



**To:** *Parents and Guardians*  
**From:** *Louis P. De Angelo, Ed.D.*  
*Secretary for Catholic Education*  
**Re:** *COVID Mitigation*  
**Date:** *August 16, 2021*

**This memo pertains to Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 students in Delaware.**

As we look to the start of the 2021-2022 school year, we thank you for providing your child(ren) with the gift of quality Catholic education through parish and diocesan Catholic schools, parish religious education programs, and CYM sports and events. At this time, the following diocesan guidelines will be in effect beginning Monday, August 16. Please know that future communications may follow which may adjust or change what is written here, depending upon direction from the Governor or the Division of Public Health.

### **Vaccination**

- Vaccination is currently the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. People who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 are at low risk of symptomatic or severe infection. Vaccination can help the safe return to in-person learning, activities, and sports.
- People 12 years and older are now eligible for COVID-19 vaccination. We strongly encourage all persons, 12 years and older, to be vaccinated on behalf of their health and safety and out of consideration for the health and safety of others.

### **Masks**

- Governor Carney announced this week that all students in Kindergarten through Grade 12 are to be masked indoors in schools. In addition, adults are to be masked when students are present indoors in school buildings.

*The Catholic Schools Office leads, serves, and supports the school communities of the Diocese of Wilmington to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We partner with our schools to develop leaders for the Church and the world by fostering faith formation, promoting academic rigor, encouraging service, and planning for a vibrant future for Catholic education.*

- PreK-3 and PreK-4 students will follow the same regulations as students in Grades K-12.
- Students engaged indoors in classroom instruction, sports, practices, activities, programs, rehearsals, assemblies, etc. are to be masked. Adults present with students indoors are to be masked.
- Students outdoors for classes, recess, sports, programs, etc., are not required to be masked.
- Spectators at indoor events are to be masked; spectators at outdoor events do not need to mask.
- Masks are required on school busses.
- Masks are to be fitted tightly on the face, especially over the nose, under the chin, and no gaps on the cheeks.

### **Physical Distancing**

- To the extent possible, schools and religious education programs will seek to maintain the greatest distance possible between students in settings such as the classroom, cafeteria, gymnasium, church, etc. A target setting is three feet; such a distance may not be possible in all settings.

### **Prevention Strategies**

- Vaccination, masks, and physical distancing are the three most significant prevention strategies to address the spread of COVID.
- Randomized antigen testing is encouraged and some schools may be able to host this testing on site. Parents and guardians are encouraged to avail themselves of antigen testing opportunities whether on campus or off campus on a regular basis.
- Handwashing and respiratory etiquette, proper ventilation, staying home when sick and getting tested, contact tracing in combination with quarantine and isolation, and cleaning and disinfection are also important layers of prevention to keep students safe.

## **Isolation and Quarantine**

- Positive cases of COVID will be reported to the Division of Public Health.
  - In schools, directives given by the school nurse will be followed. Schools will inform parents/guardians if a positive case is reported. No personal information (name, grade, grade level, etc.) may be communicated.
  - In religious education programs and CYM sports and events, positive cases should be reported by the family to the Division of Public Health.
- Isolation and quarantine procedures will be outlined by the school nurse for Catholic school students.
  - Unvaccinated students and staff considered a close contact, and required to quarantine, will be out of school for seven days with appropriate testing or 10 days without testing.
  - Vaccinated students and staff (age 12 and older) considered a close contact will not need to quarantine unless symptoms appear. Testing 3-5 days after exposure is encouraged.
- Students who engaged in religious education programs and CYM sports and events should follow the directions of the Division of Public Health, when a positive case is reported.

## **School, Religious Education, or CYM Procedures**

Your child(ren)'s school, religious education program, or CYM program may communicate to you any additional procedures related to COVID that further explain the information presented here.

Thank you, in advance, for your cooperation. Let us continue to seek the intercession of Mary, our Mother, for the health and safety of all members of our school, religious education, or CYM communities.