on Tuesday, November 24th.** Please contact the school office (623-1465) if you have any questions.

The JACS Booster Club has a great gift opportunity for you! The Booster Club is selling several **different styles of hats and visors** so everyone on your Christmas list can show their Warrior Pride! Proceeds go to support the Booster Club. More information and the order form can be found on the following link. All you have to do is fill out the order form and someone from the Booster Club will contact you to get payment. Please call Marcee Carpenter with any questions you may have, (417) 825-2252.

When we return to school the Monday following Thanksgiving it will almost be December! December is always a busy time of the year at St. Mary's and I have included a list of events and activities through the end of 2020 to help everyone keep up with this busy time. Wednesday, December 2nd is our next **Charity Dress Day**, which will benefit **St. Mary's Society of St. Vincent de Paul**. St. Vincent de Paul is sponsored by St. Mary's Parish and is a Catholic lay organization in which women and men join together to grow spiritually by offering person-to-person services to the needy and suffering. These services may include everyday needs, emergency needs, or extraordinary needs such as food, clothing, beds, housing, medication, utility assistance, and disaster relief. St. Vincent de Paul is a worldwide Catholic

organization that brings hope, help, and love to those in need. Thank you in advance for your thoughtful and generous support.

Next week is a shortened week due to the **Thanksgiving holiday**. We will have a full day of school on Tuesday and After-School Care **WILL** be available. Thank you to the St. Mary's students, faculty, and staff for making **National Catholic Principal's Day** a wonderful and special surprise for me. What I believed was a Zoom meeting with Miss Amy while I am home on quarantine turned out to be a fabulous celebration with everyone in the school! I enjoyed seeing each class, reading all the special cards each class made, and seeing each class wear a different hat reflecting "the many hats of Mrs. Lown". It was a wonderful day and it made my heart happy to see everyone's lovely face and smile. We truly have a wonderful school to be thankful for and I am honored to be St. Mary's principal.

God bless and take care,
Joanne Lown
jlown@jacss.org

Important Dates to Remember:

Wednesday, November 25 th - Sunday, November 29 th	Thanksgiving Holiday
Sunday, November 29 th	First Sunday of Advent
Monday, November 30 th	Classes Resume
Tuesday, December 1 st	First Tuesday at Club 609
Wednesday, December 2 nd St. Vincent de Paul	Charity Dress Day benefitting Society of
Sunday, December 6 th	Feast of St. Nicholas
Tuesday, December 8 th Immaculate Conception	Holy Day of Obligation-Feast of the School Mass at 8:30 a.m.
Thursday, December 10 th	Ugly Sweater Day and Jeans Day!

Thursday, December 17th

Day!

Friday, December 18th

Monday, January 4th

Crazy Christmas Sock Day and Free Dress

Noon Dismissal

~~NO~~ After School Care

Classes Resume