



DIOCESE OF VICTORIA

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March 5, 2020

Dear Diocese of Victoria Catholic Schools and Families,

An outbreak of respiratory illness caused by a novel (new) coronavirus first identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, has caused an outbreak of respiratory illness and the United States has confirmed a handful of coronavirus cases related to travel. I want to assure you that our Diocese of Victoria Catholic Schools Office is keeping track of this situation through proven and trustworthy sources: our local health department, the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). **These health officials believe the risk to our school community is low at this time.**

Updated information from the CDC on coronavirus in the United States can be found at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>. The most recent information about coronavirus in Texas may be found at: <https://dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/>.

Much is being learned about this newly emerged virus. Based on the current information, health officials are recommending local communities and schools should take the same steps to protect against coronavirus as we take to prevent the spread of everyday illnesses like the common cold or the flu:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- **Stay home when you are sick.**
- **Parents are discouraged against giving your child fever-reducing medications and then sending them to school. Children must be fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.**
- Cover your mouth and nose with the inside of your elbow when you cough or sneeze.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

The 2019 novel coronavirus is believed to be spread through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes, much in the way the flu and other respiratory viruses are spread. Symptoms can be fever, cough, or difficulty breathing. At this time, persons considered at risk are those with travel to China, or those in close contact with persons infected with novel coronavirus.

While a new type of illness can be scary, we can protect our students, teachers, and the broader community by using simple everyday actions that protect people from other types of respiratory viruses. Our teachers, school nurses, and staff are working carefully to encourage these simple and effective habits of frequent handwashing, covering every cough or sneeze, and cleaning classroom tables/surfaces frequently. This is important not just to help prevent the spread of coronavirus, but to help prevent the spread of other infections that can lead to student illness and absences.

Thank you for your support of our diocese, our schools, our students and our teachers and staff.

Sincerely,


Dr. John E. Quary
Superintendent

