



June 19, 2020

Dear Catholic School Parents and Guardians,

The responses from the parent survey sent out from the Office of Catholic Education in May told us that our families wanted their children physically in school, 5 days a week for the 2020-2021 school year. The Bishop's Reopening Task Force listened carefully to what you shared, and plans began for a full in-person reopening for all Catholic schools in August.

To achieve this goal, guidelines have been given to all principals for pre-opening preparations and operational instructions once the school year begins. ***Our priority, as we prepare to reopen, is the health and safety of our school employees, the students and their families.***

Therefore, the following requirements for all schools are now in place:

- The winter break will begin on November 25<sup>th</sup> and students will return on January 11<sup>th</sup>. The lengthening of this break is an effort to mitigate the spread of the virus after families have gathered for the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. The school year now extends into June to make up days missed by the longer break. You will receive an updated calendar for 2020-2021. *Currently, we have no information from CIF regarding athletics for the fall or during break.*
- Frequent and thorough sanitation by school personnel will be required daily with more in depth cleaning and sanitizing each evening.
- Six feet of social distancing will be observed whenever possible between students.
- Hand washing for students and employees will also require the "20 second rule" and occur more often throughout the school day.
- All staff and students in grades 2 through 12 will be required to wear masks on campus.
- At a minimum, temperatures will be taken daily as students enter the campus.

I am often asked why all Catholic schools must follow the same rules when the rate of contagion of the virus is so different county by county. The answer is that the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Fresno are like one large school district. The diocese is responsible for the health and safety of all students and employees in all 5 counties where our schools reside. The counties do not oversee nor regulate our Catholic schools. In this, as with all policies and procedures; we follow the leadership of the Diocesan Bishop.

I encourage you to have conversations with your children about these changes and expectations. Being with their friends is the most important thing to most students. Wearing masks is becoming a common requirement in our country and our state. As Christians we understand why we are wearing them - to follow Jesus' example and take care of one another.

God bless you and your families.

*Mona E. Faulkner*

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