



**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT ❖ OFFICE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS & CENTERS**  
Pastoral Center ❖ PO Box 40200 ❖ St. Petersburg, FL, 33743-0200 ❖ PH: 727-347-5539 ❖ Fax: 727-341-6848

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Dear Catholic School Parents and Guardians,

July 13, 2021

I pray that you are having a safe and blessed summer. Since we are about one month away from the beginning of the 2021-22 school year, I am writing to provide you with an update regarding Covid-19 protocols in Catholic schools for the upcoming year.

Our main goal has been and will continue to be providing the best Catholic education while safeguarding the health and wellbeing of our students and staff. Unlike many schools across the United States, we have the benefit of the past year's experience of being open for in-person learning. In making our decisions, we examined practices and data from the 2020-21 academic year, reviewed guidance from the CDC, Florida Department of Health, and Florida Department of Education, incorporated research on schools and Covid mitigation efforts, consulted with our Diocesan Covid-19 advisory committee, and discussed strategies with colleagues in the other dioceses of Florida. As you are likely aware, the guidance and best practices continue to evolve as we learn more about the virus and analyze the efficacy of efforts to combat it. As such, we will continue to monitor the situation and make changes as necessary. Below is a list of guidelines that have been given to all Catholic schools in the Diocese.

- Our expectation is that all students will attend school for in-person (brick and mortar) instruction. Schools will discontinue the practice of synchronous online instruction. However, students with physician-documented medical or familial issues may attend virtually at the discretion of the principal by using the Archdiocese of Miami Virtual School (ADOMVS) program in conjunction with their chosen DOSP Catholic school. Parents should consult their local Catholic school if they have medical or familial issues. While attending the ADOMVS, students may not participate in any sports, field trips, and extra/co-curricular activities.
- Schools may resume clubs, sports, parent meetings, and most field trips. These events and activities may have additional requirements based on the location and type of activity. Schools will keep parents informed about those requirements.
- Working together we can keep our children and families safe and healthy. Covid-19 can't spread in our schools if it's prevented from entering our local communities. As of this writing, the average vaccination rate for people twelve years and older in our two largest counties (Hillsborough and Pinellas) is 55.5%. I ask every family to speak to their primary care physician about the benefits and risks of vaccinations and other preventative measures you can take to keep your family and others safe. In addition, parents are asked to err on the side of caution by keeping their children home from school and getting them tested if they are experiencing Covid-like symptoms.
- As long as county and area levels of infection remain low, masks will be optional for students. Over the course of the academic year, schools may need to temporarily enact mandatory mask policies or quarantine sections of students as they've done in the past year. This will be decided



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on a school-by-school basis in consultation with the Office of Catholic Schools and Centers. In the event of a class-level quarantine, schools may revert to a temporary online learning period for those students. If this happens, families of affected students will be notified as soon as possible.

- Teachers and staff members who are not vaccinated will be required to use masks while indoors in the presence of others. The Diocese will continue providing the mobile testing van for all our employees.
- All standard social distancing, sanitation, cohorting, and cleanliness protocols will remain in effect. However, daily temperature checks will occur at the discretion of the school.
- School visitors and volunteers will be asked to provide proof of their vaccination status prior to being permitted into the school building and will be approved by the school administration on a case-by-case basis. If not vaccinated, visitors will be required to wear a mask while indoors, on campus.
- The Office of Catholic Schools and Centers will continue to monitor Covid-19 activity in the five counties we serve and stay current with research and guidelines from public health agencies. This information will be regularly communicated to all school leaders.

Please understand that we are doing everything we can to ensure the safety and wellbeing of everyone in our schools. I ask that you keep all our families, children, and staff members in your prayers. With your help and support, we look forward to a wonderful year of Catholic education in the Diocese of St. Petersburg.

Sincerely in Christ,

Christopher L. Pastura  
Superintendent of Catholic Schools and Centers  
Diocese of St. Petersburg