



Catholic Schools  
DIOCESE OF BUFFALO

March 13, 2020

Dear Parents:

I'm sure you have been following all of the information regarding COVID-19 that has countries throughout the world working to protect its citizens. Locally, it appears that the pace of decision making on how we will protect and insure the safety of our students and employees is moving at a rapid pace. Already we are learning that several public school districts are considering the closing of their schools until after the Easter Recess. At this time the Catholic schools have made no such decision but this could change based on health circumstances.

Our Catholic schools, like the public schools, will follow the recommendations of the County Health Departments. In Erie County there should be no travel beyond the 8 counties of Western New York where all of our schools are located. This means that field and class trips should be limited to Erie, Niagara, Cattaraugus, Genesee, Wyoming, Orleans, Chautauqua and Allegany counties until further notice. There should also be no school events of more than 50 people. I realize that some schools may have major fundraisers, plays and concerts planned, but they should be postponed until more information is known regarding the impact of COVID-19 on the community.

Presently, there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Western New York. If someone in our schools or has been in our schools suspects that they have symptoms of the COVID-19 they should consult with their doctor. The county health department has the legal authority to close a school for 24 hours if they suspect someone has contracted COVID-19. The school would then do a thorough cleaning and if the individual does not test positive the school can reopen. However, if the case should test positive the health department would close the school for 14 days. If the case is positive and the school is notified by the health department during the school day, the school would close at the normal end of the day.

In the event that any school is ordered to close or if as a diocese we believe circumstances warrant closure, every school has planned to continue the education of its students. Like our area universities, schools will use technology to interact with students and families regularly throughout the closure. Families without access to technology will also have alternatives prepared for them. Each school principal will inform parents on the details of their plan.

If public schools decide themselves to close for several weeks, this of course would disrupt transportation services to our schools. Should this happen we will be in contact with those districts to see if they will continue to provide bus services to our schools should we remain open. However, if many public schools decide to close it is most likely that our schools will also. Our principals will keep you informed as things develop.

Rest assured that we continue to have the safety of all our students and employees as our first priority.

Sincerely,

Dr. Michael C. LaEever

Superintendent of Catholic Schools for WNY