

9995 North Military Trail  
P.O. Box 109650  
Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410-9650  
Telephone (561) 775-9500



Pastoral Center  
Fax (561) 775-9556

August 19, 2016

Dear Catholic School Parent/Guardian,

Welcome back to school! The 2016-17 school year began with our 500 teachers and staff welcoming 6,000 students to our schools. We are off to a great start!

We know that our schools share common priorities:

- Sharing the Catholic faith and rich traditions with our students and their families as an extension of their parishes, while also welcoming people of other faiths to our schools who wish to learn more about the Gospel message.
- Teaching and learning through a program of academic excellence that addresses not only the individual academic needs of each child but also their physical, emotional and spiritual growth as well.
- Providing a safe and secure environment where children are loved and appreciated as gifts from God.

Communities around our country have sadly experienced safety and security issues. As a diocese we recognize the need for our schools to be safe and secure places where children can learn in a loving environment. Towards that end, the diocese is expanding our typical annual review of each of our school properties to include an extensive safety and security assessment. Some of these reviews were conducted during the last few weeks of the 2015-16 school year; however, the majority of them will occur during the first few months of the 2016-17 school year. These reviews will assist our schools in making short and long term plans for addressing the implementation of the recommendations. This will be done to enhance and improve the current procedures already in place, as well as to analyze crisis plans for emergency situations. We are grateful to Bishop Barbarito and the Diocese of Palm Beach for funding these safety and security reviews. In addition, Bishop Barbarito has agreed to fund \$1 million in grants to assist schools with implementing the recommendations made in these evaluations.

Our first step in improving school safety will be to better monitor all visitors to our school campuses. During the months of September and October we anticipate installing Raptor Visitor Management Systems at all of our schools. Once installed, these new systems will require all visitors to each campus to present a photo ID and sign in when they arrive and sign out when they depart our buildings. Employees and visitors will wear lanyards and badges that will easily identify who should be on our campuses. This is a simple first step, but one that our security experts highly recommend at the onset of any additional changes that they may suggest.

I hope that you will support these efforts and future safety measures at your school. In advance, I apologize for any inconvenience that these changes might bring to you as a parent, as we place the safety and security of students and staff first. Please join me in prayer for the safety of the children entrusted to our Catholic schools in the Diocese of Palm Beach, as well as all of the children and faculty in schools across our country.

Many blessings to you and your family,

Gary Gelo  
Superintendent of Schools