



St. Ferdinand CATHOLIC SCHOOL

April 18, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians:

And...*sigh*.

I'm not sure about you, but **the teachers, staff, and I have had a weepy, heartbroken sort of past 24 hours since the news that we've been dreading came to officially be: that all Illinois schools are closed for the rest of this school year.**

What? How could March 13 have been the last day we would greet, high-five, teach, joke with, nurture, and love in person your beautiful children? There was so much more to still do, learn, share, celebrate...it all just seems surreal.

We miss our "kids" so much...

We've got to take a moment to mourn that - - - and then get down to the business of figuring out how to make **the next 7 weeks of distance learning successfully "work" for all of us: students, families, and teachers alike in academic, social, psychological, and religious ways. How will we continue to do all that AND maintain our community "connection" to each other, our St. Ferdinand Catholic School family?**

Well, first, we'll continue with what we know was working before Spring Break:

1. We will continue to plan units in **2-week learning intervals. Our next packet pick-up/drop-off is THIS Monday, April 20, from 7-10 AM in front of school** and will cover work for the Weeks of April 20 and 27. If instructed to do so by a teacher, old work can be dropped off and new packets can be picked up; **tuition and registration monies** can also be paid, **SpiritWear** can be obtained, and **Lenten Operation Rice Bowl** monies can be brought in as well.

2. **Teachers will continue to create educational videos, paper and on-line projects, and provide live instruction** via Zoom or GoogleHangouts. They will be still be available to answer questions via email and/or GoogleHangouts during school day hours.

3. **Morning announcements, birthday shout-outs, and prayers will continue to take place at 9:00 AM every morning on the Saint Ferdinand Facebook page** (you don't need an account - you can access through our website!). Postings of school happenings will be posted there and on our Instagram page. ***Please follow us on both platforms to stay connected with St. Ferdinand School***

4. **Virtual Spirit Days** will continue to happen this first week back - - - **and then other surprises for the rest of the school year are being planned, too!**

5. **Fridays will continue to be "catch up/work on Specials" days.** New information will not be presented in the core subject areas, and if teachers are going live on Fridays, it will be for tutoring assistance on concepts presented that week. Students may devote a lot of their time to working on projects for art, music, PE, religion, Spanish, and technology, if applicable.

And we'll add:

1. **School phones will now be forwarded to school staff during the workweek.** This should abate any feelings of not being able to reach school staff.

2. **More LIVE teaching sessions will take place:** please expect homeroom/core subject teachers to teach live at least 3 times a week, and Specials teachers, once a week.

3. **Students or parents (depending on grade level) will need to check in DAILY (Mon-Thurs) with their homeroom teachers.** Many of the younger grades are expecting a response from parents as a check-in via Remind, while the older grades are hosting daily homeroom chats to check in - - - homeroom teachers will be reaching out to you with how this will be done. Fridays will continue to be the day office staff contacts families of students that we have not heard from during the week (the number gets less each week!). ***We care and want to know that our families are okay!***

4. **Thursday afternoons (noon-3) will, for this month, be a time for teachers to work on lesson plans, videos, etc. Students may use this as a screen-free time, working on non-electronic assignments,** knowing they will not be missing live Zoom times.

5. **We will be starting up group Title I services via Zoom for students who counted on that assistance** when we were still in school. **Academic Coaching** in groups should be starting up again as well. We are hoping "**Coaching**" can be expanded to include chat sessions for students who want to talk about their feelings with everything going on in our world. Stay tuned!

6. We are instituting **Ferdinand Family Fun Fridays, beginning in May!**

For each of these, socially safe trips to school will take place so students, teachers, staff, and families can all say hi from appropriate distances and through masks and gloves! Here is our tentative list of Friday Fun!

Please mark your calendars - 6:00-7:00 PM each Friday:
(rain dates will be the Monday after)

May 1 - Parade Day! Decorate and drive your car through the lot to wave hi to all teachers and staff!

May 8 - Mother's Day Craft and Carnations! Drive through the lot to pick up a flower for mom and a baggie filled with supplies to make her a card or craft!

May 15 - May Crowning in Pope John Paul II's Courtyard!
Park and walk over to offer a flower to Mary and have a rosary. We'll keep socially distant during our prayers.

May 22 - Memorial Day Kick-Off Weekend - Welcome Summer!

Drive by to pick up a small decorative flag
and (hopefully) hot dogs for dinner!

May 29 - Graduation Celebration Car Parade for the Class of 2020!

Class of 2020 families will decorate their cars
and drive through the neighborhood in celebration
of their graduates' accomplishments!

**June 5 - Happy Summer! - Drive on by to get some supplies needed for a
wonderful summer - and maybe your report
card, too!**

Please continue to reach out to teachers and myself with concerns or ideas for the rest of the year...

...if you are concerned with your child's academic progress (yes, work is graded and counts!), let teachers and/or myself know and we will work with you to promote success in learning!

...if you wonder when Graduation, First Communion, and End-of-Year Celebrations will take place - stay tuned! We are just as eager to figure out ways to commemorate these special times.

...if your child needs a free lunch and you need help with meals or other necessities, please **contact the school office or text "FOOD" to 552-020** to be put in touch with nearby resources!
Also, the **St. Ferdinand Food Pantry**, located in the convent at the corner of Barry & Mason, is **open Mondays from 11-Noon**. Please stop by if needed.

...if the whole CoronaVirus mayhem weighs too heavily on your or your child's mind, please also **text "TALK" or "HABLAR" to 552-020**. **This program is called Call4Calm**. Within 24 hours of contact, a **mental health professional** from a local community health center **will be in contact with you**.
The **Archdiocese of Chicago** also offers this list of resources for dealing with CoronaVirus effects on the family:
<https://schools.archchicago.org/family-resources>

THANK YOU for your continued **partnership** with us as we work together through this unprecedented ordeal! And please, beloved St. Ferdinand School families, stay healthy and safe.

I look forward to seeing some of you Monday morning in person at packet pick-up day, and your children in their Zoom classes, God willing.

With **peace, love, and in God's grace,**

Mrs. Erin Boyle Folino :)
Principal