



DIOCESE OF
TRENTON

Department of Catholic Schools

MEMORANDIUM

FROM: Vincent de Paul Schmidt, Ed.D. and the Department of Catholic Schools

TO: All School Administrators

RE: Masks in Our Schools

DATE: February 11, 2022

In accordance with the new direction from the Governor's Office regarding Executive Order 280, the Diocese of Trenton is stating the following as it pertains to the Catholic schools in the Diocese.

As of March 7, 2022, masks on employed adults are optional. This includes teaching staffs, members of administration and non-contract employees. Masks on children are optional as well. If a parent deems a mask is significant to the safety of their respective child(ren) they are encouraged to have their child(ren) wear a mask within the school. At the local school level, the principal, working with their pastor, can make the determination to continue masking based on current health concerns within their school.

Please note the following:

- Schools will continue to implement strategies to prevent the spread of Covid and may need to make some adjustments to school protocols and procedures in the absence of universal masking. These are local decisions, made at the discretion of the principal.
- Harassment or ridicule of individuals due to their choice regarding masks will not be tolerated and will be addressed swiftly according to the school disciplinary code.
- Parents who want their child(ren) to wear a mask will need to communicate to their child(ren) the expectations regarding mask use in school. School personnel are not responsible for regulating mask wearing but will do their best to monitor mask wearing for these students.
- The Centers for Disease Control and the Food and Drug Administration believe that vaccines are safe, effective, and accessible. In the absence of universal masking, this is the strongest line of defense against Covid.
- Locally, schools reserve the right to require masks if conditions warrant it, in conjunction with discussions with local health officials.
- It is imperative that parents act responsibly and keep children home if they are sick or experiencing Covid-like symptoms or are required to quarantine due to close contact.
- Individuals experiencing Covid-like symptoms will be sent home from school.
- Locally, schools will comply with Health Department guidance regarding masking after quarantine
- Individuals are expected to comply with a mask mandate if one is imposed by any venue used by the school for an event or trip and for transportation provided by a public school district with a mask mandate.

If a child is deemed to be in close contact with an infected person (Covid), per local health department guidelines, there will be additional protocols that will allow the student to return to the school



community. These could include re-masking for a duration of time upon returning, testing to stay/return, and/or quarantining for a duration of time.

There is no change in current policy as it pertains to adults and vaccinations or testing in lieu of vaccinations, within our schools.

If a health situation, as determined by the local Health Department/Authorities, arises for which the wearing of a mask is deemed essential for the school population or its employees to engage safely and effectively within the school community, then the wearing of a mask will be reintroduced.

As further questions arise, please be sure to contact the Department of Catholic Schools.