



From the desk of KIMBERLY A. DESOTELL President, GRACE

August 21, 2020

Greetings GRACE Families:

Today's information on our Reopening webpage is the final update prior to the start of the academic year. Further details will be regularly distributed directly from school principals in their weekly newsletters to school families. We ask you to also keep in touch with our principals to provide feedback on how your student(s) are progressing as we begin the year. Your feedback will help us regulate, assist and make adjustments as we begin anew.

Many have asked deeper level questions regarding our protocols for a potential school or grade-level closure related to the pandemic. As we have all read, school closures may have detrimental impacts on educational growth, access to school lunch and other educational initiatives for students at all levels. However, in the event of illness affecting our schools, we will utilize the direct guidance of our Public Health Department to guide decisions. A few details:

- The Brown County Public Health Department has initiated an "Intake Line" for schools to receive "just in time" support for health decisions and guidance.
- The Wisconsin Department of Health Services published yesterday additional guidance for the prevention of COVID-19 outbreaks in K-12 schools in Wisconsin. That information can be viewed [HERE](#).
- Schools would close if the positivity rate exceeds 5% of a school's population (students and staff combined).
- Schools may close if more students are absent than present.
- Schools could possibly close if schoolwide disinfection would be needed.
- And, schools could close if contact tracing is occurring in response to an outbreak.

In each of these potential situations, we will rely on the Health Department's decision for closure. We would anticipate any closure lasting for 14 days and then resuming school in person for those healthy and ready at that time. We would move to an online Continuous Learning mode for students during this 14-day time period. The Our Lady of Grace Virtual Academy would continue as well.

Regarding communication within our GRACE schools, we plan to notify families and staff from that specific school should a positive case of COVID-19 be identified once we begin the year. School families will be informed of a positive case, but the communication will not contain any identifying information to ensure privacy is upheld. This year, as we begin during this pandemic, families will be asked to share the reasons why students are absent from school should a child be called in sick. We wish to be transparent with our families and thus, need open and candid dialogue as a school community as well.

Overall, we are ready. Our schools have been transformed into safe learning spaces prepared to welcome students next week. The strong desire of over 84% of our families who wish to return to in-person learning is a testimony of your trust and belief in our schools, our teachers and our leadership.

Thank you all for your continued engagement, partnership and faith in all we do as a Catholic school system. We are ready. We are GRACE.

In Christ,

Kimberly A. Desotell
President, GRACE