



**COVID-19 POLICIES & PROCEDURES
DIOCESAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
2022-2023 Academic Year**

Catholic education, just like our Catholic faith, is meant to be face-to-face in communion and community with one another. COVID-19 (and variants) has made this simple, humane and yes, divine approach more difficult. Since the best education takes place not by distance learning but in a room or building where students and teachers can interact as human beings, we have adopted these guidelines, while we engage in this great ministry to our young people. The safety of the children and all those engaged in the ministry of Catholic education is of paramount importance.

These policies and procedures have been implemented by our schools' faculty and staff. The necessity of these measures is self-evident, but they will be enforced with charity, professionalism, and with the common good of the larger school community in mind. They may be updated as conditions change in consultation with local, state and national health authorities. Parents, we recommend that you speak to your children about how their school may look and operate differently based on the current epidemic and the guidelines provided herein.

We pray for the health and safety of all our families and those who work in our schools. May Our Lord bless our work and keep us safe from harm.



David W. Dean
Superintendent of Catholic Schools

All quotes in the text that are not cited are from the Centers for Disease Control.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

1. **Quarantine**—Each principal should make reasonable efforts to educate employees, families, and students about the importance of “staying home when appropriate” according to the Centers for Disease Control (“CDC”) or the local health department materials and guidelines. These include:
 - 1.1 Employees and the parents of students should immediately report to the principal or his or her delegate if they or their children are sick, have tested positive for COVID-19 (which as used herein includes all variants), or have been recently had close contact with a person with COVID-19. “Close contact” or “exposure” means the individual was within six (6) feet of someone for a cumulative total of fifteen (15) minutes or more within a twenty-four (24) hour period.
 - 1.2 Employees and students who have tested positive for COVID-19 must undergo a mandatory quarantine for a minimum period of five (5) days before returning to school, if asymptomatic, unless otherwise determined by the principal pursuant to these policies and procedures. This period of quarantine must be followed by strict mask use when around others for an additional five (5) days. “Strict mask use” means that when social distancing is not possible indoors, a mask must be worn.
 - 1.3 Employees and students who have been directly exposed to a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 must wear a mask for at least five (5) days after exposure.
 - 1.4 Principals, in their sole discretion, retain the right to ask employees or students to quarantine pursuant to their prudence, the provisions contained herein, and in consultation with the Superintendent.
 - 1.5 Employees and students who are sick but have no knowledge of being in contact with someone who has COVID-19 and are not presenting symptoms of COVID-19 should (i) stay home and monitor their health for COVID-19 symptoms (ii) may not return to school for at least twenty-four (24) hours after no longer having a fever without the use of any fever-reducing medications.

- 1.6 If the student who tests positive has siblings in the same household who also attend a diocesan elementary school, then all such siblings are subject to **Section 1.3**.
- 1.7 In addition, each principal should adopt procedures that address: (i) isolating potentially ill students while still on campus; (ii) making reasonable efforts to provide PPE and other precautions for employees who must work with potentially ill students; and (iii) protocols for sanitizing said isolation area and related high-touch surfaces.
2. **PTO & Absences**—It is important that both employees and parents err on the side of caution when determining whether or not to quarantine. As such, for the 2022-2023 school year, the Superintendent requests principals adopt (i) a flexible approach to PTO that encourages personnel to err on the side of caution and (ii) a flexible absence policy for students that does the same. Regarding employees, absences—other than those mandated by quarantine—should be covered first by the employee’s accumulated PTO. Any employee who believes they cannot remain home due to sickness without fear of reprisal should immediately contact the Superintendent or the HR Partner. Parents may have the same recourse regarding the absences provided students. Absenteeism shall be monitored to ensure appropriate staffing and to identify health trends.
3. **Face Coverings**—The use of face coverings, i.e., masks, is not mandatory for employees, students, visitors, or any other persons on campus. Mask are not prohibited and all persons on school grounds may wear a mask if they desire to do so. Principals may make reasonable efforts to have masks available for those who come onto school grounds. Parents may request their student(s) wear masks and the principals will make reasonable efforts to accommodate that request. The appropriateness of a mask is determined by the principal in consultation with CDC.
 - 3.1 Masks **should not be worn** by (i) students younger than two (2) years old (ii) any student who has trouble breathing (iii) any employee who has a written medical exemption and (iv) anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove mask without assistance.
 - 3.2 This **Section 3** may be modified by the Superintendent, in consultation with the principal and the pastor, to meet the particular needs or challenges at a location, which includes, but is not limited to, mandating masks for all persons at a location (save for those in **Section 3.1**). These needs could include multiple exposures of COVID-19 or the issuance of a municipal mask mandate or similar legal promulgations.
4. **Vulnerable Employees & Students**—Each principal should communicate an openness to work with and listen to employees or students who may present a higher risk to COVID-19 due to some health vulnerability, e.g., over the age of sixty-five (65) and/or underlying medical conditions. Regarding employees, Principals should consult the Superintendent and diocesan HR Partner when making human resource decisions. Regarding students, principals should discern options that may limit the student’s exposure risk.
5. **Field Trips & Activities**—Field trips and other in-person activities are permitted. Principals should discern whether any pertinent measures (e.g., social distancing) that may reduce risk are prudent and should remain cognizant of the rules of any third-parties involved.
6. **Sports**—Each principal reserves the right, pursuant to the guidelines herein, to “pursue options to convene sporting events and participation in sports activities in ways that minimizes the risk of transmission of COVID-19 to players, families, coaches, and communities.” Such options could include: limiting the capacity of indoor facilities, suspending handshakes or “high-fives” between teams; no sharing of sporting equipment, clothing, towels, and beverages, designated ingress and egress doors for each facility, and no access to communal drinking fountains.¹
7. **Designated COVID-19 Point of Contact**—Principal should “designate a staff person to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns (e.g., school nurse)” and communicate with all employees, families, and students in order that all stakeholders at the school know who this person is and how to contact them.

¹ See DMSAA Policies and Guidelines on COVID procedures at sporting events.

8. **Temperature & Symptoms**—The principal may establish routine temperature screenings or symptom checks for employees, students, and visitors pursuant to the most updated CDC guidelines regarding symptoms. Pursuant to the CDC, a fever constitutes “the temperature of 100.4°F [38 °C] or greater, or feels warm to the touch, or gives a history of feeling feverish) accompanied by one or more of the following: skin rash, difficulty breathing, persistent cough, decreased consciousness or confusion of recent onset, new unexplained bruising or bleeding (without previous injury), persistent diarrhea, persistent vomiting (other than air sickness), headache with stiff neck, or appears obviously unwell.”
9. **Waiver**—The Office of Superintendent, in consultation with the diocesan principals, diocesan legal counsel, and other dioceses, has provided the *COVID-19 Liability Release & Waiver: Diocesan Catholic Schools* as a prudent and mandatory precaution in providing Catholic education during a pandemic. Waivers signed for a previous school year **ARE STILL IN EFFECT** and **APPLY TO THE 2022-23 ACADEMIC YEAR**. Only those families who have not signed the waiver are mandated to do so this year.
10. **School Year and Academic Calendar**—Each principal may, in consultation with the Superintendent, make certain adaptations to the school year and academic calendar, e.g., extended breaks, etc., that he or she feels are necessary for the health and well-being of the students.
11. **Changes to these Policies**—These policies and procedures are subject to change without notice pursuant to changes in guidance from the CDC or local health officials or as necessary by pursuant to the discretion of the Superintendent.

End of Policies & Procedures

Diocesan Risk Management
August 11, 2022 / St. Clare of Assisi