



DIOCESE OF WORCESTER CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

49 ELM STREET
WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS 01609

August 10, 2020

Dear parents and guardians,

With the start of the school year soon approaching, Catholic schools in the Diocese of Worcester have been working fervently to develop plans for reopening.

Across the Diocese, Catholic school leaders have spent the summer months carefully reviewing Massachusetts Department of Education (DESE) COVID guidance in safeguarding the well-being of students and staff alike this 2020-2021 academic year. The DESE guidance is based upon statewide data as gathered by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), the Governor's Office, national public health agencies such as Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and the Massachusetts chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. This guidance has made for a trusted source of information on procedures and practices in mitigating the spread of COVID-19, and safely operating schools within the Commonwealth at this phase of the pandemic.

Earlier this summer, each Catholic school leader in the Diocese was given the responsibility of developing various alternatives for reopening this fall. From the start, the health and safety of students and staff has been paramount. Informed by the American Academy of Pediatrics which advocates for an in-person educational setting, our Catholic schools have worked towards this goal. Health experts and laypersons mutually agree on the holistic benefits of in-person education. Still, we likewise understand that effective school community responses to COVID necessitate locally contextualized, data-informed, and adaptive educational approaches.

Today we release the latest version of school reopening plans for your review. The plan developed for your child's school intentionally includes different learning models that will allow for ease in transitioning to another mode of learning should local or regional COVID-19 concerns require doing so. Since no two schools are alike in all things, each school has conducted reviews of facilities, developed new protocols and procedures based on the DESE guidance for mitigating the risk of COVID transmission, and are actively coordinating professional development training and school education programs to make sure stakeholders understand the expectations around new health and safety requirements. As such, each reopening plan is tailored to the individual environments in which your children are educated. Please understand that plans may need to be amended as additional knowledge and guidance is received.

It is important that you understand fully the plan that will be implemented at your child's school. If you have questions, I encourage you to contact your child's principal. I would also be happy to answer any general questions that you may have. I may be reached via email at dperda@worcesterdiocese.org or by telephone at 774-764-1019.

All God's Blessings,

David Perda, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools