



# ST. FRANCIS

CATHOLIC CHURCH AND SCHOOL

Office of the Principal

January 3, 2021

Dear Parents,

I hope you all had a very blessed Christmas and you were able to be with close family members.

I am filled with hope for this coming year, 2021. Our students have seen a variety of options for learning since September including: being on campus, limited-in-person instruction, and comprehensive distance learning. We know that on campus, in-person instruction is the best option for students to build relationships and to learn. We have been working towards this end since last March.

We have worked with ODE, the OHA, and the governor's office following metrics and safety guidelines in order to safely instruct our students. We have continued the conversations to extend time on campus to best meet the needs of our students and families. Our teachers are working hard to meet the needs of their students. This will be best accomplished when we can all be back on campus. Thus, we are optimistic about the latest information coming from the governor's office for schools.

On December 23<sup>rd</sup> Governor Kate Brown sent a letter to the Director of the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) and the Director of Oregon Health Authority (OHA). The Governor's announcement calls for schools to reopen in-person instruction as soon as possible, hopefully by February 15. The new guidance, beginning, January 1, 2021, states, "Oregon's COVID-19 Health Metrics for Returning to In-Person Instruction will be advisory rather than mandatory."

This change means that each Catholic school will make decisions in line with guidance from the local public health authorities, ODE, and the Department of Catholic Schools. Additionally, each school will utilize and update Ready Schools Safe Learners (RSSL) Guidance document released in January. Schools will be required to follow their approved Operational Blueprints outlining safety measures in place for on-site learning.

In the meantime, St. Francis Catholic School will continue with the plan put in place prior to Christmas break: Pre-K-third grade will return to school on January 4, 2021, for full-day instruction. Students in fourth grade will return to school on January 4, 2021, from 8:15-10:30. On January 11, 2021, fourth grade will attend in-person instruction full day.

Commencing on January 4, 2021, the administration, faculty, staff, shareholders, and health professionals will work collaboratively on a timeline to transition to Hybrid learning for 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade. This includes, but is not limited to, staggered plans that best allows for a safe and smooth transition, mandatory training of classroom teachers, building staff, and safety protocols including: symptom screening, cleaning routines, social distance and face mask mandates,

student traffic flow in building, adjusted learning spaces, academic schedules, breaks, newly designed arrival/dismissal processes, etc.

The goal of St. Francis Catholic School is to bring students back to school in a safe and timely fashion. If all goes according to planned, we are looking at January 25th for grades 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> as the tentative return date. In the meantime, for students in 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade you will continue with comprehensive distance learning until you are notified otherwise.

Please know that the mission of St. Francis Catholic School is always at the forefront of decision making, including the health and safety of our students and staff. Please be patient and supportive as we navigate the positive options that now lie ahead. We know there will be many questions during the transition period and many families will be anxious to start right away. We will need to work through the components mentioned above, collaboratively.

We are blessed with this opportunity to again return to the classroom and educate our students in an environment of our Catholic faith.

Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Sincerely,  
Ms. Gonzalez  
Principal