



July 16, 2020

Dear St. Aloysius families,

I pray that you are all healthy and safely enjoying the summer break. While the children haven't been in the building in so long, they are foremost on our minds and in our prayers as we plan for the new school year.

Two weeks ago, we received recommendations from Governor DeWine and the Ohio Department of Education for restarting education in the fall and spent a great deal of time reviewing those and making a plan specific to our school. I am very thankful for our committee that volunteered to be a part of this process. We are blessed to have medical professionals, parents, a parishioner who works for the Wood County Health Department, teachers and parish staff members who collaborated in this effort.

As a result, we have created a Pandemic Response Plan which is truly a working document that will be updated as government guidelines, regulations and best practices continue to evolve. We will share this document with you in its entirety next week once it has been reviewed a final time by our committee and faculty.

Our Pandemic Response Plan explains the mitigation strategies we will put into place to reduce the risk of Covid-19 in our community while beginning the school year with students learning in the classrooms five days a week. Our smaller class sizes and a creative use of space make it possible for us to do this with the desks set up with the recommended six feet of social distancing. We will require all students in KR-8 to wear masks as they enter and exit the school and when they are moving around to different areas in the building. Additionally, students in grades 3 through 8 will be asked to wear them throughout the day except when eating, drinking, or participating in Phys Ed/recess with appropriate distancing. Teachers of grades 3-8 will also give the entire class short mask breaks when they are seated in their desks and no one is moving around the classroom. While K-2 students are not required to wear the masks while working in the classroom, they are certainly welcome and encouraged to wear them as much as they are comfortable doing so. All adults are required to wear masks unless they are alone in an office or classroom.

These policies are designed to reduce the risk for our students and staff and to hopefully minimize disruption to the school year. If a student or staff member tests positive for Covid-19, anyone who was within six foot of that person for 15 or more continuous minutes may be required by the health department to quarantine for two weeks. We are arranging our day and our classrooms so that no one has that exposure to another person with close contact for 15 minutes. Teachers will be moving to the students instead of students switching classes in addition to many other precautions.

It will also be essential that you as parents screen your children at home for symptoms and keep them home if any are present. There is much more detail about that in our plan, but we will be doing a temperature screening of each person entering the school in the morning. We reserve the right to check temperatures multiple times during the school day if needed. It is crucial that we work together and keep kids home from school rather than trying to mask symptoms with medication.

It may be necessary at some point during the school year for us to move to a distance learning plan. This could happen as an entire school, especially if Wood County would move to a Level 4/purple or if in consultation with the health department it is determined that it would be in the best interest of our school community. An individual class could also move to a distance learning platform for period of time if necessary. There are many different scenarios that we would deal with on a case by case basis, such as if a teacher were asked to quarantine for exposure outside of school. In that situation, we may ask them to teach via live stream with another adult in the classroom to help facilitate. As you can imagine, it is impossible to include every one of these possibilities in a plan, but I want to assure you that we are taking them all into consideration and will do the best we can with the resources we have if and when the time comes. A distance learning policy will be released before school begins with specific expectations and procedures. I am proud of our teachers and the education they offered in the spring, but we have the opportunity to plan ahead this time and offer a more cohesive program.

I am sure you have many questions and I look forward to sharing the full plan with you next week. We know that not all of our families will be comfortable sending their children back to school and may have health concerns of other family members to take into consideration. Please let me know if that is your situation and we can talk about what we do next. We are not able to offer a full-time online option with our resources, but I would love to work with you to figure out your best options and then how to welcome your child back to school when the time is right. We have a number of new families inquiring about registration, but we will not add additional students if it cannot be done with the six foot social distancing in the classrooms.

You may recall that the first day of school is scheduled to be August 25th, but that we have an alternate calendar which moves the start day to September 8th after Labor Day. We will continue to monitor the current situation and consult with the appropriate people to make that decision next month.

As always, let me know if I can be of service to your family. St. Aloysius, pray for us.

God's Blessings,

Andrea Puhl