



# St. Gregory the Great Academy

A Ministry of the Church of St. Gregory the Great

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Mrs. Michele L. Rivera, Assistant Principal

## MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 3, 2020

TO: All Parents, Faculty, and Staff

FROM: Dr. Jason C. Briggs, Principal

RE: **COVID-2019 Coronavirus Precautions**

As we all know, COVID-2019 Coronavirus has become a major concern across the country. As a school, there are preparedness steps that are prudent to put into place at this time. While there is no cause for panic, and it is important to temper our protocols to cause as little disruption as possible, the current nonzero risk is a reason to make some adjustments to our procedures. I have received guidance from both the Department of Catholic Schools and the New Jersey Department of Education. Further, I participated in a conference call this afternoon with Governor Philip Murphy and NJDOH Commissioner Judith Persichilli. Both the governor and the commissioner reiterated that there are no confirmed cases of COVID-2019 Coronavirus in New Jersey, though nine people tested negative. Further, they stated that as of today this COVID-2019 Coronavirus is still a low risk to public health in our state. At this time, the New Jersey Department of Health has issued the following statement:

*“Special sanitizing processes beyond routine cleaning, including closing schools to clean every surface in the building are not necessary or recommended to slow the spread of respiratory illness. Schools should follow standard procedures for routine cleaning and disinfecting with an EPA-registered product. Typically, this means daily sanitizing surfaces and objects that are touched often, such as desks, countertops, doorknobs, computer keyboards, hands-on learning items, faucet handles, phones and toys.”*

Further,

*NJDOH recommends that schools and childcare settings increase education on respiratory hygiene. Staff and children (as developmentally appropriate) should all be taught and asked to follow these steps that prevent the transmission of respiratory infections:*



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- *Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or into your sleeve, not your hands.*
- *Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.*
- *Wash hands often for at least 20 seconds, especially after coughing or sneezing. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.*
- *Stay home if you're sick, especially with a fever.*
- *Avoid people who are sick.*
- *Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects.*

To this end, we all have a part to play in implementing these recommendations based on our role. Rather than address each stakeholder group individually, I felt it best to send all of the guidance that I am providing to our school community to everyone so that we are all aware of what the other stakeholder groups are being asked to do.

**Teachers/Instructional Staff:**

- All classrooms have been provided with a can of professional-grade Lysol Disinfectant Spray. Please spray all desks, chairs, other student contact areas, and door handles each day. Preferably this should occur in the morning before the students arrive; however, if necessary this can be done after school in the afternoon if the classroom is not to be used that evening.
- According to the directions, the surfaces should be wet from the spray and then air dry. Please make sure that this is done in enough time to allow drying to occur before the students arrive.
- Consistently remind students about hand washing. In Preschool, Kindergarten, and First Grade, students who will be using their hands to eat sandwiches or snacks should be sent to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer before eating snacks or lunch. Students in Grade Two and above should be reminded about not touching food with bare hands before eating it, if possible. Using clean napkins to keep the hands from touching food is one option. When this is not an option, students should be sent to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer before eating a snack or lunch.

**Maintenance Staff:**

- All door handles, restroom faucets, and handrails should be sprayed with Lysol Disinfectant Spray before the students arrive in the morning. This should be repeated at midday unless an emergency prevents staff availability.
- At lunch setup time, cafeteria tables should be wiped with the Yellow or Blue Windex.
- If the need to clean up vomit arises, the normal protocol of using Voban Absorbent to collect the material should be supplemented with the use of bleach solution to clean all affected areas.

## Parents:

- According to the New Jersey Department of Health, information to date suggests this virus is causing symptoms consistent with a respiratory illness such as cough, fever, and shortness of breath. It is necessary to remove students who present with these symptoms from school and to keep them out of school until the symptoms subside. If you are called to pick up a sick student, please do so. Any student who is sent home from school with symptoms consistent with a respiratory illness, including a cough which is severe in the judgment of the school nurse, fever, and/or shortness of breath must not return to school until they have been symptom-free for at least 24 hours. **Thus, a student who is sent home by the school nurse WILL NOT be admitted to school the next day and is to remain home until the symptoms subside.** If a student is sent to school the day after being sent home from school sick, the parent will be called to pick up the student and the student will remain separated from classes.
- Please reinforce the hygiene practices listed above, including handwashing, coughing into the elbow, using a napkin to avoid touching food with bare hands, and keeping hands away from the mouth, nose, and eyes.
- Commissioner Persichilli stated that the symptoms of COVID-2019 Coronavirus mimic symptoms of other common seasonal colds and influenza. Thus, it is prudent to practice hygiene procedures to promote wellness to defend against all illnesses. Getting proper rest and nutrition help to promote health is wise for all individuals.
- As mentioned above, current thinking is that closing school for disinfecting procedures is not particularly effective for respiratory illnesses. While it is not possible to delineate all possible contingencies, the most likely reasons for closing school would be if we were directed to do so by the Department of Health or if the number of ill faculty members exceeded my ability to safely cover all classes with substitute teachers.

Again, it is important to treat this threat with calm and rational measures rooted in the advice of medical officials. This is the approach that I am taking. Remember that everyday preventative measures are the recommended course of action currently from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. We will use soap, water, cleaner, and paper towel that we have available. Unfortunately, we will need to use our supplies of hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes sparingly, as both items are not available from our suppliers with no timetable for new stock.

Of course, as time progresses, there may be changes to the guidance and/or procedures at any time. Should this occur, we will make any necessary adjustments based on the most current official guidance.

Through the intercession of St. Luke, who was a physician by trade, may God keep us all safe!

Thank you.