



August 6, 2020

Dear Principals, Pastors and School Communities,

Yesterday, Governor Jay Inslee shared recommendations for the upcoming school year, noting the coronavirus transmission rate is not low enough. He explained if every school reopened classrooms, we would see “meaningful and dangerous levels” of increased transmission. At the same time, he highlighted the need for flexibility across the state and provided a [new framework](#) for all schools and local public health officials to follow. The framework categorizes counties into high, moderate and low risk with recommendations for remote learning, hybrid learning, in-class learning and extracurricular activities.

While we miss our students and are eager to welcome them into classrooms, the safety of our students and staff and the care for the common good of the community remains paramount in our decision-making process. Our other top priority is that, through all this, our Catholic schools remain deeply committed to upholding our Catholic identity.

Archdiocesan Catholic schools **will be following** the guidance from Governor Inslee’s office and/or local public health authorities as a minimum standard. This localized approach ensures decisions are based on the most current health and safety information from each county, which is vital for the safety of our students, staff and the local community. At the same time, we are very supportive of our schools, which may need to be more limiting to ensure safety.

Archdiocesan Catholic elementary schools in high-risk counties will start the fall with remote learning. Those in moderate to low risk have additional options and may start with small groups in the classroom or with a hybrid approach. Archdiocesan Catholic high schools in the moderate and high risk category will also start the fall remotely.

How we have prepared

At the beginning of the summer, the Office for Catholic Schools and the Archdiocese of Seattle Coronavirus Taskforce instructed principals to develop school scenarios for remote, hybrid and full return to the classroom. Our principals have been working overtime with their staffs to develop plans tailored to their school environments. These plans give our Catholic schools a strong foundation from which to kick off this fall.

Moving forward, all students will experience important safety changes at our schools, including daily temperature checks, social distancing and mandatory masks. Some students will learn in non-traditional classroom settings as schools repurpose spaces for teaching. Student interactions will be limited to minimize potential virus spread.

At the same time, our teachers will be ready to bring a vibrant classroom experience to students at home with remote learning as Catholic schools are strengthening their remote and hybrid learning plans.

Moving forward

As we all know, things continue to change. We will keep tracking the situation and provide updates to our Catholic schools to support their efforts. We want to express our sincere gratitude for all the principals, administrators, teachers, families, and volunteers who are working so hard on behalf of our students. We especially want to thank the parents who are engaged in their children's learning and are engaged with our Catholic schools. The diligence and care you've shown for this process and our students is remarkable. We are truly humbled and in awe of your dedication and love for Catholic schools.

Let's close with a prayer for Catholic Schools:

Good and gracious God,

*We give you thanks for your Son, Jesus, Our Savior and Teacher,
Who at the Last Supper taught us as he washed the feet of his apostles,
so we must serve others in love.*

*From the classroom of the cross Jesus taught the greatest lesson
of love to make a gift of our lives in obedience to your will, Father,
and in loving service to others.*

*Father, bless all our Catholic schools.
Bless our administrators, teachers, students, families and volunteers.
Keep them safe and healthy and
hold them close to Jesus, your Son.
Amen.*

This summer has been unlike any we've ever experienced. Please be sure to "mask up" so we can slow the spread, protect our communities, and get all our students back in the classroom!

Thank you,



Kristin Dixon
Superintendent of Office for Catholic Schools

In the Heart of Christ,



Most Rev. Paul D. Etienne, DD, STL
Archbishop of Seattle