



DIOCESE OF COVINGTON
Department of Catholic Schools

July 27, 2021

Dear Parents,

In just a few weeks schools across the Diocese of Covington will be welcoming students back for the 2021-2022 school year. As you make your final preparations for the new year, I wanted to provide an update on the COVID-19 prevention strategies that our schools will be using.

We have put in place safety protocols to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 as this virus continues to be present in our local community. I have included a document with this letter outlining the planned safety measures. All our school operations and activities will return to normal with these safety protocols in place. Individual schools may have procedures in addition to this document.

As parents, your support will be one of the most important factors in preventing the spread of COVID-19 and other illnesses in our schools. It will be very important that you continue monitoring your children for illness prior to coming to school each day. If your child is exhibiting illness symptoms, you must keep them home and work with your doctor to determine what the illness is and when it will be safe to return to school. We also ask that you continue teaching and reinforcing basic strategies to prevent the spread of all illnesses such as handwashing and covering coughs or sneezes.

Our schools will continue tracking COVID-19 positive cases. This will help us determine whether or not additional measures need to be taken to further prevent or slow the spread of COVID-19. In order to do this, parents must report COVID-19 positive cases to the school immediately. The school will also keep parents informed of case activity in the school. All of this communication will ensure we are responding appropriately to the illness risks in our school communities.

This will be our third school year impacted by the COVID-19 virus. While we are again starting the year with some uncertainties, we remain confident with what we have learned so far in mitigating the spread of this virus. Throughout the 2020-21 school year, we made changes to procedures based on our data. We will continue to monitor this again and make changes as necessary to maintain in-person learning.

In all things we place our trust in God. So I ask you to pray for another successful school year and ask God's protection for the health and safety of our students, faculty, staff, families and volunteers who will be part of our school communities this year.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Kendra McGuire
Superintendent of Schools



COVID-19 Return to School Requirements 2021-2022 School Year

The Department of Catholic Schools has released this COVID-19 Return to School Requirements document to provide all schools within the Diocese of Covington consistent procedures to return to school for in-person instruction for the 2021-2022 school year. Case activity will continue to be monitored across the diocese to determine if additional strategies need to be used to reduce the spread of COVID-19. These protocols are also subject to change based on government orders which will be reviewed and communicated to schools should that occur. A key factor in reducing the spread of COVID-19 and all illnesses is to keep children home when they are exhibiting symptoms and continue teaching general illness prevention strategies such as frequent hand washing and covering coughs and sneezes.

| School Activity | Diocesan Requirements |
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| Student Learning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools will offer in-person learning for the 2021-2022 school year. In the event that a student is required to isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19, the school will include the learner in remote daily instruction using the procedures established by the school. |
| Daily Health Assessment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees, students, and volunteers should complete a daily personal health assessment before leaving for school each day. Any employee, student, or volunteer who is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 should not come to school and contact their doctor. |
| Masks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Masks for students and staff will be optional and not required. Those who choose to wear a mask will be supported and encouraged to do so. Messages or images on masks must align with the Catholic faith and school dress code requirements. Schools have the final determination on acceptable masks. Masks may be used as a method of prevention depending on government mandates and/or high case activity in the school. Per government order, masks are required on school buses. |
| Immunizations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students must be current with the Kentucky immunization requirements to return to school for the 2021-2022 school year. All forms must be on file with the school office. The Diocese of Covington schools will not require students to get the COVID-19 vaccine. Families are encouraged to explore this option for their eligible children and get the vaccine if it meets your family's needs. |
| Spacing/Classroom | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is recommended that student seating is spaced three feet apart when possible. Create and maintain seating charts for students in all classes. These may be used for contact tracing if a student tests positive for COVID-19. |
| Water Fountains | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water fountains should only be used to fill water bottles. Students bring their own water bottles to be refilled throughout the day. Water fountains are to be cleaned and sanitized frequently. |

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| Cafeteria | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is recommended that students are spaced three feet apart when possible. ▪ Surfaces must be cleaned and sanitized between cohorts of diners. ▪ Students and staff use hand sanitizer or wash hands well before eating lunch or snacks. |
| School Sponsored Athletics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High schools and high school athletes must follow the KHSAA guidelines. ▪ All student athletes must complete the Diocese of Covington waiver and release form to be kept on file with the school. |
| Cleaning, Sanitation, and Environmental Standards | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Schools must clean and sanitize high touch surfaces frequently. ▪ Utilize the CDC's guidance on cleaning and disinfecting school facilities: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html |
| Contact Tracing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be prepared to cooperate with a contact tracing investigation, if needed, due to a positive COVID-19 case. |

Additional COVID-19 School Questions

Q1. What are the symptoms of COVID-19? The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has identified a wide-range of symptoms that can be mild to severe and symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with the following symptoms may have COVID-19: fever (above 100.4°F), chills, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle/body aches, headache, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea and a new, uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing. Follow this link to check your [symptoms](#).

Q2. What should a parent do if a child has illness symptoms? If your child shows illness [symptoms](#) that could be COVID-19, you should contact your doctor. Your doctor may ask that your child participate in a COVID-19 test. You must alert your school's main office and do not send your child to school. If the symptoms occur during the school day, your child will be sent to the office and you will be contacted to pick your child up from school. Your child may return to school when he/she has been symptom and fever free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication or your child's doctor has provided an alternative diagnosis.

Q3. What should I do if my child tests positive for COVID-19? You must contact your child's school immediately to report the positive case. You will need to provide details to the school principal to assist with contact tracing. This may include, but not be limited to: the date symptoms began, close contacts your child had with others, siblings (their school/grade levels), other activities, etc. This information will be used to determine if there were any close contacts in the school community. You should work with your child's primary care physician for treatment. Your child may not return to school until he/she has been cleared by their physician or isolated for 10 days since the onset of symptoms.

Q4. Will the school communicate positive student cases? Yes. Schools will continue to inform parents when their child is deemed a close contact to a positive case, if there is a positive case in a classroom, and will also keep the entire school community informed of case activity.