



August 23rd, 2020

Dear Parents,

I am sitting here thinking that as a community of faith we all desire one thing- to get our children back to SVMS in the safest way possible. I want to assure you that we can check all the boxes on the Covid-19 Compliance list:

1. We have sufficient PPE
2. Our A/C system and filters are up to code
3. We have set up the classrooms with desks 6 feet apart with sneeze guards on every desk
4. The cleaning and disinfecting will occur regularly to keep the building protected
5. Our teachers and staff are preparing very diligently to provide your children with an excellent education in-person and virtually.
6. We have a superb nurse who has read and summarized every document available.
7. Right now we are in the green zone of cases locally (documentation attached)

On reflection, I have to admit that it is very disarming to be preparing for the unknown. I believe that we all concur that we want to give our children a sense of some kind of community after being away from school for so long. I am sure that it is as much a longing for you as it is for them. We will not know what this all feels like and looks like until we experience it.

We all have our own story. There are many different personalities among us. Some of us want answers right away and want to know exactly what each day will look like, how we will tend to the remote classes and what the schedule will be. Others can go with the flow and can wait to see how it will all turn out. As an administrator, I have to be in the middle, and trust me when I say that I have had to let go of so much to clear my head and heart in a way that allows me to plug away not knowing exactly how this is all going to pan out. I have had to plan, re-plan and plan again. Randal and Tom have had to set up the rooms, reset them and even move rooms to another location. FLEXIBILITY is a key characteristic in all of this. We have a great plan and the set up is conducive to safety and curbing the

transmission of any contagious disease. We have to experience it all for at least a week to determine if it will work for the long haul. We will have to be masters of change.

The moccasins in the image signify for me a key attitude that we will all need to adopt as we come back to school. We need to 'walk in each other's moccasins' so that we can develop empathy for each other. This is a time when gentleness and kindness will pave the way for a successful return to school. All of our lives have been upended in some shape or form and I cannot imagine what it is like for each individual family with multitudinous variables and curveballs to deal with on a daily basis. I ask that we all be PATIENT for a few weeks so that we can live through the plan, make some mistakes and revisit the plan on a very regular basis. "Day by day" will be our mantra and I think that it was Aesop who said "Slow and steady wins the race." In many ways, we are being asked to do the impossible but we will always hold tight to the Gospel message of "With God all things are possible."

It certainly is impossible to develop a yearly calendar as we have traditionally done. We have worked on an updated skeleton calendar informing you of the key dates and breaks throughout the year. We are going to post a monthly calendar going forward as that is all that we can do for now praying that we can make it through the first month. You will see that it is a 'no frills' first month but that is what we have to do. We inputted the first two days in October to finish a Blue/Gold week. It is so important that we focus getting the children back into the classroom first and then all else will fall into place as we go. It is almost as if we have been given a giant jigsaw puzzle whose pieces have no picture. We have to observe closely and put the pieces together gingerly without forcing them to get the SVMS image back.

At school, we have all of the safeguards needed to provide your child with an opportunity to be among peers and to receive an education not only of the head but the heart and soul. I ask you to sincerely work with us to keep us safe at 26 Green Village Road for as long as possible. Continue to practice with the masks and social distancing. Please monitor your children daily for symptoms and do not send them to school when they are sick. Tomorrow marks a very important day on the quarantine calendar. If your family upcoming travels over the next two weeks include trips to the 'red zone' states (list attached) then your children will not be able to return to school until a 14 day quarantine requirement is fulfilled. For the safety and security of all of us I ask that you also monitor your interactions closely at functions/parties/celebrations etc. for the next two weeks so that when we open our doors on September 8th we will be able to welcome the whole contingent of students on the Blue days and the Gold days. Our focus is on continuing the mitigation process to keep the virus away for as long as possible.

Nurse Reilly has posted some valuable information in this eNewsletter for you. She has joined nursing organizations and has kept up with reading current information about the

virus and the reopening of school. I have heard from many medical people that it would be beneficial to get the flu shot early so please consider this for your child(ren).

Almost everybody in the educational field is predicting that we will be fully remote at some stage. We will be more ready for that this time around. I pray that we will be in school for long enough for the students and teachers to develop a relationship with each other. Continue to check on your home Wi-Fi system to make sure that it can accommodate the bandwidth needed to keep all of your devices up and running. It is very advisable to have your children use earphones when online to block exterior noises as much as possible. The question has been posed that if we are fully remote will the teachers be teaching from school. This is the call of the state and the diocese. When we closed in Spring, the building was closed to everybody. We are asking that children leave their cell phones at home this time round giving us one less thing to consider.

While we have things in order, we acknowledge also that we are in need of your help. I know that supplies are scarce but I ask that you try to provide your child with his/her own personal sanitizer to supplement the hand sanitizers in every class and hallway. You will be lauded as 2020 heroes if you can supplement the Clorox wipes that we have and continue to bring regular wipes and tissues. We will make it through longer if each student takes responsibility for his/her space as is age-appropriate. I know that I can count on you to work with us.

Miss Gisoldi has been working fervently with Melissa Williams, who graciously stepped in to help with drop-off and pick up. They are almost there in formulating a plan that aims to be efficient and safe for all grade levels. Again we will have to live through this to see if will work for us. For now try to memorize that if you are coming out of a driveway on Green Village Road that it will be right turn only.

I can only imagine what it is like in your house as our school's reopening is just around the corner. Try to imagine what it is like for us in school. When we eventually get all of our emotions in check and have our thoughts, our hearts, our desires and our love in sync then there will be no place that we'd rather be than at SVMS. Bring it on!

This is where our faith enters in big time. For the next 16 days let us storm heaven that all of the data will be favorable enough for us to meet face-to-face - albeit masked. We can do it! We have a great community and with Jesus at our side we will march on with confidence that we will be together soon.

Blessings,

Sr. Noreen