



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF
PITTSBURGH

COVID Health and Safety Plan 2021-2022

Parish Faith Formation and Youth Ministry

Our parish's commitment is to offer an excellent formation experience to students, deeply rooted in the faith, love and charity of the Catholic Church. Our parishes 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 begin a new catechetical 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 community worked together to keep instruction available with needed adaptations. This required flexibility, patience, and the need to monitor and adjust protocols based on recommendations from health agencies. Our parishes did amazing work in very challenging times!

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 prepared under the direction of the Diocese of Pittsburgh's Legal Office will serve as the template for the 2021-2022 catechetical year. 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" experience of parish life this year, but we do our very best to follow proper safety protocols. Your collaboration and patience is key in providing our students with the best in faith formation in these challenging times.

General Principles for the Building and Operations

General Activities

- High touch surfaces shall be cleaned and sanitized frequently.
- Hand sanitizers will be available in the hallways, near entrances and in strategic areas.
- To increase ventilation, windows will be opened if and when possible.
- 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. This policy is subject to change at any time and will be communicated when adjustments are made.
 - As of August, 2021, **we have a universal mask requirement indoors** based upon the aforementioned sources and the information below.
 - 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>
 - When counties are in moderate, substantial or higher, all individuals, regardless of vaccination status, wear masks indoors.
 - 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.
 - When masks are required, mask breaks will occur while implementing six foot social distancing and will not have to be worn when eating, drinking or while engaged in active games.
 - At this time, masks are optional outdoors. Masks should be worn in crowded outdoor settings when there is sustained close contact.
 - Exemptions for the face mask requirement will granted to those who provide documentation from the individual's treating physician (PCP or Specialist) indicating the individual is under the physician's care and cannot wear a face mask due to a specified medical condition.
 - Please use the enclosed Medical Exemption Form.

Entering the Building

All who enter the building should adhere to the following:

- Wear a mask properly in accordance with current school policies.
- Exercise good hygiene and proper handwashing, including sanitizing hands upon entering the building
- **Screen Health Daily** at home **before** coming to the programming areas
 - **Prior to entering programming area, all are to ask themselves the questions below. Should the answer to any of the questions on any given day be "Yes," that person is expected not to come/send their son/daughter:**
 - Have I or has my son/daughter had a fever as defined by the CDC during the past 24 hours?
 - Have I or has my son/daughter had a new or unexpected cough during the past 7 days?

- Have I or has my son/daughter been around anyone exhibiting these symptoms within the past 14 days?
- Do I or my son/daughter live with anyone who has been sick, has exhibited symptoms of COVID-19, or is currently under quarantine for exposure to COVID-19?
- Have I or has my son/daughter traveled domestically or internationally, necessitating quarantine consistent with CDC guidelines?
- Have I or has my son/daughter disregarded CDC guidelines and failed to limit his/her exposure to COVID-19?

Eating

- Students should wash/sanitize hands before/after eating.
- Students should remain physically distant during meals, ideally 6 feet apart.
- Eating areas (serving spaces/tables...) should be wiped down before and after eating.
- Personal food will not be shared.
- Meals and utensils should be served directly to the student and prepackaged if possible.

Active Play/Games

- Weather permitting, active games/play should be held outside as possible.
- When possible, students should avoid active play with other classes/groups
- Students will wash/sanitize their hands before/after active play
- Students will not need to wear masks for outdoor recess or indoor active games
- It is preferred that students carry personal water bottles for hydration before, during and after activity.
- Game equipment should be sanitized frequently as is possible

Traveling Within the Building

- As people travel about the building, masks will be worn if required.
- Directionality should be considered in each school so as to avoid crowds and congestion.
- A schedule should be developed that takes into consideration the movement of students around the building.
- All commonly touched items, like railings and door knobs, should be cleaned frequently.

Isolation for those who Present Symptoms during Sessions

- Anyone who presents with symptoms or suspected symptoms of COVID-19 will be isolated pending the arrival of a parent/guardian to pick up the student.
 - **Parents/Guardians understand and agree that, in the event their child develops symptoms or suspected symptoms of COVID-19 or other illness, or if otherwise requested by the School, their child will be isolated, Parents/Guardians will be contacted by School, and Parents/Guardians will make immediate preparations to have their child picked up from the parish.**
- A supervised isolation area will be established with individuals physically distanced and masked therein.
 - This may be the nurse's office.

- The room will be disinfected after each use.
- The room monitor will have supplies including:
 - Additional PPE: Mask, Gown, Disposable Gloves, Face Shield or Goggles etc.
 - Disposable paper towels
 - Tissues
 - Waste container with plastic liner
 - Soap and Water or Hand Sanitizer
 - Hard-surface disinfectant

Classroom Operations

Classroom Set-up

- Desks should face the same direction whenever possible.
- Desks will be placed a minimum of 3 feet apart.
- The first row of desks should be at least 6 feet from the teacher when he/she is teaching.

Materials within the Classroom

- Classrooms should set up areas where students can store personal items that keep them isolated from use by others.
- Sharing supplies and materials will be limited, and when materials must be shared, cleaning in between uses is recommended.
- Establish procedures to wipe down surfaces and materials regularly
- 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. The information provided below is a guide. Virtual learning experiences are determined locally.
 - **Such distance learning shall be consistent with the parish's mission, quality, and support, and is subject to the terms of the Parent Handbook and Diocesan Policies.**
 - **Students and their Parents/Guardians understand and agree that in-person classes may be recorded and/or live streamed to facilitate distance learning. The teacher/administrator shall have the sole ability to make such recordings, which shall be used strictly for educational purposes by the parish.**
 - **Students and their Parents/Guardians further understand and agree that any distance learning offered online by the parish through educational platforms such as Google Classroom and Zoom platforms for online synchronous video instruction involve web-based activities which entail known and unanticipated risks that cannot be eliminated. As a result, the parish recommends the use of appropriate Internet filtering software.**

- Platforms may differ by parish as it is locally determined.
- Virtual instruction will take place as teachers:
 - Incorporate recorded instructional follow up videos.
 - Provide materials that are age- and grade-appropriate.
 - Use textbook online components with timely follow-up.
 - Use assessments with timely feedback.
 - Complete curriculum requirements as determined by the diocese
 - Use small group and large group instruction to meet the needs of students.
 - Have regular communication with parents/guardians.

Dealing with COVID Cases

Parishes will make efforts to monitor for COVID-19 related symptoms of students, volunteers and staff. Below you will find some specific guidance related to situations involving the, community and COVID-19. **All guidelines are subject to change due to updated public health guidance.**

Isolation and Quarantine

- Students and their Parents/Guardians understand and agree that anyone who contracts COVID-19 or becomes exposed to someone with COVID-19 will need to be isolated or quarantined pursuant to CDC guidelines before returning to parish premises.

If a student, volunteer or staff member has a suspected case of COVID-19 or is demonstrating symptoms, the following steps will be taken:

1. Immediately separate staff, volunteers and students with COVID-19 symptoms (such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath) at the parish. 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. Send the staff member or volunteer home while local health officials determine next steps.
2. 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.
3. Communicate to staff, volunteers and families that there was a confirmed case – without using a name or identifying information of the person(s) involved.
4. Clean and sanitize the areas that may have been infected by the identified case of COVID-19.
5. Evaluate if any other cases related to the case were identified and decide to extend or end the quarantines of close contacts.
6. 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, the following steps will be taken:

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

If a student/staff member/volunteer 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. **Masked, Socially Distanced Unvaccinated Students**:
 1. Unvaccinated students who were 3-6 feet from an infected person and both masked consistently and correctly do not need to take any action so long as they do not experience symptoms.
 - iii. **Vaccinated**:
 1. **Staff/volunteers**: Close contacts who are fully vaccinated do not need to quarantine unless they have symptoms; however, they should get tested 2-5 days after exposure and wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until their test result is negative.
 2. **Students**:
 - a. Vaccinated students who were **3-6 feet** from an infected person and both **masked** do not need to take any action unless they develop symptoms.
 - b. Vaccinated students who were **closer** or either was **unmasked** need to wear a mask and get tested 2-5 days after exposure.
 - iv. **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 2-5 days after exposure and wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until their test result is negative.
 - v. **Exposure to COVID by member of household**:
 1. If close contact is vaccinated, there is no need to quarantine.
 2. If close contact is not vaccinated:
 - a. Quarantine through isolation period of household member; and
 - b. Quarantine 10 days from end of isolation period; and
 - c. 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.

Travel

When traveling, families, staff and volunteers should inform the faith formation director/youth minister. The guidance regarding travel changes frequently, and international travel may require quarantine and testing.

Request for Medical Exemption to Mask Requirements

If your son/daughter is unable to wear a face covering during faith formation/youth ministry due to a medical or mental health condition or disability, you must provide to the catechetical administrator/youth minister, this form signed and dated from your son/daughter’s treating physician (pediatrician or specialist). This form must specify the medical or mental health condition or disability that precludes your son/daughter from wearing a face covering in school, as well as suggestions for alternative means for your son/daughter for preventing the spread of the virus.

A physician is defined as an M.D. for Doctor of Medicine or D.O. for Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine. Medical notes from alternative health providers, such as Chiropractors, etc., will not be accepted.

Additionally, the parish will require students with a Medical Exemption to Mask Requirements to remain at least 6 feet apart from other individuals for social distancing while indoors in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control guidelines and local Health Department mandates.

The parish reserves the right to not accept a Request for Medical Exemption to Mask Requirements.

The parish may require that a student wear a face shield when social distancing is not possible.

The parent will need to submit this informational sheet signed, with the documentation from the physician when requesting a Medical Exemption to Mask Requirements.

Parent Signature _____

Date _____

SECTION A. To be completed by your child’s parent/guardian.

Full Name of Child: _____

School: _____

Grade for 2021-2022 School Year: _____

I am requesting an exemption from the mask requirements due to my understanding that my son/daughter has a documented medical or mental health condition or disability that precludes the wearing of a face covering in school, and I am requesting an exemption from this requirement.

I understand that:

1. By not wearing a face covering in school, my child may be at increased risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19;
2. The school may consider appropriate alternative learning options for my child, including whether virtual learning is appropriate;
3. My child may be referred for an evaluation to determine if any disability prevents my child from wearing a face covering and whether and to what extent accommodations will be provided;
4. Submitting this form constitutes my permission for the School to communicate with my child’s healthcare provider regarding this medical or mental health condition or disability; and
5. Submitting this form does not guarantee that my medical exemption request will be granted. The School must first review my request and provide notification if it is granted.

Parent/Guardian Name (Print)

Parent/Guardian Signature

SECTION B. To be completed by your son/daughter's healthcare provider.

Full Name of Healthcare Provider: _____

Office Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Full Name of Patient (the student): _____

Subject to the penalties of unsworn falsification to authorities, I hereby certify that it is my professional opinion, with a reasonable degree of professional certainty, that [check the box that applies]:

My patient (the student) does NOT have any medical or mental health condition or disability that precludes the wearing of a face covering in school;

My patient (the student) has a medical or mental health condition or disability that relates to his or her wearing a face covering in school, but he or she can tolerate wearing a face covering in school if accommodations are provided. The recommended accommodations are (specify):

My patient (the student) has a medical or mental health condition or disability that precludes the wearing of a face covering in school.

If you checked either the second or third box, please identify the medical or mental health condition or disability and specify how that relates to your patient's (the student's) ability to wear a face covering in school:

If you checked either the second or third box, please specify any and all alternative means that may be used by your patient (the student), while your patient (the student) is not wearing a face covering in school, to protect your patient (the student) and others from, and to prevent the contraction and spread of, COVID-19 in school:

Physician Signature

Date