



TO: School Pastors, Chaplains, and Principals

CC: Most Rev. Daniel R. Jenky, Rev. Msgr. Philip Halfacre,
Ms. Patricia Gibson

FROM: Dr. Sharon Weiss, Superintendent of Schools

RE: Coronavirus COVID-19 Plan for Diocesan Schools

In discussion with the Office of the Bishop, the following directives will be initiated immediately for the Catholic Diocese of Peoria elementary and secondary schools.

These directives have been written with an abundance of caution in order to assist our diocesan schools to plan for alternative learning options and the possible closure of our schools in light of the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic.

Please review these directives in preparation for a regional principals' phone conference with the Office of Catholic Schools scheduled this afternoon. A separate email has been sent with the time and dial-in instructions for each of our four regions.

The Office of the Bishop has approved the following directives for dissemination by the Office of Catholic Schools:

ACADEMIC INSTRUCTION

1. All diocesan schools will be closed during the week of March 16-20. Principals and teachers will be in attendance; however, students will not be in school. The rationale for this decision is for our leaders and educators to review,

update and practice their E Learning Plans. There will be many issues that schools will need to resolve, including: lesson plans and assignments; grading of these assignments (if applicable); technology requirements; teacher availability for questions during the E Learning Day(s); etc. We would like the schools to take Monday and Tuesday next week as a faculty to work with their principal and “iron out” these details.

2. On Wednesday of next week, March 18th, all schools will have an actual E Learning “Trial” Day with their students. Therefore, your school’s E Learning Plan will need to go home to parents (via your student information system) sometime on Tuesday in preparation for Wednesday’s E Learning Trial Day.

3. At the end of the alternative learning day on Wednesday, principals will send home an evaluation of the E Learning Trial Day and ask parents for their feedback regarding any challenges or other issues that were experienced. This feedback should be shared with the faculty.

4. On Thursday and Friday, March 19th and 20th, each school’s faculty will continue their E Learning planning and discuss any issues that their families encountered and adapt their learning plans to correct the problems.

5. At the end of the day on Friday, March 20th, principals will send home to parents an updated E Learning Plan, if applicable.

6. At the end of the day on Friday, March 20th, principals will also send a copy of their E Learning Plan, *with or without any changes*, to OCS (rgifford@cdop.org) which will be kept in the school’s diocesan file.

7. March 16-20 will be counted as student attendance days and will not need to be made up. *Please note: assignments will not be sent home during this week; this time has been allotted for schools to work on their E Learning plans and implementation in case a school would need to be closed for an extended amount of time due to the pandemic.*

8. **STUDENTS MUST TAKE ALL BOOKS HOME WITH THEM TOMORROW, FRIDAY, MARCH 13TH IN PREPARATION FOR NEXT**

WEEK AND THE E-LEARNING “TRIAL” DAY SCHEDULED FOR WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18TH.

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING BUILDING(S)

9. During next week, principals should hire a cleaning firm or use their own custodial service to thoroughly clean and disinfect their school building(s). If the school’s custodial staff will be used to do this work, Melissa Block will be sending a separate email to pastors and principals with directions on what must be in place to disinfect and clean. Please watch for this email from Melissa that will be sent out this afternoon.

EMPLOYEES EXPOSED OR INFECTED WITH THE CORONAVIRUS

10. Employees should self-report any exposure or infection with the coronavirus. There will be a 14-day quarantine, with pay, for the employee from the time of the report to the principal. It is very important that employees stay home and therefore, minimize the risk of spreading the coronavirus.

ATHLETIC AND EXTRACURRICULAR EVENTS

11. Per guidance received today from IHSA, scheduled athletic and extracurricular events (music, speech, etc.) will be limited to players, coaches, immediate family members, and referees only. Other spectators will not be allowed to attend until further notice.

12. Per guidance received today from IESA, scheduled athletic events are to follow the requirements of the host school in which the event is played. These events should be limited to the coaches, referees, players, and immediate family members, unless the host site has cancelled the athletic or extracurricular event.

13. During the week of March 16-20, athletic team practices may continue as usual but just with coaches and players, and these practices will be restricted to the gymnasium only. However, sporting and athletic events will follow scheduled games or events as described above.

TRAVEL

14. Families that will be travelling outside of the country during spring break will not be allowed to return to school until a 14-day quarantine has been observed, beginning with the day that the family returns home.

15. Families travelling within the United States will need to be aware of the coronavirus instructions of the site they are traveling to, and follow that guidance. If there is any exposure to the coronavirus or to someone who has been diagnosed with the virus, we would ask that the family assist the school and self-report and observe the 14-day quarantine.

16. OCS advises that field trips be reduced to a minimum and perhaps, cancelled, at this time, if possible. Usually the field trip venues involve places where many people gather. It may be best to err on the side of caution at this point.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

17. In regard to any of our students that may have health concerns or compromised immune systems, OCS strongly advises that these children stay home and receive instruction from their teachers via the online option.

18. Continuing frequent and proper handwashing, eliminating touching the face and shaking hands, and sending children home who have a fever, etc. should be observed.

It should be stated that this entire health situation with COVID-19 coronavirus has been changing rapidly day-to-day. The Office of Catholic Schools, as directed by the Office of the Bishop, will continue to monitor and share information with our school leadership as decisions are made and health updates received.

Thank you for your assistance and cooperation as we work through this pandemic together, and as we seek the wisdom and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Amen.