



Catholic Schools Office
Diocese of Birmingham

Guidelines for a Safe Year
Covid-19 Protocols and Responses
2021-2022

PREVENTION

PROTECTION

PREPAREDNESS



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CONTENTS

Introduction 4

Essential Components for the 2021-2022 School Year 5

Tiered System of Response- Protocols During In-Person Instruction 6

Level 1 Organizational Procedures and Protocols 7

Level 3 Organizational Procedures and Protocols 8

Tiered System of Response- Modes of Instruction..... 9

 Criteria for Decision Making..... 10

Entrance Protocols 10

 Screening Protocols 10

 Student Arrival/Dismissal Protocols..... 11

 Masks 11

Facilities Protocols..... 11

 Visual Cues 11

 Physical Strategies 12

Health/Hygiene Protocols 12

 General..... 12

 Isolation Protocols 12

 In the Event of an Exposure to Covid-19 (Quarantine) 13

 In the Event of a Positive Case (ISOLATE)..... 14

 Reporting Positive Cases to ADPH 15

 CDC Isolation and Quarantine Guidance Chart- Source: Alabama Association of School Boards..... 15

 Student Absence Protocols 15

 Personnel Protocols..... 15

 Vaccination Protocols 16

Cleaning Protocols..... 16

Maintaining Physical Distancing 17

 Within the Classroom..... 17

 Throughout the School Building 17

 Additional Physical Distancing Considerations 17

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Catholic Schools Office Diocese of Birmingham

Athletics 18

Fine Arts, Choir, and Band 18

Transportation And Travel 18

Food Service 19

Tools and Resources for Schools 20

Health Department Contacts by County/Region 20

ADPH Back-to-School Toolkit Resources 20

Screening Questions for Posting 20

Mask Exemption or Accommodation Form 21

COVID-19 ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND LIABILITY WAIVER 22

Source Documents 23

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INTRODUCTION

There is no one size fits all approach when it comes to our Catholic schools or to the students and staff within them, particularly when addressing their health and their safety. Recommendations within this document are predicated on the needs of the school and the level of infection within the school's community. Our successful delivery of in-person instruction throughout the 2020-21 year contributed heavily to the development of this year's guidelines.

A set of tiered options allows for schools to operate flexibly according to the situation at hand in the hope that uninterrupted in-person learning can safely occur. The purpose of this document is to guide school administrators, teachers, and staff to align their school and classroom plans with guidance developed in accordance with research, state and national public health guidance, and a committee of relevant experts.

Our priority remains, as always, with providing a safe, healthy learning and working environment for our students and our staff while recognizing that adjustments will need to be made to maintain safety, academic excellence, feelings of belonging, and an emphasis on our faith life.

Take this guidance and use it to develop the plan that meets your school's needs.

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ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS FOR THE 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR

With the Catholic Schools Office, school staff, and parents working together, we will have another highly successful, safe, and healthy school year. The continuation of certain preparedness, preventative, and protective measures combined will assist us in this process.

1. Certain events, situations, or times of increased community transmission may result in a temporary mask requirement for students and/or staff. Such a decision will be made and communicated to those involved by school or by diocesan leadership. The levels for mask wearing are outlined on the next page. Criteria for decision making are outlined on page 10. Information about types of masks to be worn can be found on pg. 11.
2. Maintain a distance of 3 feet between individuals of the same class as much as possible. A distance of 6 feet may be helpful between students of different classes.
3. Staying home when exhibiting symptoms of an illness is very important for students and for staff to mitigate the spread of contagious illnesses.
4. A quarantine period is required following a known exposure to Covid-19 for students and staff. See pg. 13-15 for more detail.
5. Vaccination is not required for eligible students or staff.
6. Handwashing, hand sanitization, and other hygiene measures will continue throughout the school day.
7. Regular cleaning and disinfection will occur throughout the school day and after school.
8. Increased ventilation and use of outdoor spaces (when possible due to weather and other factors) will be utilized.
9. Vigilance and consideration for mental health of students, staff, and families should be proactively planned.
10. Special attention should be given to community building for all, particularly new families to our schools and for those returning from virtual learning, as we welcome opportunities to interact safely in person again.
11. Virtual options, either through Catholic Virtual or through school staff, may be available. The decision whether to offer a virtual option and how it will be offered is made by the administration at each individual school.
12. Monitoring of updated guidance and/or health orders from the CDC, ADPH, local health departments, as well as the current health situation in the geographic region of the Diocese of Birmingham may result in updates and revisions to this guidance throughout the school year.

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TIERED SYSTEM OF RESPONSE- PROTOCOLS DURING IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION



Level I may be utilized for in-person instruction for the 2021-22 school year as circumstances allow.

- Masks welcome but not required
- Minimum 3-foot distance maintained
- Increased disinfection
- Emphasis on hygiene and hand washing
- Visitors welcome with protocols
- Field trips and extracurriculars allowed with protocols



Additional protocols may be implemented for certain events, such as large-scale gatherings, or during certain times of day.

These additional protocols may be requested even during Level 1 times, so that certain types of events can safely occur.

The following protocols may be utilized just for the event:

- Masks
- 6-foot distance
- Increased disinfection
- Emphasis on hygiene and hand washing
- Screening protocols, such as temperature checks or a questionnaire



During times of increased community transmission, more stringent protocols may be put in place temporarily to mitigate spread and protect in-person learning.

The following protocols may temporarily be required throughout the school day:

- Masks
- Screening protocols
- Changes to certain procedures to reduce student movement
- Reduced interaction between students of different classes or other schools, such as field trip or off-site events





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LEVEL 1 ORGANIZATIONAL PROCEDURES AND PROTOCOLS

Working in conjunction with the tiered system of response outlined above and in keeping with state, local, and national health guidance, our schools will minimize risk and maximize instructional time through three pillars: Preventative Measures, Protective Measures, and Preparedness Measures, while continuing to emphasize Catholic Identity; high-quality, developmentally-appropriate curriculum and instruction; community building and relationships; and the importance of outdoor play and socialization. Our protocols may be implemented at varying levels throughout the 2021-22 year dependent upon the community transmission that may occur within an area or a school.

Prevention	Protection	Preparedness
Staying home when exhibiting signs of an illness	Maintaining 3-foot distance as much as possible	Remaining up-to-date with guidance from national, state, and local health organizations
Utilizing up-to-date guidance for quarantine after exposure for individuals who are not fully vaccinated	Increase ventilation and airflow in indoor spaces and encourage outdoor time	Continually evaluating practices within the 3 Pillars to lessen or strengthen according to the current local health situation and to maintain efficiency and effectiveness
Increased frequency for cleaning and disinfecting shared items and spaces throughout the school day and at the end of each day	Making safe selections and enacting protocols for field trips	Planning for and communicating steps to be taken should cases occur within the school community
Increasing hand washing opportunities and teaching safe hygiene practices	Giving consideration to holding school events safely, so that community interactions can occur	Implementing a tiered system of short-term virtual adaptations to instruction in response to the local health situation when needed
	Updating certain systems and schedules to allow for recess, food service, hallway traffic, and school assemblies, and masses to continue in safe ways	Train students, staff, and families in protocols that will be implemented and instructional methods that will be used
		Plan social-emotional learning supports for students, families, and staff

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LEVEL 3 ORGANIZATIONAL PROCEDURES AND PROTOCOLS

Prevention	Protection	Preparedness
Temporarily adapting attendance and sick leave policies for students and staff, if needed	Maintaining 6-foot distance as much as possible	Remaining up-to-date with guidance from national, state, and local health organizations
Maintaining 6-foot distance for all visitors not within the same household	Maintaining student cohort groups as much as possible	Continually evaluating practices within the 3 Pillars to lessen or strengthen according to the current local health situation and to maintain efficiency and effectiveness
Screening students, staff, and visitors through a short questionnaire daily	For the safety of all, wearing a face covering is required	Planning for and communicating steps to be taken should cases occur within the school community
Increased frequency for cleaning and disinfecting shared items and spaces throughout the school day and at the end of each day	Creating community through virtual opportunities for interaction	Implementing a tiered system of short-term virtual adaptations to instruction in response to the local health situation when needed
Increasing hand washing opportunities and teaching safe hygiene practices	Updating certain systems and schedules to allow for recess, food service, hallway traffic, and school assemblies to continue in safe ways	Train students, staff, and families in protocols that will be implemented and instructional methods that will be used
Reducing entry to the school building during school hours for non-essential contractors or vendors	Increase ventilation and airflow in indoor spaces and encourage outdoor time	Plan social-emotional learning supports for students, families, and staff





TIERED SYSTEM OF RESPONSE- MODES OF INSTRUCTION

The primary response to instruction will be Face to Face Instruction. CASE Learning may take place during specific quarantine situations for individual classrooms whose students are too young to be eligible for the vaccine or for those who are not fully vaccinated. There may be circumstances within individual schools where Hybrid Learning or CASE Learning may need to occur for a short time. These tiers may be enacted according to the situation at a school. The decision is made by the school pastor and/or president, principal, and the Superintendent based on the current level of risk and exposure within the school or its surrounding community and utilizing guidance from national, state, county, and/or local health authorities. Guidelines to address a building closure are available should they be needed.



Tier 1: Face to Face Instruction	Tier 2: Hybrid Learning	Tier 3: CASE Learning
<p>Tier 1 is utilized when national, state, and/or local health orders, guidance, and/or conditions allow for face to face instruction to occur in school buildings.</p> <p>Tier 1 is our main mode of instruction and will occur with protective and preventative measures in place according to the health situation at the time.</p> <p>A virtual learning option may be offered at the discretion of each school.</p> <p>Quarantine situations may take place as needed due to cases within individual classrooms.</p>	<p>Though unlikely to occur, Tier 2 is utilized when additional precaution is necessary due to national, state, and/or local health orders, guidance, and/or conditions OR when school facilities and/or personnel constraints do not allow for Tier I instruction to safely occur.</p> <p>In Tier 2, half of a student population attends school at a designated time with the other half occurring at another time.</p>	<p>Tier 3 is utilized when national, state, and/or local health orders, guidance, and/or conditions do not allow for face to face instruction to occur in school buildings. Continuation of Academic and Spiritual Education (CASE Learning) takes place for a short period.</p> <p>Tier 3 is unlikely to occur for an entire building but will be utilized for quarantine situations for individual students or for classrooms.</p>





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CRITERIA FOR DECISION MAKING

The criteria and general thresholds to be utilized for decision making are outlined below. These criteria may be utilized in conjunction with each other or on their own. Please be aware that on occasion additional criteria may be utilized due to the many unknowns that occur with a pandemic situation. When additional criteria are utilized, schools and parents will be made aware of those criteria and these guidelines will be updated if the new criterion is widely applicable.

The criteria utilized for decision making are:

- State-wide case counts, including hospitalizations and deaths
- State and school county risk levels, which take into consideration vaccination rates in the state and county
- The circumstances within our schools as a whole and individually, including numbers of quarantines of students and/or staff, and cases that can be attributed to in-school transmission
- Medical data from the state, nation, and the world that evidence the effects the virus and any of its variants may be having on the populations within our schools
- Our ability to effectively staff and deliver instruction at each individual location

Our local school and diocesan data in conjunction with state and/or county transmission rates will be used to institute changes to mask requirements.

ENTRANCE PROTOCOLS

Each school will create well-defined entrance protocols for students, teachers, and visitors. These protocols define the processes that determine where, how, and which criteria need to be met to enter the school building each day. Processes may continually be revised to maintain efficiency, to meet the needs of the school based on observation and/or feedback, and to account for changes to health guidance.

SCREENING PROTOCOLS

Prior to Start of School

- Obtain signature to COVID-19 waiver (see page 20) from families new to the school. Waivers signed in previous years for current families are still enforced.
- Communicate screening questions to all staff and families and communicate that a 'yes' response to certain questions may result in non-entry to the school building
- Post screening questions in a visible spot as a reminder to all before entering the school building (see page 19)
- Proactively and repeatedly communicate updates to procedures and protocols

Daily

In order to enter the school building, students, teachers, visitors, and staff must meet certain criteria:

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- No 'yes' answers to screening question 1, or to questions 2 and 3, if the individual is not fully vaccinated
- Sanitize hands

Adjust visitor protocols to offer protection between visiting adults, students, and staff through measures such as:

- Schedule routine visits from outside contractors, repair people, and vendors to occur outside of school hours, if possible
- Plan protocols for visits from parents or other family members, so that these visits and interactions can safely occur

STUDENT ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL PROTOCOLS

Review and update arrival and dismissal procedures to reduce possibility of transmission between student groups. Consider:

- Use of outdoor spaces to gather students during arrival and dismissal times
- Create routines for where students entering/exiting the school should report, so that large groups are not gathered in close proximity for long periods of time

MASKS

When masks are worn, either by requirement or choice, they must be worn consistently and correctly. Cloth masks, surgical masks, and masks that meet a standard (ASTM, NIOSH, etc.) are all acceptable when they are well-fitting and worn correctly. Masks that you can see through when held to light or that have openings are not acceptable. Exceptions and accommodations (such as use of clear face shield) can be made for those students or staff with a defined, documented disability according to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or with documentation outlining the medical need from a licensed medical professional.

The [CDC Order](#) to wear masks while on public transportation applies to school buses. Regardless of the mask policy at school, passengers and drivers must wear masks on school buses and group transportation situations, including buses operated by public and private school systems, subject to the exclusions and exemptions in the CDC order.

FACILITIES PROTOCOLS

VISUAL CUES

- Utilize signage and visual cues to direct traffic and to maintain proper physical distancing in school lobby, entry and exit doors, school office, etc.
- Have signage and visual cues for hygiene practices in classrooms, restrooms, lunchroom, and other common, visible areas
 - Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol when soap and water are not available.
 - Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth

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- Cover mouth and nose with a tissue or with the inside of elbow when you cough or sneeze
- Consider visual supports to indicate physical distancing measures such as:
 - 3 or 6-foot distance lines/markers
 - Directional arrows on floors to direct hallway, classroom, and other traffic
 - Marking “personal space” within the classroom- taped areas on floors, hula hoops, etc.

PHYSICAL STRATEGIES

- Have hand sanitizing stations visible and readily accessible with signage indicating need to clean hands upon entry
- Minimize potential for exposure through means such as sneeze guards in office areas and use of dividers that can be easily sanitized between spaces that are harder to maintain distance
- Update to touchless systems as much as possible for shared items such as:
 - Sign-in/sign-out systems for staff, students, and visitors
 - Dispensing water
 - Trash cans (lidless or foot-pedal operated)
- Identify ways to limit sharing of materials, manipulatives, and supplies and sanitize any shared materials between uses, when possible
 - In instructional spaces
 - In office/meeting/lounge spaces
- **Have ventilation and airflow evaluated and increased**
 - **Encourage use of outdoor spaces for classes, activities, and lunch as much as possible**
 - **Open windows and doors (taking safety concerns into consideration)**
 - **Utilize child-safe fans**
 - **Utilize portable air cleaners/purifiers with HEPA filters**
 - **Make changes to HVAC and/or filtration systems**

HEALTH/HYGIENE PROTOCOLS

Each school will have a standard routine for all who enter the school, prevention measures to be utilized, enforced, and taught, and protocols for addressing health concerns throughout the school day. Names of positive cases may be disclosed to the local public health agency.

GENERAL

- Communicate to all the obligation to report symptoms of illness, known exposure to illness, and/or pending COVID test results
- Proactively communicate to all staff and families the criteria which determine non-admittance to the school building and which activities (if any) are restricted for visitors
- Train all staff in plan to handle confidentiality regarding health

ISOLATION PROTOCOLS

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- Create a procedure for when student(s) and/or staff develop symptoms during a school day
 - Designate a place of isolation for the affected individual(s) to remain until he/she can leave the school.
 - Student(s) should always remain visible to a school employee while in isolation.
 - Ensure that staff member monitoring isolation area(s) has proper PPE

IN THE EVENT OF AN EXPOSURE TO COVID-19 (QUARANTINE)

Close contacts are defined by the CDC as someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period. An infected person can spread Covid-19 starting from 2 days before they have any symptoms (or 2 days before specimen collection of a positive test for someone who is asymptomatic).

School officials should notify close contacts to a diagnosed Covid-19 case as soon as possible. Close contacts should be notified of their exposure, advised to watch for symptoms, and quarantine, except as outlined below. The Covid-19 Exposure Notification (rev. 9/24/21) on pg. 23 of the [ADPH Back to School Guidance](#) assists with clear notification of next steps.

If both/all individuals involved in a close contact were engaged in consistent and correct use of well-fitted masks and other prevention strategies were in place (distancing of at least 3 feet and increased ventilation). These individuals do not have to quarantine. Note: This only applies to close contacts within the school setting; not those taking place outside of the school day.

For students or staff who:

- Have received a booster shot within the recommended time frames
OR
- Completed the primary series of Pfizer, Moderna, or Johnson & Johnson vaccines within the recommended time frame for the vaccine received
OR
- Had a confirmed case of Covid-19 within the previous 90 days
OR
- Were engaged in consistent and correct use of well-fitted masks with all parties involved

THEN

- Wear a well-fitting mask at school for 10 days. If a mask cannot be worn due to medical exemption, then the individual must stay home for 10 days.
- Get tested for Covid-19 on day 3-5 following the exposure. If result is positive, stay home and follow isolation guidance below.
- If any symptoms develop, get tested and stay home. If result is positive, stay home and follow isolation guidance below.

For students or staff who:

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- Completed the primary series of Pfizer, Moderna, or Johnson & Johnson, are past the recommended time frames for the vaccine received, and have not been boosted
OR
- Are unvaccinated
OR
- Were not engaged in consistent and correct use of well-fitted masks with all parties involved
THEN
- Stay home for 5 days. Then, return to school wearing a well-fitting mask for 5 additional days.
OR
- Stay home for 10 days if a mask cannot be worn.
- Get tested for Covid-19 on day 3-5 following the exposure. If result is positive, stay home and follow isolation guidance below.
- If any symptoms develop, get tested and stay home. If result is positive, stay home and follow isolation guidance below.

In all instances, all close contacts should still closely monitor symptoms.

Antibody testing is not a strategy recommended by public health officials for making quarantine decisions at this time- only the avenues outlined above.

IN THE EVENT OF A POSITIVE CASE (ISOLATE)

The Covid-19 Screening Tool (rev. 9/24/21) on pg. 22 of [ADPH Back to School Guidance](#) assists with clear notification of return to school protocol.

Everyone, regardless of vaccination status or previous Covid-19 infection:

- Stay home for at least 5 days since the onset of symptoms or the specimen collection of a positive test, whichever happened first
- If there are no symptoms or if symptoms are resolving after 5 days, the individual can return to school
 - Fever must be completely resolved for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications
- Wear a well-fitting mask at school for 5 additional days. If a mask cannot be worn due to medical exemption, then the individual must stay home for 10 days.

School notification procedures:

- Notify the local health department **and the Superintendent immediately** and submit positive or potential positive cases to the [ADPH Report Card](#)
- Plan will be developed with the entities above to address who needs to be notified of potential exposure, disinfection protocols, and next steps depending on the circumstances involved
- When notifying families and staff, maintain confidentiality in accordance with ADA policy

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REPORTING POSITIVE CASES TO ADPH

Covid-19 is a reportable disease and falls under Alabama's Notifiable Disease laws. School principals and school nurses are mandatory reporters under Alabama's Notifiable Disease law. Because of this, all suspected and diagnosed Covid-19 cases must be reported to the [ADPH Covid-19 Report Card](#) within 24 hours.

Schools also must report outbreaks of any kind, including outbreaks of Covid-19, to the [Communicable Disease Report Card](#).

CDC ISOLATION AND QUARANTINE GUIDANCE CHART- SOURCE: ALABAMA ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BOARDS

[CDC Isolation and Quarantine Guidance](#)

STUDENT ABSENCE PROTOCOLS

- Establish and communicate protocol for reporting of illness by students/families. Designate staff member(s) to receive these calls and to use a consistent reporting system for symptoms, duration of illness, etc.
- Strengthen the school's "return to school" protocol to include benchmarks that allow a student to return following a confirmed case of Covid-19 or quarantine due to exposure using guidance on pgs. 13-15.
- Update attendance policies and procedures for students to accommodate need to stay home when sick or exposed to illness and to remain out of school until return criteria can be met.

PERSONNEL PROTOCOLS

- Establish and communicate protocol for reporting of illness by staff. Designate staff member(s) to receive these calls and to use a consistent reporting system for symptoms, duration of illness, etc.
- Update attendance policies and procedures for staff to remain out of school until return criteria can be met **after a confirmed case of Covid-19** or quarantine due to exposure using guidance on pgs. 13-15.
- Staff who are *eligible* to be up to date with Covid-19 vaccination under the recommended time frames but have not will adhere to regular attendance and absence policies. Leave days will be counted. Staff who are not eligible for vaccination due to medical exemption should communicate with their school principal.
- Special considerations for staff:
 - Do not tell a staff member he/she must stay home due to age or an underlying health condition unless a health order requires it or the disability poses a direct threat to their health/safety as defined by the ADA and the risk cannot be mitigated or eliminated by accommodation
 - When a staff member informs administration that they cannot return to work due to COVID-19 or an underlying health condition:

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- Engage in the interactive ADA process- meet with the employee to understand the situation and the limitations and determine whether any accommodations can be made so the employee can still perform essential functions of the job
- You may obtain medical evidence of the condition and the physician's suggested accommodations and the physician's determination of the limitations
- If the school feels accommodations cannot be made, consult legal counsel before taking or stating any action
- Address concerns with staff who may be fearful or uncomfortable returning to work by outlining safety steps being taken to reduce likelihood of exposure. If the employee refuses to return to work, consult legal counsel
- Plan for employee absences. Contingency plans could include:
 - Maintain an active list of substitute teachers
 - Hire teaching assistants or floating substitutes (aids with physical distancing of classes when there are no teacher absences to cover)
 - Institute CASE Learning for some classes temporarily
 - Have substitute teaching plans ready for 10-day periods. Make plans accessible to school staff so that others know where to find them when needed

VACCINATION PROTOCOLS

- Covid-19 vaccination is not required for eligible students or staff of Diocese of Birmingham Catholic Schools.
- Proof of vaccination is not required. Conversations regarding vaccination status (when outlining quarantine procedures) should only take place with the legal guardian/parent(s)- never students.
- Fully vaccinated (according to recommended times for boosters or primary series) individuals do not need to quarantine following a known exposure to Covid-19 unless symptoms develop
 - Recommendation: obtain testing 3-5 days after contact and remain strictly masked for 5 more days

CLEANING PROTOCOLS

Schools need to develop additional cleaning protocols to ensure safe environments through regular disinfection.

- Confirm that the current janitorial staff:
 - Cleans AND disinfects
 - Increase frequency and type of cleaning
 - Request confirmation that procedures and supplies used meet CDC guidelines
 - Keeps cleaning records
- Encourage staff and students to regularly wipe down classroom furniture, supplies, and equipment
- Create cleaning plans, with designated frequency and responsibility for:
 - High-touch items and areas (when students are present, do not use sprays or cleaners with fumes)

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- Daily deep cleaning
 - Classrooms
 - Offices
 - Common areas
 - Restrooms
- After a student or staff member develops symptoms during a school day
- After identification of positive cases
- Ensure compliance with cleaning protocols by all who use the school outside of school hours- religious education, parish events, clubs, etc.

MAINTAINING PHYSICAL DISTANCING

How distancing can be achieved within each school varies according to the enrollment of the school or grade level, the personnel employed by the school, the age of the students, and the space(s) and furniture available within the school.

WITHIN THE CLASSROOM

- Utilize outdoor spaces as much as weather permits
- Remove non-essential items from classrooms to maximize space
- Organize classroom seating to maintain 3-foot distance between students, as much as possible
- Consider whether physical barriers, such as plexiglass dividers, are feasible and necessary for your school community

THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL BUILDING

- Create visual supports (distance lines/markers, directional arrows on floors for hallway traffic)
- Reduce interaction between different classes of students, when possible
- Consider alternatives to shared coffee, water, and food/snack service

ADDITIONAL PHYSICAL DISTANCING CONSIDERATIONS

- Consider ways to avoid large groups of students changing clothes for physical education at once
- Select physical education activities that allow for limited physical interaction or sharing of equipment, while indoors, such as kickball, badminton, calisthenics, etc. Utilize outdoor spaces as much as possible.
- Emphasize music instruction in reading music, playing percussion instruments, composing music
- Organize art supplies for use by individual students, as much as possible. Set aside time for hand washing/sanitizing before and after use of shared supplies.
- Follow liturgical guidelines in place by the diocese for health precautions during school Masses.
- When applicable, limit attendance at extracurricular and school community events in accordance with state and local health guidelines in place at the time. Provide virtual options for attendance of these events when possible to encourage involvement.

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- Adjust before and after school care services to involve the same routines/procedures as throughout the school day

ATHLETICS

- Ensure compliance with AHSAA guidelines
- Keep up to date with changes to AHSAA guidelines and communicate changes to all involved
- Plan ways to maintain distancing for spectators and/or limit attendance according to current local health orders, if/when applicable

FINE ARTS, CHOIR, AND BAND

- Hold band practices outdoors with a greater distance than 6 feet apart, when possible. Indoor band practice with wind instruments is not recommended. Percussion instruments may be held indoors with 3 foot distance.
- Plan for physical distancing of students during rehearsals, practices, or activities
- Plan ways to maintain distancing for spectators and/or limit attendance according to current local health orders, if/when applicable

TRANSPORTATION AND TRAVEL

Transportation to/from School and/or School Events

- Stagger seating to maintain space between students, as much as possible
- Ensure ventilation and airflow on buses as much as possible
- [CDC Order](#) to wear masks while on public transportation applies to school buses. Regardless of the mask policy at school, passengers and drivers must wear masks on school buses, including buses operated by public and private school systems, subject to the exclusions and exemptions in the CDC order.
- Utilize same screening questions for driver and for students as used to enter the school building. Post questions in a visible spot upon entry to bus
- Clean and disinfect vehicles after each use

Travel to Outside Events

- Encourage virtual events as much as possible
 - Virtual field trip opportunities
 - Virtual professional development
 - Virtual retreats
 - Virtual conferences for staff and student organizations
- Overnight events for students, including field trips, retreats, and conferences, are allowed with proper health protocols in place. Conditions may require suspension of overnight events at certain times during the school year.

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- Field trips are allowed with proper health protocols and conditions in place. Conditions may require suspension of field trips at certain times during the school year.
- International travel will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis due to continual monitoring of and updates to pre- and post-travel quarantine requirements and travel notices. Quarantine requirements in addition to the time on the trip would likely cause significant impact on instruction. Superintendent permission to travel is not guaranteed and could change as circumstances change.

FOOD SERVICE

Food service can be safely continued on campus with provisions in place to ensure safe practices. These considerations are dependent upon the school's food service facilities.

Considerations for food service include:

- Ensure that glass or plastic partitions in food service lines allow students and staff to see and select the food but not breathe on, touch, or self-serve
- Ensure that all students wash hands before and after eating meals and snacks
- Develop system for food service employees to be checked daily for symptoms and wear facial covering and gloves when serving and preparing food
- Decide whether alternative lunchroom schedules or use of alternative spaces for eating are necessary, depending on cafeteria space and size of student population
 - Allow for alternative spaces to be designated for supervised class lunch use if more space is needed
 - Consider whether plexiglass dividers would allow for safe socialization to continue

Suspend use of drinking fountains, water dispensers, and other such high-touch methods.

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TOOLS AND RESOURCES FOR SCHOOLS

HEALTH DEPARTMENT CONTACTS BY COUNTY/REGION

[Public Health Districts- Map and Contacts](#)

[County Health Department Contacts](#)

[Alabama Public Health COVID-19 Resource Page](#)

ADPH BACK-TO-SCHOOL TOOLKIT RESOURCES

The entire Back-to-School Toolkit can be found [here](#) and should be read and reviewed in its entirety. Utilize the resources within the Toolkit for decisions and communications. What to do if a student becomes sick? (pg. 11 of Toolkit), When to use Covid-19 Report Card (pg. 12), Covid-19 Student Screening Tool (pg. 22) and Covid-19 Exposure Notification for Parents and Guardians (pg. 23) may be especially useful. ADPH Report Card can be found [here](#).

SCREENING QUESTIONS FOR POSTING

This questionnaire should be posted in a visible location for student(s), staff, or visitors to see prior to entering the school building.

An affirmative answer to Question 1 results in non-entry to the school building.

Question 2 and 3 depend on the individual's vaccination status or previous infection with Covid-19 within the past 90 days.

1. Have you (or the student) and/or anyone in your household experienced any of the following symptoms in the past 24 hours:
 - Fever of 100.4° and/or chills
 - New cough that is not related to an existing condition
 - Difficulty breathing
 - New or unexplained muscle aches or body aches that is not related to a known activity or condition
 - Vomiting or diarrhea
 - New loss of taste or smell
2. Are you (or the student) had close contact with anyone awaiting test results for COVID-19?
3. Have you (or the student) had close contact with anyone who tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 10 days?

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Catholic Schools Office Diocese of Birmingham

MASK EXEMPTION OR ACCOMMODATION FORM

This form is to be filled out by the individual’s licensed medical or behavioral health provider and provided by the parent/guardian to the school nurse or principal. The form will be kept in the student’s confidential health record.

Date: _____ **School:** _____ **Grade:** _____

Student Name: _____ **DOB:** _____

This individual has the following health condition(s):

and is unable to wear a cloth or surgical mask/facial covering during the Covid-19 pandemic.

A face shield is an acceptable alternative to a facial covering: (Please circle) YES NO

Additional Notes/Comments:

Licensed Health Care Provider’s Name Printed and Signature

Licensed Health Care Provider’s Practice Contact Information

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Catholic Schools Office Diocese of Birmingham

COVID-19 ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND LIABILITY WAIVER

Introduction:

The novel coronavirus, COVID-19, has been declared a worldwide pandemic by the World Health Organization. COVID-19 is extremely contagious. The school intends to follow federal, state and local standards of conduct and has put in place reasonable preventative measures to reduce the spread of the virus. However, even though such standards will be followed, and reasonable measures put into place, we cannot guarantee that you or your child will not become infected with COVID-19. Further, attending school and participating in activities associated with the school could increase your risk of you or your child contracting the disease.

Acknowledgment:

By permitting your child’s attendance at school and/or participating in school activities you acknowledge the contagious nature of COVID-19 and that your child may be exposed to or infected by COVID-19 and that such exposure or infection may result in injury, illness, disability, or death. You acknowledge too that the risk of becoming exposed to or infected by COVID-19 at school may result from the actions, omissions, or negligence of yourself or others, including, but not limited to, school employees and volunteers.

Further, in an effort to reduce the risk to your child, you agree that you will take your child’s temperature daily and will not take him or her to school should the temperature exceed 100.4 degrees. You agree that you will instruct and continue to instruct your child about the hazards of the virus, physical distancing protocols and proper virus prevention hygiene practices.¹ You agree that you will continue to monitor your child’s health and wellbeing, and will have him or her tested whenever it appears that he or she may have become infected with COVID-19. Should that happen you agree that you will quarantine your child and notify the school officials. You understand and agree that delivering your child to school is confirmation that you have followed federal, state and local directives, instructions provided herein above and that you have answered the daily screening questionnaire(s) truthfully.

Waiver:

With an understanding of the risks involved, I further agree on behalf of myself, my child(ren), my spouse, our heirs, successors, and assigns, to release, indemnify, hold harmless, and defend the school, Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama, their teachers, staff, administration, employees, agents and representatives (“indemnitees”) associated with the school arising from or in connection with any negligent act or omission of the indemnitees’ in relation to prevention of the spread of the COVID-19 virus only.

I SPECIFICALLY UNDERSTAND AND ACKNOWLEDGE THAT I AM AGREEING TO DEFEND, INDEMNIFY AND HOLD HARMLESS THE INDEMNITEES’ FROM THEIR OWN NEGLIGENCE IN REGARD TO THE INDEMNITEES’ NEGLIGENT ACTION AND/OR INACTION IN REGARD TO PROTECTION AGAINST THE COVID-19 VIRUS.

Student(s) Name(s) _____
Parent/Guardian _____

Signature _____
Date _____

¹ Proper virus prevention hygiene includes regular and thorough washing of hands with anti-bacterial soap and hot water for at least 20 seconds; regular use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer after touching surfaces within the school and in situations where handwashing is not available; and refraining from touching the face area.



SOURCE DOCUMENTS

Leading with Hope: A Reflective Guide for Catholic Schools in a New Reality; Andrew M. Greeley Center for Catholic Education

Return to School Plan: COVID-19 Protocols; Diocese of Sacramento

Back to School FAQs for Educational Institutions During the COVID-19 Era; Fisher Phillips

Return to Work Best Practices and Legal Requirements; Baker Donelson

Adjusting your School Calendar for COVID-19 Response; Texas Education Agency

The Return: How Should Education Leaders Prepare for Reentry and Beyond; Chiefs for Change & Johns Hopkins School of Education Institute for Education Policy

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Community, Work, and School Guidance

Jefferson County Department of Health Guidance

Alabama Department of Public Health Guidance

American Association of Pediatrics: COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-Entry

Alabama Department of Public Health Back to School Toolkit