



10/23/2020

Dear St. Michael's Parents and Families,

Thank you for your family's commitment to health and safety, on campus and at home. While Covid cases are surging elsewhere in the United States, our own State of Arizona, and Pima County even more so, is faring relatively well for the time being.

Covid Update and Forecast

The Covid trends statewide at present are moving slowly but steadily upward, and it is these same trends that cause concern for us longer term. According to the most recent public-health data, published yesterday by the Zuckerman College of Public Health at the University of Arizona, if current statewide trends continue, Arizona is on track to experience a major resurgence during the Thanksgiving-Christmas-New Year holiday season. According to the same report noted above, "the fall-winter viral respiratory season (cold and influenza) plus the return of part-time residents who winter in Arizona will place increasing strain on our hospitals through January."

There are a number of counties in the State that are already moving on a worrisome trajectory with Covid, though Pima recorded a decrease of one (-1) in overall Covid cases per 100,000 population over the course of the past week. Of particular note for us, the primary public-health markers that we have been monitoring daily for Pima County (overall cases, rate of positivity, and hospital capacity) are all still in the green.

This expected resurgence locally, in time, is a primary concern for us as well; in reviewing the most current data at our weekly planning meeting yesterday, however, the medical experts who are helping to guide our decision-making agree we do not need to consider a transition back to distance learning at this time.

Our sincere hope is that Covid rates in Pima County remain flatlined, as they are now, providing a reasonably safe window to continue in hybrid mode at least through the beginning of the Thanksgiving holiday. I will of course continue to provide weekly updates and notice for any and all changes to our daily schedule.

Mask Efficacy

A reminder about masks from Nurse Huff: Please look for a fine-weave, high-thread-count material for masks. Flimsy or see-through material (mesh), or material with large gaps, is not adequate because droplets and aerosols can pass through the gaps and therefore not appropriate or safe for school.

A simple candle test can determine if a mask provides adequate protection. If you can blow out a candle while wearing your mask, that's a fail. Another test you can easily do is to hold your mask up to a bright light source like a flashlight. If you stretch the mask and can see right through it, it's a bad sign.

If your mask doesn't pass these tests, it means your mask does not adequately stop the flow of air. If you can blow air out, air can also leak inward just as easily putting you and others at risk. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel to contact Nurse Huff at ehuff@stmichael.net or 722-8478 ext. 219.

Next Mini Term

For this current mini term, through November 6, we have 80% of families who have chosen to be on campus, and 20% at home. You will receive an email from Tracy Holsinger early this coming week asking you to complete the form on Blackbaud indicating your choice for the next mini term, November 10-December 17. Thank you.

Upcoming Events

Our annual Halloween Parade with the Lower School (K-4) will take place next Friday, October 30, and will be livestreamed for families through Facebook Live. That following Monday, November 2, we will host our annual Día de Los Muertos celebration and livestream that event as well.

We appreciate the kind gestures and thank you's from so many of you, and I encourage you to continue to thank our faculty for their hard work, dedication, and love for the students in our care.

All good wishes for the weekend,

Sincerely,
Brendan Sullivan
Head of School
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