

February 11, 2022

Dear Saint Joseph Catholic School Community,

The reopening task force met on Thursday, February 10<sup>th</sup>. With the approval of the Diocese of Charleston, the task force approved two items; a test to stay policy and a mask optional policy. Please take time to review both policies below.

**Quarantine Protocols - Test to Stay:** This program allows rapid tests to be performed on K-12 students who have been exposed to a COVID-19 infected person so that more students can remain in class. Rather than immediately moving unvaccinated close contacts to quarantine, Test to Stay allows those students to stay in the classroom if they test negative between days 5-7 and are not experiencing symptoms. A second test, given 24 hours after the first test is encouraged if testing is available.

1. A student who tests **positive** for COVID-19 will be required to isolate at home for 5 days from a positive test or symptom onset. The student may return to school on day 6 (if symptom-free) but must wear a well-fitting mask through day 10 (contagious period) while in school (including recess). He/she must also eat or drink at least 6 feet away from others through day 10.
1. A student who is identified as a close contact\* to a person who tested positive for COVID-19 and who is **unvaccinated** will need to quarantine for 5 days **or** if symptom-free may remain in school, (wearing a mask for 10 days after the exposure) only if the student's parents agree to test the child on day 5 after exposure. If the child develops symptoms at any time during this period they will need to quarantine and/or test.

DHEC Test to Stay Guidance: <https://scdhec.gov/covid19/resources-community-covid-19/schools-childcare-centers-covid-19/test-stay-faqs>

Test at Home form for return to school: <https://scdhec.gov/sites/default/files/media/document/Attestation-Form-for-At-Home-COVID-19-Test-2022-01-09.pdf>

1. A student who is identified as a close contact\* to a person who tested positive for COVID-19 and who is **vaccinated or has recovered from a previous COVID-19 infection within 90 days** will not be required to quarantine for 5 days. That student may remain in school as long as he/she is symptom-free and wearing a mask (for 10 days after exposure). Testing on day 5 is highly recommended. If symptoms develop during this time, he/she will need to test and/or quarantine.
1. These options do not apply to a household contact of an **unvaccinated** student. In this situation, if the student is **not able to isolate** from the positive person in the household (staying separate from the positive person and not using any shared spaces in the home),

they will be required to quarantine for 10 days from the positive person's test or onset of symptoms. He/she could return on day 11 if they remain symptom-free and have a negative test. If he/she **is able to isolate** away from the positive person, he/she will need to quarantine for 5 days from their last contact with the positive person. The student can return on day 6 if he/she is symptom-free and has a negative test.

1. A student who is a household contact to a positive person and is **vaccinated or has recovered from a previous COVID-19 infection within 90 days** does not have to quarantine if symptom-free. If symptoms develop, he/she will need to isolate for 5 days from symptom onset or have a negative test to return to school. He/she also must wear a mask for 10 days from his/her last exposure.

**Mask Optional:** Students and staff of Saint Joseph Catholic school will have the option to mask or not mask while in the classroom. All members of the community will still be required to wear a mask while at all school events (when all students are in one location under one roof), such as school Mass. The reopening task force will continue to monitor the internal (school students and staff) and community (Richland County) COVID numbers. If numbers continue to fall the mask requirement will be dropped for school events within 6 weeks of continued declining COVID numbers. The school retains the right to move back to a mask requirement if COVID numbers spike.

Close contact is defined as a person who was within 3 feet for more than 15 minutes over 24 hours with a mask; and within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes over a 24-hour period without a mask.

Students and staff who test positive for COVID will now be quarantined for 5 days before returning to school and will be required to wear a mask at school day 6 to day 10.

Please contact me if you have any questions about the new COVID protocols. I appreciate the continued support and understanding of all families as we work together to navigate the current environment.

Sincerely,

Donavan F. Yarnall, Ed. S

Principal

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