

Dear St. Joseph School Families:

I am honored to work with all of you, especially through this time of uncertainty. While this moment presents us with many decisions for our families, I wish to express my understanding and gratitude to all of you.

Academic Instruction Method

Every decision we make comes with much thought, research and prayer. With this in mind, St. Joseph School will be opening for face-to-face instruction this fall. This decision has been researched and discussed with our Pastor, Fr. Mike, as well as with the Diocese of Lansing. Below are perspectives from professional organizations in support of students attending in-school instruction:

From the Center for Disease Control (CDC):

“Available evidence provides reason to believe that in-person schooling is in the best interest of students, particularly in the context of appropriate mitigation measures similar to those implemented at essential workplaces. Scientific studies suggest that COVID-19 transmission among children in schools may be low. International studies that have assessed how readily COVID-19 spreads in schools also reveal low rates of transmission when community transmission is low. Based on current data, the rate of infection among younger school children, and from students to teachers, has been low, especially if proper precautions are followed. There have also been few reports of children being the primary source of COVID-19 transmission among family members.”

From the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP):

“The AAP strongly advocates that all policy considerations for the coming school year should start with a goal of having students physically present in school. The importance of in-person learning is well-documented, and there is already evidence of the negative impacts on children because of school closures in the spring of 2020. Lengthy time away from school and associated interruption of supportive services often results in social isolation, making it difficult for schools to identify and address important learning deficits as well as child and adolescent physical or sexual abuse, substance use, depression, and suicidal ideation.”

“The preponderance of evidence indicates that children and adolescents are less likely to be symptomatic and less likely to have severe disease resulting from SARS-CoV-2 infection. In addition, children may be less likely to become infected and to spread infection.”

From the State of Michigan Department of Education Superintendent Dr. Rice:

*“Some of you have shared that you hope to educate children at a distance for the first few months and then re-assess the situation. While your community’s health numbers may dictate this decision and while I agree with the need to re-assess regularly these numbers, *the beginning of the school year- prior to a second wave [or] flu season may be the most likely time, all else being equal, to have in-person instruction in the coming school year.*”*

School Reopening Plan

Attached is our school reopening plan that will detail our in-building expectations. This plan is a combination of requirements from the State of Michigan MI Safe Plan and the Diocese of Lansing. Please take the time to read this important information.

Several key points from our in-building safety plan and preparation are as follows:

- Medical grade true HEPA air purification filtration systems will be placed in every room. The system removes 99.9% of all particles in the air, recycles the air in the entire room every 15 minutes and has a CADR rating of 330.
- Touchless hand sanitizers are placed in every room, filled with CDC and FDA-approved sanitizer.
- Purell touchless hand sanitizers, filled with the recommended CDC and FDA-approved sanitizer, will be placed in every hallway.
- Designated bottle-fill drinking fountains will be available for use in the building.
- Lunches will be served within the classroom to maintain student classroom cohorts.
- Outdoor recess areas will be designated for individual classrooms or cohort grade classrooms only while students are outside during the school day.
- Teaching staff will travel to student classrooms during switches and specials when possible.

Distance Learning Plan

Our Distance Learning Plan will soon be available to your family. This plan is what we used during our past spring shutdown. We will implement the Distance Learning Plan if the health department or an executive order determines the need to close the school. If we go to this type of closure, we will provide a tuition reduction during the time we are closed and unable to instruct students within the school building.

Online Learning Option

We are in the process of determining an online option, distinctly unique to St. Joseph Catholic School. This has not yet been officially determined and will need some continued research before we are comfortable offering this option to your family.

Thank you for your loyalty and support of St. Joseph Catholic School. We are committed to offering a safe environment for your student's learning. We look forward to working with your family through these uncertain times.

God Bless,

Chris