



March 22, 2020

Dear St. Patrick School Families,

I hope everyone enjoyed the nice weekend and you were able to join Fr. Bob this morning for his live stream Mass in the Church. As we get ready to embark on the second week of eLearning, I would like to thank you for your patience, support and flexibility as we continue to navigate the uncharted waters of digital schooling during the global COVID-19 pandemic. The faculty, staff and I continue to learn what works best and what can be improved upon as we facilitate meaningful and creative learning for our students. As you know, we asked all of you as well as your children to complete a survey so we could gather feedback that will help us gauge how the students and parents are managing through the eLearning effort. If you did not complete the survey yet, we ask that you please refer to it in your email from March 19, 2020 and provide your feedback as soon as you are able. If you did not receive it, please email the School Office at schooloffice@st-pats.org and let us know so we can email one to you.

After reviewing the surveys we have already received, the Coronavirus Task Force - which is comprised of school faculty and staff as well as Parish staff - and I have begun to address any concerns that have been presented to us and we will continue to make adjustments and improvements as we enter our second week. Please continue to correspond with your child's teacher(s) for specific lesson and homework questions. All faculty now have daily instruction hours from 7:50AM-12:00PM where they are interacting directly with the students via the comments feature on Google Classroom and/or teaching them virtually. During this time, please know that teachers may not be immediately available to answer questions through email. They know how important the need for feedback is and will attend to it as soon as possible. Please encourage your child to move on to another subject. In addition, from 1PM-2:30PM, the faculty have established office hours and they are available via email to answer questions, provide feedback, and address any concerns that may arise.

Below are additional updates to some of your questions and feedback during the week:

School Closure

On Monday, March 16, 2020, Governor Murphy issued an Executive Order that closes all schools in New Jersey indefinitely, and as he said in his press conference, that schools would remain closed "... until such time is deemed by health officials to be safe for classes to resume". Therefore, I, as well as Fr. Bob nor the Diocese of Paterson Catholic Schools Office, do not have the authority to open school again. St. Patrick School will remain closed until such time that the Governor lifts the Executive Order and issues guidance about the resumption of schooling. As a result, at this time, you should plan for a closure beyond next week and possibly much longer. Our Easter Break remains unchanged on our school calendar, so eLearning will remain in place through noon on Wednesday, April 8, and start again on Monday, April 20, and continue so long as the Executive Order remains in effect.

Assignment Posting

By mandate of the Diocese of Paterson Catholic Schools Office, we are not allowed to post assignments by the week. We must post them daily. However, beginning Monday, all assignments in all classes and grades will be posted by 6AM and will be due by 8:15AM the next morning at the latest. We hope this change will allow those of you who are working and/or have several children at home the opportunity to have more time to help them prepare and complete the work. However, please note that there may be online instruction time that the faculty will need your child to participate in. This will be scheduled through Google Classroom in a timely manner.



Virtual Learning

Several of the faculty have been using Google Hangout Meets and/or videos of themselves as a method of connecting and communicating with students. This method of communication will expand, but please know that it is not something that will occur universally across all subjects and grades. There are faculty and student privacy issues that we must address to carry out this type of eLearning. The faculty and I are trying as hard as we can to manage this effort and to make eLearning as worthwhile as possible. Please remember that many of us have our own children at home to manage as well.

Mental Health Resources

The Diocese of Paterson Catholic Schools Office as well as the St. Patrick School faculty, staff and I know that this is a worrisome and stressful time for everyone - parents and students alike. Below is a list of resources for you from the Diocese and the school:

Traumatic Loss Coalition of Morris County: 732-235-2810 (Main Number)
Newbridge Crisis Response & Support Crisis Counseling: 1-888-746-9333
Family Intervention Services of Morris County: 973-586-5243

I hope you found the information in this letter useful. Finally, I thank you all for all you are doing to help St. Patrick School as we navigate through a truly unique challenge for our school, our surrounding towns, our country and our world.

Prayers for health & peace,

Christine Ross, Ed. D
Principal