



COVID Guidelines for the 2021-22 School Year

The Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph is committed to the health and safety of students, teachers and families. While COVID-19 has presented many challenges since March of 2020, Catholic schools have proven their dedication to students and families by remaining open and committed to the academic and spiritual formation of students. While navigating the pandemic, many lessons have been learned. Due to the evolving circumstances surrounding COVID-19 it is essential for Diocesan schools to be flexible and resilient, regardless of the challenges presented by the pandemic.

In preparation for the 2021-22 school year a committee has been meeting to identify best practices and guidelines for the new school year. The committee included representatives for principals, early childhood center directors, medical professionals, school counselors, pastors, and representatives of the diocese.

The Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph appreciates the support received from families as schools have navigated this unprecedented pandemic. Catholic school leaders are looking forward to a unified effort between families and schools throughout 2021-22 school year to keep our students safely in school.

Should the situation related to COVID-19 change in the school, community, state, and/or country the information included in this plan may be revised or updated.

MASKS

Masks are highly recommended but not required for the 2021-22 school year.

Principals and pastors/school presidents may determine the need to require masks at a particular school in the following circumstances:

1. Three clusters within a school within a 14-day period. A cluster is defined as 2 or more positive cases.
2. Quarantining, as a result of COVID exposures, becomes overly disruptive to the operation of the school.
3. After the review of the community transmission data <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view> the county where the school is located indicates a HIGH transmission level with the rising indicators in the number of cases, percent positivity, hospitalizations, and ICU bed availability.

In the event the local health department issues a mask mandate, schools will follow the guidance of the local health department for the duration of the health order.

By using local school and county data, schools will have the flexibility to adjust to the circumstances in their building and community.

VACCINATIONS AND QUARANTINE

According to the CDC, an individual is considered fully vaccinated for COVID-19 two weeks after receiving the second dose in a two-dose series (Pfizer or Moderna) or two weeks after receiving a single-dose vaccine (Johnson and Johnson).

A student/staff member exposed to a person suspected or confirmed positive for Covid-19 need not quarantine if they are fully vaccinated and asymptomatic. In circumstances where masks are required, students and staff who are fully vaccinated will not be required to wear a mask. Documented proof of vaccination must be presented to avoid quarantine or mask requirements.

If the student/staff member develops symptoms consistent with COVID-19 within 14 days of exposure, they should isolate and contact their Primary Care Physician for further guidance and testing if needed.

Although the risk is low, if a fully vaccinated student or staff member develops symptoms consistent with COVID-19, they should isolate, be clinically evaluated, and tested if needed.

Students or staff members who have been exposed to or test positive for COVID-19 will be required to quarantine, as necessary. The length of quarantine will be determined following consideration of the individual's circumstances.

INSTRUCTION

Schools are encouraged to implement layers of protection to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Each school may determine the strategies appropriate for their building(s). Please check with the school administrator regarding specific mitigation strategies.

Students are expected to be present at school for in-person learning daily. On-line learning will not be a routine instructional model available to students unless circumstances dictate the need for remote learning (e.g. a stay at home order is issued by the state/local health department).

The method of instruction for students in quarantine will be determined by the school administration.

Seating should spread out in the classroom as much as possible and a seating chart should be kept by the teacher to aide in contact tracing.

Outdoor instruction should be an option, weather permitting.

Schools should minimize congregating in the hallways and other common areas.

Frequent hand washing/sanitizing is encouraged.

HEALTH

Parents and staff members are asked to monitor their child's/personal health. If a student or staff member has COVID-19 like symptoms (i.e., fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea, or diarrhea) **STAY HOME** and contact a health care provider.