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"The laborers in the Lord's vineyard should have one foot on the ground, and the other raised to proceed on their journey." --St. Ignatius of Loyola

Dear Xavier Families,

The year 2020 has certainly presented all of us with a unique journey! At St. Francis Xavier, we are excited and ready to continue our partnership with your family. I wish to update you on our preparations for the 2020-2021 school year in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Xavier staff has been working diligently to create a rigorous and safe return-to-learn plan in order to proceed with the journey of Catholic education that feeds your child and family spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually.

Living our Mission

We are committed to providing a quality Catholic education, regardless of the mode of delivery being used. The education your child receives from Xavier is distinct, as our Catholic beliefs, traditions, and teachings are deeply embedded in daily instruction. The Xavier staff is prepared to continue this for next school year.

Regardless of which mode of delivery is being used, Xavier is committed to offering the highest level of education possible by focusing directly on the social, emotional, faith, and intellectual needs of each child.

- Religion classes and prayer opportunities will be held daily.
- Teachers will have daily communication and interaction with all students.
- Catholic beliefs, traditions, and teaching will continue to be deeply embedded in daily instruction.
- Mass will be held weekly.
- Service opportunities will be available for all students.
- Core classes will be taught daily.

Three Modes of Delivery

We have prepared three models for instruction in order to be prepared for the unknown of next school year. Each one is described below.

On-Site Learning

This model indicates services are offered at Xavier Elementary. It is our goal to begin the school year on August 20, 2020 with on-site learning. To meet this goal, we have planned for additional cleaning, social distancing, training, and health/safety plans. We will continue to work with public health officials and archdiocesan staff to receive updated guidance.

Hybrid Learning

This model indicates services are offered both remotely and on-site. This model may be used to address specific student health concerns and a lack of readiness to return to the onsite model, as well as state mandates for social distancing, etc. Students using remote virtual learning will utilize Google Classroom, Seesaw, and Zoom for instruction. Chromebooks will be available for use by students who do not have access to at home technology.

Virtual Learning

This model indicates services will be held remotely for all students. Virtual learning will be used in emergency situations when on-site learning is not possible. When students are using remote virtual learning they will utilize Google Classroom, Seesaw and Zoom for instruction. Chromebooks will be available for students that do not have access to at home technology.

Health and Safety

We recognize it is not possible to eliminate all COVID-19 exposure risks. We are implementing strategies to make our school as safe as possible.

Screening

- We will ask parents to screen students at home for COVID 19 symptoms prior to attending school each day. A list of symptoms will be provided. We are asking all Xavier staff to check for potential COVID 19 symptoms prior to attending school each day as well.
- Children or staff with a temperature of 100.3 or above should not attend school. If the temperature is discovered at school, the child or staff member will be kept isolated from others and expected to leave as soon as possible.

Face Coverings

- At this time we are strongly encouraging students, staff, and parents to wear masks, especially in situations where proper social distancing is difficult. Parents will be expected to provide a face mask for their children. Solid colored face masks will be required.
- Lessons and instructions will be provided to students on the appropriate use of face coverings, as well as the prevention of stigmas associated with use or non-use of face coverings.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

- Additional cleaning and disinfecting procedures will be implemented. Staff will provide extra disinfecting/cleaning in high traffic areas, such as restrooms, hallways, etc. throughout each school day.

Hand Washing and Personal Hygiene

- Hand washing will be done multiple times throughout each school day...including before school, before lunch, after lunch, after recess, and after traveling the halls.
- Hand sanitizer and kleenex will be available in multiple places in the classrooms and school.

Limiting Exposure

- We will limit school visitors and access to the school building.
- Staff continues to plan how to reconfigure and utilize building space to provide for as much social distancing as possible. Having smaller classes sizes will assist in making proper social distancing more attainable in our classroom settings, and elsewhere throughout the school building.
- Two health office spaces will be utilized. One for illness and one for first aid/medication.
- We are reviewing lunch procedures to determine changes that need to take place.
- We are reviewing how students will be housed while entering and leaving the school. Proper social distancing will determine how many students will be housed in certain areas, such as the school auditorium.

Exposure

- All positive cases of COVID-19 will be reported to Dubuque County Public Health. We will follow their guidance for notification, contact tracing, cleaning, and closure.

What can you do?

Please understand that we are making the best decisions we can for everyone involved. We know that everyone will not be happy with all our decisions, but please remain positive around your children. Their attitude about school will directly correlate with yours. Below are a few other things you can do to help our school community:

- Talk to your child about what school will look like, including the mitigation steps listed above.
- Discuss your family's expectation of face coverings with your child.
- Continue to read school communications as more information becomes available.
- When available, complete e-registration accurately and make sure your contact information is up to date in case we need to communicate with you.
- Please keep your child at home if they do not feel well. It is important to keep your child home if they have a fever. Please do not give fever-reducing medication and send your child to school.
- Report any exposure or positive cases to Cathy Leuck (secretary), or Jolene Bage (school nurse) immediately.
- Please contact Mr. Smith to request to be part of our hybrid model if you would prefer that your child not attend on-site during the first month of school.
- Please reach out with any questions or concerns. Our school staff is here to help!

Our school team continues to receive information almost daily from the Iowa Department of Education, Iowa Department of Public Health, CDC, Archdiocese of Dubuque Office of Catholic Schools, and the Dubuque County Health Department. Please know that plans and guidance may change as more information is received. Our local return-to-learn committee will continue to review this information in order to welcome your child back to St. Francis Xavier to continue their spiritual, social, emotional, and intellectual growth as safely as possible. Thank you for entrusting us with your most precious gift.

Sincerely,

Peter Smith, Principal