



SAINT MARY'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

A Message from the President and Principal

From the Desk of Rev. Robert Bolding

Dear Saint Mary's Families,

Like many of you, I have been longing for life to return to normal and have been hoping and praying that this return to normal would come by the time the new school year started. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Here we are, at the start of a new school year, and we are unable to begin classes with students in person on campus. We have looked at a couple of different options for how we can begin the school year, and I am grateful for the feedback we got from so many of you, which has helped us make our decision.

It was clear from the results of the survey that a significant majority of our families feel strongly that we should start August 17 with online classes. In addition, the Diocese of Phoenix recently sent out a letter ([here](#)) that clearly states that diocesan schools must start online between August 10–17. The letter also includes how we will decide when we can come back in-person.

So, we will begin school on August 17, but we will begin classes online. We have put together a virtual experience that comes as close to a classroom experience as we can make it. Mr. Muir has shared the details later in this letter. Our teachers will be on campus, teaching from their classrooms in front of the camera. Students will be in a class, interacting with their teachers and classmates, on a structured schedule throughout the school day. There is no replacement for the human interaction and communication that happens face to face, but a lesson we are learning well during all the uncertainty of these times is that we have to do the best we can with what we have been given.

I think some will be disappointed that we are not beginning school in person. I would like to clarify that, even though we are a private school and not bound by everything a public school is bound by, we do not have absolute freedom. Having in-person classes is simply not an option that is available to us right now.

We want students on campus, and we will be working to make that happen as soon as we are permitted to do so. At the heart of our educational philosophy is shared experience and dialogue between students and teachers. In the meantime, we will provide the best virtual approximation that we can. Thank you for your patience and your support. This will not last forever. The days are coming when the old normal will be the new normal. Let's hang in there together.

Fr. Bolding
President

From the Desk of Mr. Kevin Muir

Dear Saint Mary's Families,

In addition to sharing our Virtual Classroom plan with you, I have attached an updated "[Important Upcoming Dates](#)" document which reflects a few changes to the calendar. This information will also be posted on our website and reflected on our online calendars.

- Schedule Pickup will take place as planned on August 3–6. Please sign up for a time slot [here](#).
- We feel strongly that freshman students should have the opportunity to visit campus in-person before school starts; so, we will have an **In-Person Freshman Orientation on August 12 and 13**. Small groups of students will be allowed on campus for a brief orientation where they will hear from school leaders, meet their teachers, counselor, campus minister, and take a tour. We will have full safety and health precautions in place, including the requirement of wearing masks. More details will be sent to freshman families next week.
- All students will be required to attend the **Online Course Orientation on August 14**. This will be an opportunity for students to attend each class for 15 minutes and meet their teacher, hear about the course expectations, and have a test run using the online format.

Virtual Classroom

The schedule below details the times of synchronous online class sessions. We view synchronous classes as the best way to meet your student's academic needs during this time in which students cannot meet in person.

Virtual Classroom Schedule

Time	Monday	Time	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
7:30-7:55	Office Hours	7:30-7:55	Office Hours	Office Hours	Office Hours	Office Hours
8:00-8:45	Period 1	8:00-9:25	Period 1	Period 5	Period 1	Period 5
8:55-9:35	Period 2	9:40-11:00	Period 2	Period 6	Period 2	Period 6
9:35-9:55	Break	11:00-11:45	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
9:55-10:35	Period 3	11:45-1:10	Period 3	Open Hour	Period 3	Period 7
10:45-11:25	Period 4	1:25-2:45	Period 4	Period 7	Period 4	
11:25-12:20	Lunch					
12:20-1:05	Period 5					
1:15-1:55	Period 6					
2:05-2:45	Period 7					

Classes: Students will attend online classes in a block schedule according to the times listed above with all classes meeting on Monday, periods 1–4 meeting on Tuesday and Thursday, and periods 5–7 meeting on Wednesday and Friday. Students must attend synchronous classes during online meetings.

Prayer, Pledge, and Announcements: The first period of the day and the first period after lunch both have an extra five minutes for either morning prayer or the afternoon Examen and Angelus.

Synchronous vs. Asynchronous: theology, humanities, mathematics, science, and world language classes will be synchronous, but elective classes such as art, music, and PE/weight training will be synchronous or asynchronous as the subject matter demands. Seat of Wisdom may use one period for synchronous class meetings and the other period for asynchronous work.

Uniforms: Students will be required to wear their uniforms for live sessions.

Technology: Students will need a device with a reliable internet connection, microphone, speaker, and camera to participate in live classes.

Open Hour/Office Hours: Students and teachers can schedule live meetings with teachers or participate in campus ministry events, house meetings, or house activities.

Homework: Homework will be assigned at the teacher's discretion in live sessions and through Microsoft Teams. Once again, I thank you for your patience and support during this time. I look forward to having your students back in the classrooms, although virtual, and having them interact and learn from our outstanding teachers.

In Christ,



Kevin Muir
Principal

The mission of Saint Mary's is to form virtuous young men and women who know the Truth and love the Good.