



OFFICE FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS  
DIOCESE OF GREENSBURG

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Dear Diocese of Greensburg School Families:

I hope that this communication finds you and your family well. As we enter Holy Week we reflect on the passion and death of Jesus Christ, and it really puts our current suffering into perspective. This is the perfect time to dedicate your family life to prayer and reflection. I urge you to refer to the Diocese of Greensburg website to discover the many opportunities for prayer that are being offered.

In addition to it being Holy Week, it is now the fourth week of distance learning for the children. I am sure that it has been an unexpected journey for everyone. It certainly has been for all of us in the schools. But I can honestly say that I have heard of many positive experiences that have resulted from this unanticipated crisis. Families have shared videos of school and family activities, teachers have prepared exceptional educational videos to share, and teachers, parents and students are becoming close partners in education. I have been copied on countless emails that have expressed a tremendous amount of appreciation for the caring outreach of teachers and their level of preparation for teaching the students at home.

However, this time of uncertainty has called for answers to some common questions being asked by parents. To address these questions, I have developed a Frequently Asked Questions posting that I am sending with this letter.

It is possible that I do not have every question you might have on the FAQ, but please feel free to contact the school principal to ask any additional questions you might have. It is also possible that, in response to new circumstances, some of the answers might have to be revised in the future. I do not anticipate that eventuality, but I have not lived through a time similar to this one. Questions arise and can only be answered day by day.

May God's grace accompany you on your journey through Holy Week and throughout this time of uncertainty.

Yours in faith,

Maureen Marsteller

## **Frequently asked questions:**

### **Will the high school seniors be able to graduate?**

If a student who is a senior completes the requirements of her/his classes then the student will graduate. It is very important for seniors to stay in touch with their teachers to make sure that they will have all course work completed by the end of the school year.

### **Will there be a graduation ceremony?**

The graduation ceremony is a very important event in a student's life. Therefore, every effort will be made to reschedule the graduation ceremony if necessary. Right now, graduation is scheduled to take place on May 27<sup>th</sup> for Greensburg Central Catholic Junior-Senior High School and May 29<sup>th</sup> for Geibel Catholic Junior-Senior High School.

### **What will happen to other types of graduation?**

Many families look forward to milestones such as Pre-K graduation, Kindergarten graduation and 8<sup>th</sup>-grade graduation. If the school is unable to hold these graduations on their scheduled dates, each school will decide whether the events will be rescheduled.

### **Will additional days be added to the school calendar?**

Students are being educated according to each school's calendar which designates 180 days of instruction. Should circumstances intervene that prohibit the school from providing education for 180 days, the Pennsylvania Department of Education has stated, "PDE will not penalize districts/schools that fail to meet the minimum day and hour requirement." However, we have every intention of providing continuity of education to the students in the diocesan schools for the entire school year.

### **What will happen if schools do not reopen after April 30?**

The teachers and administrators will continue to provide an education to the students until the governor reopens the schools or until the school year ends.

### **Will my child be prepared to move to the next grade?**

Teachers are providing assignments that are to be completed by the students in order to fulfill the requirements for the quarter. It is essential that the assignments given to the students be returned in a timely manner according to each family's ability. The assignments lead students through the successful completion of the curricular objectives necessary to be successful as they enter the next grade.

Parents can refer to PowerSchool to see if assignments are completed. If assignments are missing, parents, students and teachers should reach out to each other to discover why the assignment is missing and what is needed by the student to complete the assignment.

## **How will students be graded?**

Our main goal is to ensure the success of students, and we know that students are used to having their work graded so we will continue that practice. Parents might see different types of grading or nature of assignments as teachers discern whether a student has met the level of proficiency necessary to move to the next curricular objective. **Teachers will use a combination of formative assessment and summative assessment.** Formative assessment is ungraded feedback given to students to coach them toward the achievement of an objective. Parents will see comments on papers which might include a request for the student to try the work again. In some cases, one-to-one communication will occur through phone and video conferencing. Summative assessment will include items such as tests, papers, or recordings that will be graded as evidence of accomplishment of the learning objective. In some cases, summative assessments will be less frequent as we use more formative assessment in the distance learning environment. The personal honesty and integrity of the student is critical in the summative assessment as misrepresenting understanding will not allow the student to grow academically and possibly harm future achievement.

It is important for parents to remember that all students are experiencing different ways of engaging in school work. Some will flourish in an online learning environment, and some will struggle despite the best efforts of parents and teachers. It is very important that, should your child be struggling, you contact the teacher as soon as possible. Teachers are as interested in your child's success as you are.

If you are experiencing family circumstances that are limiting your child's ability to complete school work, please let the teacher know. Some examples of this might include insufficient Internet access, work situations where help can only be given to children outside of regular school hours, insufficient access to an electronic device, etc. At this very stressful time, we all want to work together to make sure that we can help you with your needs.

Now more than ever communication is critical to the successful education of your child. Please do not hesitate to email the teacher if you have a question or concern. Likewise, if a teacher reaches out to you, please make sure you connect with the teacher. We want your child to be successful.

**As always, if you have any additional questions please contact your child's principal or teacher.**