

## **Archdiocese of Philadelphia**

### **Catholic Education**

### **Coronavirus FAQs**

#### **Are all schools closed?**

Our school buildings are closed through March 27, 2020. The closure affects all elementary, secondary, special education and PREP programs. However, instruction will continue to be offered through Flexible Instruction. Information on Flexible Instruction will be sent out by individual schools.

#### **Will schools reopen on March 30<sup>th</sup>?**

We hope that the 14-day closure of schools will be effective in addressing the spread of the virus and that our schools will be able to re-open on March 30. The safety of our students, staff, and visitors is of paramount importance, so that will be our guiding principle in determining when we can reopen. We will continue to work with governmental authorities in making that decision.

#### **Are all athletic events and activities cancelled?**

Yes, on March 12, we announced the suspension of all extra-curricular and co-curricular activities, field trips, retreats, athletic events on and off campus and any social events through Friday, March 27, 2020. We will evaluate whether it is necessary to extend this suspension in the coming days and weeks.

#### **What is being done to disinfect schools?**

On March 8, schools were sent guidelines for reducing the spread of germs. These guidelines included information to promote hand washing, materials that schools should have in the classroom, and information on cleaning, disinfecting and sanitizing which were developed by the Center for Disease Control. Schools were directed to increase disinfecting with particular attention to frequently touched surfaces in the schools. Disinfecting is effective in killing germs that may be on surfaces, including the COVID-19 virus.

#### **What is Flexible Instruction?**

In 2019, Pennsylvania adopted Act 63 allowing the use of flexible instruction days to allow an alternative approach to instruction if circumstances warranted. Instruction may be on-line, offline or a combination of both.

Teachers will provide ongoing assignments, educational support and availability for student questions and interaction through an online learning management system. Students will complete learning assignments from home.

### **How do I find out about Flexible Instruction for my child?**

Information will be sent out by each school.

### **Does this Flexible Instruction count as a school day?**

As envisioned, the law allows schools to have five flexible instruction days per year. However, in announcing the closure of schools on March 13, 2020, Governor Wolf announced that no school district would be penalized if it fails to meet the 180 school days or hours requirements. Due to the extraordinary circumstances of this pandemic, we anticipate using flexible instruction days throughout this national emergency.

### **What resources are available to students receiving lunch through the National School Lunch Program?**

For our elementary schools working with Nutritional Development Services of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia (NDS) to provide meals and snacks to students in need at school, please know that NDS has an emergency feeding plan. If your school is open to receiving and serving meals to students while school is closed, please contact their office for more information at 215- 895-3470, option 1. The Community Food Program is also increasing deliveries to food cupboards to help support families during this time. Information about these locations will be posted on their website (<http://nutritionaldevelopmentservices.org/covid19/>), Facebook page and other social media outlets.

### **Will there be any change in tuition?**

Although our buildings are closed for a period of time, students will be receiving instruction through Flexible Instruction. Our staff is continuing to work during this time and our schools need the continued, generous support of our parents in paying for tuition and fees. Decisions on refunding payments for events or activities that have had to be cancelled will be made by individual schools.

## **What is the risk of my child becoming sick with COVID-19?**

According to the CDC and based on available evidence, children do not appear to be at higher risk for COVID-19 than adults. While some children and infants have been sick with COVID-19, adults make up most of the known cases to date. You can learn more about who is most at risk for health problems if they have COVID-19 infection on CDC's current [Risk Assessment](#) page.

## **How can I protect my child from COVID-19 infection?**

You can encourage your child to help stop the spread of COVID-19 by teaching them to do the same things everyone should do to stay healthy.

- Clean hands often using soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Avoid people who are sick (coughing and sneezing)
- Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces daily in household common areas (e.g. tables, hard-backed chairs, doorknobs, light switches, remotes, handles, desks, toilets, sinks)
- Launder items including washable plush toys as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely. Dirty laundry from an ill person can be washed with other people's items.

You can find additional information on preventing COVID-19 at [Prevention for 2019 Novel Coronavirus](#) and at [Preventing COVID-19 Spread in Communities](#). Additional information on how COVID-19 is spread is available at [How COVID-19 Spreads](#). The CDC also provides this guidance [What to do if you are sick?](#)

## **Are the symptoms of COVID-19 different in children than in adults?**

This answer is from the CDC website. No. The symptoms of COVID-19 are similar in children and adults. However, children with confirmed COVID-19 have generally presented with mild symptoms. Reported symptoms in children include cold-like symptoms, such as fever, runny nose, and cough. Vomiting and diarrhea have also been reported. It's not known yet whether some children may be at higher risk for severe illness, for example, children with underlying medical conditions and special healthcare needs. There is much more to be learned about how the disease impacts children.

**Should children wear masks?**

No. The CDC recommends that if your child is healthy, there is no need for them to wear a facemask. Only people who have symptoms of illness or who are providing care to those who are ill should wear masks.

**How often will parents/guardians be notified of updates?**

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia Catholic Education Coronavirus Task Force has established a website:

<https://aopcatholicschools.org/covid-19-information/> which will have updates as needed for information that applies to all schools. Local schools will also provide parents with updates for any local information.

March 18, 2020