

St. Michael's Parent Handbook for School Re-Opening



Message from the Principal:

Welcome Back everyone! We are so happy to have you return to our school building. We have been apart for a long time and I would like you to know that you have always been in my thoughts and prayers. Our board's spiritual theme this year is "Transform" and certainly this will be a transformative year. Our guiding principles will be

SECURITY...BELONGING...HOPEFULNESS.

We have all had a very challenging six months but we are very excited about



this brand new school year together. It will be a very different one but one where we will meet all challenges...together. Most years, I prioritize the security of all who enter our building. This year it is absolutely KEY to everything we do at St. Michael's school and the basis of every decision I make as an administrator. Your children are very important to us and I invite you to continue to work together as a TEAM so that all children in our care can flourish in mind, body, and spirit. I would like to take a moment to call to mind those families who have selected distance education for their child(ren). These have not been easy decisions to make but I know they are made with much consideration and thought. I look forward to the day when we can ALL be together in joyful celebration that we have overcome so much by never losing hope and faith. One of my favourite quotes from scripture says: "But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." (Isaiah 40:31). Email me afortunato@bhncdsb.ca should you have any questions/concerns regarding this handbook or any other matter. I am committed to getting back to you in a timely manner as your thoughts/questions are very important to me.

Blessings to you and your family during this time of hope, faith and promise.

A.Fortunato, Principal

St. Michael's School Staff 2020-2021

| Principal | Ms. Anna Fortunato |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Secretary | Mrs. Irene Bowden |
| Parish Priest | Father Sunny Sebastian |
| Parish Secretary | Sue Secord |
| Custodian | Mr. Dan Mills |
| Custodian (Part-time) | Mrs. Lisa Pielechaty |
| Kindergarten/Gr.1 | Mrs. Bekki Vallee |
| FTJK/FTK | Mrs. Deanna Bubish |
| Grade 1 | Mrs. Ashley Carrigan |
| Grade 2 | TBD |
| Grade 2/3 | Mrs. Kim Villella |
| Grade 3 | Mrs. Laurie Rykse |
| Grade 4/5 | Mrs. Theresa Molnar (Wright) |
| Grade 4/5 | Ms. Sylvia Papez |
| Grade 6 (LTO) | Ms. Susan Jakovcic |
| Grade 7 | Miss Sarah Sienna |
| Grade 8 | Miss Shannon Gaudette |
| French | Mrs. Marie Premi |
| French/Prep | Miss Katarina Osterman |
| Special Education/Prep | Ms. Amanda DeMelo |
| Early Childhood Educator | Mrs. Yolanda Embleton |
| Educational Assistant (LTO) | Mrs. Colleen Sowden |
| Educational Assistant | Mrs. Stacey Bick |
| Educational Assistant (LTO) | Ms. Carissa MacDonald |
| Educational Assistant | Miss Brittany Swent |
| STEM Itinerant Teacher | Mrs. Teresa Mosher |
| Library Technician | Mrs. Mary Kent |
| Lunch Monitor | Mrs. Sandy Lalonde |

REMINDER ABOUT OUR STAGGERED ENTRY

Dear Elementary Families:

Please Note: This message is for students who are attending in-class learning only and does not apply to students who have opted for our remote learning program. Information about the first day of remote learning will be communicated shortly.

We are excited to welcome your child back to the classroom in September. As you know, our students will experience significant change when they arrive back at school. To make the transition easier and to ensure all students have a practical understanding of our enhanced health and safety protocols, we will be implementing a **staggered entry approach for in-class school start-up.**

Students will return to school based on the local school decision for lessening numbers and class sizes, to begin on Tuesday, September 8, 2020. All in-class students JK to Grade 8 will be fully returned to school on **Wednesday**, **September 16**th.

A staggered approach to school start-up will provide the opportunity for all schools to review health and safety practices as well as new school protocols and routines with our youngest students before the full complement of student returns to each building. This approach allows for additional staff to be available to support our students' successful integration into the new school environment. Our goal is to ensure students have the opportunity to develop comfort in their new routines.

Staggered entry does not apply to students with significant special education needs as it has been identified that it is essential for the student to attend on all days. These are students in self-contained special education classes, on an alternative report card, and who require significant ongoing assistance throughout the entire school day- we welcome these students back to school beginning on Tuesday, September 8th.

St. Michael's Dunnville Staggered Entry Plan

Students attending in-person are required to be at school on the following days:

| Monday, | Tuesday, | Wednesday, | Thursday, | Friday, Sept. 11 |
|---------|------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Sept. 7 | Sept. 8 | Sept. 9 | Sept. 10 | |
| LABOUR | JK-Gr.8 students | JK-Gr.8 students | JK-Gr.8 students with | JK-Gr.8 students with last names: |
| DAY | with last names: | with last names: | last names: | |
| HOLIDAY | A - F | G - L | M - R | |

| Monday, September 14 | Tuesday, September 15 | Wednesday, September 16 | Thursday, September 17 | Friday, September 18 |
|--------------------------------------|--|----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| JK-Gr.8 students with last names: | JK-Gr.8 students with last names: M - Z | All students | All students | All students |

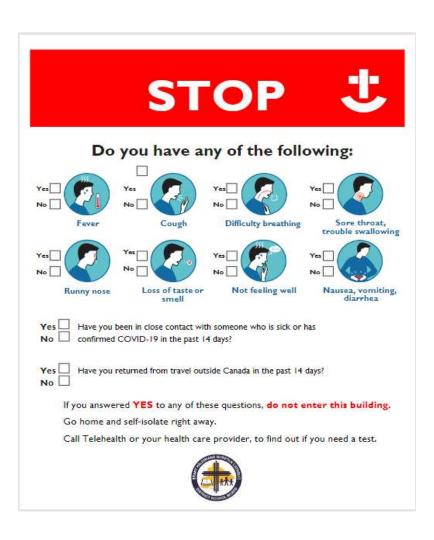
Covid-19 Self-Assessment:

Please do not send children to school if they are ill (cough, cold, fever, throwing up, pink eye, diarrhea, etc. see below).

Rules around children coming to school sick will be more strict this year — and they should be. In the past, parents would send children to school with all of these symptoms and sometimes more. This can no longer occur. Children have to be **SYMPTOM-FREE** when attending school. Please make sure we have all your correct contact numbers (home/cell/work) as it will be important that you (or a caregiver you choose) will be ready to come in a timely manner to pick up your child should they become ill. If you or your emergency contact cannot be reached we may have to escalate things to Public Health and CAS. So a plan for who will pick up your child(ren) if the school calls needs to be clearly established.

Children with Covid-19 can present with mild symptoms and it will be difficult for you or for us to know if this is Covid-19 or regular cough/cold so err on the side of caution and KEEP THEM HOME.

You should be doing DAILY self-assessments and please communicate to our local health unit and to the school immediately if you are concerned you or your child may have Covid-19.



The most <u>common symptoms of COVID-19</u> (PDF) include:

- Fever (temperature of 37.8°C or greater)
- New or worsening cough
- Shortness of breath (dyspnea)

Other symptoms of COVID-19 can include:

- Sore throat
- Difficulty swallowing
- New olfactory or taste disorder(s)
- Nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain
- Runny nose, or nasal congestion (in absence of underlying reasons for these symptoms such as seasonal allergies, post nasal drip, etc.)

Please consult the <u>Ministry of Health's COVID-19 reference document</u> for other clinical features of COVID-19, and when atypical signs and symptoms of COVID-19 should be considered, particularly in children.

If you're worried your child or any member of your household has been exposed to COVID-19 or has symptoms, you use Ministry of Health's Ontario <u>COVID-19 self-assessment tool</u>. You will get a recommendation on what to do next.

You must screen your child for symptoms every day before they come to school and upon reentry. You can use the Ministry of Health's COVID-19 self-assessment tool for this purpose. If your child has any symptoms of COVID-19 or if they are ill, they should not attend school. You can report your child's absence to us by contacting the school office at 905-774-6052

Students who become ill during the school day will be isolated and must be picked up as soon as possible. Additionally, students who become symptomatic during the day will not be able to use student transportation or the Before/After School Program (if applicable).

BHNCDSB and all schools are working closely with the <u>Brant County Health Unit</u> and the <u>Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit</u> to take steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our school. We will keep you updated with new information as it becomes available.

Outbreak Protocol:

Please read the detailed outbreak protocol on the board/school website

We have an Isolation Room in the office well equipped for any outbreak with back up rooms if needed.

Again, please make sure we have all of your important phone numbers and be prepared to have a plan in place for your child to be picked up in a timely manner if/when we call. **And (again) make sure you do not send your child to school with any symptoms as they will be sent home.**

BHNCDSB will follow the Ministry of Education's <u>Operational Guidance for COVID-19 Management in</u> Schools:

- If a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, you will be informed as soon as possible
 - Understandably, for privacy reasons, the identity of students or staff members who test positive for COVID-19 will not be identified
 - The local health unit will provide public health guidance and direction to those affected, and will be in direct contact with students, staff and families for those who have been deemed a close contact to a positive COVID-19 case. A close contact would include any child or teacher in the case's class/cohort, but may also include others.
 - In most situations, individuals who would be classified as a close contact to a COVID-19 case, will be told to self-isolate for 14 days. Any siblings or family members who reside in the same household will also be directed to self-isolate
- If a COVID-19 outbreak is declared in a school, you will be informed as soon as possible
 - An outbreak is defined as two or more lab-confirmed COVID-19 cases within 14 days of each other.
 - The local Medical Officer of Health will provide public health guidance and direction when an outbreak is declared and BHNCDSB will follow this direction.
 - An outbreak may result in the closure of a school if all students and staff members are directed to self-isolate for 14 days by the Medical Officer of Heath.

In either situation, BHNCDSB staff will work with impacted students and their families to ensure learning continues for those required to self-isolate.

For more information, visit: www.bhncdsb.ca or Ontario.ca/coronavirus.

Physical Distancing:

It is a great idea if parents discuss the distance children should be from other children and staff – roughly 6 feet apart (pool noodle length) – especially indoors. In some cases (like classrooms) children will be 1 meter apart or 3 feet. This is okay since they have been 'cohorted' or 'grouped'.

Reassure your children that is it okay to ask someone (politely) for more space.



Reassure your children that being less physically close does not mean that they are prohibited from having fun or socializing. We are ALL adjusting the new way to interact with one another.

There should be no congregation or socialization of parents or students at any time on or around school grounds.



Mask Etiquette:

Gr.JK to Gr.3 are ENCOURAGED to wear masks.

Gr.4 to Gr.8 masks are MANDATORY at all times EXCEPT when eating, drinking and playing outside (and while in transit to go outside).

All staff will be wearing Medical masks and shields and in some cases gowns.

Parents are encouraged to send multiple masks to school in case one gets dirty or lost – let your child know where the extra masks are.

Label their masks – children will lose them and you don't want them going home with someone else's mask.

Discuss the proper way to take off and put on the mask and where to store the mask when not in use.

Any student requiring a <u>medical exemption from wearing a mask must submit a formal written request</u> for approval. Contact Ms. Fortunato – Principal at (afortunato@bhncdsb.ca).

This isn't the mask you wore to school this morning.



No, this one is way cooler.
I traded mine to Taylor
who traded with Hunter.

Student Health and Hygiene

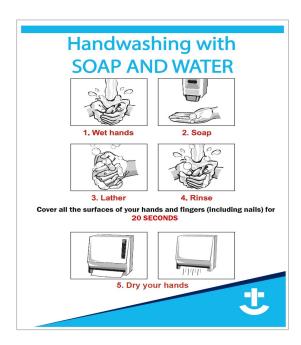
This will be a big focus upon the return to school. You can help and practice these things at home 😊



- Regular Hand washing and how to properly wash your hands (20 seconds)
- How to properly use Hand Sanitizer
- Cleaning items when done (where age appropriate teachers will show students what items will be placed in a "dirty" bucket to be cleaned and disinfected)
- Proper way to sneeze and cough
- NOTE: Washroom breaks will be scheduled (washroom stalls have been reduced)
- Students often like to wear the same clothes day after day. It is important due to Covid-19 that children change their clothes regularly or parent wash/disinfect student clothing regularly.
- SLEEP -
- HEALTHY EATING mornings can be rushed but it is important for you and your child to have a a healthy breakfast. It is also important to pack a nice hearty lunch for your child(ren)
- An HVAC system has been installed in our school portable. Windows can also be opened at our school if/when possible.

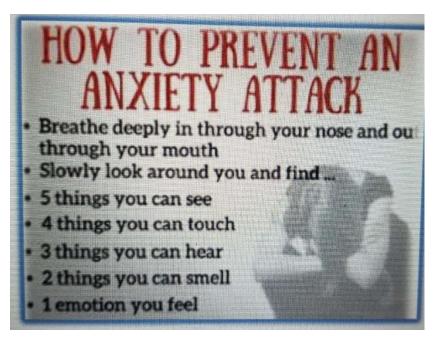
The Ministry of Health advises everyone to take an active role in protecting themselves from COVID-19. Here are a few things that you and your family can do:

- wash your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- sneeze and cough into your sleeve
- avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- avoid contact with people who are sick
- stay home and isolate if you, or anyone in your household, is sick



Mental Health and Wellness:

We know these have been challenging times for our families (for all of us). I have found the two images below to be helpful in promoting mental health and wellness. Maybe try them with your family?



| 1 min | 5 min | 10 min | 30+ min |
|--|--|---|--|
| Get Grounded Pause. Feel your feet in your shoes. If seated, lightly push your feet against the floor. | Say Thank You Text a friend, thank them for something they did for you | Journal Write down 10 things you are grateful for. | Phone a Friend Ask them how they are feeling. Share your thoughts and experiences too. |
| Recall Who is someone that makes you smile? Bring them to mind for a moment or two. | Listen Have a favourite song that you listen to when relaxing? Press play! | Sip. Savour. Prepare and enjoy a cup of your favourite tea or other beverage. | Sweat! HIIT - Run - Weights You Choose. |
| Do Not Disturb Set your phone to DND when you can. Or just leave it in another room for a while. | Meditate Find a free guided meditation online. Find a style that works for you. | Walk it Out Take a stroll around the block. | Stretch it Out Find a free yoga class online. |
| Breathe Inhale (5 sec.), Exhale (7 sec). Repeat 3x | Tidy Up Set your timer and take a 5 min break to tidy up your home office or desk. | Dance Have a favourite jam that makes you want to move? Press play. Repeat. | Laugh! Watch a funny movie, show or YouTube video. |

Cleaning and Disinfecting:

- High touch points will be disinfected at least twice per day and when visibly dirty.
- Facilities will be thoroughly cleaned before the start of each day using enhance cleaning protocols
- All staff and students (where age appropriate) will implement ongoing, informal, cleaning and disinfecting of their classroom and workspace
- We have the appropriate cleaning supplies to effectively disinfect surfaces
- Our school is clean and bright and we would like to keep it this way. This is why we ask students to bring an extra pair of INDOOR shoes so that the mud and dirt from outside does not come in the school.

Signage:

Signs (eg. directional markers) are posted all around the school which will assist students and adults with all the changes for physical distancing, handwashing and respiratory etiquette. Unlike some other schools our hallways at St. Michael's are a bit complicated when it comes to traffic flow. For this reason we opted for blue arrows ONLY to indicate direction for our traffic flow (most schools have blue AND green arrows).



Classrooms:

Have been decluttered and desks/tables are physically distant. Area rugs have been removed.

Student desks should be free of clutter and personal items from home. Plexiglass dividers are also used to help with the physical distance.

Limited manipulatives will be used – in many cases teachers have separated items for each student rather than a bin of 'shared' items.

STEM (Mrs. Mosher) and FRENCH/Prep (Madame Premi and Mlle. Osterman) class will take place IN the 'home' classroom – students will <u>not</u> move out of their class to another area – the teachers will go to them. The Librarian (Mrs. Kent) will also go into the home class as well (Library is closed).

Teachers have specific rules and markers in the class that they will go through with their students to encourage physical distance, hand washing, health, hygiene and other.

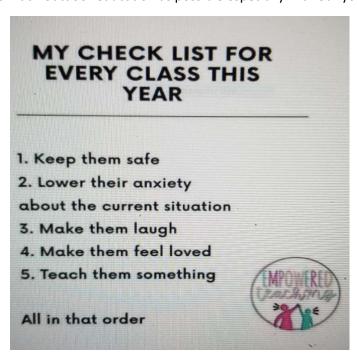
Cubbies in classrooms will be used if the teacher would like them but only if they can do so in a physically distant way.

The gym can be used – only if students are able to be physically distant. The changerooms will be closed.

Group work and circle time on the floor can be done but only if it is possible to be physically distant.

Teachers will update their D2L (Brightspace) page regularly. Parents/students are asked to check nightly for any communication and important announcements.

We are encouraging as much outdoor education as possible especially with our younger students.



Nutrition Breaks:

Students cannot share any snacks. The snack program (once started) will be pre-packaged food only. The food you provide for your child for lunch should be stored in a lunch bag and should be items they can

open/close themselves. They will eat at their own desk at all times at a physical distance from their classmates. No drinks at the water fountain – please pack a water bottle for your child to refill at our water stations. NOTE: no student helpers in primary classrooms but we have sufficient adult supervision. Also, we will be practicing

something called 'boomerang' lunches where students bring home all of their garbage from their lunch (eg. wrappers, apple cores, left over sandwiches etc.). This will help with Covid-19 restrictions, with garbage and recycling and it is absolutely great for the environment too! We can provide ziplock bags should students need one for their leftovers and garbage that will be returned home. Parents should empty out their child(ren)'s lunch bags nightly.

Parent Visitors/Volunteers

We are limiting visitors and volunteers to the school this year. It will be <u>by appointment only</u> and it must be approved by the Principal. If you come to school and buzz at the office without an appointment then do not expect access into the school. All visitors/volunteers who have made appointments must wear a face covering and must hand sanitize/hand wash when entering the school. You will also be required to sign in and sign out at the office. We do not mean to be unwelcoming but we must follow strict Public Health guidelines and restrict our contacts and 'bubble'.



Student Arrival and Drop off:

Walkers: Students are not to arrive to school before 8:35 a.m. If you walk or drive your child to school you cannot enter the school grounds. You will drop your child off at the gate on South Cayuga Street (see Attachment for the school map). Students will make



their way immediately into the school building. Supervisors will be outside ensuring students go into their proper door.

Bus Students: Will exit off the bus and enter the appropriate doors. If needed, bus buddies will deliver their buddy to their class. Supervisors will be in the bus loading area to ensure student safety.

The doors the children will use are as follows:

JK/SK students in Mrs. Bubish/Embleton class will enter Door A

Gr. 6 and Gr. 7 will enter Door B

K/1 students in Mrs. Vallee's class and Gr. 1, Gr.2, and Gr. 4/5 students will enter Door C

Gr 2/3, Gr.3 and Gr. 4/5 will enter **Door D**

Gr. 8 class will go directly into the portable

These are the same doors the students will use at recess as well in order to promote physical distance. Don't worry - this will become a regular routine and students will easily and quickly adapt to this change. They are more resilient than we sometimes give them credit for.

NOTE: Parents CANNOT enter the school building nor walk students to class at any time.

Dismissal and Kindergarten Pick up:

Bus students: Will be dismissed <u>first</u> using cohorted bus buddies for our primary children.

Walkers: When the bell rings at 3:10 p.m. primary teachers will bring their "walker' students to the pick-up area on South Cayuga (see map on Appendix A).

Parents must wait outside the gate area on South Cayuga Street for your children to come to you. Remember – no parent/guardian are allowed on the school grounds at any time. Parents are asked to please stay physically apart from one another outside the gate area waiting for your child to come out.

Forgotten Items:

If something has been forgotten (eg. lunch) we have a red bin right by the front door. Buzz the front door and you will drop the item into the bin for your child to pick up. Always make sure to have your child's name labelled on the item you are dropping off as we will not know at the school who the item is for. You are not permitted beyond that area where the red bin is without an appointment.



Lateness:

We know it is difficult sometimes in the morning for various reasons. We request you please make an effort this year to be on time for school (bell rings at 8:50). However, if your child is late – depending on their age, a parent can walk them to the front door and buzz but you cannot enter with your child. Your child will check in at the office and

then go directly to class (if your child is in kindergarten then an adult will walk them to class). Don't worry – we will look out for them and make sure they safely get to class.

Early pick-up:

We know occasionally you will have to pick up your child(ren) early. We ask you to keep this to a minimum. To pick up your child, the parent (or guardian) will buzz at the front door and the parent will have to wait outside while we call your child down. There are no exceptions to this as no adult is allowed into the school without an appointment. Please communicate with your child(ren)'s teacher via email IN ADVANCE of this change and/or contact the office so that we are aware you are picking up your child early. Teachers DO NOT have time to check their email messages throughout the day and a child will not be released unless it is safe to do so. Please limit the phone calls and we ask that you not interrupt the school day unless for important and/or urgent reasons.

Recess:

Students will still enjoy two 20 minute outdoor recesses (weather permitting) as usual and it will staggered by grade (K to Gr.5 and Gr.6 to Gr.8) in order to reduce the number of students playing outside. The school yard has been divided and cohorted into ZONES (play areas). Each class has a map and students know their 'area' to play. Any equipment (eg. skipping robe or



ball) used will be placed in a 'dirty' bin to be disinfected for the next recess or the next day. Students are NOT to play any contact sports games or activities outside (eg. soccer game, basketball game, football game). They can still play with these equipment but in NON-CONTACT ways (eg. playing a game of HORSE using the new basketball net). Students have specific doors to exit and enter. When the bell rings students will NOT line up. They will enter the school 'at a distance' and go directly to class. STUDENTS ARE NOT TO BRING ANY SPORTS EQUIPMENT OR TOYS FROM HOME TO PLAY WITH REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THEY WERE TOLD NOT TO SHARE IT. Any Items brought to school should be a MINIMUM (eg. lunch bag and note book). We are trying to reduce items going between home to school.

Home/School Communication:

We have no agendas this year and so we will be communicating electronically or by phone. Any parent meetings will take place virtually. Your child's teacher will explain how to access their class D2L site that parents will use as a tool to stay connected to the teacher and school. Please make sure to let us know if there are any concerns about this communication. It is important you stay connected with your child(ren)'s teacher and with the school. You can also follow us on twitter @stmcatholic and subscribe to our school website www.stmichaeldunnville.ca. We will be mostly paper-less so it is important we all stay connected in these other ways especially if there are any school closures.



School Activities:

- No school-wide assemblies or liturgies (we will celebrate over announcements or find creative ways) and no large choir gatherings
- No Back to School/Meet the School Staff BBQ this year teachers will be introducing themselves via email/D2L
- Field trips will not be planned at this time (virtual field trips are GREAT!)
- Clubs and sports only if physical distancing is possible and equipment and spaces are cleaned and disinfected between each use
- No contact sports at this time focus will be on individual sports and non-contact activities
- School Masses are cancelled at this time class masses may take place in October
- Gr.2 First Communion is Oct. 4th with physical distance measures in place and special modifications to the program
- Milk and Pizza will not be offered at this time for students

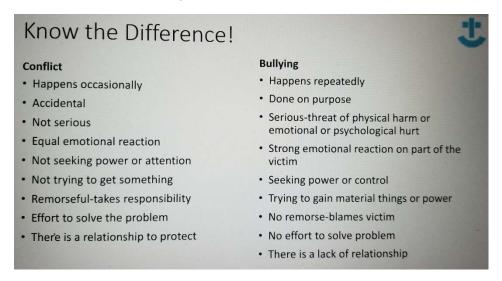
Transportation:

Bus drivers will assign students seats and students will be required to wear PPE. Bus drivers will also have medical masks and face shields. It is important that all students wear their masks on the bus. It is also VERY important they behave safely and respectfully on the bus as the bus driver has a very difficult and important job. As previous years, **students can only ride their own assigned bus.** There will be NO EXCEPTIONS to this rule as transportation cannot make room on buses for other students who do not normally ride the bus.



Student Behaviour

Just a reminder the school follows the Ministry and board policies on Safe Schools. Behaviour is examined and we document it, inform parents and guardians, and consequences are given according to the incident using progressive discipline. Bullying is absolutely NOT tolerated at St. Michael's school but it is often misunderstood. Please read below and share it with your children. Conflict is definitely part of life but no child should be bullied or bully others.



Thank you for your patience, understanding, and support this year. These are very different times for all of us and it will take some time and adjustments but together we can make it through this challenging time even stronger and more positive and appreciative of all of our blessings. We pray the prayer below for YOU and for your families....please pray for us too! The good times below will again (one day) return to our beautiful school.

Stay well!

A.Fortunato

Principal



A Prayer for Strength

Our Father. Sometimes the cares of the day seem to multiply, while the blessings fade so quickly. Our bodies grow tired and our minds even more tired. Jesus, help us. Give us the strength You've promised in Your Word Give us the power to take the next step. Give us your grace... for we know that in our weaknesses YOUR STRENGTH is revealed. May we receive it today. Amen.