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March 13, 2020

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Dear Little Flower Families, Faculty, Staff, and Community,

As you are all aware, the number of COVID-19 cases has been on the rise in both the state, Long Island, and local region over the past few weeks, with both Nassau and Suffolk Counties declaring states of emergency following Governor Cuomo's declaration of emergency for New York. A state of emergency not only recognizes the seriousness of an event or crisis, but also allows state and local governments greater authority to respond to such events or crises and access additional resources to support citizens during these times.

Suffolk superintendents are in regular communications with Suffolk County officials including the county executive and commissioner of health to discuss and inform decisions related to the health and safety related to students and staff based on the most current trends and data related to the coronavirus.

Many school districts have closed for varying periods of time, some of which might even be your home school districts. You may be left wondering why Little Flower has not closed. I will attempt to bring clarity to that process.

Terms: *coronavirus* is the type of virus at hand; there are many types of coronavirus.
SARS-CoV-2 is the strain of coronavirus of this particular outbreak.
COVID-19 is the illness contracted after exposure to SARS-CoV-2.

If a school has a confirmed case of COVID-19, the DOH requires the school shut down a minimum of 24 hours so DOH officials can conduct a "close contact" investigation to determine if others could be at risk from their proximity and interaction with the confirmed case. Schools may also use this time to undergo a thorough disinfection process. Several districts have experienced this scenario.

If a school has reason to believe there may be a community case, but COVID-19 is not a confirmed positive amongst their student body or staff, they may close out of an abundance of caution for one or more days which is not mandated by the DOH. Many districts have experienced this scenario.

Little Flower has not experienced either of these scenarios, and thus, we have not made any decision to close. We continue our heightened cleaning and disinfection protocols, increase staff awareness, and communicate with the agency's residential and medical staff on a regular basis.

In the event we do have reason to close, you will be notified via Calling Post as quickly as possible. Additionally, the district will implement a continuity of instruction plan with work packets sent home related to your child's IEP and course/curricular goals.

Thank you for your support and cooperation during this unprecedented time. Please continue to refer to the Suffolk County DOH webpage, NYS DOH webpage, NYS Education Department, the Governor's webpage, and to the CDC webpage for updated information, along with any updates I provide through the Calling Post call service and/or mailings.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'HJ Dean', written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Harold J. Dean
Superintendent

Suffolk County Department of Health
www.suffolkcountyny.gov/health

New York State Department of Health
www.health.ny.gov

NYS Education Department
www.nysed.gov

NYS Governor's Office
www.governor.ny.gov/

US Center for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov