



July 19,2020

Dear Parents,

I pray that you are all doing something to have some summer fun with your families. As the extreme heat envelops us, I hope that you can do cool activities to stay cool. We continue to be absorbed in developing a plan that will have us return to school in September. As we insert required items into the plan, we also have to be prudent to ensure that our school will be the safest that it can possibly be when the children and staff come through the doors on September 2nd. One thing for sure is that this coming school year will be very different than any other year in the 172 year history of Saint Vincent Martyr School.

Let me start with some great news! Jennifer Nolan, mom of Clare who will be going to Kindergarten has stepped into the role of President of our HSA. This is a huge undertaking and I thank Jen for being so noble as to take this position on, especially not knowing what lies ahead! Thank you, Jen! I am sure that you all support in this role at a time when our creative juices will have to work overtime to come up with ways to have our traditional events in new and unique ways. Jen is in need of a co-worker so if there is any 'heart-open' mom -or dad- out there willing to join her as Vice-President that would be icing on the cake. I want to take this opportunity to thank Marianne Klein and Nicole Van Slyck for the phenomenal job that they did this past year. Their positive energy worked overtime even during the time of remote learning. Now more than ever the memories of last year's events are sweeter. Who would have thought that our wonderful Catholic Schools Week would have been our last hurrah for the 2019-2020 school year?! May Marianne and Nicole be very blessed for their beautiful work and may all of you who in any way contributed to HAS events last year feel the power of the prayers that I am sending you.

I informed you last week that it is our hope to come back fully in person. This is the plan that has been to the forefront as I have attended multiple Zoom meetings and read volumes of informational articles. This is the plan that the task force will be focusing on over the next few weeks. The members of the Task Force are identified on another item in this eNewsletter. The members span all grade levels in the building and come with lots of expertise. I am sure that you concur that in-person learning is of paramount value as we strive to provide an excellent education to your children. We also acknowledge that we must keep to the fore the health and safety of our students and staff as we develop our 'return to school' plan. This is the balancing act that we must perform as we pragmatically are cognizant of CoVid-19 data that is changing every day.

With this in mind, we must also prepare for a blended A/B scenario or a return to a fully remote model. Let me explain the A/B hybrid scenario. If we have to go this route of alternate days, it would look like this. In all grade levels, we have an A and B section. The A/B model would have half of a class in school being taught by the teacher and the other half would be home tuning in to the class. The next day this would switch. So for example, we take 1A and 1B; Mrs. Galton would have half of her class in 1A before her in class and half would be at home learning virtually. Mrs. Fetrow would have half of her class before her in 1B and the other half home. The next day those at home would come in and those who were in school would learn from home. The teacher would always have half of his/her class with her. If it is deemed that our allocated space is not adequate then we would have to go this route. Prayers said and fingers crossed that we will be able to have everyone back.

Families will have the option to keep their children home. It is very important that we get feedback from each family for the survey contained in this eNewsletter. If you choose to go remote you must commit to a marking period. The results of the survey will give us an accurate idea of what space we need for the number of students coming into the building and what technology we will need to support remote learning. If you have friends that are away, please remind them to complete the survey. If you were a class mom, I ask that you kindly distribute the survey to your respective classes. It is important that we get 100% feedback so we will do follow up phone calls if needed.

There have been many questions in many arenas about masks. Right now, all educational and medical experts say that masks and social distancing are the best

antidotes to this virus. So, masks must be worn by the staff and the students from day 1. I ask that you please practice with your children to help them to develop mask stamina. Trust me that there will be mask breaks injected often into the daily routine - not only for the children's sake but also for the adults. I have not heard of a school yet that is not requiring masks to be worn upon return to school.

We have purchased an enormous amount of CDC approved cleaning supplies and materials that have assisted us in cleaning and disinfecting our school and will continue to do so. Every nook and cranny has been cleaned more than once since school closed on that fateful day, March 13th. Hands free sanitizing units will be placed in every room. Randal is phasing in automatic toilets and hands free sinks. I know that cleaning supplies are very scarce in the stores but I ask that you help us by having your children bring disinfectant wipes and tissues to school like they always did. The more that we clean and disinfect the better chance that we have in stemming the spread of CoVid-19 at SVMS.

Please believe when I say that I am spending every waking - sometimes sleeping-moment on devising ways to best serve your children come fall. I am grateful to have a very competent task force to work with. We all know that situations beyond our control may force us to take an alternate route. In listening called "Just Back or Back Justly" put out by Fordham University, I found myself reflecting on the sacred balancing act that we are called to perform. You know that I love your children and the path for our return will be based on our love for them.

Please pray for us as we walk on a journey where there is no GPS, no handbook, no guidance when curveballs are thrown from all angles and where the written word has to be changed multiple times before the last period is written. Please bear with us, as I know that everyone wants answers now so that you can put your plans in motion. Now more than ever we need to soak in God's Word as spoken to the Prophet Jeremiah; "For I know the plans I have for you." Let us trust in that Word as we move through what feels like quicksand.

Blessings,

Sr. Noreen