



August 13, 2020

Dear Families,

With last week's release of our State and King County's updated guidelines for schools and the corresponding directions from our Archbishop and Superintendent, we are now fully engaged in ramping up our remote learning experience to begin the year.

I am fully aware and agree that this has been frustrating; not knowing precisely what is going to happen. It has been equally frustrating for every one of our schools and communities. You deserve information that is accurate and timely. Throughout this summer, the directives to us have changed almost daily. I'll continue to push out updates as more specifics become available. Please contact our office with any questions and watch for additional information. This year, as much as ever, we'll be relying on the Spirit for grace and guidance!

As of today, this is what we know:

- It is important to understand that the date for returning students into the school is being driven by the metrics published by our county Health Dept. These directives have led to the creation of an archdiocesan decision tree that we all use for making our decisions. Currently, in Seattle, we are in a HIGH LEVEL of transmission, meaning over 75 confirmed positive cases per 100,000 residents. This triggers the REMOTE LEARNING expectation for Grades K-12. Once that number drops below 75 per 100,000 to the MODERATE LEVEL and remains that way for at minimum fourteen days, we can begin the process of returning Grades K-5 back into the building (using the distancing, masks, and cleaning protocol). Our regional schools will closely monitor the numbers each Wednesday and once given the go-ahead, we move forward. Right now, the expectation is that the earliest we can achieve that threshold will be near the end of September or early October.

Since middle school students are considered a higher risk, we need to move to the LOW LEVEL designation of 25 cases or lower over a same length period. Believe me, we are working with our sister schools to creatively develop ways to bring them in sooner. No one – especially you – wants them home any longer!

Some have asked, "What can we do to speed this along?" The number one thing we ALL can do is to wear our masks, wash our hands, and stay distant. Once everybody in this town is on board with that message, we'll see those numbers dip and we can get back to some degree of "normal." Stay tuned.

- As I said in last week's email, the surveys were clear that the level of our remote learning experience last spring was inadequate. We will be coordinating with our sister school, St. George, to ensure that our level of instruction exceeds our past effort. These next two weeks, our staff will be re-tuning our model – working in conjunction with St.

George staff – to meet the challenge. Expect to receive information from your child’s teacher within the next two weeks.

- A VERY positive development just this week... We have been given the approval to open our PK program onsite, face-to-face, on September 2. Since this age child is regulated by a different state agency, the requirements are not the same. Our lead teacher, Laurie Clark, will be in touch with the specifics. In addition, we will also be allowed to fashion an interim “early learning camp” which will allow our five-year olds to be on site at the same time. Details next week.
- For ALL students, we are creating a schedule to not only have them (and you) meet their teachers, get materials, and learn the new remote routine, but also to bring in small groups at a time for a diagnostic test of their current Reading and Math ability. This STAR assessment can be accomplished in about an hour and a half period. We’ll want this to happen in the first days in order to set a baseline for each child and set up our game plan. More coming on that next week.
- In addition, since the restrictions on bringing groups together for a liturgy is very different than school classrooms, Fr. Scott has agreed to celebrate our first Mass of the Holy Spirit on Wednesday, September 2 at 8:30am in the church. This will also give us a chance for an opening assembly and opportunity for families and staff to exchange information. Watch for that information next week as well.
- For those families concerned about instructional access to the internet either through bandwidth or platform, we want to work with you to have those needs taken care of prior to classes beginning. For reduced price or free Wi-Fi connections, please visit: <http://www.seattle.gov/tech/services/internet-access/low-cost-home-internet-access-for-residents>. Once that is established and you have a legitimate need for a loaned device from our school inventory, please contact the school office and we’ll look at options.
- Throughout the summer, we have been working to migrate our website over to a new host and to clean up some of the backend designer issues. While we’ve made progress, there still is work to do in order to be able to add fast moving details about what is happening. Again, that has been as frustrating for us as it has been for you.

In June, I pledged a higher standard of communication to you all. That pledge still stands, though I know we still have a long way to go. We’ll get there, but it will take some more patience all around until we do. In the meantime, don’t let your anxiety build. Call our office for answers. We may not have them yet, but you can bet we’re working on them!

Until next week... Stay safe in the heat!



Dan