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Dear Parents/Guardians:

"Fear not, I am with you; be not dismayed; I am your God. I will strengthen you, and help you, and uphold you with my right hand." [Isaiah 41:10](#)

About a year ago, COVID-19 changed our world significantly. Since last March, students, parents and educators have been significantly impacted by COVID-19. I think of the verse above often as we have used it on all our COVID-19 messaging. It speaks to the power our faith has and teaches us that we are never alone. With vaccines around the corner and case numbers in decline, we can begin to look for more normalcy in our lives as we return to school.

At St. Joseph High School, we certainly have been hit hard and many students have been placed into quarantine because of the positive cases we have had. We will be heading back to face-to-face learning on Monday, March 15 and the good news is that cases in Red Deer have significantly declined from 551 on February 26 to 161 cases today. Over the last two weeks, we continue to field some requests for online learning. As a school, we certainly empathize with families, however, online learning is full.

We often hear from parents and students how much the community of St. Joseph is like a family. We are looking forward to bringing our family back together and seeing our students and staff smiles, hearing their laughter and joining each other on the journey. Parental support will be crucial as we re-establish learning goals. Parents are asked to help support their children when their children are feeling stressed. It will be important to validate their feelings and encourage them to engage in activities that help them self regulate (e.g.: exercise, deep breathing, regular routines for sleeping and eating). Additionally, school based positive mental health and well-being is essential for a safe and healthy return to school. For this to be successful, teachers need students working with them face-to-face.

The staff is excited to see our students return to learning at school. As a school community, we are optimistic that things are trending in a positive direction and we can return to in-class learning.

Regards,

Graeme Daniel
Principal