

Dear St. Michael School Parents,

As we prepare to return to school, I wanted to answer some questions that have come up since my last letter. We understand that the decision to select virtual learning or traditional in-person instruction is highly personal and dependent on the unique circumstances your family faces. We are committed to supporting you as best we can. We also want to make sure you have all the information you need to make an informed decision about your child's placement this fall. The teachers will be extra vigilant in keeping the students safe and free from germs. The school has been sanitized and will continue to be cleaned every evening after the students leave. Teachers will take temperatures two times a day with an infrared thermometer. They plan to be cautious and careful with social distancing and with the use of supplies. Each student will use only his/her own supplies and not share. I have heard that teachers in grades K-2 prefer to have the supplies labeled with your child's name. As far as Clorox wipes, if you cannot find them do not worry about it. When they become available, you can send them in.

As far as the extra art supply list, some are duplicate from their supply list and you do not need to repurchase. We are sincerely trying not to have any sharing of items and that is why Mrs. Vannan had to ask for supplies. Usually, she provides all the art supplies, but because of students handling the items, she can't have students touching the items after they have been used by another student. It is extremely difficult to disinfect markers, paint brushes, and watercolor palettes every time a student would use them. Sketchbooks were required so that touching and passing out a lot of paper to each student is diminished, thus fewer germs being passed around. I hope that clarifies the question of art supplies being required.

Mrs. Herbst, our music teacher, has asked that students in grades 4-8 have a spiral-bound one-subject notebook for her class. Please know the health and safety of the students is our first priority and we are following guidelines from our local health department to make sure we are in complete compliance with what we need to do. We are in constant communication with the CDC and APA to make sure St. Michael School is following the proper guidelines. Attached to this letter is a video created by Dr. Megan Staub, the mother of Tim, grade 5, and Sophia, grade 2. We are sending it home for you to view with your child and it will also be shown again in school by their homeroom teacher. Washing hands, staying six feet apart, and staying germ-free can't be overemphasized.

As far as those families who choose remote learning, the teachers are planning their lessons so that all students at home will receive the same lessons being taught in school. These lessons will either be live-streamed or recorded lessons taught by the teacher and will be uploaded to Google Classroom for students to watch the teacher. Each teacher will have a different schedule and that will be shared with you from the homeroom teacher. All teachers plan on utilizing Google Classroom or Google Meet as the school remote learning platform.

The student will be able to see the teacher's lesson either live or recorded, depending on the teacher. The student will be asked to do the same assignments the students in the school will do. The students will be held accountable to do all classwork.

Each student will need to make a 9-week commitment for remote learning and may return to school after 9 weeks. When the second 9 weeks comes, you can choose to have your student attend remote classes from home, but the commitment will be for an entire 9-week period. The teacher will grade the assignment and will expect full participation and cooperation from the student. Assignments can be turned in by having it scanned back to the teacher. If you have a phone or iPad, the "Notes" application has a scanner, so that you can scan the assignment and send it back to the teacher. Books and Chromebooks will be provided. Procedures will be developed to keep the students bonded with the school community as much as possible. The teacher will not be able to answer questions past 4:00 pm, as they need to have time to unwind and spend time with their own families.

At this point, we have not decided how and if our specials (art, music, Spanish) will be recording or presenting their lessons, more information will be coming.

The classrooms and halls in the school are being cleaned, scrubbed, sanitized, and defogged. A crew of maintenance staff is here working throughout the day and will continue to deep clean at the end of each school day, using electrostatic sprayers for sanitizing, this is what is used in the hospitals. As I said before, the teachers will be extra cautious in the classroom with handwashing procedures and wiping areas that have been touched, like door handles, light switches, etc.

More information will come, as we plan to have the students return to school. We certainly miss the noise in the halls, the sound of laughter, and the "stories" we are told by the students. The teachers are gradually coming back to school and spacing their desks 6' from one another and removing articles that will allow social distancing. We continue to say, hopefully this is just for a short period of time. Don't forget to watch the video made by Dr. Staub.

Lastly, understanding that families may need some more time to consider their choice of online or in-person instruction, we have extended the deadline to register by THURSDAY, AUGUST 6. Please email dcornelius@youngstowndiocese.org ONLY if you plan for your child(ren) to remain at home and receive online instruction for the first nine weeks.

Blessing to all of you. Stay well and healthy,
Claire Gatti, Principal.