



Date: July 29, 2021

Re: Mitigation and Preventative COVID-19 Strategies for School Year 2021-2022

Dear Parents/Guardians, Administrators, Faculty, and Staff,

The mission of the Church is to evangelize. The Lord commanded his disciples to go out and make disciples of all nations. Parents are the primary educators in the faith, and the Church works with parents to catechize children through the ministries of the parish and Catholic schools. In this fundamental ministry of the Church, the Catholic school holds not just a special place. The Catholic school is at the heart of the Church. Indeed, the Church has stated that to fulfill the mission of evangelization; a school is needed. We are grateful for the extraordinary efforts of our teachers and administrators, pastors and parents, students, and community throughout the 2020-2021 school year. As we prepare for the 2021-2022 school year, let us pray for a safe and productive school year in which we work closely with parents to help form their children into the saints they are called to be.

Lord, thank you for the unique gifts of all who work for our Catholic schools and the students they serve. We ask that the Holy Spirit provide our students with grace, enthusiasm, and a heart that is excited to learn and grow together. May our students and staff feel your enduring love for them. A love that instills in them the confidence to persevere through trials like the spread of COVID-19. Bless everyone with the hope for a safe and productive school year that will build up your Kingdom. For everything they do is for your greater glory. Amen.

Below are the mitigation and preventative COVID-19 strategies intended to keep all who work in and attend our schools safe.

### **Decision Making**

- Schools (Pastors, Principals, School Boards, and CSO) should collaborate and make local mitigation and prevention strategy decisions.
- Schools (Pastors, Principals, School Boards, and CSO) can change mitigation and prevention strategies based on local conditions.
- Schools must follow the Bishop's Directives, Federal Mandates, and the Governor's Executive Orders to combat the spread of COVID-19.

### **Vaccination**

- The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend (DFWSB) does not mandate COVID-19 vaccinations for students or staff.
- The DFWSB encourages all eligible individuals to get COVID-19 vaccinated.

### **Masking/Face Coverings**

- Masking/Face Coverings Optional during the normal school day.
  - The Federal Government continues to mandate masking/face coverings on all school busses or school-sponsored transportation.
- The DFWSB encourages all unvaccinated students and staff to wear masks/face coverings.

### **Physical Distancing**

- When possible, keep physical distance to a minimum of three feet.

### **Hand Hygiene**



- Schools should continue to promote frequent hand-washing (at least 20 seconds) and good hygiene (before and after: meals, recess, sharing supplies, use of equipment, going to the restroom, etc.).
- Use soap or hand sanitizers with 60% or more alcohol.

### **Cleaning**

- Follow a daily cleaning schedule for routine cleaning, clean high-touch surfaces.
- Thoroughly clean within 24-hours areas where someone has been sick or tested positive for COVID-19.

### **Daily Screening**

- Schools should encourage parents to monitor their children daily and keep students home if symptoms of COVID-19 or other illnesses are present.
- Symptoms of COVID-19 include a temperature of 100.4 or higher; loss of taste or smell; sore throat; diarrhea, nausea, or vomiting; headache; congestion or runny nose; and cough or difficulty breathing.
- Schools will send home any student they believe has COVID-19 symptoms and encourage parents to get a COVID-19 test.
- Schools should continue to screen volunteers, construction workers, and guests when they enter the building.
- [Daily Parent Screening Tool](#)

### **Contact Tracing, Quarantine, and Isolation**

- Follow your local health department guidelines for contract tracing.
- All fully vaccinated asymptomatic students and staff do not need to quarantine but should monitor for symptoms throughout the 14 days following their exposure.
- Close contacts who are unvaccinated MUST quarantine.
- Follow IDOH: Guidelines for isolation, quarantine, testing, and return to school.

### **Virtual Learning and Academics**

- While our schools will open and hopefully remain in person for the school year, we will have students out for isolation, quarantine, and illness. Therefore, schools should set up procedures for students' absences to keep up with their academics.
- Schools will determine whether or not they will offer a Virtually Only option.

### **Monitoring and Layered Mitigation Strategies**

- Our schools will continue to monitor the spread of Covid-19 in their areas and respond accordingly regarding layered mitigation prevention strategies.

Sincerely,

  
Superintendent of Schools

Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend