



MATER DEI

CATHOLIC SCHOOL

2018 NATIONAL BLUE RIBBON
SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE

Mary, May We Be A Reflection Of Your Hope And Peace

September 21, 2020

Good afternoon, Parents!

After a first full week of school, we have been thrilled to welcome our eLearners from Kindergarten through 8th grade. It has been amazing to see how well our students in person and at home have adjusted to the new routines and procedures. At the same time, we recognize the need to provide just a few clarifications to ensure both our in-person and eLearning students have a positive learning experience each day.

Help Desk

All of Mater Dei's IT services will be provided through Educational Technology Professionals, who have prepared a help desk ticketing system to track any concerns or issues related to technology. If there are any problems with a Mater Dei issued iPad or Chromebook, we ask you to please email helpdesk@materdeicatholic.com with your child's name, homeroom, and a clear description of the issue. This includes any functions of the iPad, including the camera or sound, as well as any apps that are not loading. The help desk will respond to acknowledge the ticket request with an automatic reply and then will contact that email address with a resolution or request for more information. This process was designed to allow teachers to concentrate on addressing the students' instructional needs and is available for our in-person and eLearning students.

Live Instruction

It has been wonderful to see so many of our eLearning students on the Zoom calls actively participating in classroom activities and discussions. Our in-person students enjoy seeing their classmates displayed on the SMARTBoard each day. After week one, we have assembled a few suggestions for our eLearning students to maximize the learning experience for the in-person students and eLearning students.

- **Organization of Materials**

- Before students begin their live instruction, it would be helpful for students to have some assistance in checking to make sure they have all of their materials needed for eLearning before classes begin each day. Our in-person students have been

using their Mater Dei milk crates to hold all of their books and materials needed to learn, and we hope that our eLearning students feel connected to their classmates by keeping all materials organized in the same manner.

- **Workspaces**
 - Many of our families have created incredible workspaces in homes that allow students to attend their Zoom calls for live instruction. In order for eLearning students to maximize each learning experience, we ask parents to prepare spaces that eliminate as many distractions as possible. For example, sound from a television or background household conversations could be a distraction for students. Because we are highly encouraging students to participate in all of the learning activities in the classroom, fewer distractions allow students to remain focused on learning.
- **Sound**
 - To maximize the Zoom calls' sound quality during live instruction, we learned that it is most helpful for eLearning students to use headphones with a built-in microphone plugged into the Mater Dei iPad. This most especially applies when sitting next to a sibling who is attending classes in a different classroom.
 - For teachers to facilitate in-person and eLearning simultaneously, teachers may ask eLearning students to mute themselves at certain times when giving direct instruction. When asking a question or checking for understanding, teachers will give a verbal prompt when students are to unmute themselves. It can be very distracting if students mute and unmute themselves on their own without direction. For our younger eLearners, some adult assistance might be needed as students learn how and when to mute and unmute themselves properly in response to a teacher's prompt.
- **Snack Schedule**
 - It would be most helpful if the eLearners at home followed the same schedule of snack and lunch breaks as our in-person students. This will help set the tone for eLearners and mirror the same expectations for all of our students that eating and drinking occurs during the scheduled break times. We are grateful for your support on this issue.

Thank you for your continued support in ensuring all of our students have a positive learning experience each day. Your patience and understanding are most appreciated as we all work together to provide in-person and eLearning instruction to meet your child's needs. We are grateful for your commitment to Mater Dei Catholic School.

Most sincerely,

Miss Diane E. McCaughan
President

Miss Elizabeth A. Waltrich

