



OFFICE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
MEMORANDUM
September 24, 2021

This week the Florida Surgeon General issued new COVID-19 guidance and protocols for public schools. As our county health departments begin to implement these new strategies, particularly related to whether or not asymptomatic, exposed individuals should quarantine, the Diocese of Palm Beach Catholic Schools will adopt these new protocols. If a person in our schools is exposed but remains asymptomatic, the options are for the individual to continue to attend school and other school-related functions or to quarantine for 7 days. If the person becomes sick, symptomatic or tests positive, the person would be required to quarantine and follow the guidance in the attached decision tree from the Florida Department of Education. It is also available on our website:

[Catholic Schools Diocese of Palm Beach: Home \(diocesepbschools.org\)](https://www.diocesepbschools.org)

Please note that our 60-day temporary mask requirement remains in effect until October 20, 2021. The requirement will be re-evaluated as we approach that date. The only opt-out is for an approved medical accommodation.

The following points from our COVID-19 Reference Guide also remain in effect:

- COVID-19 symptoms can include fever (more than 100.3°F), loss of smell or taste, cough, muscle aches, sore throat, shortness of breath, chills, new or unusual headache, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea. Delta variant: watch for cough, runny nose, sneezing, headache and sore throat.
- If a person is sick or being tested for COVID-19 they must stay home and notify the school administrator.
- These are general guidelines and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- The county health department will also be consulted as needed and they may offer specific guidelines which differ from the diocese. The CDC indicates that the local health departments make final decisions on quarantines.
- Cooperation with the school and health department on contact tracing is essential to keeping our schools safe.
- **A COVID-19 PCR test is required by the diocese when testing is necessary. The rapid or home test will not be accepted.**
- If a household member of a DPB employee/student has tested positive, all DPB employees/students in that household must follow the exposure guidelines.
- In the event a school has a positive case of COVID-19, staff members and parents of those individuals exposed will be notified as soon as possible.

The data continues to trend in positive directions in our counties with the number of COVID-19 positive cases, positivity rates, hospitalization rates, ICU bed utilization all declining. Thank you for your continued patience and efforts to work together to mitigate the transmission of COVID-19 within our schools and communities.

Yours in Christ,

Gary Gelo

Gary Gelo
Superintendent of Schools