



MOUNT CARMEL SCHOOL

Post Office Box 500006 • Saipan, MP 96950
670.234.6184 • 670.235.4751 (facsimile)
www.mountcarmelsaipan.com • www.facebook.com/mtcarmelcnmi

Dear Mount Carmel School Family,

I apologize for this lengthy email, and hope that the following bullet points make it easier to follow important announcements in this update to how we are responding to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19):

- Our decisions are informed by consultation with public health officials and consistent with community-wide actions.
- Face-to-face classes will resume on March 30 with an adjusted school calendar and additional safety precautions.
- All assemblies and student activities will be suspended until further notice.
- Major events, like honor society induction ceremonies, are postponed until it is safe to hold assemblies.
- What can you do to help? Refer to the suggestions discussed below.
- Please be patient with us as this is a dynamic situation that changes everyday.

CONSULTING PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS

This morning, the school's Leadership Team continued its consultation with the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation (CHCC) Public Health Emergency Preparedness Program and the CNMI COVID-19 Task Force to seek guidance on how to move forward with the spread of COVID-19. Based on a lengthy meeting with extensive discussion, and consistent with [CNMI Executive Order No. 2020-04](#) from the Office of the Governor declaring a state of public health emergency and continued state of significant emergency, the school has decided to take the following steps.

NEXT STEPS

Spring Break will be rescheduled and extended to cover the period of March 16 through March 27. This will allow the school to participate in community-wide mitigation and containment efforts for COVID-19 without sacrificing too much instructional time.

Face-to-face classes will resume on Monday, March 30th, with additional safety and health precautions implemented to ensure the safety of students, teachers, and their families.

To maximize remaining instructional time, Mini-Course Week, from April 6 through April 9, will be cancelled.

As a result of this rescheduling, there will be no Spring Break from April 13 through April 17.

In addition, the school will continue precautionary measures to ensure the safety of our students, teachers, and their families, including suspending our short-term auditing program for foreign students, reinforcing campus cleaning with disinfectants, sharing information from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) on proper personal hygiene, and requiring a 14 day quarantine for any member of the school family returning from off-island travel.

More information about other precautionary measures will be provided before the resumption of classes on March 30.

ASSEMBLIES AND STUDENT ACTIVITIES SUSPENDED OR POSTPONED

As an additional precaution, until further notice, when classes resume on March 30, the school will exercise social distancing by suspending all major assemblies (Flag Raising, Knights Calisthenics, Friday Mass/Rosary, etc.) and student activities (sports games, fundraisers, dances, etc.). Major events, like the Induction Ceremony for the Immaculate Conception Chapter of the National Junior Honor Society and the Father Arnold Bendowski Chapter of the National Elementary Honor Society, will be postponed until such time that public health officials determine it is safe to hold large assemblies.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

This public health crisis calls on all of us to do what we can to keep our community safe. This is what you and your friends and family can do to help:

Stay calm and talk to your children. As shared earlier, the situation is already distressing enough for children, and parents must remain calm and reassuring for their children. (Please refer to the following [resource from the National Association of School Psychologists](#) for guidance on how to talk with your children about this situation.)

Protect yourself. Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks. If surfaces are dirty, clean them, using detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.

Protect others. Stay home if you are sick, except to get medical care. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow. Throw used tissues in the trash. Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Wear a face mask ONLY if you are sick or are taking care of a sick person unable to wear a face mask.

Exercise social distancing. Protect yourself and others by minimizing contact with others. Since someone may carry COVID-19 without showing any symptoms, social interactions, especially among large crowds, may unintentionally spread the virus. Parents are thus asked to keep their children at home and refrain from letting them visit residences of friends or family or meet up with them in public.

Stay informed. The CHCC and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) provide important resources and information that provide clear guidance on how all of us can get through this crisis. Follow these COVID-19 updates from the CHCC and CDC:

<https://www.chcc.gov.mp/coronavirusinformation.php>
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>

Pray. As a Catholic school, our faith must be the center of our lives, no matter what is happening in world. We invite all school stakeholders to join as one family as we pray the “Prayer for Global Healing from CORONAVIRUS” at exactly 8:00 am Monday through Friday. Students can also pray devotional prayers appropriate for the season of Lent like the Holy Rosary and the Stations of the Cross. And, during this time of

mitigation and containment, everyone can follow daily masses from Mount Carmel Cathedral on the following Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/pg/dioceseofchalankanoa/videos/>

DYNAMIC SITUATION

As this is a dynamic situation that changes on a daily basis, the future is uncertain and many questions still remain. The school's Leadership Team, guided by Bishop Ryan P. Jimenez and the school's Board of Directors, are making decisions based on the best and most accurate information available at any given time. As the situation changes, so too may the school's actions. That is why we do not know when or if major events, like First Holy Communion, Holy Confirmation, and graduation ceremonies, will be held. We thus ask that all our stakeholders be patient as we all do our best to get through this difficult time.

As shared in a previous message, the school does have a contingency plan to transition learning online. With a majority of our teachers having been certified by the EdTech Cohort program, our communication and media infrastructure in place, and our entire student information management system online, we are positioned to make that transition. If that transition occurs, we will provide guidance for students and their families to help them make the transition.

Please be assured that, as with every major initiative or emergency precaution that we take at Mount Carmel School, no matter what we do, we will provide ample notification and information to all students, parents, teachers, and families via email, our website, all our social media outlets, and local media. In other words, you will definitely hear from us and know what to do.

These are challenging times, but we have survived devastating typhoons, economic recessions, and many other tragedies. With faith in our Lord, and faith in each other, we will get through this together. We are **KNIGHT STRONG**.

Sincerely in Christ,

Galvin Deleon Guerrero, EdD
President
Mount Carmel School, Inc.