



**Department of  
Catholic Education**

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July 21, 2020

Dear Families, Faculty and Staff,

We, the Office of the Superintendent and School Administrators, are so excited to welcome you back to school. Since the pandemic began, we have been working on our “Return-to-School Plans” (RTS) for a safe and systematic approach to reopening our campuses to our students. Our Bishop, along with everyone in our parishes, has been praying for a vaccine and for the end of this pandemic; until then, we will do everything in our power to keep your children safe, healthy, and enjoying their learning while they are entrusted to us during each school day.

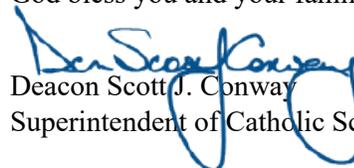
In consultation with our Diocesan COVID-19 Task Force and the Diocesan Council on Catholic Schools and while dialoguing weekly with our school principals, ***we have decided to postpone the start of the 2020-2021 school year in our K-12 schools from August 10 to August 19.*** The reason for our delay is that we are awaiting delivery of specific products, which have all been delayed due to the pandemic, to help us reinforce the daily cleaning and sanitizing of our schools as well as many instructional technology devices needed to upgrade our school systems, and we want to make sure we have done our due diligence in researching every way possible to keep our students, faculty and staff safe and healthy in our school environments. Safety is our number one concern in reopening our Catholic schools. We are committed to the date of August 19 and will be opening our schools to face-to-face instruction on that day. We will be wearing masks, sanitizing frequently touched surfaces throughout the day, and electrostatically spraying our buildings. A new general calendar will be distributed to all Catholic schools, and you can expect to receive an updated calendar once your principal has had some time to adjust any local dates if needed.

Our protocols have been tested here in the diocese for the past five months. Our early learning centers throughout the diocese have not closed and have continued to provide service throughout the pandemic. We have only had one student contract COVID-19, but because of all our health and safety protocols, there was no spread of the COVID-19 virus. We have had a few students test positive during our summer workouts at the high school level, and we communicated with all parents/guardians regarding the positive tests. Again, we have had no spread of the virus because of the same health and safety protocols.

We need to continue to pray for one another and an end to this pandemic. We also need to have some new rules in place for our schools right now. For the time being, we will not be allowing visitors in our schools to limit the schools’ exposure from outside our campuses. Our office has been working very closely with the Florida Department of Health to report every case that enters our schools. We follow their guidance and work with full transparency with our families. Our schools are doing everything we can to ensure a safe environment for our students and employees. Please know that our office will continue to monitor the pandemic and make changes to our plan as needed.

Again, we look forward to welcoming you back to school on August 19 and celebrating the gifts of each person.

God bless you and your family,

  
Deacon Scott J. Conway  
Superintendent of Catholic Schools

  
Rhonda Rose  
Assistant Superintendent of Catholic Schools