



OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK

1011 FIRST AVENUE, NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10022 PHONE (212) 371-1000 FAX: (212) 758-3018
MR. MICHAEL J. DEEGAN, SUPERINTENDENT

March 29, 2020.

Dear Catholic Schools Community,

As we have done many times since our founding more than 200 years ago, Catholic schools in New York are adapting to circumstances and overcoming adversity. Since the earliest days of this public health crisis, we have endeavored to be proactive, pragmatic and positive in the decisions we have made and the actions we have taken. From the outset, your partnership and support in navigating these unsettling days has been invaluable.

Indeed, with leadership and encouragement from Cardinal Dolan, our administrators worked with instructional specialists, principals and teachers to prepare and implement a home-based learning plan. After days of intense planning the program was launched and now 62,000 Catholic school students are enthusiastically learning every day.

While we have begun to settle into some semblance of routines in our respective homes, the government-issued directives, policies and orders continue to change with each passing day. As noted in a letter sent on March 6th, “The Health and Safety Task Force of the Office of the Superintendent of Schools will provide information on school operations as well as, COVID-19 (coronavirus)-related guidance from government agencies.”

The Department of Health has advised us: *“Currently, there is generalized community transmission of COVID-19 in New York State, meaning there are cases that have no known link to travel or to another confirmed case. The school or workplace environment having a positive case does not put others at higher risk than anywhere else in the city, given that there is generalized transmission in the state.”*

During times like this, the safety and well-being of our Catholic schools families and staff, as well as those in the broader community around us, are our primary concern. The policy of the Health and Safety Task Force of the Superintendent of Schools has been to notify schools communities of all positive test cases within the school community since there was potential for exposure to members of the school. The Task force policy has been updated as of March 29, 2020. That date marks more than 14 days since schools are closed, which is the known incubation period for COVID -19. Given information from the CDC, schools within in the Archdiocese will no longer send out notifications about a positive test result since students or staff members could not have been exposed at school. Still, the Health and Safety Task Force of the Superintendent of Schools will continue to monitor the outbreak and its effect on our school community in order to ensure the safety of our school communities.

I would encourage you to visit the CDC website, [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov), for additional information and resources. We continue to entrust all of us to the care of Our Lord, most especially those who have been directly affected by this virus. We also pray for those on the front lines: our doctors, nurses, health care workers, first responders as well all those volunteering and serving in essential services.

For regularly updated information on COVID-19 (coronavirus) related issues in our schools, the best resource will always be [CatholicSchoolsNY.org](https://www.CatholicSchoolsNY.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michael J. Deegan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mr. Michael J. Deegan
Superintendent of Schools
Archdiocese of New York

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