



March 27, 2020

Dear Student and School Families:

I am writing to address some recent questions received by the Office of Catholic Education (OCE) regarding the impact of COVID-19 on our learning communities. As you know, we have communicated about this national public health concern frequently and remain committed to providing a safe, dynamic, and faith filled learning environment for your children.

OCE continues to follow the recommendations set forth by the Centers for Disease Control, the Pennsylvania Department of Health, and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Currently, access to our facilities remains prohibited, but our schools remain open and instruction continues virtually through a variety of instructional models.

At each of our schools, students remain active and engaged through a variety of platforms, such as Google Classroom, Google Meets, YouTube and Zoom, among others. Faculty and students communicate on a daily basis regarding instruction given and assignments received.

Individualized Flexible Instruction Day (FID) plans are available on your school's website. There you can find additional information and updates. Our on-line presence is vibrant, and reflects the creative talents of our faculty and administrators.

We understand that many parents and agents have reached out to inquire whether it is best for your student to remain here with their host family or return to their native country. We recognize and respect that this decision is a personal one to be made by individual families. We will support you and your child in whatever direction you choose.

For international students, there are two separate factors; earning academic credit and maintaining status with SEVP. A better understanding of each may guide your decision making process.

We will provide the opportunity for our international students to earn academic credit for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year provided students follow the FID plans currently in place. When our school buildings re-open, students will work with their schools in transitioning to an on-line platform supported by Educere courses. Our school administrators will work with your students to move their work to the necessary Educere courses at that time.

The Active status of your child's I-20 is subject to regulations set forth by the Student Exchange Visitor Program through the United States Department of Homeland Security.

The current regulation states:

*“Given the extraordinary nature of the COVID-19 procedural changes, SEVP will allow F-1 and/or M-1 students to temporarily count on-line classes towards a full course of study in excess of the limits stated in 8CFR214.2(f)(6)(i)(G) and 8 CFR214.2(m)(9)(v), even if they have left the United States and are taking online classes from elsewhere. This temporary provision is only in effect for the duration of the emergency. Due to the fluid nature of this situation, the answers in this document may be subject to change.” Please refer to <https://www.ice.gov/covid19> for updates.*

Students who continue to actively engage in their on-line course work will remain in Active I-20 status. Once our buildings re-open, students must return to the United States to remain in Active status. Should this regulation change in any way, it will be reflected on the website above. I will continue to work closely with your agencies, and communicate this information directly to you.

As a parent myself, and as someone who has met many of you, I know how important it is to feel that your child is safe. Please be assured that we will stay vigilant and I will update you as necessary. We appreciate the trust you place in us. We value our partnerships with the agencies that represent your children, and our schools take great delight in our international community. As Catholic educators, we keep you and your families in our prayers, and wish you well as we navigate these challenges.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janet Dollard". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Janet Dollard  
Director of International Programs