



Dear Bishop O'Gorman Families,

As we begin another school year, let me Thank You, our beloved Catholic school families, teachers and staff, for your commitment to Catholic education. The start to this school year has been exhilarating. As I have visited our schools, a palpable feeling of excitement from our students and staff is evident.

We are grateful to have another school year underway and appreciate the support you continue to provide as we once again navigate a time when COVID-19 is present. The question I hear most often is, "Do we have COVID-19 in our schools?" The answer is yes. Much like last year when we had students and staff who tested positive throughout the entire school year, we have and are likely to continue seeing it this year. Our schools will continue to work with students and staff who are diagnosed positive. ***As of today six (6) total positive diagnoses have led to absences (been reported on September 21, 2021) across the entire Bishop O'Gorman Catholic Schools. This is out of the 2900+ students and staff who attend or work in our schools. By comparison, at the highest points of positive cases last year, our schools had a total of 29 students & staff out of school due to positive COVID diagnoses. These occurred each day during the weeks of October 9-18 and November 24-29 in 2020.*** As we continue to monitor and determine if a change in our current protocols is called for, managing COVID-19 will remain fluid throughout this school year.

We trust that our parents will use an abundance of caution, as they did last year, and will keep their children home if they are not well. We appreciate how diligent our parents are and therefore anticipate that absences may be higher again this year. Mask wearing remains a parental decision and a viable option for students, staff and visitors at our schools. All are welcome to wear a mask at any time. ***I am also including an attachment that addresses additional frequently asked questions that both Bishop DeGrood and I have received since our school year began.***

As a community, we have learned a tremendous amount of information about COVID-19, but there is still much that is unknown. Despite the uncertainty that surrounds this pandemic, there are many things I am confident in; our faith and the Catholic mission of our schools, caring for our students, curriculum, pedagogy, professional development, staffing, building projects/needs, budgets, and strategic planning. These are all things to do with PS-12 education for children for which we feel confident and qualified.

We are grateful for your trust in our embodiment of these essential elements to the Catholic education we are called to provide your children. We also hope you will understand our efforts invested toward these critical elements as we strive to maintain the excellent level of Catholic education Bishop O'Gorman Catholic Schools is known for. We are here to educate and to assist you in the formation of your children.

Please pray for the students and staff at Bishop O'Gorman Catholic Schools. We see the daily interactions and energy staff put forth. Staff do so with the hope that students might be given every opportunity to have an encounter with Christ and to grow in knowledge and understanding. It is my hope that we, as a Bishop O'Gorman family, can continue to encourage each other, lift each other up, and find ways to help each other succeed. I remain thankful for all of those who are in service to our children in "the vineyard of the Lord"!

With thoughts and prayers,

Kyle L. Groos

President

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