



DIOCESE OF
FORT WAYNE-SOUTH BEND
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

Date: March 16, 2020
To: Parent/Guardian
Re: COVID-19 School Closure
From: Dr. Joe Brettnacher, Superintendent, Mr. Jeff Kieffer, Associate Superintendent, & Mr. Carl Loesch, Secretary for Catholic Education

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We are in unprecedented times. Based on recommendations from local, state, and national health departments to respond to the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19), on Friday, March 13, 2020, we announced the closing of our 43-schools, within the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, for a minimum of three weeks, beginning on Monday, March 16, 2020. Local health departments have yet to establish a re-opening date for our schools.

We want you to know that your family is in our thoughts and prayers. Please join us in asking the Blessed Mother, patroness of our diocese, to intercede for us, in the words of Pope Francis from March 11, 2020.

O Mary, you always shine on our path as a sign of salvation and of hope. We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick, who at the cross took part in Jesus' pain, keeping your faith firm. You, Salvation of the Roman People, know what we need, and we are sure you will provide so that, as in Cana of Galilee, we may return to joy and to feasting after this time of trial. Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform to the will of the Father and to do as we are told by Jesus, who has taken upon himself our sufferings and carried our sorrows to lead us, through the cross, to the joy of the resurrection. Amen.

St. Rocco, protector against the plague and all contagious diseases, pray for us.

We have schools spread out over fourteen counties within the diocese. Each one of them unique based on geography, demographics, diversity, social-economics, academics, and more. Because of these differences, each principal has the discretion to create schedules that fit best their setting in regards to distance learning. Our principals and teachers have talked about checking with students to make sure we do not overload them with too much school work. Also, we will check up on their social and emotional well-being.

We care about your family's well-being too. Please, let your child(ren)'s school(s) or the Catholic Schools Office (CSO) know if you are without food or utilities. If our schools or the CSO do not have the resources to help you, we will do our best to direct you to agencies that can.

To provide faculty, staff, and parents information about COVID-19, we developed a diocesan website and a Catholic Schools Office Padlet (like a website). Both sites contain information on how to plan, prepare, and respond to COVID-19. Parents, please note that the Padlet has COVID-19: prayers, latest updates, facts, presentations, what to do when you or your child is sick, tips for schools, how to talk to children about the virus (age-appropriate guidance), learning tips, and more. You can access both sites by clicking on the links below.

- CSO Padlet: https://padlet.com/jbrettnacher2/COVID_19
- Diocesan Website: <https://fwsbhealth.weebly.com/>



Take care of yourself by practicing prevention strategies as outlined in the documents on our Padlet. Should you have any concerns, do not hesitate to contact your school or the CSO.

Remember, we do not know how long the COVID-19 Closure will last.

You are in our thoughts and prayers.

Blessings,

Joseph (Joe) A. Brettnacher, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Catholic Schools

Jeff Kieffer
Associate Superintendent

Carl Loesch
Secretary for Catholic Education