



ST. MARY MAGDALEN
CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Dear SMM Families,

The school building continues to be a safe place for your students to be in attendance. The teachers and students are amazing! They are adhering to the 3 W's (Wash, Wear, Watch Your Distance). We appreciate your due diligence regarding illness and keeping your child(ren) home when they are sick. I want to reiterate the importance of thinking of the greater good. In the past, you may have 'pushed' through the sniffles, a cough, or a sore throat and sent your student to school. *You have been respectful of the situation and we are grateful. Please continue to do so this year, in this environment, during this pandemic.* Now is not the time to be concerned about absences. Please see the updated absence policy, below, as amended by faculty and staff in this particularly unique environment.

Preschool – 4th grade

- Absent is absent. Notify the office at the beginning of the school day and this will be considered an excused absence. Your ability to make up the work will follow the absence policy in the Parent/Student Handbook.
- **** Update** - If you are absent, please do not attend Zoom. This becomes a classroom management issue along with the issues of delivering the daily curricula.

5th - 8th grade

If you are home sick - you have two choices.

Option 1 - You are too sick to do schoolwork:

- Report your absence to the school office.
- Take care of yourself and get better.
- After you recover, you will be responsible for the learning and work that you missed following the absent policy for each class.

Option 2 - You are NOT too sick to do school work (i.e. maybe you have a sore throat so you are staying home out of an abundance of caution or your symptoms have cleared and you are waiting your 72 hours):

- Join your regularly scheduled classes via Zoom. You will NOT be counted absent as long as you attend homeroom and all your classes virtually.
- Participate in class and do the assigned work following all classroom policies and procedures.

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As we all watch what is happening around the country, we are also acutely aware of what is occurring in our local communities. The number of cases of Coronavirus has risen rapidly in the past two weeks. I attend a weekly meeting with the Snohomish County Health Department to increase my awareness and knowledge of the virus as well as an appropriate response, given our situation, to this increase as we look to the future and educating our children at SMM. While there is caution about returning more students there are also benefits to returning to in person learning. Our Preschool through 6th grade students who are attending in person represent over 66% of our total population. As we add middle school over the next two weeks – we will be adding less than 50 students to the building. We are adhering to all safety protocols and the result has been positive. We have not had a confirmed or suspected case of COVID.

The health department understands our responses need to change based upon new information. The number of cases is the highest it has been since March. When asked why the response had evolved since March, the answer was, “we know much more now about this virus than we did in March.” We know more about how it is transmitted and how to mitigate transmission. In March, it was thought a two week ‘lockdown’ would stop the virus. We now know this is not the case and we are in this for the long haul. Masking and Social Distancing are here to stay.

The Health Department pays special attention, more attention, to hospitalization rates and availability of beds. The target group, representing 67%, of the new cases is 20 – 39-year olds. High rates of transmission are occurring at small, social events comprised of this age group and people are not following the safety rules.

We are not being mandated to delay return or go backwards. There was cautionary conversation about how to address the target populations should they be an antecedent for a surge in hospitalizations. We will move forward with caution as our middle schoolers return.

Our 7th grade will return to in person learning on the 2nd of November. The teachers have met to discuss procedures for safety and efficiency. The 6th grade has been a tremendous help in figuring out the daily routines for traffic, lunch, recess, bathrooms, drop off, pick up, handwashing, etc.

Our 8th grade will return November 9th.

A reminder that staying with remote learning is always a choice. We provide materials pick up every other week for the minimum two-week commitment to remote learning. Our next pick up is the 6th of November for the weeks of November 9th and November 16th. Please let the office know no later than Friday at 3:30 if your 7th or 8th grader will remain remote learning. This is a two-week commitment to remote learning. Please see the 5th -8th grade absence policy above.



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Pick Up and Drop Off are going smoothly. Thank you to the numerous volunteers who help with these processes. We are all getting stronger as we heft a lot of cones from parking lot to parking lot! Truly, a big thank you.

I want to thank you for your patience. I understand this is scary and uncertain. We arm ourselves with knowledge and skills that allow us to feel the safest, for everyone. This means following the rules when we are away from school too. Make sure as we move into the holidays and occasions for small, intimate social gatherings present themselves we wear our masks, keep our distance, or possibly just stay home and reconnect with your immediate family.

It is imperative that families partner with St. Mary Magdalen to ensure that their student(s) limit their exposure while off campus to mitigate the spread of the disease.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions or concerns.

Blessings,

Dr. Bernadine Mahar
Principal