

Catholic Schools Onward
Best Practices and New Opportunities
as We Move Forward

Guidance and Procedures



2022-2023 school year

Introduction and Philosophy

Introduction

As we start the 2022-2023 school year, the COVID-19 landscape is greatly different than what we experienced over the previous two academic terms. Although COVID-19 is still present in our community, the availability of new treatments, vaccines, and testing have all of us better equipped to confront the virus and maintain healthy environments.

With the availability of these new tools, we are poised to embrace a new strategy in dealing with COVID-19 in our schools. We are pleased to share that we are now able to operate our schools without many of the previously enacted restrictions designed to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Below are some of the guidelines for this school year and our return to a pre-pandemic education model.

Parental Partnership – Catholic elementary schools are inherently a partnership between the parent and the school. This collaboration remains the most important aspect of our plan to deal with COVID-19. It is paramount for us to keep children in school. This goal cannot be possible unless the school and the parents agree to the importance of monitoring their child’s health daily. Most importantly, this means that children who are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 or the flu need to stay home. With parental cooperation in this matter, we will be able to limit the impact of the virus on our classrooms. Below are some specific recommendations;

- *Student or Staff Member Tests Positive* - If a student or staff member is COVID-19 positive, they should stay at home for a minimum of 5 days and then wear a mask when returning to school during days 6 through 10. Each school will follow their specific policy as to make up work. Virtual learning will not be available.
- *Student or Staff comes into close contact with a positive case*- We recommend that in this case the student or staff can return to school with a mask and test on the second and fourth days after exposure. If after that time, the student or staff is negative, then the mask is not recommended. If the person does test positive, follow the above procedure for a positive case

Additional School Practices

Ventilation

Increase ventilation to the greatest extent possible to optimize air quality and reduce the risk of germs and contaminants spreading through the air. Open classroom windows and doors.

Reinforce Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Best Practices

Washing hands can prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Schools and Early Childhood Centers (ECC) programs should teach and reinforce proper handwashing to lower the risk of spreading viruses, including the virus that causes COVID-19. If washing hands is not possible, schools should provide hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol. In addition, schools should teach and reinforce covering coughs and sneezes to help keep individuals from getting and spreading infectious diseases, including COVID-19.

Enhanced Cleaning – Schools should clean surfaces at least once a day, or to the greatest extent possible to reduce the risk of germs spreading by touching surfaces.

Strategic Use of Masks – Masks will be optional except for their use with the specific cases detailed above.

Monitoring Health – We ask that parents to monitor the health of their children.

Schools should also continue to monitor the recommendations from their county health department as those guidelines can vary from county to county. Unless the COVID-19 landscape virus changes radically, the following practices used in the past are *not* required:

- **Social Distancing**
- **Virtual Learning**
- **Modified Attendance**
- **Quarantining Classrooms or Schools**