



11/2/2020

Dear St. Michael's Parents and Families,

Thank you very much for your and your family's commitment to health and safety, on campus and at home. Committing wholly to the basics of COVID mitigation—handwashing, masking, and distancing—have helped and will continue to help sustain our chances of remaining reasonably safe in hybrid. Thank you very much as well for your further commitment to and vigilance about reporting directly with our School Nurse, Erika Huff, for any and all health concerns at home.

These two essential measures, screening at home and mitigation on campus and at home, have certainly helped keep our school community stay as safe as possible: **we have had zero (0) reported COVID infections among St. Michael's staff and students to date, since we initiated hybrid on campus on September 10.** This is a significant data point for our school community and a strong reminder about the efficacy of adhering strictly to proven COVID-mitigation measures.

COVID Updates

While we have fared well during these first seven (7) weeks of hybrid learning on campus, we are concerned above all about growing COVID trends nationally, statewide, and locally in Pima County. In my last email to the SMS community, sent October 23, I emphasized that COVID cases are indeed increasing even more quickly by the day in the U.S. and in our own State of Arizona.

While the most recent County health markers that we have been monitoring for months indicate it is reasonably safe to continue in hybrid, the same data for COVID locally, published late last week by the Pima County Health Department, shows a worrying upward trend in local cases, hospitalizations, and the rate of positivity, trends that have shifted considerably for the worse in a week's time, and ones that will most certainly present a challenge for us to remain longer term in hybrid.

The medical experts in our St. Michael's COVID Planning Group will meet with me and our administrative team again this Thursday. We anticipate that our upcoming discussion will involve added urgency about COVID trends in Pima County before we break for Thanksgiving on Friday, November 20, and for when we are scheduled to return after the break. For now, with the recommendation of our medical experts, we will remain in hybrid, and I will of course continue to provide updates and notice for any and all changes to our daily schedule.

Please Get Your Flu Shot

Each year we strongly encourage all families to immunize themselves against the influenza virus. Primary-care health providers and local pharmacies and health clinics are prepared for the coming (imminent) cold-and-flu season this year and have shots available now. **A flu shot will not of course provide any defense against COVID, but it does offer the best defense against flu and its potentially serious consequences and can reduce the spread of flu to others.** Getting vaccinated has been shown to reduce flu illnesses, doctor's visits, missed work and school days, and reduce the risk of flu-related hospitalization.

Health Questions and Concerns for Families

If you have any health-related questions or concerns, please contact our School Nurse, Erika Huff, at ehuff@stmichael.net, or by phone at 722-8478 ext. 219.

I hope all of you enjoyed a safe Halloween weekend. If you missed virtually attending either our annual Lower School Halloween Parade last Friday or our Día de Los Muertos annual celebration today, both are available to view on our Facebook page.

As a final note, we recognize the inconvenience many of our families and staff experienced during a brief TEP power outage this past Friday afternoon. This brief outage impacted our campus power and internet, as it did with a number of homes in the area, and caused an interim stoppage for our distance learners at home.

Sincerely,
Brendan Sullivan
Head of School
bsullivan@stmichael.net