



# OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

## ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK

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MR. MICHAEL J. DEEGAN, SUPERINTENDENT

July 13, 2020  
Feast of St. Henry

Dear Catholic School Community,

Catholic Schools are opening in September! I know for so many of you that is the question that has been on your mind, and the next question is how are we doing it safely? Since March, the Health & Safety Task Force of the Superintendent of Schools has been ensuring that our students and staff remain healthy and have access to the most accurate information to safeguard them. Moreover, in April the Catholic Schools Re-Opening Council with leading experts across our state and nation have been working on a plan to safely bring our students home to our beloved catholic school buildings.

Later today, we anticipate that NYS State DOH and the Board of Regents will release its guidance; our council will release the Archdiocese comprehensive guidance early next week. Principals have been working already with information from the council to begin planning for a September start. In advance of our Archdiocese guidance, *Catholic Schools Opening: Moving Forward Together*, being released early next week, I wanted to outline some fundamental topics:

1. We are committed to opening schools for 5 days a week and ensuring that as many students using social distancing can safely be in our buildings under the direct supervision of a Teacher. The fact is that most buildings cannot accommodate all students socially distanced for a full 5 days, scheduled; Plans will be created by the principal using a three day/two day alternating week cycle. Early Morning Drop Off and After School Program will not be available until a later date. While I know all of you want your child in 5 days a week, government guidelines for health & safety do not allow that to happen.
2. Parents who desire can choose full time remote learning for their child. Remote learning will be with their child's teacher, learning in the classroom with students who are in the building. Students will be seamlessly connected.
3. We are deeply committed to ensuring the loving nurturing Catholic School environment will continue. We will not relent on our academic excellence that had our students outperform our public and charter schools in achievement on academic measures. Social emotional learning and mental well being are a priority from the moment they return.
4. The health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff are being prioritized with enhanced cleaning, disinfecting and sanitizing protocols, temperature checks and symptom screening.
5. We have requested many resources which our students are entitled to under state and city law as well as through the Local School Districts. Most significantly our expectation will be all public school districts provide a nurse/medical professional for all of our schools and transportation for eligible students. We are not confident that they will fulfill those requirements. We will persist on engaging local school districts and lobbying for our students. We want you to know how aggressively we are fighting for our children, but fear the government will fail to help us. We will keep you updated.

Like many of you, I have been watching around the world and our country as states and school districts release their plans, we have studied them all. It will be a new normal and no one plan, strategy, guideline or executive order will return us to what was. We do know however, that as we emerge, emboldened with our faith in Christ and accompanying each other on this journey, we will be stronger and committed anew to leading students to college and heaven!

Sincerely,

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

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