



DIOCESE OF COVINGTON
Department of Catholic Schools

August 19, 2021

Dear Parents,

I am writing to inform you of an update to the masking procedures for the Diocese of Covington schools. Earlier today a restraining order was issued by Judge Bertelsman blocking enforcement of Governor Beshear's executive order requiring masks in schools. There is another hearing in that case next Tuesday, August 24th, after which the judge will decide whether to continue to enjoin the executive order. A case involving similar issues is currently pending before the Kentucky Supreme Court, and a decision from that court could be issued any day.

Due to the restraining order, schools in the Diocese of Covington will return to the original COVID-19 plans. I have included these plans along with the updated quarantine procedures for your reference.

Since the case activity is currently high in Kentucky, we do encourage families to continue the use of masks as a preventative measure. However, the use of masks will remain optional until additional decisions are made by the courts or a school temporarily requires masks due to high case activity in their local school community. It is important to note that wearing a face covering may prevent your child from having to quarantine if they are deemed a close contact to a positive case.

We currently have 35 schools who have welcomed students back into their classrooms for the 2021-2022 school year and things are off to a great start. I ask your continued prayers for all our students and staff as they settle in to this new school year.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Kendra McGuire
Superintendent



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.

-Updated August 19, 2021

School Activity	Diocesan Requirements
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. ▪ Students who choose to wear a mask may be excluded from quarantines in some circumstances following a close contact exposure.
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 COVID-19 vaccine is not part of Kentucky's schedule of vaccinations for children. ▪ 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.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students bring their own water bottles to be refilled throughout the day. ▪ Water fountains are to be cleaned and sanitized frequently.
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.
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 for 10 days from the date symptoms began or the date of the positive test (if asymptomatic).

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.

Quarantine Procedures

Parents must report COVID-19 cases to their child's school. Each COVID-19 report will be reviewed and contact tracing will be conducted for the positive case. The guidance below will be used when determining the appropriate actions for each report. This guidance comes from the Kentucky Department of Public Health for schools.

Quarantines

When a positive case is identified and reported to the school contact tracing will be conducted to identify any close contacts to the positive case. A close contact is defined as follows:

- A close contact is someone who was within 6 feet of the positive COVID-19 case for a cumulative total of 15 minutes while the person was considered contagious. The contagious period is 48 hours prior to the onset of symptoms.
 - a. Exception: In the classroom setting, students who were at least 3 feet away from the positive case and masked may be excluded as a close contact based on the circumstances and prevention measures in place at the time. This will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis as long as specific details can be obtained and reviewed.
- If a student is deemed a close contact to the positive case, the parents will be notified and provided the close contact letter from the health department. The family may choose from the following quarantine options for their child:
 - Quarantine for 10 days if you have no symptoms.
 - Quarantine for 7 days if you have a negative COVID-19 test on or after day 5 and have no symptoms.
- If the close contact lives in the same household as the positive case, the following guidance from the NKY Health Department should be followed:
 - The quarantine for a household contact will begin after their last exposure to the positive case. If the contact can separate from the case within the home then they are considered no longer exposed. The quarantine options above may be used.
- If an individual meets the following criteria, he/she will not have to quarantine when considered to be a close contact to a positive case:
 - The person has been fully vaccinated and shows no symptoms of COVID-19
 - The person has previously tested positive for COVID-19 and recovered (within the past three months) and shows no symptoms
 - If someone is exempt from quarantine and begins to show symptoms within 14 days of the close contact exposure then he/she must isolate immediately, notify the school, and contact their doctor for treatment/testing.