



Monday, August 3, 2020

## **Catholic Schools Across WV to Release Plans Today for Five Day in School Instruction**

WHEELING- Throughout the last four months the Department of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston has been focused on implementing the recommendations and guidelines from worldwide, federal, state, and local experts. This week based upon the extensive work that has taken place, West Virginia Catholic School families will receive their individual school reopening plans, outlining a five-day a week physically present strategy.

“Principals from all 24 Catholic schools across the state have worked closely with their local health departments, school communities and my office to develop plans to allow for the reopening of schools that meet local, state and federal guidelines,” Catholic School Superintendent Mary Ann Deschaine, Ed.S., said.

When providing information about the reopening of schools, Mrs. Deschaine also referenced the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) that “strongly” supports students returning to the school building. A recently released statement from the AAP notes, “All policy considerations for the coming school year should start with a goal of having students physically present in school.”

“This is completely in line with our position,” she said. “Because we are Christ-centered, every choice we make, and plans we develop are prayerfully made with our students’ success and well-being in mind. We are a strong Christian family guided by our faith. Our learning environment will always focus on the social, emotional, physical, spiritual, and mental well-being of each child.” While these are unwanted and unpredictable times, the challenges in the world today provide a great opportunity to teach huge and powerful life lessons for our children.

“What has always been our routine focus in Catholic schools—academics, responsibility, accountability, citizenship, and empathy—is now being taken to a heightened level,” she said. Last spring, schools across the Diocese displayed how well they react to a total upheaval of their academic, social, and physical plans.

“I know without a doubt that our principals, staff, and teachers performed outstanding,” she said. “Our families saw that, and our students will always remember how they continued to be challenged academically, and moreover won’t forget how they felt knowing their teachers genuinely cared about their mindset.”

As with each phase of this COVID experience, these recommendations will be subject to change with little notice. Therefore, administrative staff will continue to monitor local conditions, in consultation with the appropriate county health support systems. Any additional details or changes will be given directly to all families by the administration of their respective school. Please be advised that individual building plans may vary slightly from school to school based on regional guidance. “We will constantly be re-evaluating the health and safety measures in our buildings,” Deschaine said. “We will also be able to turn on a dime and adapt to a remote learning environment if we must. No matter what the circumstance - weather, building issue, or health/safety concern – our Catholic schools will continue to learn, lead, and succeed. We are well equipped and prepared.”

For more information about Catholic schools in West Virginia, please contact the office of Catholic Schools at 304-233-0880, or for a list of schools including contact information visit: <https://wvcatholicschools.org>.

Media Contact:

Tim Bishop

304-233-0880, ext 353