



SAINT IGNATIUS

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March 3, 2021

Dear Parents and Students,

Peace of Christ.

On Monday, March 15, almost exactly one year from the day we left last spring, our students will return to campus for **full-day in-person learning five days a week**. While we must remain vigilant and cautious, this is cause for celebration.

Our focus for March 15 through May 24 is three-fold:

1. Care for the health and the social and emotional wellness of our students, faculty and staff
2. Foster a sense of community and belonging
3. Prioritize meaningful and authentic teaching for learning

As a result of a consultative process with members of our faculty/staff and students, and after further discernment and reflection, we will return to campus by implementing a schedule that is similar to our current Off Campus schedule (that we used for three weeks in the fall semester) with an A/B rotation. It includes the following:

- **Monday-Friday, a daily start time of 8:30 a.m. with the day ending at 2:55 p.m.**
- **Four 70 minute instructional periods per day**
- **Each student will have a 35 minute lunch period**
- **A-Days are periods 1-4 and B-Days are periods 6-9**
- **Our existing [school calendar](#) will remain intact and the A/B rotation will be identified for planning purposes.**
- **Students should anticipate 2 hours of homework per night (est. 30-40 minutes per course)**

<i>For Full In-Person Return</i>			
Start	End	A-Day	B-Day
8:30	9:40	Period 1	Period 6
9:50	11:00	Period 2	Period 7
11:00	11:35	<i>First Lunch</i> Grades 9 & 10	<i>First Lunch</i> Grades 9 & 10
11:35	12:10	<i>Second Lunch</i> Grades 11 & 12	<i>Second Lunch</i> Grades 11 & 12
12:20	1:30	Period 3	Period 8
1:40	2:55	Examen + Period 4	Examen + Period 9

Example of the Rotation for the Week of Monday, March 15

Monday, March 15	Tuesday, March 16	Wednesday, March 17	Thursday, March 18	Friday, March 20
A-Day Periods 1-4	B-Day Periods 6-9	A-Day Periods 1-4	B-Day Periods 6-9	A-Day Periods 1-4

The following Monday, March 22, will begin with a B-Day. We will continue to use the *Peek of the Week* to offer a two week preview of the calendar.

The decision was not an easy one to make nor immediately clear. Nevertheless, the reasons for the decision are as follows:

1. *A focus on social-emotional wellness and belonging.* The last twelve months have been anything but normal, and providing quality time for teachers and students to build relationships and community for the final three months of the year is essential and part of who we are as a Catholic, Jesuit high school. It is well researched that the emotional wellbeing of students is intimately linked with learning. Longer periods will encourage a less frenetic pace, time for individual conferencing with students, and classroom community.
2. *Consistency & care for the vulnerable.* The A/B rotation and four period day is consistent with the expressed experience of our students for the year. Teachers and students had three weeks to experience the schedule in the fall semester. For our distance learners, a return to the old nine period day would require a minimum of thirty hours of screen time per week.

3. *COVID concerns.* The A/B rotation cuts an individual's risk of exposure in half. Furthermore, with only four periods, there will be half the number of transitions of 1,500 students. You may find more information about our contact tracing and quarantine practices [here](#).
4. *It is forward thinking.* If we are not moving forward, we are moving backwards. COVID-19 has forced schools to examine their old ways of doing things by asking the question "What's best for the development of the whole child?" While many of us, myself included, were educated under the nine period day model, we know that this structure does not promote learning and wellness the way that we once believed. This is not an indictment of the old way, but an opportunity to embrace what we know is best for the cognitive and social-emotional development of adolescents. The four period instructional day with longer periods and a later start time reflects elements (although not all) of our new schedule for the 2021-2022 school year that will be formally announced in April.

Lunch

We are committed to providing students and teachers with a cognitive break and time for lunch during the school day. We are also aware that lunch poses a significant logistical and health challenge. Know, however, that all students will have a dedicated time and location to eat lunch during the day. We are working hard to address these concerns and more details on how lunch will occur will be shared soon. You will already note that the 70 minute lunch period has been divided between grades with "First Lunch" for freshmen and sophomores from 11:00 a.m. - 11:35 a.m. and "Second Lunch" for juniors and seniors from 11:35 a.m. - 12:10 p.m. Students that are not eating during that dedicated time will be able to access other open spaces on campus for studying, socializing, potentially meeting with a teacher, participating in a club or sports meeting, etc.

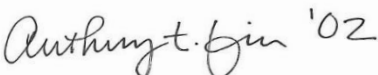
Managing COVID Concerns

Over the course of the past year, the entire Saint Ignatius community has worked tirelessly to mitigate and manage the risk of COVID-19 spreading on our campus. We will continue to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 on our campus by: practicing universal masking, requiring daily health assessments prior to arriving to school, emphasizing hand washing and sanitizing of hard surfaces, employing physical distancing when possible, using HEPA air purifiers in classrooms, leveraging all large spaces on campus, and increasing ventilation through the opening of windows in all possible locations.

These details and instructions will be emphasized and shared with students over the PA system and via email the week before March 15.

Finally, take consolation in the words of Pope Francis. In *Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better Future*, the Holy Father writes, "We are living in a time of trial. The Bible talks of passing through fire to describe such trials, like a kiln testing the potter's handiwork (Sirach 27:5). The fact is that we are all tested in life. It's how we grow." May we embrace these final weeks of the semester with an attitude of openness, positivity, freedom to learn, to be vulnerable, to experiment, and to endure.

Duc in altum.



Dr. Anthony T. Fior '02
Principal