



THE ARCHDIOCESE OF
GALVESTON-HOUSTON

August 31, 2021

Dear Parents,

The month of August has been quite eventful. With the excitement of the new school year and the joy of welcoming our students to a new learning adventure, we also faced the challenge of discerning how the school year would begin amidst the global pandemic. After reviewing the numbers related to the COVID virus, the Archdiocesan leadership team decided to require masks for students in grades K-12. That decision was not made lightly, and we shared that it would be reviewed frequently.

True to that promise, we are reviewing numbers on a weekly basis and will continue to evaluate the decision every two weeks. We are in weekly conversations with experts from various medical entities, and we review the current data from our schools' number of cases, county and school district data dashboards, and The Texas Medical Center. With the latest review, it was decided that we will continue to require masks until there is a steady decline in the number of COVID cases as well as an increase in the number of available hospital beds, especially for children.

We continue to update our principals every other week, with the expectation that they will communicate with families the following week regarding any changes to the protocols, which include:

- ❖ Requiring self-screening for staff and students daily
- ❖ Expecting masks be correctly worn indoors (except when in active play during PE or Athletics as well as Band) for students in grades K-12 and all staff and visitors
- ❖ Encouraging handwashing and hygiene
- ❖ Allowing extracurricular activities (sports and clubs) and field trips
- ❖ Identifying an isolation room and using it if needed
- ❖ Following quarantine guidelines from the CSO; those fully vaccinated, masked, and asymptomatic do not have to quarantine
- ❖ Screening masked volunteers to serve the school community
- ❖ Cleaning regularly and properly
- ❖ Implementing parish protocols for Masses and liturgical celebrations following Archdiocesan directives*

*The obligation to attend Mass remains dispensed until further notice; online Mass attendance is encouraged for those not attending in person.

We anticipate that the decision to continue to require masks at this time will not please all families. Please know that these decisions are prayerfully considered by the Archdiocesan leadership team for the good of all and, as stated previously, will be reviewed again in two weeks. If you have comments, suggestions, or data to share, please use our email address: COVIDshare@archgh.org.

We thank you for your continued support of your school's leadership teams, and we join you in prayer as we unite to gain strength in community and perseverance in solidarity.

In Him we trust,



Debra Haney
Superintendent of Catholic Schools



Most Reverend Italo Dell'Oro, C.R.S.
Vicar General