



OFFICE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS MEMORANDUM

December 31, 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Last week we celebrated the birth of our Lord and Savior who came into this world as a vulnerable infant. Thank you for sharing your precious children with us and entrusting them to our wonderful educators.

Putting first the health and welfare of students and school employees has been our priority as we have taken a cautious approach to COVID-19 mitigation strategies, supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). We have adopted a multi-layered approach to mitigation that has helped to minimize the number of positive COVID-19 cases and quarantined students in our schools (encouraging vaccinations, improved ventilation, handwashing, social distancing, cleaning protocols, masking and sick individuals staying home). As you know, COVID-19 cases have increased significantly over the Christmas holidays and all of our counties are above the 100/100,000 criteria we had set for the schools of the Diocese of Palm Beach.

As we indicated in our October 18, 2021 Memorandum- **Effective January 3, 2022 we will be requiring everyone on our school campuses to wear a well-fitted mask/facial covering through January 14, 2022.** We will continue to evaluate our COVID-19 protocols in the coming weeks. I am grateful to our panel of medical advisors who recommended this, as well as the following protocols, which are effective immediately:

1. A temporary halt to all large indoor gatherings (including all-school Masses) and other events.
2. With regards to isolation, the CDC still recommends for schools, students and staff members, 10 days of isolation since symptoms began or positive test if asymptomatic. The revised isolation guidelines issued December 29, 2021 do not apply to schools, but rather just to the public. The medical advisors confirmed this information with the CDC. The current CDC Guidelines for schools can be found in this link: [Overview of COVID-19 isolation for K-12 Schools: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-contact-tracing/about-isolation.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-contact-tracing/about-isolation.html)
3. After-school sports programs in our elementary schools will be on hiatus until further notice. High school administrators will review the FHSAA guidance on sports programs to determine their status.

Protocols adopted by the Diocese of Palm Beach for its schools related to COVID-19 are the product of considered judgement and a function of religious autonomy in the administration of its private religious schools. All parents are expected to cooperate with the school administration on this and all school policies.

Please remember that anyone who is sick should not come to school. If you exhibit COVID-19 symptoms, please get a PCR test. Report symptomatic or positive cases to your school administration. Please be cautious and safe this New Year's Eve and may we all pray for God's blessings and good health in 2022!

Yours in Christ,

Gary Geblo

Superintendent of Schools