



THE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN  
THE ARCHDIOCESE  
OF KANSAS CITY IN KANSAS  
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## **COVID Protocols and Guidelines for the 2021-22 School Year – Johnson County Schools**

**August 13, 2021**

The Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas is committed to the health and safety of students, teachers and families. While COVID-19 has presented many challenges since March of 2020, Catholic schools have proven their dedication to students and families by remaining open and committed to the academic and spiritual formation of students. While navigating the pandemic, many lessons have been learned. Due to the evolving circumstances surrounding COVID-19 it is essential for Archdiocesan schools to remain open for in-person learning and to be flexible and resilient, regardless of the challenges presented by the pandemic.

In preparation for the 2021-22 school year a number of people have been consulted to identify best practices and guidelines for the new school year. Among those consulted were principals, school parents, medical professionals, school counselors, pastors, and representatives of the archdiocese.

The Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas appreciates the support received from families as schools have navigated this unprecedented pandemic. Catholic school leaders are looking forward to a unified effort between families and schools throughout the 2021-22 school year to keep our students safely in school.

### **MASKS**

On August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the Board of County Commissioners of Johnson County issued Public Health Order No. 001-21. Item 2c of the order specifically exempts “persons engaged in religious services, ceremonies or activities.” As Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas, we follow the rich tradition of Christ in the Eucharist as the source and summit of our entire Christian life. Every aspect of our lives, and, by extension, everything that takes place within our schools, is informed by this principle. Our faith is at the center of all aspects of our school curriculum and all activities undertaken during the school day. As such, pursuant to item 2c, our schools are exempt from the Public Health Order. However, in deference to the common good and with due respect for the safety of our faculty, staff and students, as well as for those in the broader community, pastors and principals of our schools in Johnson County should require masks in their respective schools for students in grades kindergarten through and including grade 6 or for all students through grade 8 if not separated from lower grades, and should require masks for all faculty, staff and visitors while inside the school building except while eating or drinking.

As Catholic school educators, we are called to collaborate with the parents of our students who are the primary educators of their children. Parents are best equipped to make decisions on behalf of their children, including decisions regarding personal health. That being said, all Archdiocesan schools within Johnson County must allow exemptions to a mask requirement if enacted by a school for the following:

*Persons with a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that prevents wearing a face covering. This includes persons with a medical condition for whom wearing a face covering could obstruct breathing or who are unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a face covering without assistance.*

An exemption letter from a medical doctor, mental health professional or parent is acceptable for our schools in Johnson County.

## VACCINATIONS AND QUARANTINE

According to the CDC, an individual is considered fully vaccinated for COVID-19 two weeks after receiving the second dose in a two-dose series (Pfizer or Moderna) or two weeks after receiving a single-dose vaccine (Johnson and Johnson). Consideration of natural immunity for those who have had Covid-19 should be considered.

If the student/staff member develops symptoms consistent with COVID-19 within 14 days of exposure, they should isolate, be clinically evaluated, and tested, if needed.

Although the risk is low, if a fully vaccinated student or staff member develops symptoms consistent with COVID-19, they should contact their Primary Care Physician for further guidance and testing, if needed.

## INSTRUCTION

***Schools are encouraged to implement layers of protection to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Each school may determine the strategies appropriate for their building(s). Please check with the school administrator regarding specific mitigation strategies.***

Students are expected to be present at school for in-person learning daily. On-line learning will not be a routine instructional model available to students unless circumstances dictate the need for remote learning (e.g. a stay at home order is issued by the state/local health department).

The method of instruction for students in quarantine will be determined by the school administration.

Social distancing of three feet is recommended in the classroom and six feet in the cafeteria. A seating chart should be kept by the teacher to aide in contact tracing.

Cohorting of students is recommended, when possible.

Outdoor instruction should be an option, weather permitting.

Schools should minimize congregating in the hallways and other common areas.

Frequent hand washing/sanitizing is encouraged.

## HEALTH

Parents and staff members are asked to monitor their child's/personal health. If a student or staff member has COVID-19 like symptoms (i.e., fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea, or diarrhea) **STAY HOME** and contact a health care provider.