



The message applies to all archdiocesan, agency, parish and school locations and activities.

Dear School Families:

Thank you for your partnership over the past year and a half and your commitment to providing your children with a Catholic education. Looking ahead, we want to share with you anticipated safety protocols and operational guidance for the upcoming academic year.

Protecting the health and safety of our students and school staff while providing them with an excellent, in-person academic experience remain our priorities. Based on the guidance of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), consultation from our team of medical advisors, and our Archdiocesan COVID-19 Task Force, we plan a return to near-normal, pre-pandemic school operations while maintaining select safety protocols to ensure a healthy, in-person learning environment. While there remains the potential for some adjustments considering the growing prevalence of the delta variant and stalled vaccination rates, please note the following:

Returning to full pre-pandemic, near-normal operations

- School Masses will resume.
- There will no longer be cohorts; however, every classroom will maintain an assigned seating chart since any necessary quarantines will be limited to only the students in closest proximity to any COVID-positive student (i.e., fellow students seated in front, back, left or right).
- All extracurricular activities, athletics, theater, music, clubs, field trips, etc., will resume.
- Resuming before- and after-care programs.
- Library and computer labs will reopen.
- Wellness checks or staggered drop-off/pick-up schedules will no longer be required.
- No masks will be required for fully vaccinated students, teachers or staff. Guidance regarding masks for unvaccinated individuals will be released by early August.

Safety protocols for the 2021/22 school year

- Students who are ill or are experiencing COVID-19-like symptoms MUST stay home.
- We will follow prevailing local health department guidelines concerning quarantines.
- Classrooms and activities will be arranged to maintain 3 feet of physical distancing indoors whenever possible.
- Schools will maintain daily cleaning procedures for desks and high traffic areas.
- Students and staff will be encouraged to sanitize hands upon arrival to the classroom and throughout the day as a good hygiene practice, and to use water bottles instead of drinking directly from water fountains.

Lastly, providing proof of vaccination will be extremely helpful for contact tracing purposes and to ensure that vaccinated students, if exposed, are not included in any quarantine requirements.

Any student without a COVID-19 vaccination card on file, who is determined to be a close contact, will immediately be quarantined until proof of vaccination is received. Your school's leadership will provide more information about this in the coming weeks. Vaccination information will be kept confidential as with all other student records and medical history.

Again, we expect to have a final determination on the use of masks for unvaccinated individuals by early August. We will re-assess these guidelines, as necessary, during the academic year to ensure safe operations of our schools. For the sake of everyone's health and our collective ability to fully overcome the COVID-19 virus, we will continue to encourage vaccinations for faculty, staff and students over the age of 12.

We wish you all a safe and restful summer,

Office of Catholic Schools

Archdiocesan COVID-19 Task Force