



# COVID-19 Return to School Requirements 2021-2022 School Year

*Updated January 14, 2022*

The Department of Catholic Schools has released this COVID-19 Return to School Requirements document to provide all schools within the Diocese of Covington consistent procedures to return to school for in-person instruction for the 2021-2022 school year. Case activity will continue to be monitored across the diocese to determine if additional strategies need to be used to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Extra precautions may be implemented diocese-wide or in a targeted manner (school-by-school basis) in response to case activity. This coincides with our data and experience that many school communities have no case activity while other school communities have active cases. This occurs even when community case activity is high in the counties where our schools are located.

These protocols are subject to change based on new guidance, government orders, or diocesan case data which will be reviewed and communicated to schools should that occur. A key factor in reducing the spread of COVID-19 and all illnesses is to keep children home when they are exhibiting symptoms and continue teaching general illness prevention strategies such as frequent hand washing and covering coughs and sneezes.

School Activity	Diocesan Requirements
<b>Student Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Schools will offer in-person learning for the 2021-2022 school year.</li> <li>▪ In the event that a student is required to isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19, the school will include the learner in daily instruction using the procedures established by the school.</li> </ul>
<b>Daily Health Assessment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Employees, students, and volunteers should complete a daily personal health assessment and temperature check before school each day.</li> <li>▪ Any employee, student, or volunteer who is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 should not come to school and contact their doctor.</li> </ul>
<b>Mask Requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Masks will be required in schools through Friday, January 21<sup>st</sup>. Beginning January 24<sup>th</sup>, schools may begin returning to recommended masks on a school-by-school basis when the requirements below are met. The school principal will communicate mask changes to parents.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The school has 5-10 cases or less, and</li> <li>○ Cases are declining.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Masks are required on all public transportation including school buses per federal mandate.</li> <li>▪ Schools will continue to encourage the use of masks as a COVID-19 mitigation strategy.</li> <li>▪ Schools who are seeing increasing illness in their school community may return to a temporary mask requirement until cases decrease. This could be done in a classroom, grade level, or school-wide and will be communicated by the school principal following consultation with the Diocese.</li> </ul>

<b>Mask Requirements</b> <i>Continued</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ When mandatory masks are required by a school, the following procedures must be observed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ All students, staff, and visitors must wear a mask within the school building.</li> <li>○ Masks are not required outdoors.</li> <li>○ When engaged in physical activity masks may be removed.</li> <li>○ Students or staff with a disability, or physical or mental impairment that prevents them from safely wearing a mask may be exempt with proper documentation from a physician.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Messages or images on masks must align with the Catholic faith and school dress code requirements. Schools determine acceptable masks.</li> </ul>
<b>Immunizations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students must be current with the Kentucky immunization requirements to return to school for the 2021-2022 school year. All forms must be on file with the school office. The COVID-19 vaccine is not part of Kentucky’s schedule of vaccinations for children.</li> <li>▪ The Diocese of Covington schools do not require students to get the COVID-19 vaccine. Families can explore this option for their eligible children and get the vaccine if it meets their family’s needs.</li> </ul>
<b>Spacing/Classroom</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ It is recommended that student seating is spaced three feet apart when possible.</li> <li>▪ Create and maintain seating charts for students in all classes. These may be used for contact tracing if a student tests positive for COVID-19.</li> </ul>
<b>Water Fountains</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Water fountains should only be used to fill water bottles.</li> <li>▪ Students bring their own water bottles to be refilled throughout the day.</li> <li>▪ Water fountains are to be cleaned and sanitized frequently.</li> </ul>
<b>Cafeteria</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ It is recommended that students are spaced three feet apart when possible.</li> <li>▪ Surfaces must be cleaned and sanitized between cohorts of diners.</li> <li>▪ Students and staff use hand sanitizer or wash hands well before eating lunch or snacks.</li> </ul>
<b>School Sponsored Athletics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ High schools and high school athletes must follow the KHSAA guidelines.</li> <li>▪ All student athletes must complete the Diocese of Covington waiver and release form to be kept on file with the school.</li> </ul>
<b>Sanitation and Environmental Standards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Schools must clean and sanitize high touch surfaces frequently.</li> <li>▪ Utilize the CDC’s guidance on cleaning and disinfecting school facilities: <a href="https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html">https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html</a></li> </ul>
<b>Contact Tracing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Be prepared to cooperate with a contact tracing investigation, if needed, due to a positive COVID-19 case.</li> </ul>

## Isolation & Quarantine Procedures

Parents must report COVID-19 cases to their child’s school. This should include the student or anyone in his/her household. Each COVID-19 report will be reviewed and contact tracing will be conducted to determine close contacts to the positive case. Below are the steps each school will take once a positive case is reported:

1. School is notified that a student has tested positive for COVID-19.
2. The school administration will conduct contact tracing to determine if there are any close contacts to the positive case at school or at school-sponsored activities.
3. The school will notify the parents of any student deemed a close contact.

**Close Contact Definition:** A close contact is someone who was within 6 feet of the positive COVID-19 case for a cumulative total of 15 minutes while the person was considered contagious. The contagious period is 48 hours prior to the onset of symptoms.

COVID-19 Situation	Procedures
Positive COVID-19 Test <i>(With symptoms)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Stay home and isolate for 10 days from the date symptoms began</li> <li>▪ Isolation may be shortened if symptoms fully resolve                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ You may resume activities after day 5 on the first day without symptoms (Must be fever free for 24 hours)</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Wear a mask for 10 days since the start of symptoms</li> </ul>
Positive COVID-19 Test <i>(No symptoms)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Stay home and isolate for 5 days from the date of your test</li> <li>▪ Wear a mask for an additional 5 days</li> </ul>
School Exposure to COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Remain at school as long as you have no symptoms</li> <li>▪ Monitor for symptoms for 10 days following the close contact exposure</li> <li>▪ Wear a mask for 10 days following exposure</li> <li>▪ If symptoms develop, isolate and get a COVID-19 test</li> </ul>
Exposure to COVID-19 Home or Outside of School <i>(Vaccinated*)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue school, work, or activities if symptom-free</li> <li>▪ Wear a mask for 10 days</li> <li>▪ If symptoms develop, isolate and get a COVID-19 test</li> </ul>
Exposure to COVID-19 Home or Outside of School <i>(Not vaccinated*)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Quarantine for 5 days                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ For a home exposure, the quarantine period begins when the COVID positive case can isolate from the household members or the positive case has recovered</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ May resume activities after five days if you have no symptoms</li> <li>▪ Wear a mask for an additional 5 days</li> <li>▪ If symptoms develop, isolate and get a COVID-19 test</li> </ul>

\*The new exposure guidelines are based on individuals whose vaccines are up-to-date according to the CDC. Visit the following link to determine if you are up-to-date with the vaccine schedule: [COVID-19 Vaccine Guidance](#)

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## COVID-19 School Questions

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**Q1. What are the symptoms of COVID-19?** The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has identified a wide-range of symptoms that can be mild to severe and symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with the following symptoms may have COVID-19: fever (above 100.4°F), chills, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle/body aches, headache, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea and a new, uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing. Follow this link to check your [symptoms](#).

**Q2. What should a parent do if a child has illness symptoms?** If your child shows illness [symptoms](#) that could be COVID-19, you should contact your doctor. Your doctor may ask that your child participate in a COVID-19 test. You must alert your school's main office and do not send your child to school. If the symptoms occur during the school day, your child will be sent to the office and you will be contacted to pick your child up from school. Your child may return to school when he/she has been symptom and fever free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication or your child's doctor has provided an alternative diagnosis.

**Q3. My child had COVID-19-like symptoms, but tested negative for COVID-19. When can he/she return to school?** If your child tested negative for COVID-19, but has another illness, your child may return to school when he/she has been fever and symptom free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication. A doctor's note will not be required for return.

**Q4. What should I do if my child tests positive for COVID-19?** You must contact your child's school immediately to report the positive case. You will need to provide details to the school principal to assist with contact tracing. This may include, but not be limited to: the date symptoms began, close contacts your child had with others, siblings (their school/grade levels), other activities, etc. This information will be used to determine if there were any close contacts in the school community. You should work with your child's primary care physician for treatment.

**Q5. When can a student return to school after receiving a positive COVID-19 test?** If a student tests positive for COVID-19, the student must isolate for 5-10 days depending on symptoms. The chart on page 3 provides the requirements to allow a shortened 10-day isolation period. Parents must consult with the school principal and get permission to return prior to the 10 days. A student must be fever-free without medication for 24 hours prior to returning to school. The student must wear a mask for a total of 10 days.

**Q6. What should I do if another member of my household tests positive for COVID-19?** You must immediately contact your school's office to report the positive case. You may need to provide details to the school principal to assist with contact tracing. You should follow the quarantine procedures above to determine when to return to school.

**Q7. What happens if a student in my child's class tests positive for COVID-19?** Your school will determine which students, if any, were close contacts to the positive case. The school will notify the parents whose students were deemed close contacts. You should follow the quarantine procedures above to determine when to return to school.

**Q8. I suspect someone in my household may have COVID-19, should I keep my children home from school?**

Yes, if you suspect that someone in your household may have COVID-19 or is going to be tested for COVID-19 due to symptoms then all the household members should stay home and not attend school or other activities. The family members should remain isolated at home while awaiting the test results.

**Q9. If my child has had a close contact with a positive case (outside of the household) and is required to quarantine, do my other children need to quarantine?**

No, your other children will not need to quarantine since they were not considered a close contact to the positive case. However, the child in quarantine should remain isolated at home as much as possible while monitoring for symptoms. If symptoms should appear in the isolated child or any household member, you must keep all your children home from school, notify the school office, and work with your physician for treatment and COVID-19 testing.

**Q10. Can I use an at-home test kit to determine if my child or household member is positive or negative for COVID-19?**

A family may choose to use a home test kit to check for a positive case but negative home test results cannot be used. Schools will need official test results from a medical provider or state approved testing site to prove a negative test result. If the home test is positive, families should follow the procedures above for a positive case.

**Q11. Can an antibody test be used to avoid a quarantine?** No. According to the CDC, there is not enough information to determine how protected someone might be from being infected again following exposure to the virus. Therefore, antibody tests cannot be used to avoid a quarantine.

**Q12. Can a medical exemption for masks be used with the isolation and quarantine procedures?** A medical exemption for a face covering will not be permitted to shorten the isolation period for students or staff who test positive for COVID-19. In order to take advantage of the shortened isolation period, a mask must be worn in accordance with the CDC guidelines. If a student is exposed to COVID-19, the circumstances of the exposure will be reviewed by the school administration and/or the diocese. Following the review, the school administration may consider a test-to-stay option. If a family does not wear the mask according to the CDC exposure guidelines or agree to the test-to-stay plan (if offered), then the 10-day exposure quarantine will be used.

**Q13. What happens if my child's teacher tests positive for COVID-19?** Should any employee have COVID-19 symptoms or test positive for COVID-19, we will follow the same protocols used for students. If your child's teacher becomes sick and is unable to work, your school will provide a substitute teacher. It is important to note that many schools have limited substitute teachers. If a substitute is not available, the class may be moved to NTI until the classroom can be staffed.

**Q14. Will the school communicate positive student cases?** Yes. Schools will continue to inform parents when their child is deemed a close contact to a positive case. Schools will keep the school community informed of general case activity.