



August 5, 2020

Dear Parents,

At Our Lady of the Lake Catholic School, we've been planning for fall reopening throughout the summer. We have created split classes, planned for professional development, upgraded technology, and renovated classrooms. As the summer has progressed however, our best laid plans have gone awry. If you read last week's announcement from the Governor, you are already aware that there are several metrics whose values will determine whether OLL will be able to open school with students and teachers on campus, or whether we will be required by the state to revert to Plan C, the distance (digital) learning model.

Governor Brown's mandate requires that before schools can offer in-person classes of any kind, both the state's and Clackamas County's COVID-19 test positivity rates must fall to or below 5%. While the numbers continue to fluctuate, Clackamas County's positivity rate remains relatively low, and we are hopeful that the positivity rates for both state and county can reach and remain below 5%.

The third metric—which must hold fast for three consecutive weeks—is that the county's weekly incidence rate for new cases be at or below 10 new cases per week per 100,000 residents. Unfortunately, Clackamas County in the last full week of July had a new case rate that exceeds this number.

While we wait as a community in hopes for in-school learning, I have been told by the Archdiocese that all students at OLL, K-8, will begin the school year learning digitally. The Archdiocese is following the state's mandates. The Archdiocese did say that once we get the green light from Clackamas County, we will transition back to in-school learning. My goal will be to return in phases. Grades K-3 will transition back as soon as possible. Gradually, we will transition 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> back, which will be followed by middle school.

Therefore, the question of the moment is, "What holds us together while we are forced to be apart; how do we bridge the distance of digital learning"?

I want to take a moment and reflect on what makes OLL and our incredible community unique. For whether we are all together in-person, or instead online and remote, our values and mission hold strong, and they inform all we do.

- Our Mission is to Act Justly, Love Tenderly, and Walk Humbly with our God.
- The strength of our community is founded on helping students find and develop their intellectual and spiritual values.
- The commitment of our teachers is to know and appreciate every single one of their students, and to inspire them toward mastering discipline, enhancing their autonomy, and seeking purpose in life.
- Genuine care and regard grows among students (as it is nurtured by teachers) that prepares them to discuss, problem-solve, and find solutions, both personally, spiritually, and as a community.
- Invaluable and unparalleled contributions of a uniquely talented faculty who, in addition to bringing excellent training in the field of education, also bring their own distinct "voices" and experience to their teaching.

And finally, the delightfully curious, earnest, inquisitive, kind-hearted, spiritual, gracious, and accomplished students we raise together as a school community.

I look forward to the day when we can resume teaching and learning, as we have known it at Our Lady of the Lake Catholic School. Until then, we are focused on making the best of the year to come. As stated before we will transition into in-school learning when Clackamas County and the Archdiocese allows (we will not wait until November if metrics allow us to return sooner).

The administration at OLL is revisiting the Digital Learning plan and look forward to the upcoming teacher training, starting on August 31<sup>st</sup>. I do want to take a moment to reflect and remind you in particular of our Spring Digital Learning Plan, which was far better than any public school digital learning plan or school in our area. As a result, we have experienced unprecedented numbers of applications over the summer. **We currently are full and have a waitlist in every grade except 8<sup>th</sup>!** Thank you for the excellent word-of-mouth marketing. We can only continue to move up. Here is what we learned and will improve on.

- The experience of our enforced digital learning in the spring taught us all many lessons about what works and what needed improvement to maximize the learning experience.
- OLL teachers return to school on August 31<sup>st</sup> to start collaborating and utilizing all opportunities for professional development to learn from experts on how to maximize efficacy with digital learning.
- The scientific evidence suggests that digital learning allows OLL families to remain safely at home and decrease the likelihood of infection.
- Digital learning allows teachers and students to teach and learn in an environment free from immediate anxiety (which many staff and parents have voiced.)
- We have already improved strategies, specifically ZOOM to incorporate more live instruction.
- Administration is working to streamline, organize, and simplify the number of digital platforms we use, as well as the manner in which Google Classroom is used.
- Digital learning will include interactive, collaborative instruction that will specifically adapt in real-time to students' learning pace and needs. We do recognize that we have students who struggled in this environment last spring, and our teachers are intent on reaching out and finding the way forward for all students.
- Parents will be trained and given more guidance on how to support digital learning at home.

While I would love to believe that this very long letter has answered all your questions, I know there are more questions out there. Please allow the teachers to return on August 31<sup>st</sup> for their week long in-service before sending questions to teachers regarding digital learning. Administration will send out an updated digital learning plan with updated expectations for staff, students, and parents. You will also receive an updated welcome letter from homeroom teachers before the first day. School Supply Lists are posted on our website at the following address, <https://oll.school/summer-information/>. You can purchase school supplies and keep them at home for now.

We are comforted by the knowledge that we are not embarking on this journey alone. Catholic educators nationwide are coming together to innovate, support, and grow in our school communities. As we retreat into prayer and planning in the following weeks, let us remember, "In their hearts humans plan their course, but the LORD establishes their steps." (Proverbs 16:9). We are blessed to teach and learn within this faith-filled community, and I am confident we will make the best of the possibilities that lay ahead of us.

We are better together.  
God Bless,

Corrine Buich  
Principal