



The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington

Archdiocesan Pastoral Center: 5001 Eastern Avenue, Hyattsville, MD 20782-3447

Mailing Address: Post Office Box 29260, Washington, DC 20017-0260

(301) 853-4500 | adw.org

August 19, 2022

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome back from what I hope was a joyful and relaxing summer with your family and friends. As we prepare for the new school year, I wanted to share with you our archdiocesan Catholic schools theme for the year. Beginning in 2022 through 2025, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) instituted the National Eucharistic Revival. This is an opportunity to (re)discover the beauty and grace of Jesus, who promised to be with us always, particularly in the Blessed Sacrament. This year, we encourage all school leaders to offer more opportunities to introduce students and families to Mass, Eucharistic adoration, processions, study of the saints who were devoted to the Eucharist, and many other ways to celebrate. We will share schools' great work on social media with the tag #ADWEucharist, so that you can share in the devotions.

Over the past two years, the pandemic impacted our schools in so many ways. As we enter into the new school year, we anticipate a return to traditions and activities that we cancelled in previous years. Although we are in a better position this year, COVID-19 has not gone away. We will continue to follow protocols to maintain good health in our schools. With ongoing practices such as staying home when ill, proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, increased ventilation, and appropriate cleaning, we expect to maintain healthy schools. Our goal has always been to operate schools for in-person learning in a safe manner. Below, please see more information on this guidance:

| General Guidance | |
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| Masks | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Individuals may wear a mask based on preference or risk-level. |
| Individuals who Test Positive with COVID-19 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stay home for 5 days from start of symptoms or date of test, if asymptomatic.Return on Day 6 if symptoms have improved and no fever for at least 24 hours without medication.Wear a mask through Day 10.If unable to wear a mask,<ul style="list-style-type: none">Test on Day 5 or later and return Day 6 with a negative testStay home through Day 10 |
| Individuals in Close Contact with Someone with or Suspected COVID-19 but No Symptoms | <ul style="list-style-type: none">May continue to attend school regardless of vaccination status providing there are no symptoms.Those who can wear a mask should do so for 10 days.Testing is recommended 2-5 days after exposure. |
| Individuals with COVID-19 symptoms | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stay home and get tested.If test is negative, return when symptoms have improved and no fever for at least 24 hours without medication. |
| Outbreaks | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Universal contact tracing is no longer recommended but will be implemented during an outbreak.Outbreaks will require additional mitigation strategies. |

In the District of Columbia, a COVID-19 vaccination mandate applies to all students, ages 12 and older, for both public and private schools. The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington intends to follow the new legal requirements and will honor religious or conscience-based exemptions for the COVID-19 vaccine, if claimed by parents, as well as, properly substantiated medical exemptions. Contact your school leader regarding the exemption process.

This year, we are making another important effort to focus on school safety. The tragic school shooting in Uvalde, last school year, is a reminder about threats that could harm our community. In August meetings with school leaders, we discussed safety training to prepare in the event of a violent critical incident. Our students and staff will learn how to respond in an emergency. Please continue to have conversations with your child(ren) about safety and how to tell a trusted adult, if they become aware of a potential threat.

Finally, I am grateful to welcome everyone back, in person, to our schools. Let us pray together, in thanksgiving for another faith-filled and successful school year. I appreciate your commitment to providing a Catholic education for your children and you remain in my continued prayers.

Faithfully in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K Branaman', with a stylized, flowing script.

Kelly Branaman
Secretary for Catholic Schools
Superintendent of Schools