

Important Information

Please Read

Dear Parents and Guardians,

For whatever reason, I was made aware that some of you did not receive the message about no school on Sunday night, not sure what happened so I am just going to chalk it up to another technological glitch. As if the COVID wasn't enough for all of us to deal with, the snow keeps coming. I know that many of you are questioning, why we are calling off school when the storm has passed or not yet begun, please understand that in twenty-one years, I have never made the NO School call. It is generated from Worcester Public Schools and based on the transportation. We do not technically pay for the buses, so we are at their mercy to make the call. Most of the time they are good calls. This year, I will say that without the public school students in session, I think they make the call more hastily than in other years. We have five buses of students, transported to SPCC, the number of riders is smaller due to social distancing., but many of our families rely on the buses. I understand how trying all of this has been for all of you, our teachers and our children. I stand by our Diocesan decision to stay remote until January 25th. The spike of the virus was so high following the holidays, our families were affected by the virus. Unlike the spring, when everything was shut down, many of our parents are working outside the home in front line positions and exposure is happening despite precautions. When someone in the household tests positive, the children must quarantine for fourteen days. This equates to a lot of interruption to our in-person learning, as teachers try to teach remotely to several at home and address the needs of the students in attendance in class.

When I set up the remote program, I did so at the request of families who are compromised or have circumstances that made it too risky to have a student attend in person. In grades Kindergarten through Grade 5, I designated one teacher at each grade level to be the remote teacher. In grades 6, 7 and 8, since the students have multiple teachers each teacher is set up for remote learning. I offer this as a way of explanation. Lately, we are receiving phone calls about travel or appointments, and the desire to have your child go on remote for the day. Our system is not set up for this. Remote access will be reserved for students who are ill or must quarantine, due to exposure to the virus. In the case of illness, if that teacher is not one of the "remote learning teachers", it will take them a day to gather the necessary equipment, needed to teach remotely. I also hear your concerns for better acoustics for your remote students. We are working on that too, but please understand that the teacher moves around the room and also attends to the students in the classroom. Some teachers are understandably more comfortable with all of this, but I am so proud of all of them for learning and doing all they can to make this challenge work for our kids. Thank you for your understanding.

We have over two hundred chrome books in the school and are busy writing grants for additional devices. When we went to remote learning in January, we were prepared and able to assist with some who lacked enough devices at home. Some chrome books were returned

missing parts and others needed to be cleaned from food spills. We do not have the money to automatically replace such expensive pieces. We have had requests to keep them at home throughout the snowy weather. Unfortunately, we cannot do that because they are always being used in the classrooms while we are in attendance.

Snow days are quickly becoming a thing of the past across New England. I have heard from many of you, who think that removing a snow day from a child's life is a terrible thing. Agreed there should always be time for sliding, snow angels or shoveling out a grandparent but since we have all mastered the technology, some educators want to do away with them altogether.

We have made a decision at St. Peter's, after listening to parents, teachers and students that snow days will be from 9-12 with synchronous learning with the teacher. We will fulfil our requirement for a day of learning by abbreviating the length of each class. I heard, your comments about not enough technology at home or difficulty managing the remote process. I have heard the concern in your voices about child care and how many grandparents or day cares are not equipped to help with the remote process. So, the afternoon will be snow time.

Most important, I cannot thank you enough for your honesty, attention to our COVID checklist, reporting and patience. You have helped us to remain in- person learning, which we all know is the right thing for our children.

May God bless you all,

Meg