



DIOCESE OF  
**FORT WAYNE-SOUTH BEND**  
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

Date: March 23, 2020  
To: Parent/Guardian  
Re: COVID-19 School Closure Update  
From: Dr. Joe Brettnacher, Superintendent, Mr. Jeff Kieffer, Associate Superintendent, & Mr. Carl Loesch, Secretary for Catholic Education

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Every night, we pray to our Blessed Mother, Mary, to ask for God's healing graces, and the protection of her holy angels, to heal those afflicted by COVID-19, protect their caregivers, and shield the rest of us from the worst of this illness.

The purpose of this letter is to keep you informed during closures to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Allow us to share some items with you.

#### **The Most Reverend Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades**

- We continue to follow the Christ-like servant-leadership and directives of Bishop Rhoades as he took measures to reduce the accelerating spread of COVID-19 per the recommendations of the CDC and other civil authorities. To view, those directives, click on the following link: <https://fwsbhealth.weebly.com/>
- Be assured that the Diocese remains committed to our Catholic Social Teachings with regards to the dignity of work and the rights of workers and the care for the poor and vulnerable. For this reason, the Diocese continues to pay hourly employees during the shutdown for the regular hours they would have worked; this includes contracted employees too.

#### **Information-Mandates-Cancellations from the State of Indiana**

- Governor Holcomb mandated statewide school closures until May 1, 2020.
- The mandated Closure follows the recent CDC guidelines to limit gatherings to less than ten (10). They may extend this limit for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year.
- The Indiana Department of Education announced the cancellation of all state-mandated tests.
- The current 20-day waiver may not adequately address the needs of local districts. Therefore, the IDOE will work with individual districts and schools to determine the total amount of instructional waiver days necessary.
- Requirements for Grade 12 Seniors – Understanding the acceptable concerns of Grade 12 seniors and their families, IDOE will continue working to develop a timely and practical solution.
- To view directives from local, state, and national health departments along with other information about COVID-19, visit the Catholic Schools Office Padlet by clicking on this link [https://padlet.com/jbrettnacher2/COVID\\_19](https://padlet.com/jbrettnacher2/COVID_19).

#### **Continued Education of Our Children & Tuition**

As parents/guardians, we recognize you are your children's first and most important educators. Thank you for allowing us to share in the responsibility of educating them. We are grateful for this awesome responsibility and partnership. Know our teachers are working overtime to provide excellent remote/distant-learning for their students and your children.



Most Catholic school tuition rates are lower than the cost to educate a student. That difference requires many of our parishes to subsidize our schools, often at the expense of other ministries, so more parents can afford to provide their children with a quality Catholic education.

As parents of children who graduated from our Catholic schools, we are grateful to our Bishop and pastors for their servant-leadership and financial support. Also, we are thankful for the financial sacrifice; our children's teachers made to teach in our schools because they see their jobs as a vocation to God. We are passionate in our belief they deserve our full financial support during this crisis. For these reasons and more, we ask that you continue to support your school and the Diocese by continuing to pay tuition.

### **Tuition Assistance**

If your family experiences a layoff, making it challenging to pay your tuition bill, we ask that you contact your pastor or high school principal. Explain your circumstances to them to determine whether the parish or school can offer you tuition assistance to cover what you cannot afford. Regardless of your ability to pay, we will turn no students away during this Closure.

Take care of yourself by practicing prevention strategies. To learn how you can reduce your family's exposure to Coronavirus (COVID-19), visit the U.S. Department of Health's Coronavirus (COVID-19) website by clicking [HERE](#).

You remain in our thoughts and prayers.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph A. Brettnacher".

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

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeff Kieffer".

Jeff Kieffer  
Associate Superintendent

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carl Loesch".

Carl Loesch  
Secretary for Catholic Education

Cc: Administration, Faculty, Staff, Business Office, etc.