



14 March 2020

Dear Saint Mary's Faculty, Staff, Parents, and Students,

Thank you for your continued dedication to Saint Mary's Catholic Schools and your consistent support of our mission. I want to continue to reiterate my promise to you of transparency and communication in all aspects of our school life, and now especially concerning the spread of the Coronavirus, or COVID-19. With all the information available, I want to assure you that all decisions made up until now and going forward are the result of conversations and advice from the Iowa Department of Education, the Diocese of Sioux City, including the Office of Catholic Schools, as well as local officials.

As of now we are not closing our schools or setting a timeline to do so. We will continue to monitor the situation and adjust our plans based on accurate information and the advice of public and medical professionals. Our school building was thoroughly cleaned and disinfected on our no school day on Friday in anticipation of our return on Monday. As this situation continues to be ever-changing, be assured that any decision to modify class schedules or close our schools will include all entities mentioned above, and that plan will be communicated to all of you. If we are compelled to cancel classes, we will work with the Diocese of Sioux City and the Iowa Department of Education on alternative plans.

The safety and well-being of our students is our primary concern. We are taking several actions immediately to be proactive toward the spread of the virus. School trips planned for our students are now being reconsidered, postponed, or cancelled. We are confident that you are doing your part to combat the spread of COVID-19 and talking to your children about the value of frequent and thorough handwashing, avoidance of touching your face, along with extra cleaning of doorknobs and high touch areas. Please remember to follow practical guidelines and keep your children at home when they are sick, running a fever, or symptomatic. Do not send them back to school on medicine and please wait 24 hours after the first dose of an antibiotic.

We have procedures in place as part of our emergency operating plan to handle situations regarding the spread of illness. To that end, the St. Mary's School is limiting non-essential adults in our schools, as well as canceling large gatherings associated with our schools in the short term. We plan to suspend our Watch D.O.G.S. program until further notice. We also ask that when parents come to school to pick up children for appointments, they pick up their child outside the school using the following steps: 1. Call school to let them know you are on your way so the child can be called to the office. 2. Press the call button at the visitor entrance when you arrive and your child will be sent out to you.

These are uncertain times and we are in uncharted territory. I ask for your patience, continued support, and cooperation. We will communicate with you any updates or changes as soon as we are able. Continue to pray with your children for those affected, for their families, and all civil and medical personnel. May the Blessed Virgin Mary, our patroness, guide and protect us in these troubling times.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brent C. Lingle".

Father Brent C. Lingle  
President