

Dear STM families,

St. Thomas More Catholic School and the Diocese of Baton Rouge continue to monitor the developments related to the Novel Coronavirus, known as COVID-19. At this time, there have been no cases of the disease in Louisiana.

Common signs of infection of COVID-19 include fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. In more severe cases, particularly those in persons with underlying severe and chronic health issues, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and even death. COVID-19 spreads in a similar way to flu. Prevention tips include:

- Avoid eating or drinking after others.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.

For more information on COVID-19, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/>

While the disease was first identified in China, additional countries have seen an increase in cases of COVID-19, leading to new travel advisories. For the most up-to-date travel restrictions and guidelines, please visit the CDC website at

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

STM families, parishioners, faculty, and staff who have returned from an area where COVID-19 is spreading should monitor themselves for symptoms for 14 days and take their temperature twice a day. If they develop even a mild cough or low-grade fever (i.e. a temperature of 100^o F or more) they should stay at home and self-isolate. This means avoiding close contact (6 feet or nearer) with other people, including family members. They should also telephone their healthcare provider or the local public health department, giving them details of their recent travel and symptoms. **Students should not come to school if they have ANY symptoms of a respiratory illness within two weeks of returning from any countries affected by COVID-19, with or without fever.**

Our school will continue to encourage good hand washing practices, disinfect surfaces, and send sick children home from school. Prevention of Coronavirus is no different than influenza or any other communicable diseases. Thank you for your continued support and for keeping sick children home until they are free of contagious symptoms for 24 hours before returning to school. These are the best practices to prevent the spread of disease in the school setting.

Sincerely,

Brian Moscona, Principal

Rochelle Bowman, RN, School Nurse

STM Catholic Church

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