



March 12, 2020

Dear Parents,

I wanted to take this opportunity to share some important information that we have been given over the last few days regarding the coronavirus/ COVID-19. I'm sure many of you have questions and I wanted to keep the lines of communication open as much as possible regarding our future plans.

The information changes rapidly. Our resources include the Illinois State Board of Education, the CDC, the Adams County Health Department, and Diocese of Springfield.

We have been doing our very best to keep our building sanitized on a daily basis with our cleaning crew. A few weeks ago, we had an outbreak of the flu, and thankfully, our number of absences has decreased to a normal level at this present time. We are asking students to wash hands frequently, and have placed signs in the restrooms as an additional reminder.

We are encouraging students to stay home if they are ill. Please do not send your child to school unless they are fever free for 24 hours without medication. The following information may help to answer some of your questions.

1. What proactive measures is St. Francis implementing?

We are monitoring our student attendance on a daily basis. If there is an increased number that is unusual, we will contact the local Health Department. We will continue to sanitize touch points, desks, classrooms, and open areas on a daily basis. We will continue to encourage good health habits such as covering a cough, or sneezing into your elbow.

2. Where can the most up-to-date resources and guidance on COVID-19 be found?

The U.S. Department of Education has resources linked directly to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at [www.ed.gov/cononavirus](http://www.ed.gov/cononavirus). Further, current IDPH resources can be accessed at [www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/diseases-a-zlist/coronavirus](http://www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/diseases-a-zlist/coronavirus).

3. Who would make the decision to close school?

Local school districts, acting in accordance with guidance from IDPH and local public health departments, will make the final decision as to whether or not conditions require the closure of schools. Should St. Francis be closed, we will implement an electronic learning plan to meet our students' educational needs.

4. Are schools being advised to close at this time?

We have been informed that some schools are closing throughout the nation, but we will rely on the direction of the Adams County Health Department before making any decisions. Some schools in Illinois are closed in the Chicago and St. Louis area.

5. Are you cancelling school events/trips?

At the present time, we are not cancelling any field trips. As mentioned earlier, we will follow the directions that we are given by the Health Department, Illinois State Board of Education, and the Diocese of Springfield if we are required to do so in the future.

6. If traveling as a family over Spring Break, should we let the school know?

For students and families who travel domestically or internationally, it is important that you monitor your health closely and seek medical attention when warranted. If you have traveled to any areas in the world that the CDC deems as a higher threat- China, Italy, Iran, South Korea, or Japan, we expect that you will disclose this to both St. Francis and the Adams County Health Department.

The coronavirus is a serious matter and is a threat to the public's health. While more and more people are becoming sick, do remember the overwhelming majority of those infected by it have recovered. We will do our very best to keep you informed of any major changes or decisions as soon as possible, should those occur. We are working to stay proactive, and we pray that our students, teachers, staff, and parents all stay well.

My Best,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lori Shepard".

Lori Shepard