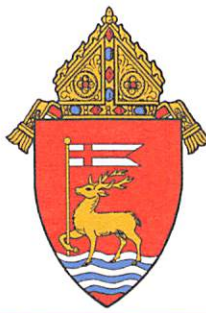


OFFICE OF THE  
VICAR FOR  
CATHOLIC EDUCATION &  
FORMATION



OFFICE OF THE  
SUPERINTENDENT  
OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

February 8, 2022



Dear School Leaders,

As you are all aware, yesterday, Gov. Lamont announced his intention to change the mask policy throughout schools in CT to take effect on February 28th. Decisions to follow this recommendation will be decided upon by local superintendents, Town Managers, and Mayors. *It will be the position of the Archdiocese of Hartford for all schools to change their policy to afford parents the choice if they want to send their child to school wearing a mask.* Therefore, the continued wearing of masks in school and at school events will be at the discretion of parents/guardians, regardless of vaccination status.

This decision is being made in alignment with the science, the data, and the educational research that supports the healthy development of children at various ages. It supports our mission that parents are the primary educators of their children and primary caretakers.

We understand that other dioceses are enforcing the no mask recommendation earlier than February 28th. We have been fortunate that we have established a collaborative and cooperative relationship with CSDE and DPH. We appreciate the open communication and the sharing of resources with our schools. This is a time to stand in solidarity with the state and respect February 28th to commence with the new policy.

Please be mindful of the following:

- Masks may still be required on public transportation, including school buses.
- Masks may be required on field trips if the venue requires masks.
- Individuals who test positive will continue the protocol of quarantining for five days.
- Positive cases will continue to be reported to the DPH.
- As already established, contact tracing need not continue,
- Schools should continue to communicate if a positive case is identified.
- Schools must reinforce the responsibility of parents to monitor for COVID-like symptoms; if symptoms are present, they must stay home.
- Regardless of parental mask choice or vaccination choice, every student will be treated with mutual respect and kindness.
- Families do not need to justify their choice whether to have their child masked or not masked; their reasons are their own and will not interfere with their child's education.
- Students will not be segregated or separated by barriers during the school day.
- The Archdiocese reserves the right to reverse or suspend this decision on a school-by-school basis should there be a spike in cases within a school.

Thank you for all you have done, persevering these past two years while maintaining the integrity of academics and the emotional wellness of the school community. While this pandemic has not been declared over, the end appears to be in sight. We have charged this storm together as a community, and we will see it through to the other side. Let's continue to pray for an end to the pandemic, and may God continue to bless you and your home and school families with good health and continued courage.

Peace,

Valerie Mara  
Superintendent of Catholic Schools