



**To:** Parents/Guardians  
**From:** Louis P. De Angelo, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools  
**Re:** COVID Update  
**Date:** February 28, 2022

As we approach the two-year mark of the COVID pandemic, we are grateful to you for your cooperation, support, and patience. Our COVID-positive cases in parish and diocesan schools continue to decline. In the second week of January, we reported 292 positive cases; in the second week of February there were 21 positive cases. Our experience seems to mirror what has occurred throughout the Diocese of Wilmington in Delaware and along Maryland's Eastern Shore. As you are probably aware, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated its guidance last Friday.

In the parish and diocesan schools of the Diocese of Wilmington, the Maryland schools implemented a mask-optional protocol on Tuesday, February 15. **Beginning Wednesday, March 2, parish and diocesan schools in Delaware will be mask-optional for students, as determined by each student's parent or guardian.** If a parent or guardian requires a student to wear a mask, compliance with mask wearing is between the parent or guardian and the student. School administration, faculty, and staff will not be responsible to monitor and maintain individual requests.

School staff and visitors will also have the option to wear a mask or not beginning Wednesday, March 2.

Masks are no longer required on school busses or in school vans beginning Wednesday, March 2.

In both Delaware and Maryland, schools will continue to follow health department guidance regarding students or staff who test positive for COVID. In Delaware, school nurses will discontinue in-school contact tracing. However, parents should report household contacts to the school nurse. Schools will discontinue quarantine for close contacts except household contacts. In Maryland, schools will follow the local health department regarding contact tracing. More complete details would be provided by the school nurse in the event of individual cases of COVID-positive students or close contacts.

*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.*

If there are concerns about in-school spread or localized breakouts, such as two or more cases in a classroom, sports team, or extracurricular group or an increase in cases of absenteeism in the school, additional responses may be required. These additional responses may include temporary masking and testing to develop plans and strategies to lower transmission. If such situations develop, the school nurse will work with school administration, the health department, and Catholic Schools Office to determine next steps.

All school families in Maryland and Delaware are reminded that vaccination remains the primary means to protect students from serious illness as a result of contracting COVID and to reduce the spread of COVID to others. Regular handwashing or hand sanitizing continue to be effective mitigation strategies.

Moving forward from the last two years, let us offer gratitude to Almighty God for the blessings he has bestowed on us throughout the challenging days of COVID and seek his assistance each day of the Lenten season which begins this Wednesday, March 2.