April 4, 2020

Dear St. Ethelreda School Families,

I would like to begin by acknowledging and thanking you for your cooperation these past three weeks. When we left school on March 13, we thought it would only be for two weeks. We had so many plans for our students and ourselves as I am sure you had as well. But here we are entering the fourth quarter of school and a new platform for teaching using eLearning and Distance Learning. With your support, we are making a somewhat smooth transition to these learning styles which will become smoother with time. I know this because you, my parents and grandparents, are incredible! You always give your best and rise to the occasion to help to make your child successful.

Last week was our first time implementing Distance or Remote Learning, the education of students who may not be physically present at a school and in a classroom. We noticed our students’ behavior and nonchalant attitudes toward learning. We realize they were excited to see their classmates and this was new to them. Yet, we must remind them this is school and they must continue to learn.

Therefore, we are putting strict guidelines in place for Zoom class attendance.

* Students must log in ten minutes before class begins with the necessary supplies.
* Students who are late will be in the waiting room until the teacher admits them to class. If the student is too late, he/she will not be admitted and will receive 0 points.
* Students must wear their St. Ethelreda gym tee or sweat shirt ONLY. No other St. Ethelreda shirt will be accepted (football, student council, chess, track, Future Problem Solver, summer camp, etc.).
* Students’ faces must be visible on the screen for the entire class period.
* Headphones, ear buds, doo rags, younger siblings, food, drinks, toys, pets and background noise of any kind are not allowed. This is distracting to your child and to the teacher.
* Parents are encouraged to be present, if possible, and to observe quietly and off camera. Assist your child only if the teacher asks you to.

This is continuous learning in a different setting and we want the students to realize the importance of it. By dressing in school attire, their frame of mind should think school and they will conform to the expected classroom behavior. We want them to continue to follow the Eagles Pledge.

Updates

* Distance and eLearning will continue through April 30.
* St. Ethelreda School will honor our scheduled Easter/spring break from April 10-17. Distance Learning and eLearning will resume on Monday, April 20.
* ACT Aspire testing is cancelled for the 2019-2020 school year.
* The Federal and State Constitution tests have been cancelled for this year. The seventh graders will take the test in eighth grade instead.
* Decisions about graduation for preschool, kindergarten and eighth grade have not yet been made.

Tuition/Financial Aid/Scholarships

For the sustainability of our school, we ask that families continue to pay tuition regularly. I do understand the financial burden this virus has placed on everyone and keeping a roof over your heads, putting food on the table and keeping your lights and gas on are extremely important at this time. Still, I need you to make some type of payment on your tuition for these reasons:

* St. Ethelreda School is committed to paying teachers and essential staff throughout this crisis.
* We are providing daily instruction, feedback and support.
* St. Ethelreda School pays for all of the online resources that students have access to for learning.
* We are providing additional resources to teachers and families to accomplish Distance Learning.

*Additionally, here is the official response from the Office of Catholic Schools regarding tuition:*

*Our Catholic schools depend upon tuition revenue. We have made a commitment to continue to pay our* *teachesr and staff during the closure. Moreover, we are continuing to work hard and deliver a high-quality education through eLearning.*

* The current situation will not affect financial scholarships awarded for this school year. Additionally, Empower Illinois and Big Shoulders Fund are in the process of awarding scholarships for the 2020- 2021 school year. Check your email frequently, including spam, to make sure you do not miss an important communication.
* It is vital to our planning for the upcoming school year that families requesting Financial Aid complete the application on FACTS management. This is a requirement to be considered for financial aid at St. Ethelreda School. Email Ms. London, the business manager, at: tlondon@archchicago.org if you have questions or need assistance.

We know that Distance and eLearning cannot substitute for having the day-to-day interactions with our students. We have all been put in an unimaginable circumstance. So much has happened in these past three weeks and the uncertainty as to when it will end causes more anxiety and stress. We don’t want to add to this. We are here for you as an additional resource. Feel free to contact your child’s teacher via Class Dojo, school email, phone or the teacher’s website. You can reach me Monday through Friday, 1:00-5:00, by email: dspells@stethelreda.org, Class Dojo or phone: 773-270-1686. Most mornings I am in meetings or observing classes. If I don’t answer, leave a voice or text message and I will return your call as soon as I can.

If you need a device for your child to complete work online, please inform the teacher. I am trying to secure chrome books or tablets for our students. Also, Comcast is offering free internet access for sixty days for qualifying families.

Praying steadfastly for all of us,

Dr. Spells