

COVID-19 School Guidelines for School Administrators



**Archdiocese of Cincinnati
Catholic Schools Office**

July 2021



A message from the Superintendent Susan M. Gibbons:

As we continue into the 2021-2022 school year with the COVID-19 pandemic, we remember all those whose lives have been directly affected by this illness. We remain vigilant in our protection of all God's children who are enrolled in our Catholic schools and we pray for good health for all children, families, staff, and communities. The Catholic Schools Office of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati offers the following considerations under four guiding principles: Build, Protect, Prioritize, and Operate to support schools and Catholic school leaders as they prepare to return to school this fall. The Catholic Schools Office serves 111 schools within 19 counties, with various recommendations aligned to local stakeholders. Health considerations referenced in this document are based upon the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) as of July 9, 2021. Recommendations may be updated and/or changed based upon changed circumstances or directives from medical experts as the 2021-2022 school year progresses. It is our commitment to all Catholic schools within the Archdiocese of Cincinnati to provide support, resources, and collaboration around concepts and ideas to best meet the specific needs of all our schools.

***The Archdiocese of Cincinnati Catholic Schools Office's Guiding Principles:
Build, Protect, Prioritize, and Operate.***

1. ***BUILD a community centered around Christ that supports the social and emotional well-being of all members.***
2. ***PROTECT students, staff, and families within our school communities.*** Schools will evaluate and consider the health and safety guidelines recommended by the CDC and local health departments.
3. ***PRIORITIZE curriculum and instruction to ensure accelerated learning opportunities.*** Christ-centered, in-person, data-driven intentional instruction remains the goal for student learning.
4. ***OPERATE efficiently, collaboratively, and responsibly.*** Schools should be prepared to operate in-person, taking into consideration the health and safety guidelines outlined by the CDC and local health departments.

CONSIDERATIONS

BUILD – Considerations

- Continue meaningful and relevant prayer and ongoing parish based Catholic faith formation opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to deepen their spirituality as they seek fulfillment in God the Father.
- Collaborate with priests and pastors regarding school masses and prayer services as they seek to Radiate Christ in their communities.
- Investigate opportunities to share in faith formation and catechetical moments with neighboring schools as we seek to strengthen Christ's church within the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

PROTECT - Considerations

- **CDC:** All interested parties, including faculty, staff, students, and parents should review the complete CDC guidelines here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html>
- **Vaccination: COVID-19 vaccines are recommended, but not required, for all who are eligible.** Consult with your health care provider regarding COVID-19 vaccination decisions.
- **Face masks: Per the CDC, facial coverings are recommended indoors for those who are not fully vaccinated. However, the Archdiocese of Cincinnati acknowledges that this is, at least in part, a personal decision that school families may want to make themselves, in consultation with their medical provider. Thus, at this time, the Archdiocese of Cincinnati is not issuing an Archdiocesan-wide policy requiring face masks in schools; that decision will be left to local Catholic school leadership.**
 - According to the CDC, those who are vaccinated may resume activities without wearing a mask or social distancing.
 - According to the CDC, people generally do not need to wear masks when outdoors. However, the 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.
 - **Anyone at any time may wear a mask for protection.**
- **Physical/Social Distancing:** The CDC recommends that schools maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students, staff, and volunteers within classrooms or other indoor school environments.
- Where social distancing is difficult or impossible, multiple layers of other prevention strategies, such as indoor masking, are recommended by the CDC. However, as mentioned above, the Archdiocese of Cincinnati is not issuing an Archdiocesan-wide policy requiring face masks in schools; that decision will be left to local Catholic school leadership.
 - **Daily Health Assessments:** Students and staff should stay home when they have signs of infectious disease and be referred to their healthcare provider for testing and care.
 - **Hygiene:** Schools shall provide opportunities for handwashing and ensure hand sanitizer is readily available.
 - **Shared Supplies:** General cleaning is recommended when using shared supplies.
 - **Exposure:** Schools should follow the recommendations of the local health departments with regards to any exposure to COVID-19. A school may choose to perform screen testing or contact tracing in order to promptly identify cases, clusters, and outbreaks.

PRIORITIZE – Considerations

- **Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment:** Curriculum and instructional planning should be student centered and focused on accelerating learning (student growth and achievement) for all students. Christ-centered, in-person, data-driven intentional instruction remains the goal for student learning.
- Gather and analyze student data from 2020-2021 (EOY) spring assessments and 2021-2022 (BOY) fall assessments to develop and implement a systematic approach to accelerate student learning.
- Design and implement learning experiences that increase the rate of learning, incorporating specific aspects of interventions, approaches, and strategies that focus on the current learning needs of individual students.
- Focus on learning leaps rather than on learning loss providing intentional instruction and assessment guided by the prioritized standards set out in the Graded Course of Study.
- Social Emotional Learning (SEL) shall be integrated into core content areas across all grade levels. Implementation of a plan of support with resources shall be easily accessible in response to the social-emotional needs of students and staff.
- Enrichment and intervention opportunities, departmentalized courses, and related arts instruction may return to pre-COVID-19 protocol.
- Utilize Emergency Assistance to Non-Public Schools (EANS) funding to incorporate evidence-based strategies, interventions, and activities that create a learning environment to support students and accelerate learning.
- Enhance the professional learning communities to focus on teacher learning as well as student learning. Provide opportunities to foster, nurture, and sustain teacher capacity and expertise within your building.

OPERATE – Considerations

- Schools should plan to operate fully in-person, with the understanding that additional prevention strategies (such as requiring facial coverings for anyone who is not fully vaccinated) and periods of remote learning may become necessary if outbreaks of COVID-19 related illnesses occur at the local level. A contingency plan is recommended should such an outbreak occur.
- Schools should operate responsibly by evaluating and considering guidelines and procedures outlined by local governing agencies. This would include considerations needed for transporting students to and from school. Per the CDC, passengers and drivers must wear a mask on school buses, including on buses operated by public and private school systems.
- Provide adequate training for all employees to know and recognize the most likely symptoms of COVID-19 and to know how to protect employees and students from infection.
- Distribute COVID-19 [Acknowledgment of Risks Form](#) to students and families at start of the 2021-2022 school year.

RESOURCES:

Centers for Disease Control

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

Ohio Department of Health

- <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/responsible/main-guidance-21.pdf>

Ohio Department of Education

- <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Reset-and-Restart>

Archdiocese of Cincinnati Catholic Schools Office

- [Acknowledgement of Risk Form](#)