ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON

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September 18, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I am grateful for the many hours and careful work that our school leaders and staff have committed to preparing our schools to be safe spaces for children to learn. It is good to be back in school!

During our first several weeks of teachers and students returning to buildings, the Catholic Schools Office has received calls about potential exposure situations. When we are informed of a possible exposure, the local health department is contacted and we follow their guidance. However, the majority of situations we have managed have not been directly connected to our schools. We are seeing a trend in which teachers, staff and students were in contact with a family member who was potentially exposed to COVID-19.

In a previous communication to parents, I asked that the safety of our schools be on the minds and hearts of every family in our community. Our successful reopening and efforts to keep children and teachers safe depends on each of us to do our part. Please remember to practice safety measures at all times. It is critically important that we do not become complacent when in close contact with friends and loved ones. Remember, people who are asymptomatic can spread the virus. Maintain 6 feet or more social distance at all times, wear a cloth face covering, and wash your hands frequently. These basic safety measures can have an impact on all of us, and will ultimately help reduce the spread of COVID-19 in schools.

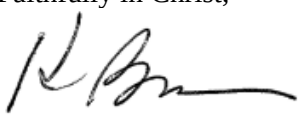
Please help us keep our schools safe and healthy. Keep your child at home if:

- They show symptoms of illness - https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html
- Anyone in the home is waiting for COVID-19 test results, has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or been instructed to isolate or quarantine by a health care provider or the health department
- Your child had close contact (within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes) with anyone diagnosed with COVID-19 or suspected of having COVID-19

Consult a healthcare provider, if you are ill. Testing site information can be found in Maryland at https://coronavirus.maryland.gov/pages/symptoms-testing and for the District of Columbia at https://coronavirus.dc.gov/testing.

As Pope Francis said at one of his audiences over the summer, “Be careful, don't cry victory, don't cry victory too soon, follow the rules. They are rules that help us to avoid the virus getting ahead again.” I ask each of you for the good of our entire #ADWcommUNITY, to follow safety practices, at all times.

Faithfully in Christ,



Kelly Branaman
Secretary for Catholic Schools