

Archdiocese of Baltimore Catholic Schools Coronavirus (COVID-19) FAQ's

How long is a school calendar in the Archdiocese of Baltimore?

A school calendar consists of 178 days of instruction. There are 170 days required by the State of Maryland. Because of the unique mission of Catholic schools, the Archdiocese of Baltimore requires 5 additional student days. There are three days built into every calendar for "inclement weather." Archdiocese of Baltimore Policy states that the three inclement weather days remain in the calendar even when we do not have inclement weather. There are eight days beyond the required MD 170 days built into the 2019-2020 Archdiocese of Baltimore Catholic schools calendar. After the initial ten day closure period, the archdiocese will be 2 days under the required instructional days.

What support to schools is provided by the Department of Catholic Schools?

Catholic schools are provided support for the business functions of their school by Chancellor of Education, Jim Sellinger, Director of Technology, Joe Oleszczuk and his team, Director of Marketing, Lauren Robinson and Director of Enrollment Management, Laura Mooney. Schools are provided academic support by the Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Dr. Donna Hargens; three Associate Superintendents - Dr. Camille Brown, Karen Murphy, and Denise Ball (effective July 1st); Chief Academic Officer, Dr. Eric Watts; Director of Student Support Services, Denise Garman; Director of School Excellence, Mary Destino; and Technology Integration Specialist, Nancy Reed. Five principals provide regional leadership and facilitate the engagement and problem solving for the regional group of principals as assigned (Casey Buckstaff – Howard/AA Collaborative, Karen Smith – Western Collaborative, Maggie Dates – Northern Collaborative, Christine Olescheski – Metro Collaborative, and Brian Kohler – High School Collaborative). Eight teachers were selected to serve our teachers in the role of Content Area Experts. Content Area Experts interact with grade level and content area teachers around questions and discussions regarding the learning outcomes for specific grade levels and subjects. These are educators who are on the frontline of education every day and understand the standards per content and grade-level and what teachers need to meet the varied needs of teachers.

Does every family in a Catholic School in the Archdiocese of Baltimore have Internet access?

Unfortunately, not every family has Internet access. Families, even with Internet access, may have a different number of devices. A family may not have 1:1 access in their home. For example, a family of five may have a father and mother working from home and three children all needing access to technology and the Internet. Every family make-up and situation is unique and we do not assume every family has Internet access.

What guides instruction in a classroom in the Archdiocese of Baltimore?

We are guided by our Mission: Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Baltimore provide a Christ-centered education that is academically excellent and empowers students to reach their full potential spiritually, intellectually, physically, socially, and morally. There are learning expectations for each grade level and content area that help teachers keep "the end in mind" when designing instruction. Teachers everyday use their professional expertise to individualize instruction to meet the needs of an individual student.

What guided the development of the resources that have been provided to continue the learning process during this period of school closure?

Our mission and those learning expectations guided the Content Area Experts who developed resources to support teachers and families as teachers and parents collaborate to ensure that students are

engaged in learning during this time. The teacher of a student is in the best position to provide additional support to ensure that learning continues. The method that a teacher and/or school is using - from an online platform, to sending links to materials, or to providing hard copy packets or electronic copies of activities – provide alternative ways to provide access to learning for students. The focus should be on the “end” – the learning. “Means” will vary as they do now from classroom to classroom and from school to school.

How are parents receiving the information from a school?

The parent/teacher relationship is vital to the learning process. The parent and teacher work collaboratively to ensure that each child achieves academically. The connection between the parent/student and the teacher holds the same importance when students are in school and when they are at home.

Our AOB Catholic School Distance Learning Story...

What are some of the creative ways Archdiocese of Baltimore teachers are approaching distance learning (spiritually, academically, socially, morally, and physically) that is in support of students

Spiritually

Catholic schools in collaboration with parishes are living out the Gospel of Jesus Christ by providing daily and weekly encouragement opportunities, such as Mass live streamed from churches, and daily prayer as recommended by Pope Frances.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness (Galatians 5:22)

PK-2

- School-wide focused prayers and daily online school announcements with prayer

3-5

- Weekly Live Stations of the Cross across the AOB schools
- School-wide focused prayers and daily online school announcements with prayer

6-8

- Weekly Live Stations of the Cross across the AOB schools
- School-wide focused prayers and daily online school announcements with prayer
- Weekly online Mass Attendance

9-12

- Student Youcat Journal/Workbook
- Weekly online Mass Attendance
- Weekly Live Stations of the Cross across the AOB schools

Academically

The Archdiocese of Baltimore Chief Academic Officer, Dr. Watts, in collaboration with the Curriculum Content Experts, have created lessons and resources in alignment with the Archdiocese of Baltimore (AOB) and State standards for all AOB teachers to manage and facilitate.

How much better to get wisdom than gold (Proverbs 16:16)

PK-2

- *Scholastic Let's Find Out* magazines
- Cooking lessons that strengthen both reading and math skills
- Phonics, Reading and Math Focus

3-5

- NASA Stem Online Learning Lessons
- Handwriting Lessons
- Reading and Math Focus

6-8

- Use Google Forms for assessing student learning
- Daily Reading Log Google Form
- Math and Literature Focus

9-12

- Teachers are utilizing a plethora of platforms to engage students in learning to include but not limited to Google Meet, Zoom, Youtube and Skype.
- Teachers are leading online museum tours, hosting online instruction for all the disciplines, to include faith formation/religion classes.
- Use Google Forms for assessing student learning

Online Resource Sampling:

Discovery Education, SeeSaw, FlipGrid, Scholastic, Mailbox by Audible, KhanAcademy, Freckle, Prodigy

Socially

Given the guidelines mandated by Governor Hogan, Catholic schools have focused on providing families with best practices and resources on how to use this time to build relationships within their families. Many Catholic schools have encouraged students to meet and spend time together playing cards etc. via Google Meet, Zoom and other online platforms.

The Holy Spirit is present whenever believers gather together (Mathew 18-20)

PK-2

- Some teachers are having scheduled phone chats with students and parents-a weekly touch base.

3-5

- Many schools are allowing students/families to take turns in sending in morning announcement videos and then sharing it on their school social media for families to begin their distant learning day.
- Morning Messages to include Birthday Wishes

6-8

- Google Meet Class Times to Discuss Material being Learned
- ZOOM Class Times to Discuss Material being Learned
- YouTube Conferencing
- Online Youth Faith Formation Meetings

9-12

- Highlighting Student of the Week with Video Segments
- Teacher Office Hours on Google Meet and Skype for Students to Check in

Online Resources

- Discovery Education On-Line Field Trips, Online Museum Field Trips

Morally

As Christians, it is our moral obligation to lend helping hands to those in need. We are called to model the Gospel of Christ in word and action. Catholic school leaders are encouraging families to adhere to the mandates set at the State level, while being mindful of those in need.

Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor (1 Corinthians 10:24)

PK-2

- Faith-based story time
- Art encouraged pictures of sharing and giving to others

3-5

- Faith-Based Discussions using Google Classroom
- Online Prayer Leaders for School Communities

6-8

- Many schools are finding ways to engage students in supporting local food banks like Our Daily Bread

9-12

- Counselors are supporting student needs via email, online meetings and phone calls
- Many schools are finding ways to engage students in supporting local food banks like Our Daily Bread

Supporting Pictures-Morally

Physically

Teachers across the Archdiocese of Baltimore are sharing resources and recommendations for families to use to engage students in physical activity. These examples range from online “Go Noodle” video brain breaks to outdoor mindfulness exercises.

I can do all things through him who strengthens me (Phillipians 4:13)

PK-2

- Unstructured Playtime
- Many school counselors and gym teachers are sharing resources and videos for families on how to pause and be mindful for a few moments.
- Families are being encouraged by schools to go on nature walks and spend time outside catching a ball or enjoying simple play for daily “recess” time
- Playing 4 Square in Driveway with Chalk

3-5

- Families are being encouraged by schools to go on nature walks and spend time outside catching a ball
- Family Bike Rides Walks or Runs

6-8

- Families are being encouraged by schools to go on nature walks and spend time outside catching a ball
- Going on family bike rides walks or runs
- Backyard Obstacle Course
- Family Scavenger Hunts

9-12

- Families are being encouraged by schools to go on nature walks
- Bike Rides, Walks or Runs

Leadership in Action

- Many schools sent out distance learning surveys soliciting parent feedback and reminding parents their teams are available to support them during this time.
- Many schools are posting pictures on social media of teacher and administrative team meetings to remind parents and caregivers that virtual meetings are taking place to ensure the needs of students are being met.
- Some schools are hosting online Town Hall meetings.