



Saturday, July 31, 2021
Feast of St. Ignatius of Loyola

Letter Regarding 2021-2022 School Year and COVID-19 Policies

Dear Catholic School Faculty, Staff, and Families,

This time last year we were all praying for the 2020-2021 school year. We were praying for the opportunity to be together in our school communities and that the accommodations in response to a pandemic would not intolerably detract us from teaching and learning in our Catholic schools. By the grace of God, all of our Catholic schools in the Diocese were able to return to in-person instruction or in a hybrid way. In doing so, another bright chapter in the storied tradition of Catholic education and formation was written by you through your perseverance and zeal to make God known, loved, and served in our schools.

As we approach another school year, we will again look for prudent actions to appropriately address the enduring concerns of COVID-19. Moreover, after considering the recent trends in Ohio, the availability of vaccinations for people 12 and older, the low-risk that COVID-19 poses for children, the guidance of healthcare providers, and the experience of reopening our parishes to their normal activities, we expect that schools will return to more customary operations.

Some considerations for the 2021-2022 school year are the following:

- Students, faculty, or staff who are ill or experiencing symptoms must stay home. If not already adopted, schools should consider a “fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication” policy before returning to school or activities.
- For any cases of COVID-19, the policies of the local health department for quarantining and reporting will be followed. Please be aware that these policies are updated frequently; continue to be observant of the changes in these areas from local health officials.
- Good hygiene routines and regular cleaning procedures should continue to be practiced.
- Social distancing is not required but continues to be recommended by the Ohio Department of Health.
- At this time, masks are voluntary for all students, faculty, and staff. Policies should ensure that all those who wish to wear a mask may do so, if desired.
- Regular occupancy numbers in classrooms, lunchrooms, and other spaces may resume.
- Customary classroom instruction should resume without the need for hybrid or all-remote learning options.

Some considerations for the 2021-2022 school year (continued):

- The CDC continues to require that masks be worn on all public transportation, including school buses operated by public schools. This requirement is regardless of vaccination status of students, faculty, or staff. It is unlikely that this will change before the beginning of the year.
- Athletic and extracurricular activities may resume their normal schedules and procedures.
- Vaccinations continue to be encouraged but are not mandatory for students or employees.
- Schools should refrain from inquiring about an employee's or student's vaccination status, unless there is a professional reason to do so. For example, to determine whether isolation or quarantine is necessary after a confirmed positive case. Employers, including anyone in a supervisory role, should refrain from even casually asking employees about their vaccination status, unless there is a legitimate reason to do so.

Along with the other Dioceses across the state and public health officials, we will continue to monitor the situation as we begin this school year. Thank you again for your enthusiastic commitment to Catholic education, and by God's grace, we will continue to build on the fruit of the extraordinary efforts of our principals, teachers, staff, students, and families.

In Our Lady,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew Daniels". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "D" and "L" at the end.

Matthew Daniels
Senior Director