

March 20, 2020

Dear Parents,

Recently, many of our school administrators and teachers have received questions from school parents regarding the decision to continue e-Learning and grading e-Learning assignments. Governor Pritzker's executive order required all school (public/nonpublic) to close from March 17 until March 30 (now updated to April 7th). These days have been declared as "Act of God" days. These days will not be required to be made up however, our students will continue to participate in e-Learning during this school closure.

The State Of Illinois has been very clear in suggesting students should participate in enrichment activities through e-Learning plans. We realize the Illinois State Board of Education has stated that e-Learning assignments should not be graded and should be used as enrichment activities only, the expectations for the students in the Diocese of Rockford are more rigorous.

The Catholic Education Office has established its guidelines for our Diocesan schools including how these "Act of God" days will be handled. Our guidelines have been developed with the students' best interests in mind. To keep our students engaged and moving our schools' curriculum forward, the decision was reached that our students would be engaging in e-Learning during this mandatory school closure and not just "busy work." These e-Learning assignments will be graded and student attendance will be recorded as present or as virtual learning days.

Everyone needs to understand that e-Learning is very different than classroom instructional time and different strategies are used to engage students in learning. Depending on the grade level, e-Learning may not be designed to fill the entire day but it is designed to engage students in learning and helping to prepare our students for the next grade level. E-Learning is developed specifically for learning that takes place outside the regular classroom. It should be rigorous as it can be and at the same time, teachers understand that it requires a delicate balance of providing just the right amount of student engagement. Teachers vary their lessons from independent self-paced learning to teacher led electronic instruction. Depending on the Internet availability in the home, some schools are providing student packets as a means of instruction. Everyone must follow the IDPH guidelines of not allowing groups of 10 or more to group together and even then they must practice social distancing.

Our goal is to support our school administrators, faculties, students, and parents as we maneuver through this very difficult period and continue to prepare our students for the next step in their educational journey.

We appreciate your patience and understanding and will continue to keep you all in our prayers. We ask that you pray for us as well.

Sincerely,

Mike Kagan  
Superintendent

Vito C. DeFrisco  
Assistant Superintendent

Elizabeth Heitkamp  
Assistant Superintendent