

December 2019

Dear Families,

In light of recent events that have happened here at Regis Catholic Schools and across the state, we would like to take the opportunity to share the ways in which we focus on student mental health as it relates to student safety.

This topic is of great priority to us as we work to educate your child(ren) in body, mind, and spirit. Children spend much of their daily life at school, and we know how important it is for our teachers, school counselors, and administrators to pay attention to their mental health and to support them. Early intervention is key if a student experiences depression, anxiety, or stress and we have the following strategies in place to help us respond quickly and effectively at the school level.

Focus on Students

- We place a direct focus on the academic, social, emotional, and spiritual needs of each of our students.
 - Religion classes focus on character education, Our Core Values, and safe environment.
- Individual meetings are held on a weekly basis for students who need additional support.
 - These meetings focus on goals and coping strategies for the student as he or she moves forward.
 - Students are referred to licensed mental health counselors as needed.
- All students receive cyberbullying information from industry expert Dr. Justin Patchin from UW-Eau Claire.
- All elementary students attend regular guidance classes and participate in small group counseling sessions, if necessary.
- All middle and high school students participate in Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Curriculum, which is offered as part of health classes.
 - SEL Curriculum is intended as a pro-active mental health promotion strategy rather than reactive behavior intervention.
- All 9th and 12th grade students at Regis High School participate in QPR (Question, Persuade, and Refer) Training for Suicide Prevention, which is set up by counselors and the health teacher.
 - QPR Training helps share the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to respond.

Teachers & Administrators Educated & Empowered

- All Regis Catholic Schools staff members are trained to look for “red flags” in students.
- Our teachers and staff members are encouraged to refer a student to the school counselor if he or she appears to be struggling with mental health or bullying.
- The Regis Catholic Schools Student Intervention Team, made up of teachers, is fully trained in youth mental health first aid.

- School administrators, along with the Regis Catholic Schools Pupil Services Director, monitor specific students in the classroom if an issue arises.
- All Regis Catholic Schools teachers have completed NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) training on the unique perspectives of students who have experienced trauma. (2019)
- All K-5 teachers complete the b.e.s.t.® (Behavioral Emotional Social Traits) Universal Screening Platform for students twice a year.
 - System designed to build on the behavioral health of students while helping to identify students who may benefit from additional, positive behavioral support.
- All Regis Catholic Schools staff have completed mindfulness training and teachers are encouraged to use the practice in the classroom.

School Counselors Fully Trained

- Each school has a counselor available; these individuals must follow the guidelines of his or her license.
 - NOTE: According to the American School Counselor Association's Ethical Standards, school counselors "aim to provide counseling to students in a brief context and support students and families/guardians in obtaining services if the student needs long-term clinical counseling".
- School counselors support our teachers by listening and sharing resources on a regular basis. This includes bullying curriculum.
- School counselors are empowered to reach out to individual families if they feel more therapy or counseling is needed outside of the school setting.
- If a student is receiving outside counseling, our school counselors ask for a release of information so we can work in partnership to help the student.
 - NOTE: Parents are encouraged to sign this release, but some choose not to; this can hinder our ability to work in partnership.
- All Regis Catholic Schools counselors attend a variety of mental health workshops every year, including QPR (Question, Persuade, and Refer) Training for Suicide Prevention.
- All school counselors obtained a mental health certificate after completing a two-day training, facilitated by Dr. Michael Axelrod from UW-Eau Claire. (2018)
- During the current school year, all school counselors completed training in youth mental health first aid and grief and trauma training. (CESA)
- All Regis Catholic Schools counselors meet monthly to support each other.

Parents Encouraged to Build Partnerships

- All Regis Catholic Schools parents are encouraged to refer a student to meet with the school counselor, if needed.
- Parents are encouraged to get involved with our newly-formed mental health committee, created thanks to support from a recent safety grant.
 - The group is comprised of parents from each school who meet quarterly.
 - Paul Pedersen (RMS & RHS Principal) and Pam Foegen (Pupil Services Director) serve as ad hoc members.
 - We are looking to grow this group by also including industry experts.

If you would like to discuss any of these items, or feel your child could benefit from extra mental health support while at school, please reach out to your child's school counselor.

COUNSELOR CONTACT INFORMATION

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Regis Middle School | Jill Urdahl

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Immaculate Conception Elementary School | Malia Clements

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St. James Elementary School & St. Mary's Elementary School | Deanne Eslinger

(715) 830-2277 or (715) 830-2278 | deslinger@RegisCatholicSchools.com

We also encourage all of you to attend our upcoming Parent Meeting, focusing on school safety and mental health. This will be a great opportunity for you to learn more about these important topics and get your questions answered. The meeting will be held on Monday, January 13 at 7 p.m. in the Fr. Dowd Auditorium on the Regis campus. The meeting will also be live streamed on our website.

Regis Catholic Schools is committed to student health and safety. At every juncture, we seek to promote the peace and charity of Christ. Your concerns and feedback are always welcomed and appreciated.

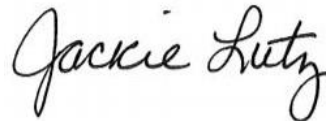
Thank you and God Bless.



Mark Gobler
President



Paul Pedersen
Principal, Regis Campus



Jackie Lutz
Principal, St. James Elementary School



Kayla Bahnub
Principal, Immaculate Conception Elementary School



Carisa Smiskey
Principal, St. Mary's Elementary School

Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow

Regis Catholic Schools is dedicated to educating students of all faiths in a Catholic, Christ-centered environment. We are united by Our Core Values of Living Faith, Accepting Responsibility, Promoting Teamwork, Achieving Excellence, and Inspiring Leadership.