

DIOCESE OF ALLENTOWN
SECRETARIAT OF EVANGELIZATION, EDUCATION & FORMATION
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January 3, 2022

Dear Diocesan Educational Community,

I hope each of you and your families enjoyed a blessed and joyful Christmas. As we begin this New Year, we are faced with many challenges. With COVID-19 cases rising across the five county area of the Diocese, hospitals near capacity including an increase in pediatric hospitalizations, we will not be moving to a mask recommended policy on January 10, 2022. Our current mask requirement for all students, faculty, staff, and visitors in our schools will remain in place. We will re-evaluate the mask policy again the week of February 7, 2022.

I know that this is a change from our plans announced in December. As I shared with you in my December 15th correspondence, the mask recommended policy would need to be re-evaluated if the situation changed and compromised our ability to keep our schools both safe and open. In re-evaluating our mitigation strategies, we took into consideration the surge of the COVID-19 virus in our community, particularly the omicron variant over the last few weeks, the number of COVID-19 cases in our schools prior to the Christmas break along with the number of cases reported from our schools over the Christmas break and since returning today. We must be responsive to the most current information available and prioritize keeping our students and staff safe and safeguard in-person instruction. These two principles drive our decisions around our COVID-19 protocols.


Additionally, we are reviewing the new Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines for Isolation and Quarantine Periods issued on December 27th; however, we learned yesterday that the newly issued protocols may be revised again early this week. Also, we are anticipating receiving guidance from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) this week regarding Isolation and Quarantine Periods. Given the uncertainty with the new CDC guidelines and possible changes along with forthcoming direction from PDE, we will stay with our current procedures and time frames for quarantine and isolation for the time being.

With the assistance and support of each of you, we have been able to keep our students in school for in-person instruction, limit the number of quarantines, and keep our students and staff safe. As we begin the New Year with the increasing number of cases, it is important that we all remain vigilant and following the existing proposals.

As we have done throughout the pandemic, we will continue to review and revise our mitigation strategies given the available information, always focusing on keeping our schools both safe and open.

May you and your families have a happy, holy, and safe New Year!

Sincerely,



Philip J. Fromuth, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Catholic Education