



April 8, 2020

Dear High School Parents and Guardians,

First of all, we want to wish you and your family a blessed Holy Week. I hope this email finds you healthy and safe. While there have surely been many challenges during this pandemic, there are always hidden blessings, such as being able to slow down a little and have more family time together.

As a result of school closure in Iowa being extended until April 30, the state is requiring schools to submit a continuous learning plan to them by the end of this week. We have the option of continuing with voluntary learning or moving forward with required learning. After polling parents of our high school students, there was an overwhelming majority in favor of moving to a required learning plan. Therefore, St. Mary's School will be implementing required and graded learning in grades 9- 12, and will continue with a voluntary enrichment model for grades PK-8. This officially will begin on Tuesday, April 14, for the high school.

Teachers will begin reaching out next week to high school students with plans for their classes. There is also a Temporary Distance Learning Plan document attached to the email that contained this letter, and it outlines procedures and expectations. We know this is a new experience for everyone, so we will be flexible and will be focusing on quality over quantity. We have no intention of keeping students occupied for 7 hours a day like they would be if we were back in session. However, we do want to be able to provide our students with learning that will prevent them from falling behind. We are confident that with our small setting, we can find a way to do this effectively, but it will likely take some trial and error. With the real possibility of the school closure extending to the end of the year, we do not want to see an entire quarter of learning be lost. We will do all we can to help children continue their education and help prepare them for future online learning opportunities in college and beyond.

Now more than ever, the role of the parents as partners with our Catholic school faculty is obvious and important. When this effective partnership is strong, Catholic schools really shine. When parents understand this vital role and responsibility, children will thrive in growing their mind, body and soul. Thank you for taking your important and God-given role so seriously.

As with the rest of society since the Covid-19 pandemic began, things are constantly changing daily and we all must be flexible. We understand that many communications have been sent your way from teachers and administrators. We will work on streamlining and simplifying this. However, over-communication is preferred to under-communication as St. Mary's always wants what is best for your child's education. It shows that St. Mary's administrators and teachers sincerely care about your child. Thanks for your understanding as we all navigate these uncharted waters each day.

Again, watch for follow-up emails from your child's teachers with more details on our continuous learning instruction beginning on Tuesday, April 14. We will offer a brief period of time for the school to be open on Monday, April 13, to pick up any textbooks/materials that were left in lockers. To respect social distancing practices, we ask that only one person from the family comes to pick up materials, either

a parent or the student, etc. No one should congregate in the parking lot or any areas around or in the school. Simply park, come grab needed items, and be on your way again. Here is that pick up schedule:

ENTER THROUGH THE GYM LOBBY DOORS

Juniors and Seniors – 10:00 - 11:00 am

Sophomores – 11:00 am - Noon

Freshmen – Noon – 1:00 pm

Finally, enjoy these next few sacred days of Holy Week, the most celebrated week of the year in our Church. And let's all do our part as a team working together to fight Covid-19. Stay safe, stay healthy, and stay home. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Brent Lingle

Ryan Berg

Father Brent Lingle
Priest President

Ryan Berg
6-12 Principal