

January 16, 2022

Dear Saint Joseph Catholic School Community,

I hope this finds you and your family staying dry and warm!

On November 12th the Reopening Taskforce announced that if we meet all the requirements laid out by the Diocese of Charleston, we would lift the mask mandate on January 18th. However, at this time we do not meet the criteria. As outlined in the November 12th letter:

- The following data points will be used to decide to move away from the mask mandate.
 1. The 7-day moving average of cases in the local communities is below 75%, a reduction of cases from the early September 2021 peak for 3 consecutive reporting days. (.25 x peak 7-day moving averages of cases, which was 449 in mid-September for Richland County).
 - i. The 7-day moving average for Richland County is 1419.9
 1. <https://scdhec.gov/covid19/covid-19-data/south-carolina-county-level-data-covid-19>
 - ii. We need to be at or below the 7-day moving average of 112
 2. Cases and quarantines in the school in the previous week are less than 5% of the student and staff population.
 - i. We have 331 students or staff
 - ii. We currently have 15 positive and 30 quarantined students or staff
 - iii. We have 13.5% of students or staff who have tested positive or have been quarantined in the past 7 days.
 1. We need to be at or below 16 students or staff who are positive or quarantined in the past 7-days.
 3. There is no CDC, DHEC, DOC, or City of Columbia/Richland County mask mandate that requires students, faculty, staff, and visitors to wear masks.
 - i. Currently, Richland County has a mask mandate for individuals ages 11 and above.
- If the three data points above are met then the school will go to phase 1 in which masks are optional but highly encouraged for students, faculty, and staff while seated at their desk or in a small group while indoors. All students, faculty, staff, and visitors must still wear a mask while participating in indoor activities where multiple grade levels are combined, for example, Mass and Extended Care.
- Students and/or staff who are vaccinated, or have had a positive case within 90 days, do not need to quarantine after contact with someone who had COVID-19 unless they have symptoms. However, a fully vaccinated person should get tested 5-7 days after their exposure even if they don't have symptoms and must wear a mask indoors for 14 days following exposure or until their test result is negative.
- Students and/or staff who are not vaccinated but are wearing a mask will only be quarantined if it is determined they were within 3 feet of the positive person for a cumulative time of 15 minutes or more over 24 hours.
- We strongly recommend that you **START** the vaccination process for your child before and have your child vaccinated with the second vaccine to ensure that your child is fully vaccinated. We understand that this is a parent choice; please remember that your child's

vaccination status will potentially impact their quarantine period, and in turn their ability to learn in person, in the event of exposure. If you decide to vaccinate your child, please share that information with our School Nurse, Jessica Eadon Jeadon@stjosdevine.com. The school will be tracking those who are vaccinated for the purpose of quarantining.

The school will next review the data points on Friday, January 21st. Until then all Students, faculty, staff, and visitors will be required to wear masks while in the building. We will continue to monitor COVID-19 trends and data and will make decisions accordingly. Again, thank you for your understanding and support.

It is the little things we do that show how God is in us, with us, and working through us - "Blessed are we".

Sincerely,

Donavan F. Yarnall, Ed. S

Principal

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