



# MOUNT CARMEL SCHOOL

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

## **MCS COVID-19 Update #5 “Back to School” Edition**

Dear Mount Carmel School Family,

In some ways, tomorrow is “Back to School” day for our Knights as we have our first official day of synchronous (live) video sessions. As we all prepare for tomorrow, please note the following, which are summarized in the bullet points below:

- Most Reverend Ryan P. Jimenez, Bishop of the Diocese of Chalan Kanoa, has a special message for the Knight family.
- We all stand ready to provide support that you and your children need, with various points of contact for different resources.
- Applicable school policies, rules, and procedures will be enforced.
- Please follow all directives from government and public health officials.
- Campus closed down until further notice.
- 3rd quarter report cards will be distributed via email tomorrow.
- All assemblies and student activities are suspended until further notice, but we are still exploring all options for major school events.
- What can you do to help? Follow the guidelines below.
- Please be patient with us as this is a dynamic situation that changes everyday.

### **A SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM BISHOP RYAN P. JIMENEZ**

Most Reverend Ryan P. Jimenez, Bishop of the Diocese of Chalan Kanoa, has been working closely with the school’s Board of Directors, led by Chair Vicente “Ben” Babauta, and the school’s Leadership Team, to guide us all through this difficult time. Bishop Ryan’s support is empowering the school to continue fulfilling its mission to educate the whole person to see with Christ’s eyes. In that vein, Bishop Ryan has a special message for the entire Knight family, which is attached. Please take a moment to read the message.

### **MCS IS READY TO SUPPORT**

With the transition to online learning and the ordeal that our community is enduring, we want to assure you that Mount Carmel School stands ready to support our students during this difficult time. As such, other than your child(ren)’s teacher(s), please note the following points of contact for the listed areas:

**Teachers and Learners**

Principal Barbara Merfalen: [bkmerfalen@gmail.com](mailto:bkmerfalen@gmail.com)

Vice Principal Bobby Baldazo [bsbmtcarmel@gmail.com](mailto:bsbmtcarmel@gmail.com)

*In particular, if you have not yet heard from your child(ren)'s teacher(s) about classes, please contact Principal Merfalen or Vice Principal Baldazo.*

**Spiritual Health**

Campus Minister Vir Abueme: [abuemevir@gmail.com](mailto:abuemevir@gmail.com)

**Social/Emotional Health**

Counselor Tobed Smith: [tobeds@gmail.com](mailto:tobeds@gmail.com)

**Registrar and Digital Tools**

Office Manager Leeani Villagomez: [mtcarmelschool.secretary@gmail.com](mailto:mtcarmelschool.secretary@gmail.com)

*Please also refer to the attached MCS Parent Guide for Online Learning.*

**Financial Transactions**

Business Manager John Blanco: [mtcarmelknights@gmail.com](mailto:mtcarmelknights@gmail.com)

**Media and Communications**

Director of Institutional Development Victoria Deleon Guerrero: [v.dlguerrero95@gmail.com](mailto:v.dlguerrero95@gmail.com)

**SCHOOL POLICIES, RULES, AND PROCEDURES**

While we are moving learning online, we must still retain our identity as a Catholic school. As such, please note that all applicable school policies, rules, and procedures still apply and will be enforced. In particular, please note the following:

- Each synchronous (live) video session will begin with prayer.
- School uniform (the navy blue polo shirt) is preferred for synchronous (live) video sessions. If you and your family are having difficulty with laundry due to social distancing measures in our community, please contact your child(ren)'s respective teacher(s) as uniform enforcement will be at the discretion of teachers.
- Students must follow rules and regulations for classroom behavior, with particular attention to respecting their teachers and their classmates during synchronous (live) video sessions.
- Students must follow general rules and regulations for behavior outside of the classroom, with particular attention to the school's No Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying (HIB)/Cyber Bullying Policy found on pages 44 and 45 of the [2019-2020 Mount Carmel School Handbook](#).

**FOLLOW GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTIVES**

To ensure the safety of everyone in our community, please take note of and comply with all directives issued by the Office of the Governor Ralph Torres, the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, and the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation. Attached is the most recent directive from Governor Torres which sets forth the following:

- 7:00 pm—6:00 am Curfew for all persons in the CNMI, with some exceptions. (Directive 16)
- 6:00 am—6:00 pm Business hours (Directive 14)
- No gatherings of more than 10 people in a single room or space (Directive 10)

Also, as the following advisory notes, before purchasing or using a medical/surgical mask in public areas, please consider our healthcare workers and front line workers who need such supplies and remember that it is more effective to do the following:

- Stay home, especially if you are sick.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from people (social distancing).
- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds.

## **CAMPUS CLOSED DOWN UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE**

The campus will be closed down with gates closed all day until further notice. Only authorized employees and officials will be granted access as needed. Financial and academic transactions can still be conducted online or via email. For financial transactions, email Business Manager John Blanco at [mtcarmelknights@gmail.com](mailto:mtcarmelknights@gmail.com). For academic transactions, contact Office Manager Leeani Villagomez at [mtcarmelschool.secretary@gmail.com](mailto:mtcarmelschool.secretary@gmail.com).

## **3RD QUARTER REPORT CARDS**

Tomorrow, 3rd quarter report cards will be distributed via email from our student information management system, RenWeb FACTS. Report cards will be emailed to addresses registered with that system. If you do not receive the email please check your spam folder to make sure that the email was not inadvertently directed there. If you still have trouble accessing report cards, please contact our Office Manager, Leeani Villagomez, at [mtcarmelschool.secretary@gmail.com](mailto:mtcarmelschool.secretary@gmail.com).

## **STUDENT ACTIVITIES AND MAJOR EVENTS**

To enforce social distancing, until further notice, all extra-curricular and co-curricular activities are suspended. However, we are still exploring all possible options for major school events such as sacramental celebrations (First Holy Communion and Confirmation), induction ceremonies for honor societies, and commencement exercises. These options include, but are not limited to,

postponing events until such time that public health officials determine it is safe to hold such events, broadcasting virtual events online, or holding events while following safety and social distancing protocols in such a way that public health officials determine is safe for attendees. As soon as the school determines what we will do, we will notify all students and their families. Please be patient as we explore alternatives to cancelling such important events in the lives of our students.

## 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.** 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. Students can pray devotional prayers appropriate for the season of Lent like the Holy Rosary and the Stations of the Cross. Also, everyone can follow daily masses from Mount Carmel Cathedral on the following Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/pg/diocesefchalankanoa/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. Please be assured that 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, **HOPE** for a better tomorrow, and **LOVE** for each other, we will get through this together. We are **KNIGHT STRONG**. We are **MARIANAS STRONG**.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel...

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