



April 19, 2020

Dear SJB Families,

Our distance education program resumes tomorrow with an increase in daily online class instruction. Your child's teacher is posting the weekly class online schedule in the portal. We've also created a set of rules for students in online classes.

On Friday, Gov. Hogan announced that distance education will continue in Maryland until May 15. The secretary of Catholic schools said archdiocesan schools would follow suit. Make no mistake. While we follow the archdiocesan guidance, we are planning distant education for the remainder of the school year. The safety and health of our students, families and staff remain our priority.

Before Easter Vacation, we told families about plans to modify grading for the 4th quarter. We are now re-evaluating that grading plan. We have been talking with other Catholic schools and are looking to adopt a broadened, modified 4th quarter grading policy for the Catholic school system. We're not planning to use the grading scale on the regular report cards. We maintain that regular report cards aren't suitable for assessing students in distant learning. We're also planning alternative, mixed, and project-based assessments instead of final exams for students in grades 5-8. We think this is the better way to go.

ONLINE CLASSROOM RULES FOR STUDENTS

- Attend classes assigned by teachers. They're not optional.
- Be on time. Meetings to be locked after 10 minutes.
- Turn on video. Student must be visible to teacher.
- No cell phones unless it's carrying your online class.
- Limit distractions like TV and siblings.
- Be seated at a table/desk and dressed (not in uniform, but not in pajamas either).
- Be prepared. Have the assignment in front of you (digital or printed), some things to write with and take notes on, and bring your questions about the content and assignments.
- When a teacher calls on a student, the student must respond. In other words, students must be present in body and mind, ready to learn. No side chats.
- Listen and watch the teacher during instruction.
- Mute yourself unless you are asking a question.
- Raise your hand to ask a question and wait to be called upon by the teacher.
- Teachers may have additional specific requirements for their classes. Ask your teacher if you aren't sure.



We see merit in adopting a single grading policy as a Catholic school system, particularly for the 7th grade students who will be applying to high schools next fall. We hope to announce modified 4th quarter grading before the end of the week.

With an increase in online classes during the day, there are bound to be conflicts for families with two or more students and limited bandwidth and technology. Please communicate to your child's teacher if your child cannot attend an online class. Our teachers have responded to family concerns with flexibility and understanding, and they are recording online sessions.

Thank you, SJB families, for your cooperation and your support as we enter the last stretch of the school year, as unfamiliar as it is. We understand how difficult it is to add teacher to your countless responsibilities as parents. We hope to be as supportive to you as you have always been to us.

Respectfully and Faithfully,

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