



February 28, 2020

Dear Archdiocese of San Francisco School Families:

While there is no reason to believe COVID-19 is an immediate threat to our Archdiocese, I understand that with the strong media coverage, anxieties are heightened and you may have questions about the Coronavirus. Please note that public health officials stress that the risk to the public in the United States remains extremely low. Coronavirus disease (COVID-2019) is an infectious disease caused by a new virus that had not been previously identified in humans. The virus causes respiratory illness (like the flu) with symptoms such as a cough, runny nose, sore throat, fever, difficulty breathing and in more severe cases, pneumonia. People with other medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease), may be more vulnerable to becoming severely ill. (Source World Health Organization)

The Department of Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of San Francisco is in regular contact with San Francisco, Marin and San Mateo County Public Health officials, who assure the community that there is no need to change daily routines in any way. According to public health officials, students and staff should continue their normal routines and take the same precautions they would during cold and flu season, including:

- Handwashing remains our No.1 defense against illness. Please wash hands often with soap and water.
- Daily cleaning of frequently touched surfaces with chlorine containing cleaners.
- Communicate all health concerns with your physician.
- If a child has a fever, please keep them at home.
- There is no evidence to support wearing a mask prevents airborne illnesses from spreading. CDC does not recommend the routine use of N95 respirators outside of the healthcare setting. N95 masks are not designed for and should not be worn by children.
- Get your flu shot. The flu vaccine won't protect against COVID-19, but it is highly recommended to help keep you healthy.

As a Catholic community, I know that you will join me in praying for those around the world that have been afflicted with this virus, and please know that the safety and wellness of our students, staff, and families is our top priority. For more information, please visit the San Francisco Department of Public Health at <https://www.sfdph.org/dph/default.asp>, the San Mateo Department of Public Health at <https://www.smchealth.org/>, or the Marin County Department of Public Health at <https://www.marinhhs.org/>.

Blessings,

Pamela Lyons
Superintendent of Schools