



ST. DOMINIC
CATHOLIC SCHOOL

INSPIRING MINDS † DEVELOPING CHARACTER † SEEKING CHRIST

March 16, 2020

Dear families of St. Dominic Catholic School,

As promised, I will continue to provide you with as much information as I can when appropriate. I am not an alarmist by nature so I apologize if my message yesterday portrayed things as such. Several factors went into my decision to close school immediately. None of which are necessary or appropriate to share. Please know that if I learn of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in our school community, I will let you know.

This morning, the available school staff met to devise our plan for how to move forward these next 15 days of school. You will receive communication from teachers independent of this correspondence tomorrow, Tuesday, March 17, to share specific expectations for students. They will use the platforms they identified on Friday, March 13. Each teacher is going to be keeping “office hours”. During these “office hours” they will be making themselves available for correspondence and online interaction. This will help to provide structure for their days as well as yours. Each day they will be sharing what students should strive to accomplish while at home. This will include information from the special area teachers. The specials will share items through the classroom teachers once a week, typically on a day they would have had contact with the students. The expectations for work activities will vary based on the ages of the children in our school. We will be making packets available for you to pick up tomorrow. These packets will contain items shared by teachers to keep children engaged while we are away from school in addition to the items they will be sharing online. **Please pick up your family packet.** (Fourth grade families will not have a packet at this time.) We will have these outside the school entrance tomorrow from 7:00-2:00. They will be identified by family name. This will allow us to provide for social distancing and meet the needs of working from home. If your child requires something from their locker/desk that they didn’t take home on Friday, please alert me today so I can have it ready for pick up tomorrow. Students who were absent on Friday will have their books outside for pick up. After this week, we will move to a Thursday drop off/pick up pattern. Should teachers need to get something to children, families will be able to pick it up on Thursday from 7:00-2:00. Do not come to get materials unless your child’s teacher has told you to. We will only use this when absolutely necessary. If items need to be dropped off, there will be bins out on Thursdays for deposits to be made (no pun intended). The work being done by our students while away is important work to complete, not just for school, but for their own peace of mind. The middle school students especially need to keep up. This is not vacation. This is work from home. Report cards are being made available today, however, we have been informed by Bright Arrow that operations are slowed due to the inundation of communication going through their services. Please be patient. They will be there momentarily.

I can’t reiterate the words of the CDC enough. Please make every effort to stay home when you can. Travelling is growing more and more limited. You will need to intentionally do things to maintain normalcy for your family as life becomes more contained. The easiest way to keep things calm is to establish a routine. As educators, we know that routine creates a rhythm that provides calm. Attached to this letter is an idea for how to establish a rhythm in your home that resembles school but isn’t school.

This is where we are working to partner with you. Fill in the times with our suggestions for how to engage your children's brains yet strike a balance with the "freedom" we are experiencing. Please don't read this to be us telling you what to do, we just are providing you with suggestions. We hope that you do create a schedule for your children to keep everyone focused. It will help as we draw closer and closer into our homes.

Amidst these troubling times, I would be remiss if I didn't mention maintaining your connection to God and working with your children to build their relationship with Jesus. Prayer is a wonderful balm for a troubled mind and soul. It will do your family well to sit in prayer at different times in the day. Attached to this letter is a Lenten calendar, one for younger children and one for older children, to help you in keeping focused on our Lenten journey. While this pandemic is proving to be a cross all of its own to bear, fostering intentional quiet prayer at home will ease that weight. Might I suggest this be woven into a structured daily routine?

Extended Care

Having had the morning to regroup, we continue to realize that there are some of our families who need help in caring for their children while businesses remain open. Not all of our families have the luxury to work from home. The Catholic Church is notorious for reaching out to those who need help despite all obstacles. This is our overarching mission. To that end, we will be opening up Extended Care for families who find themselves in extreme need of assistance. Extended Care will be open during school hours, 7:45-2:45, without any additional cost. Before school care from 7:00-7:45 will be the usual \$3.00 charge. After school care from 2:45-5:45 will be the usual \$7.25 per hour charge. Families needing this service are to contact Ms. Kempfer immediately so that we may prepare for tomorrow. We will ask for your schedule every Thursday for the week ahead. So long as we have children and families in need, this service will be available.

Everything is so very fluid with the COVID-19 pandemic. I will continue to communicate with you as appropriate and/or necessary. I would like to close with a prayer for all of us.

Lord Jesus, our family needs Your help today. We need Your peace and tranquility, an end to discord. Give us strength and compassion to understand each other, wisdom and love to help each other, and the trust and patience we need to live peacefully together. Grant that, through the intercession of Your mother, Mary, and St. Joseph, our family too may become a holy family, a family that works together as one, a family that embraces peace and love, a family whose members are dedicated to each other and to You. Amen.

Mary, Mother of God, pray for us.

St. Dominic, pray for us.

Mrs. Fischer