



2021 – 2022 FAQs COVID-19 Safety Guidelines for Parishes and Parish Ministries – Archdiocese of San Antonio

➤ **Are masks required?**

Masks are recommended indoors for all those not vaccinated. No one is to be asked for proof of vaccination.

➤ **What is considered social distancing?**

1. The CDC recommends 3 feet between children/youth and 6 feet between adult volunteers/staff and children/youth.
2. Social distancing should not impede the pastoral experience for all participants.

➤ **Do children/youth/adult volunteers need to quarantine if they are a close contact for someone diagnosed with COVID-19?**

1. Close contacts identified through contact tracing should quarantine. Per CDC guidance, quarantine is not needed if an individual is fully vaccinated and shows no symptoms. Quarantine is also not needed if an individual tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 3 months, recovered, and has not developed new symptoms.
2. Quarantine period is for 10 days.

➤ **Is there a difference between isolation and quarantine?**

Yes. Quarantine keeps someone who might have been exposed to the virus away from others. Isolation keeps someone who is infected with the virus away from others. If someone tests positive for COVID-19, they must isolate for 10 days, regardless if they are fully vaccinated. If someone is considered a close contact to the infected person, they must quarantine.

➤ **What cleaning/disinfecting procedures are needed?**

Cleaning procedures should include regular cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing of facilities.

➤ **Should hand washing and using hand sanitizer be continued?**

Children, youth, volunteers, and staff should continue with handwashing and hygiene protocols related to the prevention of the virus.

➤ **Should windows or doors be opened?**

The CDC has found that improving ventilation can reduce transmission of COVID-19 by opening doors, windows, and using fans to improve circulation. It is advisable to have the parish HVAC contractor inspect the HVAC units to ensure that the fresh air intake is set appropriately. This can be done during an upcoming scheduled maintenance.

➤ **What symptoms should exclude a child, youth, volunteer, adult participant or staff member from coming to the parish?**

For screening purposes, we commend this list <https://www.cdc.gov/screening/paper-version.pdf> from the CDC. Symptom screening should not try to identify every known symptom of COVID-19. No single symptom indicates someone has COVID-19, and many COVID-19 symptoms can occur when a person does not have COVID-19 or any infectious illness. Instead, use symptom screening to determine if an individual currently has an infectious illness that they might pass onto others. The presence of any of the symptoms below generally suggests an individual has an infectious illness and should not attend school, regardless of whether the illness is COVID-19:

- temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher (CDC states 100.4)
- sore throat
- cough (for students with chronic cough due to allergies or asthma, a change in their cough from baseline)
- difficulty breathing (for students with asthma, a change from their baseline breathing)
- diarrhea or vomiting
- new loss of taste or smell
- new onset of severe headache, especially with a fever

➤ **If a child, youth, volunteer, adult participant or staff member is ill, when can they return to the parish?**

- if an individual has a fever, they can return to the parish when they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever suppressing medications.
- if an individual has vomiting, nausea or severe abdominal pain, they can return to the parish when they are symptom-free for 24 hours.
- if an individual has a sore throat, acute cold or persistent cough, they can return to the parish when they are symptom-free.
- earache, they can return to the parish when they are symptom-free
- diarrhea-free for 24 hours without the use of diarrhea suppressing medications.
- COVID-19 symptoms; follow the guidelines listed above.
- COVID-19 positive, after the isolation period has ended.

➤ **Is all religious education and youth ministry now going to take place onsite at the parish?**

In-Person religious education and youth ministry, always with the appropriate safety precautions, is preferred, but hybrid models including online and home-based types may be used for individuals and families who prefer them.

➤ **What specific release forms for minors are necessary at this time?**

- Any and all formats that include online interaction of minors (those 17yrs. old and under) with any adult volunteer or staff member and/or parish onsite in-person formation require that parents sign the following release form:
<https://www.archsa.org/images/uploads/2020-Informed-Consent-Minor-Participation-Form.pdf>
- Please include the following General Disclaimer all your registration forms for religious education and youth ministry:

[Name of Parish] is dedicated to preventing the transmission of COVID-19. Even with these precautions, infections are still possible and may result in serious illness or even death. If you have concerns about your child's safety, or your child or someone in your household is in a vulnerable population, you may opt to have your child participate in religious education/youth group on-line or by correspondence.

➤ **For current *liturgical* COVID-19 Safety Guidelines, please see Bishop Michael Boulette's communication:** https://www.archsa.org/images/uploads/05-20-2021_Update-Letter-Bishop-Michael-Boulette.pdf

These guidelines are subject to change according to the guidance of the CDC, local health department, the Archdiocese of San Antonio, or state government.