



PROVIDENCE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

1800 W. Lincoln Highway • New Lenox, Illinois 60451 • (815) 485-2136 • www.providencecatholic.org

Fr. John Merkelis, OSA, President
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April 22, 2020

Dear Providence Family,

Now that the Governor has officially decided that classes will not be held at school, there are a lot of things that we need to decide. I think you may be bombarded with emails in the next few weeks. Have patience! We will try and condense as much as we can into as few emails as we can. Take the time to read things carefully! The Administration is working on a comprehensive calendar of end of the year activities that you will be receiving early next week. Right now, I would like to address locker clean out, as this item is timely.

You are invited to clear out your lockers (hallway, P.E. and athletic). These must be cleared out before May 4th, for reasons you shall read in the following paragraphs. Here is the process by which you may retrieve your “things.”

We will limit the number of people in the building to 20 by using pickATime, the same process by which we use to schedule parent-teacher conferences. A link to pickATime will be located on the Providence Catholic website, in the “News” section of the home page. You may choose your 15-minute time slot for any of the following days:

- Friday, April 24th 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
- Monday, April 27th 3:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, April 28th 3:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, April 29th 3:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

I am aware that Fridays are review days for the students. I am making this time available in case a parent or family member chooses to clean out the locker. If a student signs up for a Friday time slot, I will assume s/he has the permission of a parent to do so.

When you have reserved your time, please arrive at school as close to the time of your reservation as possible. Early arrivers will be directed to stay in their car until the reserved time. We will enforce social distancing and prevent students gathering in groups while they way. Please use only Door #3 (by the Math hallway) or Door #16 (by the English/International Language hallway) to enter and exit the school. The adult stationed at the door will strictly enforce the reserved time.

Upon entering the school, you will find a box of gloves to be worn for your safety and convenience. You will also find a box of garbage bags to assist you in collecting your locker items. I will allow you to bring a box or a backpack with you, if you prefer. In addition, there

will be a portable hand sanitizer for your use. We are severely limited in the availability of masks; you may bring one with you if you choose.

Please go directly to your locker, as you have only 15 minutes to empty the contents of your locker. We will provide garbage cans in the hallways for any excess paper or refuse. When you have completed this task, please exit using the same door by which you entered. **You will not be allowed into the gymnasiums or the cafeteria/commons when you are cleaning your school locker.**

Art Students: Artwork from this year may be picked up in the art room during locker clean-out times. Students may also clean out their art bins and take art supplies home with them.

After cleaning out your hallway locker, you will exit the building using the same door as when you entered. If you have an athletic or P.E. locker, please proceed to Door #8 at the back of the school. An adult will limit the number of students/family members in the locker rooms.

I have also included a letter regarding work involving our upcoming asbestos abatement. It explains the rationale for choosing to do some necessary repairs and installation while we are out of school. You will note that the letter was written before the Governor closed the schools in the state; since time is of the essence, I did not want to waste time updating it. In sum, we will begin work on the Main Hallway on May 4th. **From May 4th to approximately May 12th, the Main Hallway and all rooms connected to it will be inaccessible (this includes the classrooms, the Main Office, the Dean's Office, the Faculty Lounge, the Counseling Offices, etc.).**

I thank you for your cooperation in this extraordinary time. We will keep you updated regarding future events as we receive directives from the President, the Governor or the Bishop.

Stay Safe, Stay Healthy!

fr. merk



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Dear Providence Family,

If you are passing by Providence Catholic in the next few weeks, you will see notices posted on the doors. This is the legal requirement to notify the public of asbestos removal, and it must be displayed at least 10 days before such removal takes place. Let me supply the plan and the reasoning behind it, since it involves construction in our building and explains the rationale for my decision to post the notices at this time.

It starts with plumbing! As President, I am a homeowner, and Providence Catholic High School is my (our) home. Replacing the plumbing in the main hallway has been on our capital repairs list for the past several years.

At the start of the school year we, like many businesses in Illinois, received a generous grant to replace our lighting with LED lighting. All of the lights in the school proper have been replaced, except those in the Main Hallway. The new Main Hallway light fixtures necessitated demolishing the ceiling, so the installers initially proposed hanging the new lights in a temporary way to avoid disrupting school. However, we soon discovered that a temporary installation was not possible. So, we decided to plan the entire project for this summer, beginning the week following Graduation in May and ending in late June. Then it occurred to me: since we were demolishing the ceiling anyway, why not use this time to replace the plumbing? We called for an estimate and discovered that there were several places where asbestos was used to insulate the “elbows” of the pipes. So, the construction would include:

- Removing the current ceiling
- Asbestos abatement
- Replacing the plumbing in the Main Hallway
- Installing a new ceiling and hanging the new LED fixtures

As of this writing, the Governor has not communicated whether we will be in school during May. If we are not, I would like to expedite our construction plans and begin as close to the beginning of May as possible, with completion estimated to be early June. This means that the school will be ready over the summer to have your children back on the campus to celebrate the seniors, hold Art Camp for junior high students and conduct Summer Studies for Incoming Freshmen. If by some chance we are in school in May, we will return to the original plan to begin work at the conclusion of school.

To cut to the chase: I am following the legal requirement to post the asbestos removal notices at least 10 days prior to construction. If we are in school in May, construction will begin

after school is completed. If we are not in school, sufficient notice has been given to begin the project as early as possible. I have attached a copy of the Asbestos Removal Notice so that you are assured we are following the requirements of the Diocese of Joliet and the Illinois Department of Public Health.

I want to keep you informed of the events of the school, which in this case involves building construction. I also want to use the opportunity, if our building is empty during May, to work in a way that is efficient and convenient to the entire operation.

My Daily Prayers for the Providence Family,

fr. merk



Asbestos Removal Notice

Beginning **Monday, May 1, 2020**, Providence Catholic High School will be conducting asbestos removal in the school building. In preparation of the replacement of the ceiling in the main hallway, it was decided to remove the remaining pipe insulation above that ceiling. In accordance with Ill Dept. of Public Health recommendations the school contacted licensed professional asbestos response persons to assist with addressing this issue. Abatement will be conducted using Ill. Dept. of Public Health licensed contractors and air monitoring personnel. The area will be sealed, negative air pressure provided in the area, and the air monitored before, during and after the project. Air clearance tests will be conducted using Transmission Electron Microscopy after the project and the results placed in the asbestos project manual. Admittance to the area will be permitted only when the air clearance results are known to be as specified by the Ill. Dept. of Public Health. As a public document the manual as well as the asbestos management plan may be reviewed at the school office. If you have any questions, please call Richard M. Kaffka, the Asbestos Designated Person at 708.334.0585