



December 4, 2020

Dear Diocese of Monterey Catholic School Community,

As most of you know, there have been many recent changes in response to the current COVID-19 surge in California. I want to bring you up to date with what we currently know; however, it is important to note that things are changing very quickly, and there may be further updates coming.

New Regional Stay-at-Home Order

On Thursday, December 3, Governor Newsom announced a regional approach to a stay-at-home order. The State is now divided into five regions. The four counties in our Diocese are in three different regions:

- Santa Cruz and Monterey are in the Bay Area Region,
- San Benito is in the San Joaquin Valley Region and
- San Luis Obispo is the Southern California Region.

The new regional stay-at-home order is triggered when the available ICU beds in the region is 15% or less. Once triggered, the stay-at-home order will be in effect for three weeks. The order is not currently in effect in any region. However, it is likely that the San Joaquin Valley Region and the Southern California Region will reach the threshold in early December. The Bay Area Region is projected to reach the threshold in mid-late December.

More information regarding the regional stay-at-home order and each region's ICU capacity can be found at: <https://covid19.ca.gov/stay-home-except-for-essential-needs/>.

School Operations

Under the regional stay-at-home order, guidance related to schools remains in effect and unchanged. Accordingly, when the order takes effect in a region, schools that have previously reopened for in-person instruction may remain open.

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Monterey that have previously opened for in-person instruction will maintain their programs as planned until Christmas break. Schools will switch to distance learning for two weeks following Christmas break and in-person learning will resume January 19, 2021.

A switch to distance learning following Christmas break will allow for a quarantine period after Christmas activities and holiday travel. I appreciate you making this accommodation to further ensure the health and safety of our school communities.

Mitigation Efforts

Schools have implemented and continue to enforce the recommended guidelines from the CDC and the CDPH. These mitigation strategies have been effective in maintaining our healthy school environments. Each school will continue our earnest mitigation efforts that include wearing masks, physical distancing, proper and frequent hand hygiene, daily symptom screening, staying home when feeling sick, quarantining after travel, timely communication and frequent cleaning and disinfecting.

Quarantine Period

On Wednesday, December 2, the CDC announced a change to its previous guidance regarding quarantining after exposure to someone with COVID-19. The change allows the state and local government to adopt a shorter quarantine period than the previously announced 14 days. It is very clear in the CDC guidance that the CDC still recommends a 14-day quarantine, but that a state or local health department could adopt the new rules of shortening the time to a minimum of seven days. Neither the State of California nor any of our counties has adopted these shorter quarantine guidelines. **Because of this, we will continue to use the 14-day quarantine period. This also means that the previously announced travel restrictions will use the 14-day period.**

Moving Forward

As the situation progresses in the weeks to come, please be assured of our efforts to maintain our safe learning environment for all members of our school community. Your principal and I will be in contact with you as we receive applicable updates.

Thank you for your continued support of Catholic education in the Diocese of Monterey.

Advent Blessings,



Kimberly Cheng
Superintendent