



DIOCESE *of* SACRAMENTO
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

BLUEPRINT FOR FALL
2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Sacramento



VI.I

August 12th, 2021

Faith + Community + Growth

INTRODUCTION

Our schools responded heroically to the challenge of COVID-19, keeping students on campus while taking significant steps to mitigate the disease's spread. Our safety plan is currently in its tenth iteration since July 2020. This updated document aims to create an expectation of what the coming year holds. While we embrace a less restrictive environment, the safety and well being of our students and staff remain our top priority.

Our priorities remain:

1. **Safety:** Our overall risk has been reduced because adults and students 12 and older have had the opportunity to be vaccinated. We will continue to manage our risk.
2. **Hygiene:** We will continue to emphasize robust hygienic practice.
3. **Presence:** Keeping school open daily. We do not want to burden parents with challenging schedules that prevent them from working a full workday - we want our students at school in-person.
4. **Growth:** Despite limitations, we want our children to continue their academic progress at grade level in their faith and all core academic standards.
5. **Distance options:** We have launched our Catholic Online School, Blessed Sacrament Online Academy which allows any family who desires to continue with independent, distance learning the opportunity to do so. The distance school is a full-fledged online school independent of the local parish school. For more information please visit the website here: [Blessed Sacrament Online Academy](#)

We have written this document specifically for our school environments, and we expect it to evolve as the public health situation changes. The school principal will share any updated documents on the school website and through the school information system.



COVID-19 PREVENTION PROGRAM

Layers of Safety: Infection Mitigation Strategies

For the past year, we have offered a variety of mitigation strategies working in unison to reduce our risk of exposure and transmission of COVID-19 on campus. We have effectively applied all recommended strategies, as well as our own novel strategies (such as behavioral screening), at our schools this past year. As COVID-19 rates of spread increased, we layered on the strategies. It is our hope that as people get vaccinated or recover from infection, and COVID-19 wanes, it stands to reason that we can move to less-intrusive interventions.

The new [CDPH Guidelines for the 2021-2022 School year](#) affirm this approach and, at the same time, allow for our school sites to have a less restrictive environment as we move forward.

Vaccination

CDPH strongly recommends that all persons eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccines receive them at the first opportunity.

All Catholic school employees who desired a COVID-19 vaccine have had access to one. Though we are not mandating vaccination, we will not make special accommodations for employees who choose not to receive them; in other words, this plan is predicated upon a vaccinated teaching force or society achieving herd immunity. Though we are not currently mandating vaccination for employees in the hope that we will reach herd immunity before that step is necessary, we will review this policy if faced with new mutations or other changes that may require a mandatory vaccination strategy.



In addition to vaccines required for school entry, CDPH strongly recommends that all students and staff be immunized each autumn against influenza unless contraindicated by personal medical conditions, to help:

- Protect the school community.
- Reduce demands on health care facilities.
- Decrease illnesses that cannot be readily distinguished from COVID- 19 and would therefore trigger extensive measures from the school and public health authorities.

Antigen Screening

- Our schools may require employees and students wishing to return to campus to undergo antigen screening at a place, time, and frequency as designated by the Catholic School Department, in collaboration with our advisors and county health departments. A sample test letter and waiver form are available in [Appendix I](#).

Social Distancing

Recent evidence indicates that in-person instruction can occur safely without minimum physical distancing requirements when other mitigation strategies (e.g., masking) are implemented.

- We will continue to encourage outdoor play and activities (masks optional outdoors), and we will encourage all persons on campus to continue to practice social distancing.
- Close contact interactions (to determine contact tracing) are considered less than 6ft and longer than a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.
- Grade Level Groups are considered close contacts even with distancing given prolonged indoor exposure.
- We encourage the continued use of signage throughout campus to support social distancing and proper hygiene norms.



Classroom Plans

- Windows will be opened for proper ventilation.
- Students have their own supplies, water bottle, cleaning materials, and hand sanitizer.
- Shared spaces are cleaned regularly.
- Teachers will utilize outdoor space as much as possible.

Screening

- Students and staff should conduct an at-home, daily self-check and temperature check before they come to campus. Temperatures need to remain below 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Should symptoms present themselves, school employees may all function as designated screeners for students and non-employees. The principal or school office staff may serve as screeners for faculty and staff if a third-party screener is required.
- During the day, any person experiencing or showing symptoms will report to the office for screening.
- If a staff member already at school shows symptoms described above, a supervisor will allow them to go home without penalty for that day.
- The school principal and/or contact tracers shall update the Catholic School Department Executive Assistant every Monday morning regarding confirmed COVID-19 cases amongst staff and students from the previous week.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE is not a substitute for social distancing or proper hand-washing. In addition to using PPE, please remember to:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.



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Face Coverings

We will continue to comply with CDPH and county health guidelines on the use of masks.

FACE COVERINGS FOR EMPLOYEES

- Adults in K-12 school settings are required to mask when sharing indoor spaces with students.
- N-95 masks are more effective than cloth masks.
- Personal hygiene, social distancing, and frequent cleaning efforts are critical parts of employee protection.
- Masks are optional outdoors regardless of vaccination status.

FACE COVERINGS FOR STUDENTS

- Masks are optional outdoors for all in TK-8 school settings.
- TK-8 students are required to mask indoors, with exemptions per [CDPH face mask guidance](#).
- Persons exempted from wearing a face covering due to a medical condition, must wear a non-restrictive alternative, such as a face shield with a drape on the bottom edge.
- A face covering will be provided to students who inadvertently fail to bring a face covering to school to prevent unnecessary exclusions.
- Students who refuse to wear a mask indoors will be isolated from other individuals, a parent/guardian will be called to pick up the student. The student may return once a proper face mask/cover is worn.

Staff Training and Family Education

Delivering Instruction

- Principals will present the plan to their communities and make themselves available for questioning.
- Teachers will provide initial and routine instruction in mitigation strategies and health practices to their students in keeping with all provisions of this protocol.



- Schools will inform the community of changes to this plan via their information system (SchoolSpeak) and post the updated plan or a link to the diocesan portal website on the school website.

Cleaning & Disinfection Routine

- We will continue to maintain a high level of hygiene on campus. Students will continue to routinely clean and disinfect their desks and materials.

Healthy Hygiene Practices

Reducing the risk of exposure to COVID-19 by proper personal hygiene practices and disinfection is a critical part of ensuring student and staff safety.

- Staff and families will be trained and educated in sanitation and hygiene instruction through training if needed and review of protocols.
- [Cleaning hands at key times](#) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not readily available is essential.
- Build time into daily routines for students and staff to wash hands.
- Families will be constantly reminded to maintain hygiene and distancing when necessary at home and in the community.

Visitor & Volunteer Protocols

Volunteers on campus must wear a mask when indoors regardless of vaccination status. No volunteers or guests will be allowed for class parties at this time due to the presence of food.

Food

- Maximize physical distance as much as possible while eating (especially indoors). Arrange for eating outdoors as much as feasible.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces. Surfaces that come in contact with food should be washed, rinsed, and sanitized before and after meals.
- Given very low risk of transmission from surfaces and shared objects, there is no need to limit food service approaches to single use items and packaged meals.



- Food for the whole class (ex: birthday treats) must be store-bought, small, and individually-prepackaged. Teacher must be consulted at least 24 hours in advance to give their approval.

Travel Restrictions

Our focus will be on behaviors and not the act of travel itself. We reserve the right to ask community members to quarantine if they have traveled to regions which are documented hotspots, so please be prepared for a revisiting of this policy.

COVID Symptoms and Case Response

Definitions

A **contact** is defined as a person who is less than 6 feet from a case for more than 15 minutes. An entire group is considered a contact if they have shared time indoors, even with distancing.

Contact Tracers

- The school has a designated employee who is a contact tracer whose name is on file with the Catholic School Department and County Health.
- Contact tracers must be trained either by the county within which the school resides or take one of the following courses on contact tracing:
 - Webinar-Based as recommended by the CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/contact-tracing/general-training-modules.html>
 - Coursera Option: <https://www.coursera.org/learn/contact-tracing-for-COVID-19>

Symptoms

Our symptom checklist distinguishing between high-risk and low-risk symptoms remains the same.



Students

- Fever of 100.4 degrees or higher;
- Sore throat;
- New uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (for students with chronic allergic/asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline);
- Diarrhea, vomiting, or abdominal pain;
- New onset of severe headache, especially with a fever.
- (If a student is exhibiting symptoms refer to student health history form)

Adults

- Fever of 100.4 degrees or higher;
- Chills;
- Cough;
- Shortness of breath/ difficulty breathing; Fatigue;
- Muscle or body aches;
- Headache;
- New loss of taste or smell;
- Sore throat;
- Congestion or runny nose;
- Nausea or vomiting; Diarrhea

Testing

- Any student or staff person with symptoms not explained by another non-infectious condition diagnosed by a medical professional needs to be tested for COVID-19.
- Per this directive, symptomatic individuals must be tested within 48 hours of symptom onset, and provide test results within 72 hours.
- If the medical provider for the individual with symptoms cannot guarantee a 72-hour turnaround in test results, the symptomatic individual must seek out a different lab.

Parents and students are responsible for the cost of their own testing, unless the school directs an entire cohort to get tested at a designated site.



Quarantine and Isolation

Students and staff who test positive for the virus that causes COVID-19, take the following steps to protect others regardless of COVID-19 vaccination status: Isolate at home and isolate away from others for at least 10 days.

- If you do not have any symptoms, you should still isolate yourself at home for at least 10 days.
- If you develop symptoms, continue to isolate for at least 10 days after symptoms start as long as symptoms have improved, and no fever is present for at least 24 hours without use of fever-reducing medications.
- Contact your healthcare provider as soon as possible if you are more likely to get very sick because of being an older adult or having underlying medical conditions or if your symptoms get worse.

Quarantine recommendations for unvaccinated students and staff members for exposures when both parties were wearing a mask, as required in K-12 indoor settings:

a. When both parties were wearing a mask in the indoor classroom setting, unvaccinated students who are close contacts (more than 15 minutes over a 24-hour period within 0-6 feet indoors) may undergo a modified 10-day quarantine as follows. They may continue to attend school for in-person instruction if they:

- i. Are asymptomatic;
- ii. Continue to appropriately mask, as required;
- iii. Undergo at least twice weekly testing during the 10-day quarantine; and
- iv. Continue to quarantine for all extracurricular activities at school

Quarantine recommendations for vaccinated staff and vaccinated students-close contacts:

- a. Refrain from quarantine and testing following a known exposure if asymptomatic
 - i. Following a known exposure at school, fully vaccinated individuals do not need to quarantine if asymptomatic.
 - ii. Vaccinated individuals who are symptomatic and test positive will need to undergo a 10 day quarantine



Additional Details

Virtual Academy

The Diocese of Sacramento will offer a dedicated virtual academy for any family opting for remote learning for their student. Our traditional parochial elementary schools will not offer dual delivery of instruction (ie, in-person and online simultaneously) and instead will focus on in-person instruction.

Distance Learning

If a grade level group (entire class) must quarantine for a period of time, we will transition to distance learning as in the 2020-21 school year until quarantine is over.

School Closure and Subsequent Reopening: The Catholic School Department, in consultation with Public Health, will determine if a partial or full school closure is needed based on guidance and recommendations from CDPH. Both the school and the county must meet current state guidance to reopen.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT

The safety of our employees and students is our first priority. Upon reopening, our schools have been completely cleaned and disinfected, and we will continue to adhere to all necessary safety precautions. In addition, the process outlined below will routinely serve to protect everyone and reduce the risk of spread of infection.

- Custodial staff and any other workers who clean and disinfect the school site must be equipped with proper personal protective equipment, including gloves, eye protection, respiratory protection, and other appropriate protective equipment as required by the product instructions. All products must be kept out of the reach of children and stored in a space with restricted access.
- Establish a cleaning schedule in order to avoid both under- and over-use of cleaning products.
- Ensure safe and correct application of disinfectant and keep products away from students.
- Ensure proper ventilation during cleaning and disinfecting. Introduce fresh outdoor air as much as possible for example by opening windows where practicable.



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