

PITTSBURGH CATHOLIC SCHOOLS



Health and Safety Plan 2021-2022

Our commitment to our families is to offer an excellent educational experience deeply rooted in the faith, love and charity of the Catholic Church. Our schools exist for the purpose of promoting a Catholic way of life based on Gospel values and providing our students with a faith experience that will nurture a love for Jesus Christ that will fill their hearts for a lifetime..

As we return to school for the 2021-22 school year, we do so with great faith and hope that this will be a very healthy, happy school year for our students. We faced many challenges last year and our school community worked together to keep in-person instruction available all year with minimal interruptions. This required flexibility, patience, and the need to monitor and adjust protocols based on recommendations from health agencies. While many schools in our area are discussing how to make up for learning loss, we saw growth in students' achievement. Our schools did amazing work in very challenging times!

We are facing similar challenges this school year which require adjustments to our health and safety plan. We know that the most effective education is in-person. For this reason we place our focus on providing health and safety protocols that reduce potential exposures and reduce the number of students having to quarantine.

In compliance with the latest health and safety guidance from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Pennsylvania Departments of Education and Health (PDE and PA DOH), Allegheny County Department of Health, American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and Children's Hospital of Pennsylvania (CHOP) Policy Lab, the accompanying framework will serve as the template for the 2021-2022 school year. Take the time to read through the protocols. Of critical importance is the knowledge we all have from living through this pandemic that the environment can change quickly. We will be responsive to those changes as the situation improves or worsens in our communities. This includes every layer of mitigation and may require decisions to be adjusted on short notice.

We had all hoped for a "normal" return to school this year, but we do our very best to follow proper safety protocols. Your collaboration and patience is key in providing our students with proper school days in class with their friends.

General Principles for the Building and Operations

General Activities

1. It is our intent that visitors will be allowed back into the building. They will need to follow all health and safety requirements in place at the time of their visit.
2. High touch surfaces should be cleaned and sanitized frequently.
3. Hand sanitizers should be available in the hallways, near entrances and in strategic areas.
4. Sharing supplies will be limited, and when materials must be shared, cleaning in between use is recommended.
5. Students and teachers will use individual technology devices when possible.
6. When possible, special teachers and departmental teachers should go into the students' classrooms. If students transition to other classroom spaces, assigned seats should be maintained for contact tracing purposes. Students will be able to sing during music class if masked, 3 feet apart and all facing the same direction.
7. To increase ventilation, windows will be opened if and when possible.
8. Face masks requirements will be determined in accordance with the county transmission metrics and the guidance from various sources, which may include, but not limited to the CDC, PA DOH, PDE, and Allegheny County DOH. At this time, the information below has been determined to be masking policy using the aforementioned sources. This policy is subject to change at any time and will be communicated when adjustments are made.
 - a. The levels of transmission for a county are listed as Low, Moderate, Substantial and High and found at <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>
 - b. When counties are in moderate, substantial or higher, all individuals, regardless of vaccination status, wear masks indoors.
 - c. When a county is in a low community transmission rate for at least 2 weeks, masking may return to optional. Anyone that is not vaccinated at that time, will be encouraged to continue to mask indoors.
 - d. When masks are required, mask breaks will occur while implementing six foot social distancing during the day and will not have to be worn when eating or drinking.
 - e. At this time, masks are optional outdoors. Masks should be worn in crowded outdoor settings when there is sustained close contact.

Sharing the Faith

1. School masses will follow school protocols.

Principals will work with pastors and/or chaplains to develop a Mass schedule that is either in person or live-streamed.

- Attendance of parents and general community at the school liturgies will follow school guidelines. If the Mass is live-streamed, parents and families can also attend virtually.

Entering the Building

1. All who enter the building should immediately sanitize their hands by using sanitizers or washing hands.
2. Use of a mask for students who ride a bus will be dictated by school district policy. Currently, the PA Department of Health requires masks on public transit.
3. When masks are required, they must be worn properly (covering nose and mouth and fitted snugly against the sides of the individual's face) by faculty, staff, students and visitors as they enter the building and throughout the day.

Daily Monitoring of Health

Adherence to following.

- Masking in accordance with school policies at any given time. This will likely vary throughout the year given the dynamic nature of the virus, community spread and vaccination rates.
- Promoting good hygiene and proper handwashing
- Physical distancing measures
- Proper cleaning and disinfection
- Health monitoring of faculty, staff and students at home **before** coming to school.

Lunch

1. Students should wash/sanitize hands before lunch.
2. Students should stay with their class as they eat lunch, if possible.
3. Students should remain physically distant during lunch, ideally 6 feet apart.
4. The table and desks should be wiped down before and after each meal.
5. Meals will not be shared.
6. Meals and utensils should be served directly to the student and prepackaged if possible.

7. Students should wash/sanitize hands after lunch.

Recess

1. Students will go to recess using the procedures established in school operations regarding movement within the building.

2. Students will wash/sanitize their hands before going to recess and before returning to Class.

3. Students will not need to wear masks for outdoor recess.

4. Games and activities used during recess will be pre-approved locally by the principal and school health and safety committee to limit the spread of infectious disease.

5. Practice physical distancing while walking to recess.

Traveling Within the Building

1. As people travel about the building, masks will be worn if required.

2. Directionality should be considered in each school.

3. A schedule should be developed that takes into consideration the movement of students around the building.

4. Increased cleaning of all commonly touched items, like railings and door knobs, should be cleaned throughout the day.

Physical Education

1. Weather permitting, PE class should be held in outside space. Weather non-permitting, PE in the Gymnasium.

2. Students should wash/sanitize hands before and after activity.

3. It is preferred that students carry personal water bottles for hydration before, during and after activity.

4. Class equipment be sanitized frequently if possible (arrange class times to allow for a buffer between classes to allow the teacher to facilitate moving, washing and sanitizing).

5. Limit shared items or keep the same groupings throughout lessons.

Isolation

1. Establish an area that is supervised and can be physically distanced until a parent arrives. This may be the nurse's office.
2. Require masks of all who enter the room.
3. Disinfect room after each use.
4. Provide the room monitor additional PPE: Mask, Gown, Disposable Gloves, Face Shield or Goggles etc.
5. Keep in the room:
 - a. Disposable paper towels
 - b. Tissues
 - c. Waste container with plastic liner
 - d. Soap and Water or Hand Sanitizer
 - e. Hard-surface disinfectant

Classroom Operations

Classroom Set-up

1. Desks should face the same direction whenever possible. There may be times when this is not possible, but the students will maintain the 3 - 6 feet of distancing to the maximum extent possible.
2. Desks will be placed a minimum of 3 feet apart.
3. The first row of desks should be at least 6 feet from the teacher when he/she is teaching.

Materials within the Classroom

1. Classrooms should set up areas where students can store personal items that keep them isolated from use by others.
2. Sharing supplies and materials will be limited, and when materials must be shared, cleaning in between uses is recommended.
3. Establish procedures to wipe down surfaces and materials regularly (before and after every use is recommended).
4. Remind students to wash/sanitize their hands after using a shared item.

5. If students travel to an alternative room, an area and place should be established for the traveling student to store items away from those being used by others.

Virtual Learning

While we realize that in-person instruction is the most conducive environment for student learning and well-being, the need for virtual learning may become necessary due to school required COVID-19 quarantine. These are the only instances whereby virtual learning will be utilized. The information provided below is a guide. Virtual learning experiences are determined locally.

1. Provide the use of a Google Classroom and Google Meet to centralize materials, lessons, instruction, assessments, feedback and communications. (Platforms may differ by school as it is locally determined.)

2. Virtual instruction will take place as teachers:

- Provide a continued focus on our Catholic identity throughout instruction and in all content areas.
- Provide asynchronous and synchronous direct instruction by teacher.
- Incorporate recorded instructional follow up videos.
- Provide materials that are age- and grade-appropriate.
- Use textbook online components with timely follow-up.

3. Use assessments with timely feedback.

4. Goal is mastery of concepts within the curriculum.

5. Use small group and large group instruction to meet the needs of students.

6. Have regular communication with parents/guardians.

Health Protocol

Guidance for Dealing with COVID Cases

Schools will make efforts to monitor for COVID-19 related symptoms of students, faculty and staff. If a community, or specifically school, has cases of COVID-19, local health officials will be contacted to help identify those individuals and follow up on next steps. Below you will find some specific guidance related to situations involving the school, community and COVID-19.

All guidelines are subject to change due to updated public health guidance.

Vaccinations: It is highly recommended that everyone who is eligible get vaccinated, and those who are not yet eligible, get vaccinated when it is their turn. We will inform you of any changes in public health guidance as they arise.

If a student, faculty or staff member has a suspected case of COVID-19 or is demonstrating symptoms:

1. Immediately separate staff and students with COVID-19 symptoms (such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath) at school. Individuals who are sick should go home or to a healthcare facility depending on how severe their symptoms are. CDC guidance for caring for oneself and others who are sick should be followed.
2. Provide an isolation room.
3. Call for home transportation, if necessary.
4. Direct to return in accordance with one of the following scenarios
 - a. **No COVID Test:**
 - i. Alternate Diagnosis:
 1. Documentation of an alternative diagnosis from individual's health care provider; and
 2. Fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication; and
 3. Symptoms have improved.
 - ii. No Alternate Diagnosis:
 1. 10 days out from start of symptoms; and
 2. Fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication; and
 3. Symptoms have improved.
 - b. **COVID Test:**
 - i. Negative COVID test:
 1. Documentation of a negative COVID test from the individual's healthcare provider; and
 2. Fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication; and
 3. Symptoms have improved.
 - ii. Positive COVID test:
 1. 10 days out from the start of symptoms; and
 2. Fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication, and
 3. Symptoms have improved.

If a staff member or volunteer has a confirmed case of COVID-19:

1. Notify the local health officials to ask for guidance.
2. Send the staff member or volunteer home while local health officials determine next steps.
3. Quarantine close contacts, related to the suspected case of COVID-19, according to health official guidance as set forth herein..
 - a. A person is a close contact if they were within 6 feet of an infected person for 15 consecutive minutes or more in an indoor setting with or without a mask.

- b. **EXCEPTION:** In the K–12 indoor classroom setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student if both the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time.
4. Communicate to staff and families that there was a confirmed case – without using a name or identifying information of the person(s) involved.
5. Clean and sanitize the areas that may have been infected by the identified case of COVID-19.
6. Evaluate if any other cases related to the case were identified and decide to extend or end the quarantines of close contacts.
7. The COVID-positive staff/volunteer can return after the following conditions have been met:
 - 10 days out from the start of symptoms; and
 - Fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication, and
 - Symptoms have improved.

If a student has a confirmed case of COVID-19:

1. Notify local health officials to ask for guidance.
2. Send the student(s) home while health officials determine next steps.
3. Quarantine close contacts related to the suspected case of COVID-19 using health official guidance for this.
4. Communicate to staff and families that there was a confirmed case. Name or identifying information of the student with COVID-19 is not permitted.
5. Clean and sanitize areas related to the identified case of COVID-19.
6. Evaluate if any other cases related to the case were identified and decide to extend or end the quarantine of close contacts.
7. The COVID-positive student can return after the following conditions have been met:
 - 10 days out from the start of symptoms; and
 - Fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication, and symptoms have improved.

If a student/staff member has an exposure to a confirmed case of COVID-19, she/ he can return after the following conditions have been met:

1. Quarantine Duration if experiencing **No Symptoms:**
 - a. Quarantine 10 days from date of exposure; and
Return on day 11, wearing a mask on days 11-14.
 - b. **EXCEPTIONS:**
 - i. **COVID Test:** Quarantine can end after 7 days if the person does not develop symptoms and tests negative 5 days after exposure or later.
 - ii. **Vaccinated:** Close contacts who are fully vaccinated do not need to quarantine unless they have symptoms; however, they should get tested 3-5 days after exposure and wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until their test result is negative.

- iii. **Previously confirmed COVID:** Close contacts who were diagnosed with COVID within the past three months of exposure, recovered, and do not develop symptoms do not need to quarantine; however, they should get tested 3-5 days after exposure and wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until their test result is negative.
 - iv. **Exposure to COVID by member of household:**
 - 1. Quarantine through isolation period of household member; and
 - 2. Quarantine 10 days from end of isolation period; and
 - 3. Return on day 11, wearing a mask on days 11-14.
2. Quarantine Duration if experiencing **Symptoms:**
- a. If a Close Contact develops symptoms, see above protocol for individuals with a suspected case of COVID-19 or is demonstrating symptoms.

Before Care/Aftercare (if applicable)

1. Physical distancing practices and all required protocols at the time are to be observed.
2. Students are responsible for providing their own snack and beverage during their time in Aftercare. There will be no snack sharing.
3. All employees should follow the same health checklist practices as school employees.
4. All operational guidelines put into place in the school (e.g. movement through the building, recess, etc.) are to be practiced during sessions.
5. Disinfect shared rooms before and after use.
6. It is recommended that materials and toys used during these programs be cleaned and sanitized daily.
7. Monitored hand washing and sanitizing will be done on a regular basis.
8. Follow the recommendations for any suspected illness.

After-school Activities & Sports

1. Each principal is asked to examine the after-school activities in the school.
2. If there is a room available, where students may be physically distant, after school activities may continue. All rooms must be disinfected after use by the activity/club.
3. If in compliance with the state guidelines for events and gatherings, in-person gatherings may occur.

4. Sports may continue following the local PIAA regulations and Diocesan protocols in the case of high schools, **and** Diocesan health and safety protocols in the case of intramural and middle school athletics.

- Currently, CDC guidelines do not require masks to be worn while actively playing sports if the individual is fully vaccinated.

Travel

If you are traveling, please inform your school principal. The guidance regarding travel changes frequently, and depending on the travel destination, there may be a need for quarantine. Current CDC guidelines are available at:

- Domestic Travel: [Domestic Travel During COVID-19 | CDC](#)
- International Travel: [International Travel During COVID-19 | CDC](#)