

St. Thomas More Catholic School

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STM -COVID-19 Coronavirus Update 3-11-20- EMAIL

Dear Families and Friends,

I understand there continues to be concern and anxiety in our community regarding the coronavirus (COVID-19). I would like to resend the Principal's note from last Friday's Knight Times along with additional information highlighted in green.

All steps that we take or do not take are based on direct communication with the Orange County Health Department, Parish administration, and community medical professionals. At this time, there is no mandate for school closings or changes to our protocols here at STM. Of course, we will continue to monitor daily the updates as the situation may change. **Due to the concern from some parents regarding Friday's International Festival's Dessert Tasting, I have decided to sadly cancel this portion of the event.** As stated previously, we will continue to monitor daily. I appreciate all the information and concerns that have been sent to me over the past week. Please know that I share this with those we consult with for guidance. Please use this correspondence as your most current update of information.

We continue to monitor closely the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19). Our main priority is to keep our students, faculty and staff healthy and safe. We want to assure you that we will take necessary precautions and follow the advice of local public health experts to ensure the safety of our community. Our faculty are teaching and expecting our students to cover coughs and sneezes, increase frequent hand-washing, and avoid touching their mouth, nose, or eyes — all ways to stop or decrease the spread of many illnesses. **Students who become sick at school, arrive at school sick or exhibit concerning symptoms will be sent home as soon as possible. If any student, faculty, or staff member show signs of cough with fever, they will require a physician's note prior to returning to school.** As a reminder, faculty and students must follow the STM Health guidelines, which mandates that they are free from symptoms of fever, vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school. Directives from public health officials concerning coronavirus will supersede our policies.

Our housekeeping staff has implemented more aggressive cleaning measures. Nightly, they wipe down all desks, seats, light switches, door handles and restroom fixtures with QT Plus, recommended by the CDC. In addition to our regular classroom/bathroom sinks and hand sanitizer dispensers, we have additional antibacterial/antiviral hand sanitizer dispensers readily available around campus.

We are talking with students, in developmentally appropriate ways, about coronavirus and the preventative public health measures being enacted in and beyond the school. Below you'll find links to helpful resources for you to talk with your children about these topics. Considering that we are a learning community, this is a moment for learning about science, statistics, probability, geography, epidemiology and more. We are very aware that anxiety can be heightened in times like these. Please remember that students take their emotional cues from the adult community. We encourage you to monitor your child's engagement in the topic and help them understand what they are seeing and hearing to avoid anxiety. It will also be helpful for them to understand the potential for stigmatization by ethnicities associated with or people sickened by the virus. Here is a [helpful article](#) on how to talk to your child about the outbreak. Our nurses and counselor are here as resources as well.

[Explaining the News to Our Kids](#) (Common Sense Media)

[How to Talk to Kids About Coronavirus](#) (New York Times)

[FAQs About Coronavirus and Children](#) (CDC)

[What To Do if You Are Sick with Coronavirus](#) (CDC)

Distance Learning - PreK-5 grade-level teachers and Middle School content teams have collaborated to create distance learning plans. If at any point we are required by the health department to close school due to the spread of COVID- 19, students will be able to continue the curriculum at home. As internet connectivity is critical for distance learning, families without in-home internet access should contact school administration in advance.

- PreK-5 – Teachers will share assignments via email including PDFs of textbook/workbook material, digital practice programs like IXL, and suggestions for at-home practice.
- Middle School - Teachers will share daily assignments including projects, reading, activities, and digital practice, by posting details in Renweb and Google Classrooms.
- Specials - Teachers will reach out weekly with suggestions on how students and parents can engage with special subject curriculum at home.

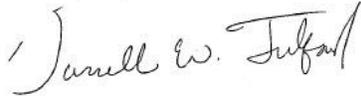
Field Trips - We will determine whether to postpone or cancel these events on a case-by-case basis.

Travel - STM families, faculty/staff, tutors/private therapists, and volunteers who travel to CDC Level 2 or 3 areas may not come to school (including after-school or offsite activities) for two weeks after their return to the United States. Medical clearance will be needed before returning to campus. If anyone in your household has upcoming travel plans to these areas, please contact school administration. We will keep you updated if there are any changes in protocol.

As we collaborate with you and our greater community to meet known and unknown challenges, we are committed to keeping the channels of communication open and doing all we

reasonably can to ensure the health, safety and well-being of our community. Please be aware that the rapidly-changing nature of the situation may not allow us to provide much advance notice about our decisions. We will do our best. If you have any questions or concerns regarding any medical or health issues, please reach out to the local health department or your personal physician. If you have any questions relating to our policies and procedures, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Darrell W. Fulford". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D' and a distinct 'F'.

Darrell Fulford - Principal