

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School Back to School 2021-22 COVID-19 Guidance

Following are revised back-to-school recommendations based on state and local health guidelines, CDC recommendations, American Academy of Pediatrics Guidance, Diocesan COVID Committee feedback, and COVID-19 current regional data. These recommendations are subject to change depending on the COVID-19 numbers as well as local and state health department guidance revisions. If you have any questions or concerns regarding our Back to School 2021-22 COVID-19 Guidance, please contact the school office. May God bless us and everything we are doing to prepare for a most successful school year.

IN-PERSON LEARNING: Students benefit both socially and academically from in-person learning. Therefore, it is the priority of St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School to return safely to in-person instruction.

VACCINATIONS: Vaccinations are currently the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, vaccinations of those who qualify and are able are highly recommended.

MASKS: According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, in addition to vaccinations, the wearing of masks is among the primary mitigation strategies to decrease the spread of COVID-19. Therefore, all staff and students 5 years or older **should** wear masks indoors unless medical or developmental conditions prohibit their use regardless of vaccination status (AAP, 2021).

However, as the primary educators of their children, parents/guardians may make the determination as to whether their children will wear masks indoors while at school. School faculty and staff **should** wear masks while indoors, especially when working with children under 12 years of age who are unable to be fully vaccinated and/or those who are in a vulnerable health category.

The impact that your decision will have on your child, child's class, and school community is great. Thus, masking, whether vaccinated or not, should be practiced out of charity toward others and the common good, health, and safety of the entire school community.

In general, people do not need to wear masks when outdoors. However, in areas of substantial to high transmission, CDC recommends that people who are not fully vaccinated wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings or during activities that involve sustained close contact with other people who are not fully vaccinated. (CDC, 2021)

SOCIAL DISTANCING: It is recommended that student desks/individual workspaces be at least 3 feet apart. A distance of at least 6 feet is recommended between students and teachers/staff, and between teachers/staff who are not fully vaccinated (CDC, 2021). Lunchroom seating should be a minimum of 6 feet apart for both students and employees. Students, family members, employees and community members should physically distance at least 6 feet for:

- School registrations
- Clubs and after school functions and gatherings
- Community gatherings

- Indoor sporting events

COHORTING STUDENTS: St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School will resume traditional classroom and recess procedures.

SPORTS: St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School will require a signed ***Release, Waiver of Liability, and Indemnity Agreement for Communicable Diseases Including COVID-19*** prior to participating in any St. Francis sports programs.

COVID-19 SYMPTOMS: St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School will continue mitigation regarding students and/or staff to stay home or will be sent home from school if they are experiencing any symptoms including fever, chills, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headaches, or fatigue. Exceptions would be for chronic asthma, allergies, or other diagnoses on file that exhibit similar symptoms which will be particular to each individual.

CLOSE CONTACT:

- Anyone within 6 ft of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.
- An infected person can spread COVID-19 starting from 2 days before they have any symptoms (or 2 days before the positive specimen collection date) until they meet criteria for discontinuing home isolation.

A ***Note Home-Positive Case at School*** letter regarding the quarantine guidelines that must be followed will be sent out when a positive case within a class or cohort has been identified.

COLLABORATION WITH LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT & POSITIVE COVID-19 CASES: St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School personnel will continue to collaborate with our local health department on any COVID-19 related issues and will report student and/or employee positive COVID-19 cases to the local health department. This is especially important regarding students or staff who are in close contact with a COVID-positive person and/or are determined to have contracted COVID-19. Unless the local health department indicates otherwise, the same [ADHS Isolation and Quarantine Guidance](#) used at the end of SY2020-21 still applies. Please note and review the following exceptions referenced in the document, along with the articulated guidance for each:

- Shortened Quarantine for those who remain asymptomatic
- Not Required to Quarantine – Fully Vaccinated Persons
- Not Required to Quarantine – Previously Infected Persons (that are not fully vaccinated) whose exposure is within 3 months of symptom onset of their initial illness

QUARANTINE OF CLASS OR COHORT: St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School will plan to accommodate classes or cohorts who need to quarantine. Distance learning will be afforded to classes and/or cohorts who need to isolate due to a COVID-19 diagnosis or quarantine due to an exposure to a COVID-positive person.

CLEANING/SANITIZING PROTOCOLS: St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School will continue the same level of cleaning/sanitizing they had in place during the close of school year 2020-21.

IN-DOOR VENTILATION: St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School will continue to focus efforts on optimal ventilation for classrooms and indoor gathering spaces.

References

CDC Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools: [CDC K-12 School Guidance](#)

Pima County Recommendations for K-12 Schools: [PCHD K-12 Guidance](#)

AZ Dept. of Health Services: [ADHS Release from Isolation and Quarantine](#)

American Academy of Pediatrics: [AAP Guidance for Safe Schools](#)

PARENT/GUARDIAN ACKNOWLEDGMENT:

This is to certify that I, as parent/guardian, with legal responsibility for the participating children named above, have read and understand the provisions in St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School Back-to-School Health and Safety Plan, including the risks and responsibilities. Furthermore, by signing I understand and accept these risks and responsibilities for myself and my participating children/wards. I do consent and agree to the Plan provided above and hereby do release and agree to indemnify and hold harmless St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School, its officers, employees, volunteers, and any of its agents for any and all liabilities incident to the presence or participation of my children/wards, as full-time enrolled students, to the fullest extent provided by law.

Name of parents/guardians: _____

Parents/guardians signatures: _____

Date signed: _____