

November 19, 2020

Dear Parents,

As you may have heard, Summit County Public Health (SCPH) released an advisory this morning that included language about Summit County K-12 schools remaining aware of the need to possibly move to a remote learning environment as the preferred option for students during this time of surging COVID-19 cases.

Specifically, SCPH stated:

Section 6: Employers and Schools

Employers are strongly encouraged to identify and accommodate as many employees as possible to work from home during this time. All businesses and local governments are advised to transition as many transactions and functions as possible to online. Public and private K-12 schools are advised to maintain awareness of case numbers both within their district buildings and the general community. Shifts to learning modality could become necessary.

We have been in ongoing communication with SCPH and are aware of this advisory, as well as the fact that not all schools are alike. As we said when a similar recommendation was issued in August, public school districts in Summit County face some challenges that our school community does not. We are also aware that there is no perfect option in this situation, and that all options available to us carry some risks, including the risk of illness associated with in-person learning, the risk of social-emotional challenges associated with learning from home, and others.

It is important to note that all St. Hilary School families have already been offered a remote learning option in addition to the option for in-person instruction, and many have taken advantage of this opportunity. Our synchronous learning plan offers students the ability to attend classes in person or online at the same time, as part of the same classroom, with the same curriculum, teacher and classmates, no matter which option is selected. We have been as flexible as possible as family situations change and the need to move into or out of remote learning arises, within the guidelines we have published and the parameters of available technology. You can find our mid-September communication about temporary and ongoing distance learning [here](#).

We join the Diocese of Cleveland in the belief that all children are a precious gift from God, and all parents have the right to choose what is best for their children. We are committed to providing the safest possible face-to-face learning option for our students, along with the option for synchronous distance learning. However, we know that COVID-19 remains in control and is the driving force behind all decisions that must be made this school year. Our state and local leaders have consistently demonstrated their resolve in issuing policies to protect the health and safety of our community. Although Governor DeWine has repeatedly expressed that it is his desire for schools to remain open and that such decisions should be made by the schools themselves, if the present surge worsens, we cannot rule out the possibility that we may be forced back into a completely distance learning situation at some point during this school year, either due to illness / quarantine / staffing shortages in our school community or conditions in the larger community.

Therefore, as we have repeatedly said, it is vital that every family have contingency plans in place. Equally important, all of you have it within your power to make decisions and take actions that can impact our ability to continue to provide an in-person learning option.

Per the SCPH Advisory issued today:

Section 3. Advisory on Indoor and Outdoor Meetings and Social Events

Residents are advised to limit meetings and social events to 10 individuals, from the issue date of this advisory. The advice applies to both indoor and outdoor events, birthday parties, and other events that may occur at a banquet hall, event venue or other similar space. Furthermore, houses of worship are recommended to continue to implement all virus transmission prevention protocols and are advised to limit the number of individuals in attendance to ensure safe distancing at all regular services. A meeting or social event that is outside of normal operations is advised to have no more than 10 individuals. All gatherings should provide space for adequate social distancing and shall require the wearing of masks.

Section 4. Private Gatherings

Residents are strongly advised to not have any indoor gatherings with guests in their homes unless they require services from essential workers (e.g. plumbing, heating, electrical repairpersons) and should wear a mask and observe social distancing if such services are necessary.

We again plead that you take this situation seriously as you consider plans for holiday and other social gatherings.

We remain grateful for the trust you have placed in us and for sharing your children with us each day. We wish you and your families a safe, healthy, and happy Thanksgiving.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Jennifer Woodman
Principal