



March 29, 2020

Dear St. Patrick School Families,

I pray this letter finds you doing well this fifth Sunday of Lent. On Friday, we completed our tenth day of digital learning. This past week, our faculty made great strides in differentiating lessons when needed and adding more virtual learning through Zoom and Google Hangouts/Meet. In fact, Ms. Dickinson, in partnership with her TK parents, read a bedtime story to her class on Friday night!

Easter/Spring Break

I have had various exchanges with parents and the Education Council regarding details on our upcoming Easter/Spring Break, which starts at Noon on Wednesday, April 8 and runs through Sunday, April 19. Since we are restricted to social distancing, I would like to hear from parents on whether or not the break should remain as planned or be shortened with days off given in May. Although local public school districts are bound to contractual obligations, St. Patrick School is able to do what is in the best interest of our students and families. As such, we are distributing a survey to all families tonight, asking for feedback on the break schedule. We ask that all families complete the survey by Monday at 3PM so we can make a final determination on the break and announce any changes accordingly.

Virtual Learning

This past week, I was able to see and speak with students who were participating in virtual Google Hangouts/Meets and Zoom. It is so wonderful to be able to have this! I truly miss seeing everyone each day. I ask that parents make every effort to encourage your child to sign on when these are made available. This week many teachers made the virtual lessons optional. Starting next week, Grades 4 & 5 will have one mandatory session per class so that the teachers can provide face-to-face instruction and check in with students. We ask that you assist us in making sure your child signs on during this time. If you have any questions, please email the teacher. In addition, I know some elementary and Early Childhood teachers are also trying this so please look for calendar invites and make every effort to have your child participate. Please remember that due to privacy issues for students and teachers live sessions will NOT happen universally.

Updated Middle School Schedule

Because we are uncertain how long we will be conducting digital learning, the administration and faculty are working hard to determine how best to meet the academic and emotional needs of our students. With that, next week (starting Monday, March 30th) marks the launch of a new Middle School block schedule that will allow for students to attend “live” classes online with their teachers, varying subjects daily. Each parent and student received a formal schedule via email yesterday and must log in to their classes at certain times. This not only will help relieve the demands on our teachers but provide the students with a more structured schedule with different subjects each day and more time to turn in assignments.

Home/School Partnership

We are extremely grateful to all parents for their patience and flexibility with this unprecedented situation. As a working parent, I know the struggle that this can be for so many of our families. Please know that eLearning is truly a partnership between home and school. I am sure that your household has somewhat settled into a routine, just like mine has. I ask every parent to please ensure that your child is submitting and/or hitting the "Turn In" button when they complete their lessons, and that they are keeping up with their assignments. The faculty and I are relying on parents to communicate any challenges



directly to the teachers. No student should be completely independent in this venture. The faculty - the majority of whom are working 18-hour days, six days a week to make this transition as seamless as possible for your child - are here to help and want to make sure this is a positive learning experience. I thank you for all you are doing to partner with us to support your child during this time!

Lent

Although so many things have changed due the COVID-19 pandemic, the most Holy season of Lent continues for us Catholics. While we do not know what Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday hold for us, we pray for the health and wellbeing of all families, faculty and staff. Please note that even though the Church has dispensed Catholics from the canonical requirement to abstain from meat on Fridays during Lent, since certain food items are becoming difficult to acquire, we still ask that parents practice Lenten traditions with their children as much as possible.

I thank you again for being a partner with St. Patrick School. And, thank you for being a blessing to us and for entrusting your child's education to St. Patrick School. We appreciate your sacrifice and commitment.

Prayers for health and peace,

Christine Ross, Ed. D
Principal