



March 3, 2020

Dear Catholic School Families,

We write to update you on the preparations our schools are taking due to growing concerns about COVID-19, commonly known as the coronavirus. In recent weeks, coronavirus has infected tens of thousands and led the death of thousands, especially in China. The situation is rapidly changing, so material that was disseminated even two weeks ago regarding the disease may no longer be pertinent.

Currently, our school health offices and principals are working with local school districts, county departments of health, and the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) to implement their guidelines for monitoring the health and safety of our students. Along with guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the New York State Education Department (NYSED), we will continue to implement the recommended protocols for ensuring a healthy school environment. Frequent and thorough handwashing remains a key recommendation.

While there is currently no vaccine to prevent this coronavirus, the NYSDOH recommends these simple steps to help stop the spread of this and other respiratory viruses:

- *Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.*
- *Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.*
- *Avoid close contact with people who are sick.*
- *Stay home when you are sick.*
- *Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.*
- *Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.*

More information on the recommendations are available at:

<https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/coronavirus/>

Be assured that the health and safety of our students and school staff remain our highest priority. We will continue to frequently check and implement the recommendations of our health agencies to ensure a healthy school environment.

As we move forward, we hold in our prayers all those impacted by the virus and those that are working hard to implement prevention measures.

May God bless you,

*James Tauzel*

*Superintendent of Catholic Schools*