



March 13th 2020,

Dear NELC Parents,

We know there are many questions in our community at this time. The outbreak of the highly-publicized Coronavirus (COVID-19) has people concerned around the world, including students, families, and faculty/staff at Nativity of Our Lord School and the NELC. The safety of our students, staff, parents and other community members is always our top priority.

We are writing to inform you of the proactive measures being taken by our school, how you can help at home, our school's preparation and response plan, as well as a list of helpful resources. As a faith community, we consistently turn to prayer. Especially during this Lenten Season, we ask for God's blessing and love as we navigate the challenges of this time.

Earlier this afternoon, we watched the press conference with Governor Tim Walz and Commissioner of Health Jan Malcolm, which outlines the steps being taken at the state level regarding current best practices for mitigating the spread of the coronavirus. Although the Governor has declared a Peacetime State of Emergency for the State of Minnesota, he, along with the executive leaders of our state, have affirmed the Commissioner of Health's decision to NOT close schools at this time. Based on current guidance, Nativity School and the NELC intend to stay open for the immediate future. At this time we have cancelled our Grandparents Day gathering on Wednesday, April 1st.

Our top priority at The Nativity Early Learning Center will always be the health and safety of the children entrusted to our care. We want to reassure you that we are in the prevention stage of managing the outbreak of COVID-19, and we want to share an update with you since the communication you received on March 9th.

- To date, there have been no transmissions of COVID-19 to any child in a child care center, nationwide.
- We continue to be proactive with daily monitoring of any new developments with the coronavirus/COVID-19.
- It remains very uncommon for a young child to get COVID-19, and severe symptoms are rare. However, we are recommending that if a child is at an increased risk of severe illness, parents should proactively discuss with their health care provider whether they need to develop an alternative plan in the event there is transmission of COVID-19 in the center where they are enrolled.
- As of today, there have been no community-based transmissions. All of the cases in Minnesota were the result of travel or direct contact.

It takes a collaborative team effort to mitigate the risk of an outbreak of COVID-19. As such, we have enhanced our health measures and instructed our staff to:

- Conduct more frequent handwashing (at least 20 seconds) for all staff and children.
- Conduct more frequent classroom disinfecting for areas such as doorknobs, sign-in and sign-out areas, toys, tables, shelves, etc.
- Closely monitor children for any signs of illness and separate them from other children until they are picked up.
- Stay home if they show signs of any cold or flu-like symptoms.
- Not share personal items.
- Limit sharing of food and drinks.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Cover a cough. Cough or sneeze into an elbow or use a tissue. Immediately place it in the trash, and wash their hands.
- Avoid handshaking and use other non-contact methods of greeting such as a hand wave or smile.

We are asking you to do the following:

- Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer (to the extent it is available) before entering your child's classroom.
- Limit your time in the classrooms at drop off/pick up.
- If you are notified that your child has any symptoms of illness, please pick up your child immediately.
- Please ensure that your child is fever-free for at least 24 hours without the aid of fever-reducing medicine before returning to school.
- Please consider social distancing and limiting events such as birthday parties with other families enrolled in our program.
- Considering Limiting Travel: We know that families engage with a wide range of people while traveling, particularly when it comes to domestic and international travel. With Spring Break taking place from April 6-13, family travel may increase. While Nativity School and the NELC would not ask anyone to alter travel plans, know that travel during this time could add to the risk of student and employee exposure to the virus. The CDC has posted additional information for travelers here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>. If you do travel, please pay special attention to CDC protocols for those who have visited a "High-Risk Country." It is important to be aware that if you or your student(s) has traveled in the past 14 days to High-Risk Countries, you must notify the school office immediately and NOT return to school pending further instruction. This directive is regardless of whether you or anyone in your household is experiencing symptoms.

Nativity School and The NELC's Response Plan:

- If we receive notification that a student, family member, faculty/staff member, or visitor has a confirmed case of COVID-19, upon consultation with the Archdiocese, the school would most likely cancel school immediately. The length of time will be determined based on when the case was confirmed.
- If local districts close, school/parish leadership will be in consultation to take appropriate actions and determine if the school should close.

- Athletics and extra-curricular activities would be cancelled during this same time period.
- We will communicate decisions with families via phone or email - as we do in any situation that alters the regular school day (i.e. severe weather, etc.).

Additional Resources:

- **Talking to Your Children About Covid-19:** [click here](#)
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>
- **Minnesota Department of Health:** <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools.html>

As things are rapidly changing, we are committed to maintaining strong communication with our community. Please continue to keep our school and our Nativity community, along with all those across the local, national, and global communities that are impacted by COVID-19, in your thoughts and prayers. We will continue to keep you advised regarding any additional policies or procedures implemented to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in our community and to provide our children, adults, and employees with a safe and healthy environment at The Nativity Early Learning Center.

Sincerely,

Nicole Clausen
Director