



**2022-2023 COVID 19 Guidelines for Catholic Schools in the  
Diocese of Manchester**

*For the most up-to-date guidelines please refer to our website:  
<https://www.catholicnh.org/schools/>*



August 1, 2022

Dear New Hampshire Catholic School Community,

It is important to commend all Catholic school leaders, faculty, and staff for their fortitude in delivering what we know to be good, true, and beautiful to thousands of students across our diocese through the difficulties presented by COVID these past two years. Their commitment bears witness to an incredible faith in God, an unwavering dedication to our Catholic mission, and a strong partnership with parents.

As quoted in our *Statement on Parental Partnership in Education*,

“Parents are the primary educators of their children; this is an essential tenet of the Catholic faith. We, the teachers and administrators of the Diocese of Manchester, consider it our privilege to work alongside you in the education and formation of our Catholic school students.

When you choose to partner with our Catholic schools, you commit to a collaboration of effort and good will, opening the door to a world of goodness, truth and beauty. Your child will experience the transformative effect of God’s love in his or her life, and you will be amazed at the ways it touches others, both in and outside of school.”

As we move forward as a community of faith, it is important to note that this updated guidance is informed from two years of experience and designed to continue our strong partnership with parents while continuing necessary protocols for the safety of all students, faculty, and staff in our buildings. These guidelines are to assist Catholic school leaders in the Diocese of Manchester in updating their COVID-19 school plans to conform to diocesan norms.

We pray, through the intercession of our Blessed Mother, that our Lord continue to bless every Catholic school community in our diocese with more wonderful families to experience the beauty of the education our schools provide.

Yours in Christ,

Superintendent of Catholic Schools  
Diocese of Manchester

**I. Maintain a Health and Safety Committee of the local school Advisory Board.**

The continuation of a Health and Safety Committee of the Advisory Board to provide feedback and guidance to school leadership regarding health and safety issues including COVID-19 remains a best practice. The committee may have non-board members serve on the committee and, as input from all stakeholders is essential, it is highly recommended that the committee include at least one school employee, *a local medical professional*, a parent, a board member, the school leader, and the pastor in the case of a parish school.

The ultimate goal for the committee is review and assist in the implementation of these COVID -19 Guidelines so the educational experience of our students and their families remains safe yet uninterrupted. Deviations may only be made with the approval of the Superintendent.

**II. Strengthen a culture of staying home or going home when you are sick or not feeling well.**

Employees and students need to stay home and not report to school if they are sick with any illness or not feeling well and will notify the designated person at the school their decision to stay home.

If an employee or student becomes sick or is not feeling well at school, they must notify the designated contact person and go home. If they are not able to go home immediately due to their condition or lack of transportation, then they will be directed to a designated area.

School leadership will work with employees if they need to remain home for a long duration due to COVID to discuss their available sick time. If any issues arise, school leadership will work with the diocesan Human Resource Department to explore all options including sick leave and disability time if necessary.

Only students and employees who test positive for COVID-19 regardless of vaccination status, previous infection, or lack of symptoms will be required to stay home for at least 5 days and may return to school after day 5 as soon as they are fever-free for at least 24 hours and other symptoms are improving or until after 10 days of being home.

**III. Mask use will remain the option of the individual employee and visitor and the decision of parents for their children and will continue to be available at all entrances.**

**IV. Covid vaccines will not be required for employees, students, or visitors and school employees will remember that a person's vaccination status is personal medical information.**

Students, employees, and visitors will not be asked if they have been vaccinated.

The direction of Bishop Libasci in his June 6, 2021, Letter to the Faithful is most appropriate when he stated, *"In making a decision whether to wear a mask, those who have not been vaccinated must be mindful of the need to take other safeguards for the care of self and others, as recommended by public health authorities. In any event, let us not shame or admonish other people whatever course of action they decide to take."*

**V. Students and employees should frequently wash or sanitize their hands throughout the day.**

Sanitizing stations at entry points, in common areas, and throughout the building remain a best practice.

- VI. Disinfecting desk areas and shared supplies on a regular basis should remain the norm.**
- VII. Visitors are allowed entrance to the buildings unless they are sick or not feeling well. Signs saying as much will be posted at entrances. Visitors use of a mask will be optional as stated in Section 4 above on Bishop Libasci's direction.**
- VIII. Common areas will continue to be used including Churches, lunchrooms, auditoriums, playgrounds, restrooms, etc. and all cocurricular activities will continue.**
- IX. All schools will have a communication plan to educate staff, families, and children about COVID-19 health and safety practices at the school.**
- X. The following are best practices learned these past two years:**
  - a. Maintain an abundant supply of PPE, cleaning supplies, and other necessary materials.
  - b. As much as possible, handle requests from parents and employees for reasonable accommodations.
  - c. A commitment by parents, students, and employees to stay home when sick has been a good prevention from a rise in COVID cases.
  - d. Constant communication has allowed parents to make informed decisions for their children and greatly appreciated by all.
- XI: Monitor Ongoing Health Updates and the Health and Wellbeing of the Community:**

After the school year begins, the Health and Safety Committee of the Board should continue to meet regularly and provide consultation to the Principal/Head of School on the latest information from the diocese, CDC, NHHHS, etc. The committee should assist in the discernment of additional COVID mitigations if an outbreak occurs in the school or there is an increase of cases within the school's local region. Any additional mitigations need to be approved by the Superintendent. If a case of COVID-19 is confirmed, the school must notify the Superintendent.