

November 12, 2021

Dear Saint Joseph Catholic School Community,

I hope this finds you and your family doing well!

The Reopening Taskforce met on Thursday, November 11<sup>th</sup>. Throughout the pandemic, Saint Joseph Catholic School and the Reopening Taskforce have sought and used information and guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC), and the Diocese of Charleston (DOC) as we navigated the pandemic. That practice continues.

Several items were defined at the meeting:

- Students, faculty, staff, and visitors will be required to wear masks while in the building through Friday, January 14<sup>th</sup>.
- Starting on Monday, January 17<sup>th</sup>, 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 a 75% 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).
  2. Cases and quarantines in the school in the previous week are less than 5% of the student and staff population.
  3. There is no CDC, DHEC, DOC, or City of Columbia mask mandate that requires students, faculty, staff, and visitors to wear masks.
- 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.
- The school will reinstate a mask mandate if either of the 1<sup>st</sup> two data points above exceeds the required threshold or if there is a CDC, DHEC, DOC, or City of Columbia mask mandate.
- Students and/or staff who are not vaccinated and not wearing a mask will be considered a close contact if they are within 6 ft or less of a positive case for 15 minutes or more over 24 hours and will be quarantined per CDC guidelines.
- 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 December 10<sup>th</sup> and have your child vaccinated with the second vaccine on or before December 31, 2021, to ensure that your child is fully vaccinated before the change in masking policy on Friday, January 14, 2022. 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](mailto:Jeadon@stjosdevine.com). The school will be tracking those who are vaccinated for the purpose of quarantining.

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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