



ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL

30 MEADOW AVENUE, BRONXVILLE, NEW YORK 10708

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Blessed Feast Day of Our Lady of Fatima!

I hope that you are all well-despite the truly unprecedented crisis we are experiencing. I want to thank each and every SJS Community member for doing your part during this most uncertain time.

I have had the pleasure of communicating with you via email, phone call, texts, or socially-distanced in-person contact over the last two months. How wonderful to see so many of you on our Instagram and Website! Thank God that we can keep in contact and see what the SJS Community continues to do, despite all of the challenges.

I am so grateful to you – and to our SJS students – for the energy, faithfulness, determination and love that you are all bringing to this enterprise. It is your spirit that makes SJS thrive; it is your partnership that makes our school a community.

I am extremely gratified to report that we have had an amazing response from you in regard to SJS Reregistration. Your Reregistration signals your continuing commitment to Catholic education and to SJS. I am more grateful than I can say for your continued tuition payments. You know that we cannot teach the children without the work of many -your tuition makes all of that possible. It is the fuel that powers the engine of an SJS education. Each day I am reminded, in a myriad of ways, of the sacrifices and commitment you are making to provide a Catholic education for your children.



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Our outstanding SJS Faculty has responded to your commitment by developing Distance Learning that has exceeded my initial hopes. The ingenuity they have displayed and our students' embrace of their creativity is demonstrated in the high participation rates logged in our educational systems.

Now that schools have been given the mandate to close through June, the ever-present need to continue to provide instruction is even more paramount. The SJS Teachers have demonstrated their commitment since Day 1, March 16th, and continue to show their professional desire to grow. In order to maximize each of our teacher's individualized teaching style and classroom structure, in light of the grade and subject matter taught, our teachers are providing a combination of instructional methods, included recorded instruction, guided practice, Zoom, independent work; all are using Google Classroom as the main platform; as you know, many programs, such as IXL, LangugeNut, and Odessey, are being used as well. I am happy to report that we were able to keep our Coding Classes for the upper grades, and the Symphony Space Program for our 8th Graders.

Besides the academic hurdles we are facing, we are all trying to adjust emotionally to a new social norm-or "abnorm"- which is completely in contrast to our humanity and to our typical SJS atmosphere which is driven by our many gatherings as a prayerful, social, and academic community. It is painful to realize how many of our events have been cancelled or postponed. As we try to deal with the disappointment and isolation, please know that we at SJS are here for you. If you are not certain where to turn, please do not hesitate to make those needs known to me. I can assist locally and I will be able to direct you to other resources available through the Archdiocese. The Archdiocese has provided confidential supports and services through ADAPP, and can be reached via this email address: mentalhealthsupports@adapp.org.

Naturally, we all still have many pressing questions and concerns, and as time goes on, the urgency to get the answers increases. Some of the most important questions will be answered in a letter from the Superintendent of Schools, Michael J. Deegan which I was told you will be receiving soon. Here are some highlights of what his letter will address:



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- 1) There will be no spring MAP testing.
- 2) There will be NO final exams in any subject, including NYS Regents Exams.
- 3) The graded work assigned and collected should continue to provide the most authentic opportunity for demonstration of mastery of standards, using the full array of assessments.
- 4) To meet our students with Christ-centered compassion, if a student's grade for the fourth quarter is not equal to or greater than the average of the first three quarters, a Principal will confer with the teacher before report cards are distributed to discern why and to ensure that proper communication was established with the family and that supports were provided for the student. These same principles should be considered when completing effort and conduct grades. Teachers and Principals must demonstrate prudential judgment, an understanding of the challenges facing students and families, and the realistic reality of the pandemic.
- 5) Kindergarten: The nature of assessment of young students requires classroom observation and interaction. Because of this necessity, teachers cannot authentically assess students' progress on these standards remotely. These teachers will not be rating standards for the fourth quarter. Those fields will remain blank. Instead, teachers will be completing a detailed narrative summary of students' progress throughout the year.

As always, know how grateful I am to lead such a faith-filled, dynamic community.

I leave you with a Prayer to Our Lady of Fatima:

O Most Holy Virgin Mary, you came to Fatima to reveal the graces that come from praying the Holy Rosary to three little shepherd children. Inspire us with a sincere love of this devotion so that, like the shepherd children, it is not a burdensome task but a life-giving prayer. May our prayers and meditations on the mysteries of our redemption bring us closer to your Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ. Like the children of Fatima, we want to bring God's word to others. Give us the strength, O Lord, to overcome our doubts so that we may be messengers of the Gospel. We know that Jesus lives in our hearts and we receive Him in the Eucharist. Lord Jesus, the miracles, prophecies and prayers that Your Mother





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brought to us at Fatima amazed the whole world. We are certain of her closeness to You. We ask through the intercession of Our Lady of Fatima that you graciously hear and answer our prayers, especially for the SJS Community-our spiritual, emotional and physical health-Our Lady of Fatima, Pray for us! Our Lady of the Rosary, Pray for us! Immaculate Heart of Mary, Pray for us! St. Joseph, Pray for us!

God bless you and yours
Stay safe.

SJS STRONG and Distance Praying, Learning and Giving!

Sincerely,
Mary Ellen Sanchez,
Principal, SJS



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