



DIOCESE OF  
**FORT WAYNE-SOUTH BEND**  
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

Date: March 12, 2020  
Re: Coronavirus COVID-19 Update

Dear Parents or Guardians,

We want to provide you with an update regarding our efforts to ensure the health and safety of our students, faculty, staff, parents, and community regarding the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19).

St. Anthony, the diocese, and the Catholic Schools Office (CSO) are in constant contact with local and state health departments and are making decisions based on scientific facts and recommendations. As of right now, our schools will be conducting school and school activities as usual as possible until otherwise advised by the local or state health departments. The preventative measures taken by all our diocesan schools to manage the flu season are the same precautions to be used for COVID-19; however, we are enhancing what we have already done.

If the local health departments or the Indiana state health department advises us to close any of our schools, we will fully comply, and we will work on a plan of action for remote or eLearning or apply for waivers of instructional days.

The news media continues to shine a spotlight on COVID-19, but that coverage has also created some unnecessary panic in the process. Hopefully, staying informed will help alleviate the anxiety that some people are experiencing. In case you do not know, COVID-19 has mild symptoms such as a runny nose, sore throat, cough, and fever. Illness can be more severe for some people and can lead to pneumonia or breathing difficulties. More rarely, the disease can be fatal. Older people, and people with other medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease), can become severely ill.

Please continue to go to credible sites such as the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH), the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention, to keep updated on COVID-19. The diocese has also created a webpage for the most current directives and resources for our diocesan parishes and schools: [www.diocesefwsb.org/covid-19](http://www.diocesefwsb.org/covid-19).

St. Anthony is working with the various diocesan entities and outside sources to help each other respond to different COVID-19 scenarios. Know that we are in a constant state of readiness to plan, prepare, and respond to COVID-19 using local, state, and national health departments, and we are making decisions based on their recommendations. We continue to consult with other (arch)dioceses in Indiana as well as other states and utilize our policies relating to planning for seasonal & pandemic diseases. The process will not end until the pandemic is over.

Keep in your prayers those inflicted with COVID-19 along with the health professionals and first responders tending to them.

Blessings,

Joseph (Joe) A. Brettnacher, Ph.D.