



Archdiocese of Newark

Vicar for Education and Interim Superintendent of Schools

March 8, 2022

To All in Our School Communities:

We are writing to follow up on our previous communications regarding the mask policy at the Archdiocesan Catholic Schools.

As you may know, on March 4, 2022, New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy announced the signing of Executive Order No. 292, which lifts the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency in addition to the statewide school mask mandate, effective today, March 7th.

Accordingly, this letter now clarifies and confirms that we will similarly lift the mask mandate in Archdiocesan Schools for students, staff, volunteers, and visitors, effective immediately. Of course, all are permitted to continue wearing masks, and we encourage all, especially parents, to discuss the option of masking and to decide what is best based on individual and family circumstances and risk factors. Any hostility or ridicule based on anyone's choice to wear a mask will not be tolerated. Indeed, all who continue to wear a mask are affirmed in this choice.

Please note, however, that school personnel will not be regulating students' mask wearing, and families are expected to communicate their expectations to their children. Masking requirements will be subject to an ongoing review of our circumstances, of updated guidance, and of the infection rates. In addition, with full consideration to these masking policy updates, Archdiocesan schools will continue to assess and carryout COVID safety protocols and procedures at the local level.

On a related note, and as you may also know, Governor Murphy has simultaneously affirmed that Executive Order No. 253 remains in effect, such that staff and volunteers who have not yet submitted proof of full vaccination will remain subject to the State's weekly COVID testing requirements.

We are committed to the continuous review of forthcoming guidance from the CDC, from the Department of Health, and from our government, and will update our COVID requirements as appropriate for the safety of our community and of the children in our care.

We will also continue to pray that COVID-19 infection rates keep diminishing and remain stable. We have come a very long way. We in turn ask that you continue to be patient as we navigate the evolving COVID situation and know that the health and safety of our Catholic school communities, and the educational and spiritual needs of our students, continues to be our top priority.

If you have any questions, please contact your school's principal.

Sincerely,

Reverend Monsignor Thomas J. McDade, Ed.D.
Vicar for Education and Interim Superintendent of Schools

ARCHDIOCESAN CENTER

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