



Dear Families,

Regular communication between home and school is critical to the success of our Catholic schools. We are always as transparent as possible regarding COVID exposure and case counts to ensure the health and safety of everyone in our community. However, as COVID numbers are on the rise, we wanted to share information with you regarding outside factors limiting the information we are able to release.

On September 16, the Iowa Department of Education and Iowa Department of Public Health jointly released guidance for schools and local public health agencies regarding public reporting of COVID-19 cases, instituting limitations in accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

The state [guidance](#) states:

- *Schools that have no cases can report zero cases*
- *Schools with five or fewer cases should not provide a specific count but can confirm there are cases within the school population*
- *Schools with counts of six or more cases can release specific case counts* ● *No other demographic identifiers should be included in the school-level release*

“Demographic identifiers” include information such as grade bands, individual grade levels, and class names. In September, we adapted our reporting procedures to meet these updated guidelines. We appreciate your understanding regarding this guidance at the state level.

While these limitations may be challenging at times, we are committed to safety and transparency while maintaining student privacy. We appreciate your ongoing support of our schools during these unprecedented times. Please continue to pray for all those affected and an end to this virus.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Donna Bishop".

Donna Bishop
Superintendent
Diocese of Des Moines Catholic Schools