

This message is being sent on behalf of School Nurse, Whitney Battershell, to all St. Mark families registered in FACTS Family Portal.

Dear Parents: Please see below for two important items from the School Nurse:

1. Due to extensive hand washing, the increased use of hand sanitizer, and the colder/dryer air, we are seeing increased numbers of students in the nurse's office with painful cracked, dry hands. As a result, we are asking for donations of unscented, moisturizing hand lotion for the classrooms. If you choose to donate to your child's classroom, please follow these guidelines:

-Lotion should be unscented.

-Examples include Vaseline Intensive Care, Cetaphil, Eucerin, and Aveeno (please avoid Bath & Body Works, etc.).

## 2. COVID-19 Update

With a few days left until we break for the Christmas holidays, I want to provide you with some detailed information about COVID-19 guidelines and resources, new recommendations from the Diocese of Dallas Catholic Schools Office, and school notification procedures. My apologies for the lengthy email, but please take a moment to read through it now. While I hope you will not need to refer to this information over the break, please save it just in case.

As a reminder, we are asking our families to be extra vigilant about maintaining COVID-19 precautions since cases are on the rise around us. Please know that we are still holding strong at St. Mark, but we continue to see increased numbers of people in our community identified as "close contacts" to others outside the school who have tested positive for COVID-19. A "close contact" is defined as someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more.

**When identified as a close contact, a 14-day quarantine is required, and that individual may not physically return to the school campus during that period.**

Following are ways that you can help reduce your family's exposure and keep our school community safe and healthy:

1. If you gather with individuals outside of your immediate family in any way, please ensure that everyone wears a face mask at all times.
2. If your student is involved in sporting activities, please keep social distance from other families and wear face masks at all times.
3. If you choose to travel, please maintain safety practices at all times.

**We urge everyone to review the CDC safety guidelines for daily activities, gatherings, travel, etc.**

## **Catholic Schools Office Safe Travel and Holiday Gathering Recommendations**

- \*Obtain PCR testing 1-3 days prior to travel/gathering.
- \*Remain home for 7 days following travel/gathering and obtain PCR testing 3-5 days upon returning home from travel.
- \*Remain home for 10 days following travel/gatherings if unable or unwilling to obtain PCR testing.

### **Where do I get tested?**

\*[Texas Department of Emergency Management](#): This website allows you to search by address and indicates which testing sites are free of charge.

\*FREE drive through testing by appointment without ID or insurance.

***EUA PCR mouth swab- requires 30-minute fasting from food/water and patient to follow directions exactly.***

\*<https://curative.com/>

\*<https://www.gogettested.com/>

\*[Parkland Clinics](#): These clinics offer PCR nasal swab by appointment only for symptomatic established Parkland patients age >5. Lab turnaround is typically 48-72 hours.

\*[Dallas County FREE testing](#): This link helps you find locations for free testing for teachers and construction workers with a school ID.

\*Local Pharmacies: [CVS](#), [Walgreens](#), [Walmart](#)

### **Who do I notify?**

*During the Christmas break, our school offices will be closed. I will check my email periodically but may not respond until Monday, January 4. If you become ill with COVID-19 or are identified as a close contact, please email our COVID Response Team for a return to campus timeline and request public health information and resources as needed.*

\*FDA-approved RT-PCR labs are preferred.

\*FDA Emergency Use Authorized (EUA) molecular PCR and RT-PCR labs are acceptable as well.

\*FDA approved or EUA rapid-antigen labs are only accepted for positive (+) results. No negative (-) rapid antigen results are accepted.

**Families should submit copies of COVID-19 lab reports to their campus clinic for evaluation and county case reporting as required by law. Copies can be emailed to [whitney.battershell@stmcs.net](mailto:whitney.battershell@stmcs.net).**

**COVID Response Team emails:**

[corky.cronin@stmcs.net](mailto:corky.cronin@stmcs.net)

[sarah.peralta@stmcs.net](mailto:sarah.peralta@stmcs.net)

[gregory.michniak@stmcs.net](mailto:gregory.michniak@stmcs.net)

[pam.steinkirchner@stmcs.net](mailto:pam.steinkirchner@stmcs.net)

[whitney.battershell@stmcs.net](mailto:whitney.battershell@stmcs.net)

**When emailing the COVID Response Team, please include:**

1. Last exposure date, the situation of the exposure, and names of all the children who attend St. Mark Catholic School, along with their grade(s).
2. If a student or a family member is positive, indicate when the symptoms started and what signs and symptoms they are experiencing (fever, chills, conjunctivitis, muscle or body aches, fatigue, runny nose, sore throat, headache, cough, shortness of breath, abdominal pain, diarrhea, vomiting, nausea, loss of taste or loss of smell, and any other symptoms).
3. If it is a positive case that is asymptomatic, list the date the test was performed and the reason for obtaining the test (travel, exposure etc.).

Please have a safe and happy holiday. I look forward to seeing all of our students in the new year.