



# DIOCESE OF LAS VEGAS CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

## COVID-19 PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PLAN

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August 2021

This plan has been created to assist in planning for and responding to the operation of schools in the Diocese of Las Vegas for the 2021-2022 school year. The guidelines referenced in this plan are based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Southern Nevada Health District (SNHD), the State of Nevada, and the Diocesan Restoration Advisory Council. Regular updates to this plan will be made based upon information provided by the CDC, and all applicable federal, state and local agencies.

Our strategies center on two essential principles: health and safety. Looking back over the course of the last school year, we successfully met the challenges of the pandemic while keeping our students safe. Our experience clearly demonstrates that our schools are at a lower risk for COVID-19 when implementing key practices and strategies. Prevention through mitigation, such as physical distancing, masks, and hygiene, are still the best methods to prevent COVID-19 outbreaks in school settings, as well as any other common diseases.

While many have been vaccinated, the response to the pandemic remains ongoing. Therefore, recommendations and mitigation practices for schools will vary during the 2021-2022 academic year. In an effort to ensure the health and well-being of our students, faculty, staff, and families we ask for your continued cooperation and support. We look forward to welcoming our students back to school and will continue to make the decisions necessary to ensure the safety of all who are entrusted to our care.

On behalf of Bishop Thomas, Bishop Gordon, and our Diocesan Leadership, please know that we are incredibly proud of the work and reputation of all of our schools. As a result of the dedication, creativity, and resilience of our administrators, faculty, and staff, Catholic education in the Diocese of Las Vegas continues to thrive. We remain grateful for your commitment to our schools and to Catholic education.

## Monitoring for COVID-19

Parents and guardians are to monitor their children for symptoms of COVID-19 and keep their students home from school when symptomatic. Likewise, faculty/staff are to self-assess for symptoms and stay home when symptoms are present.

Students and faculty/staff who are sick or symptomatic with COVID-19 symptoms or other illnesses must remain home and cannot come to school. Any student or faculty/staff member who has a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher should not report to school. Please do not send students to school if they exhibit ANY of the following symptoms:

- Fever
- Excessive fatigue
- New or worsening cough
- New or worsening shortness of breath/trouble breathing
- Chills
- Sore throat
- Muscle/body aches
- New loss of taste or smell
- New or worsening headache
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- New nasal congestion or runny nose

### Parent/Guardian and Student Responsibilities

A collaborative process between schools and parents/guardians/students is essential for successfully managing illness in a school setting. All parties should be equally responsible for managing the needed steps.

- Monitor symptoms daily, before and after school attendance.
- Inform the school of any exposure to COVID-19.
- Immediately report any symptoms and keep the student at home.
- Provide COVID-19 testing results.
- Agree to follow isolation and quarantine guidelines when required.

Additionally, the following will be instituted by each school:

- Immediately sending symptomatic students or staff home or who are identified as a close contact of COVID-19.
- Designate a room to isolate students while they are waiting to be picked up.
- Posting signs at all entrances instructing students, staff, and visitors not to enter campus if they have any illness symptoms.



## Managing Symptoms Among Students and Staff

### Response Guidelines:

- If the CDC clinical criteria for COVID-19 symptoms are met, the symptomatic student or staff, regardless if they are vaccinated, are to be excluded or sent home and encouraged to seek medical care and/or testing.
- Students or staff who are not tested for COVID-19 are to be excluded for a minimum of 10 days after illness onset.

### A student/staff may return when:

- At least 10-days have passed since symptoms first appeared, **and**
- At least 24-hours have passed since last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications, **and**
- Symptoms have improved.

### The following exemptions to this 10-day stay-at-home exclusion may be considered:

- If the student or staff tests negative for COVID-19 and are not a close contact to a known COVID-19 case, they may return based on illness protocols.
- If a healthcare provider evaluates the student or staff and determines that symptoms are associated with another illness/infection (i.e., provides documentation with diagnosis), and they are not a contact to a known COVID-19 case, they may return based on illness protocols.
- As long as COVID-19 and variants are circulating, the presence of other viruses in the community that may cause similar illnesses should not change the suspicion for COVID-19 in an individual with compatible symptoms.

## COVID-19 Screening Tool for Students and Staff

The following questions will be asked to screen for COVID-19. A student, staff, or parent of a student who answers "Yes" to any of these questions must not come to the school.

### Daily Home Screening

1. Within the last 10 days, have you been diagnosed with COVID-19 or had a test confirming you have the virus?
Yes – STAY HOME and seek medical care if needed.
2. Within the last 14 days, have you lived in the same household with, or had close contact with, someone who tested positive for COVID-19? (Close contact is less than 6 feet for 15 minutes or more).
Yes – STAY HOME and seek medical care and testing if needed.
3. Have you had one or more of the following symptoms today or within the past 24 hours? Are these symptoms new or not explained by another reason? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fever</li><li>• Excessive fatigue</li><li>• New or worsening cough</li><li>• New or worsening shortness of breath/trouble breathing</li><li>• Chills</li><li>• Sore throat</li><li>• Muscle/body aches</li><li>• New loss of taste or smell</li><li>• New or worsening headache</li><li>• Vomiting</li><li>• Diarrhea</li><li>• New nasal congestion or runny nose</li></ul>
Yes – STAY HOME, contact the school, and seek medical care if needed.

## Physical Distancing

Schools are to maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms, combined with indoor mask wearing to reduce transmission risk.

- Even when vaccinated, adults are to maintain 6-feet from their unvaccinated students. All unvaccinated adults are to remain 6-feet from both adults and children.
- Only necessary visitors and volunteers will be allowed on campus, the number of students and staff who come into contact with them will be limited.
- Stable seating arrangements will be assigned for students (this ensures that close contacts within classrooms are minimized and easily identifiable).
- Training will remain ongoing for staff and students on protocols for physical distancing for both indoor and outdoor spaces.
- Signage will be posted throughout campuses reminding students and staff about physical distancing in prominent locations.
- State and Local guidelines for large gatherings will be followed and all necessary precautions will be taken.

## Arrival and Departure Procedures

- To eliminate crowding during arrival or departure, staggered arrival or departure times and designating multiple pick-ups and drop-off locations will remain in effect.
- Designated routes for entry and exit will remain in effect.
- Drivers will be instructed to remain in their vehicles, to the extent possible, when dropping off or picking up students.
- When in-person drop-off or pick-up is needed, only a single parent or caregiver should enter the facility.
- Students gathering during school arrival and departure will be disbursed.

## Classroom Settings:

- Students will remain in fixed cohorts within their classrooms for instruction and will avoid mixing with other fixed cohorts.

## Non-Classroom Settings:

**Lockers:** The use of lockers will be coordinated to avoid unnecessary mixing and congregation of students.

**Hallways:** Movement through hallways and corridors will continue to be monitored and traffic flow managed (e.g., one-way hallways) as much as practicable.

**Restrooms:** Staggered use will be in place for fixed cohorts to the extent practicable.

**Libraries:** Staggered use will be in place for fixed common touch surfaces or objects may be used as appropriate, with all hygiene measures in place.



**School Events:** Schools will continue to utilize enhanced mitigation methods for any large gathering.

**School Clubs and Sports Activities:** All appropriate mitigation strategies will be followed to ensure student safety.

**Playgrounds and Recess:** Recess activities will be held in separate areas designated by fixed cohorts or staggered throughout the day. The use of playground equipment will be scheduled to be used separately by fixed cohorts with appropriate handwashing and hygiene measures in place.

**Cafeterias:** Eating environments continue to be identified as one of the most common sites for the spread of COVID-19. To ensure a safe eating setting, ensure a 6-foot distance between adults and students; 3-to-6 feet for students. Fixed cohorts will not mix while in lunch settings. To the extent practicable, lunch will be eaten in classrooms or outdoors to optimize physical distancing.

- Physical distancing will be maximized as much as possible when moving through food service lines and while eating (especially indoors). Using additional spaces outside of the cafeteria for mealtime seating, such as the gymnasium or outdoor seating, will help facilitate distancing and provide improved ventilation.
- Frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned regularly. Surfaces that come in contact with food will be washed, rinsed, and sanitized before and after meals.

**School Offices and Support Staff:** All adults are to maintain 6-feet from adults and students as practicable. Staff that has limited or no student contact may follow community guidelines and recommendations for physical distancing.

## Masks

In accordance with the latest CDC recommendations and Governor Sisolak's July 27, 2021 Emergency Directive No. 47 ("Directive 47"), the Diocesan Restoration Advisory Council and Bishop Thomas direct that the following protocols are to be implemented **effective July 31, 2021:** Mask use is now required by all individuals *regardless* of vaccination status who enter any Diocesan facility.

**Outdoors:** In general, people do not need to wear masks when outdoors. However, particularly in areas of substantial to high transmission, it is recommended that masks are worn in crowded outdoor settings or during activities that involve sustained close contact with other people.

### Types of Masks:

- Standard face/neck gators (minimal filtration) and bandanas (which do not correctly cover the nose and mouth/acts more as a shield) are considered the least effective and are to be avoided.
- Masks are recommended to be made from multiple layers (current recommendations are two layers of tightly woven cloth [cotton preferred] and one layer of synthetic material) that can be repeatedly washed.
- Face shields are not a replacement for masks, given concerns over their ability to minimize droplet spread to others.
- Masks with one-way valves or vents are not allowed unless covered with a cloth face covering (one-way valves allow air to be exhaled through the valve).



# Hygiene Measures

## Handwashing and Other Hygiene Measures

Schools will continue to teach and reinforce:

- Proper handwashing techniques
- Avoiding contact with one's eyes, nose, and mouth
- Covering coughs and sneezes correctly

Each school will:

- Maintain the routines developed to ensure students wash their hands or use hand sanitizer upon arrival to campus, after using the restroom, after playing outside, before eating, and after coughing or sneezing.
- Ensure adequate supplies are on hand to support healthy hygiene behaviors, including soap, tissues, no-touch trashcans, and hand sanitizers (with at least 60 percent ethyl alcohol).
- Post signage in high visibility areas to remind students and staff of proper handwashing techniques for covering coughs and sneezes and implementing other prevention measures.
- Model, practice, and monitor handwashing, particularly for lower grade levels.

Cleaning and Maintenance:

- Routine, pre-pandemic maintenance and cleaning protocols will continue.
- When a COVID-19 case is identified, CDC disinfection guidance will be followed.
- Schools will ensure proper ventilation during COVID-19 focused cleaning and disinfecting.
- Fresh outdoor air will be introduced as much as possible and where practicable.

