



Our Lady of Mount Carmel School

Dear Parents and Guardians,

On Sunday, Governor Gina Raimondo announced the first presumptively positive case of coronavirus (COVID-19) in Rhode Island. A “presumptively positive” case is one that is waiting for confirmation by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This first case is associated with travel in southern Europe where other cases have been reported.

The Governor emphasized, however, that even with this first case, the risk to Rhode Islanders is low and there is no need for alarm or panic. Nevertheless, as school administrators, we want to be prudent and prepared. Our aim is to ensure the safety and health of the students and all members of the school community.

The Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) <https://health.ri.gov/> and the CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/> have been providing us with guidance as this relates to school communities. The CDC has regular updates on COVID-19 and the RIDOH is sending out regular updates to our school.

The RIDOH has reminded us that our primary responsibility is to help students understand the importance of good hygiene and to follow practices which can minimize the spread of illness. Colds, the flu, and the norovirus spread the same way as the coronavirus.

RIDOH is recommending that students, staff, and volunteers wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and, if unable to wash, use 60% or higher alcohol-based hand sanitizers. It recommends that they avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouths with unwashed hands, covering their coughs or sneezes with a tissue or their sleeve, staying away from people who are sick, and staying at home when they are sick. You can help us reinforce these recommendations, especially by keeping your student home if ill so other students and the teachers are not infected.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel School, a Catholic institution, is devoted to the development of the whole student. We integrate spiritual, intellectual, social, emotional, and physical growth with academic excellence. We encourage our students to serve God and others as part of a strong, socially responsible, Catholic community. We strive to provide our students with example and opportunity in order to help them become intentional Disciples of Christ.

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RIDOH is recommending schools follow a regular cleaning and disinfection program, which includes cleaning hard surfaces (desks, tables, countertops, sinks), frequently touched surfaces (door handles, faucets, railings), bathrooms and health rooms, and using alcohol wipes to clean keyboards.

If the coronavirus does spread in Rhode Island—and we pray that it won't—we will plan ways to conduct school with many students out sick or with all students remotely and not in school. Following the direction of the RIDOH and the CDC, we will also determine the safety of student travel, field trips, and any activities outside the school that may bring students and staff into close proximity with each other or with people who may have respiratory infections.

We do not want to create fear or anxiety with the students and we ask your support in talking about the role we all play in staying healthy and preventing the spread of illness. Please contact me if you have any questions. We will keep you updated.

Sincerely,

Ms. Walters
Principal

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