



June 3, 2020

Dear St. Patrick School Families,

Wow! The 2019-2020 school year is quickly coming to a close. No other year has been like this one! It has brought an abundance of blessings as well as many challenges and has truly allowed us to live out our motto, "Create Caring Moments..." I hope that many of you are able to join us for the livestream of Graduation Mass on Thursday at 9AM. In addition, please join us online for Mass Celebrating the Close of School on Friday, June 12 at 9AM.

Throughout the last 12 weeks, I have been so proud of our teachers, staff, students, and families for working in partnership as we have navigated uncharted territory. Thank you for your patience and understanding. I hope you follow us on social media, because it has been a blessing to witness all of the amazing things your children are doing. Their creativity, perseverance, and your dedication in supporting them is truly wonderful.

Now, I would like to share a few key points as we conclude this year and continue to plan for the next. First for this school year:

- A livestream of the Graduation Mass will occur this Thursday, June 4 at 9AM. All students and families are welcome to watch this important Mass, which is a tradition that we are pleased to continue. To join the livestream, visit the Parish website at www.st-pats.org.
- On Thursday, June 11, the Early Childhood Program will celebrate their class closing programs virtually on Google Meets. We are excited to continue this tradition with our families of our youngest students.
- Friday, June 12 marks the final day of instruction for students in Grades 1-7. All lessons will be posted to Google Classroom and should be completed as directed on Thursday, June 11 & Friday, June 12. The teachers will use these two days to compile all items in their classrooms for your children and close down their classrooms for the summer. Please know that they may not be immediately accessible to answer questions and emails.
- The last day to turn in any and all school work to teachers, including teachers of special subjects, is Friday, June 12. Any work not turned in by this date will not receive credit.
- Report cards for the last marking period will be emailed to parents no later than June 30, 2020.

Materials Exchange Days

On June 15 and 16, the school will host Materials Exchange Days whereby parents will need to bring items back to St. Patrick School and pick up any items left in students' desks or in their cubbies, including coats, sweatshirts, bags, etc. Homeroom teachers will provide each family with a checklist of items to return on the Materials Exchange Days.

All items to be dropped off must be placed in one CLEAR PLASTIC BAG so that the administrative staff can easily inventory all items. In addition, when parents and students come for their scheduled drop-off/pick-up time, there will be a school nurse on duty so that parents may collect any student medications stored in the Nurse's Office. If your child keeps an allergy kit/inhaler in the classroom please collect that from your child's teacher. We ask for your patience and cooperation in the Materials Exchange Days as we have many protective protocols and procedures to follow as directed by the CDC and NJ Department of Health. The clear bag is essential to this process.

If you are not able to drop-off and pick-up your student's items on June 15 or 16, please see if another family is comfortable dropping the items off for you. If you have any questions or concerns, contact the



School Office at schooloffice@st-pats.org. *The school needs all items back before we can close out the school year for your student. Please contact teachers prior to June 10th if items are lost or damaged for instructions on how to proceed.*

The dates and times for the Materials Exchange Days are the following:

Monday, June 15 - PreK through Grade 5 only

- 8:30AM Last Name beginning with A & B
- 9:30AM Last Name beginning with C & D
- 10:30 AM Last Name beginning with E & F
- 11:30AM Last Name beginning with G, H & I
- 1:30PM Last Name beginning with J, K & L

Tuesday, June 16 - PreK through Grade 5 only

- 8:30AM Last Name beginning with M & N
- 9:30AM Last Name beginning with O, P & Q
- 10:30 AM Last Name beginning with R & S
- 11:30AM Last Name beginning with T, U & V
- 1:30PM Last Name beginning with W, X, Y & Z

Grade 6 families will receive a Sign-Up Genius today for Monday, June 15 for the students to drop-off items and clean out their lockers. Grade 7 families will receive a Sign-Up Genius today for Tuesday, June 16 for the students to drop-off items and clean out their lockers.

Academic Standards For Online Learning

The faculty, staff and I recently reviewed the Family Survey made by the Diocese of Paterson Catholic Schools Office and a majority of the families at St. Patrick School participated. For this, we are grateful! We received great positive feedback however some parents did raise a concern that they felt their student(s) may not be learning as much as they would if they were in-person at school. In fact, all classes are on schedule with their curriculum standards for the year, with some even ahead of where they would normally be due to the streamlined online learning programs we have in place. In short, all grades will complete the 2019-2020 school year having met the curriculum standards as set forth by the state and the Diocese. I also realize that every parent, and every faculty member, is concerned about the social emotional health of each and every student during this pandemic. Faculty are addressing this each day with students, and I again encourage you to reference the daily parent blog for resources and counseling services.

2020-2021 School Year

As the school year comes to a close, we continue to navigate through these unprecedented times with the intent of making informed decisions when determining next steps for the safety of our St. Patrick School community. While we remain prayerful that we will make a return this fall with our school family together once again, I understand that there may still be questions regarding alternative plans for the next school year in the event that we are unable to fully open our doors.

As the leader of the St. Patrick School, I want to always be transparent with you and I want you to know that I wish I could provide a clear and detailed plan for the upcoming school year. While I cannot share all the details at this time, it is important that I communicate what we do have in place for the 2020-2021



academic year. Currently, I have organized a task force to discern, analyze, and determine a detailed plan for reopening in the fall. We will continue seeking guidance from federal, state and local authorities, including the New Jersey Department of Health and the CDC, ensuring that all safety protocols will be met. To see some of the guidance that the CDC has given schools, please follow the link [here](#). You can also see recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics [here](#).

For a quick summary of what we are developing, the Coronavirus Task Force, Education Council, Fr. Bob and I have been reviewing four scenarios that we see for St. Patrick School for the fall: A.) Open on schedule in September in a regular school mode; B.) Open on schedule with social distancing, PPE, necessary technological equipment for all students in grades PK3-8 to facilitate various modes of learning and modified schedules so that all students may be on campus for some — if not all — of each day; C.) Blended learning (live and in-person at school AND online classes with live instruction for students in grades PK3-8) with some type of alternate scheduling; D.) Remote learning until the state allows a transition to plan “C” above followed by a transition to “B” and, then, “A.” With all of these scenarios also comes the questions of whether or not we will be able to bring students together for large gatherings, including lunch, Morning Prayer and other assemblies, music classes and concerts, etc. Also, what will our Physical Education and competitive sports programs look like or will they happen at all? And, finally, what health, hygiene and cleaning protocols will our janitorial staff, nursing staff and/or teachers have to implement on a daily, weekly and monthly basis? I am aware that some of the private high schools have started to announce their plans. Please be mindful that our student population is not the same. Our students are not all independent and the expectations must be different. Just like all schools are not the same, the plans for September will not be the same.

While we are doing all of this, we are also working with the Diocese of Paterson Catholic Schools Office and the School District of the Chathams on busing plans. While our goal is to provide as much busing as possible to those who qualify for it in the Borough and the Township, we are currently consulting with our transportation provider in accordance with CDC guidelines regarding social distancing on school buses. It is possible that mitigation efforts involving social distancing will dramatically reduce the number of available seats on the buses for the 2020-2021 school year.

While none of these plans are final, we are working on the various scenarios above to ensure that no matter what of the ever-changing guidance we receive, St. Patrick School is prepared. I reiterate that the above is just a brief synopsis of what COULD be possible IF schools open with a strict adherence to the guidelines published to date. The extent to which the above may become reality will likely be determined at a state level. As we know more, information will be shared with our school community. I ask, again, for your patience and understanding as I can assure you that this will change multiple times in the days and weeks ahead. I also ask for you to be open-minded about what the reality of school will be like in the fall and understand that we will all have to adjust to the “new normal” and know that the “new normal” will in fact look very different than before.

I want to, again, thank all of you in our St. Patrick School community. All of you have served the needs of our children in ways that no one could ever have imagined when this school year started and truly created caring moments!

Blessings,
Dr. Christine Ross, Principal