



March 25, 2020

Dear Parents, Faculty, and Staff,

During this time of uncertainty, I hope that you are well. Governor Northam has stated that public and private schools are to be closed for at least the end of this academic school year. We are required to follow that mandate during this state of emergency. However, while our classrooms and hallways may be closed to students gathering, we are still open to learning new things and successfully completing this academic school year!

From our Early Learners through 12th grade the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Richmond are committed to fulfilling our mission to develop and nurture the spiritual, intellectual, social, and emotional growth of each student in the spirit of the Gospel and teachings of the Catholic Church. From the start of this pandemic, our faculty and staff have adjusted quickly and are working hard to provide instruction to your students. This continuation of learning is ensuring that our students are meeting the instructional requirements they will need to successfully complete this academic year and move onto their next grade level.

We are meeting the spiritual needs of our students within our lessons, through religion classes, daily prayer, and can offer the opportunity to attend weekly mass virtually through live streaming or video.

Beginning March 30, 2020:

- We will continue instruction through digital/remote learning.
- Our students will still be learning new material and receiving grades.
- Our schools will continue to follow the existing academic calendar for 2019-2020.
- We will follow all breaks including Easter break (April 10-17), Memorial Day (May 25), and any early dismissal days that have already been scheduled. Five additional Teacher Professional Development days may be scheduled at each school. Your school will notify you of those days.
- We will not be administering the Spring Performance Series Testing or the Assessment of Children/Youth Religious Education (ACRE) this year.
- Advanced Placement (AP) exams will be optional this year.
- While schools are closed, all school related activities, sports, dances, ceremonies, and events are also canceled.
- We are exploring options on how to honor and celebrate our graduates!

The personal interactions of students, faculty, parents and administrators are the true spirit of our Catholic Schools. We recognize that this new format of instruction cannot completely replace learning experiences that take place within the schools each day. However, our amazingly creative, talented and dedicated teachers have embraced the challenge! Using technology and a wide variety of approaches and resources, to engage, enrich and to meet the needs of students is nothing new to our faculty.

I know that this is a very stressful time in all our lives and this pandemic is certainly not something that anyone of us ever imagined would happen. While we are doing our best to provide our students with the best possible education, we do not want them or you to be overwhelmed. It is okay to reach out to your teachers and share that you and/or your child(ren) need a break and things can be adjusted. It is important to know that we are all in this together and that it will be okay. Our schools are a family and we will get through this crisis together as a family.

For the schools to remain financially stable and viable this year, and into the future, it is vital that families honor their tuition contracts and payments for the rest of this school year. We are still providing your children with an exceptional education and we must meet our own expenses. If you have temporarily lost your income due to this crisis, please contact your school to make arrangements to set up a payment plan to start once you return to work.

How we respond to this crisis will be a lifelong lesson for all of us, let's focus on the positive. We are blessed to be in a world where we can still stay connected with each other in so many ways while still adhering to social distancing for the safety and wellbeing of all.

A special thank you to all the essential workers that are helping us every day. Our thoughts and prayers continue to go out to those who have been affected by this virus and to those fighting it.

Yours in Christ,

Kelly M. Lazzara
Superintendent of Schools
Catholic Diocese of Richmond

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

~ John 14:27