



# COVID-19 Return to School Requirements 2021-2022 School Year

*Updated November 3, 2021*

The Department of Catholic Schools has released this COVID-19 Return to School Requirements document to provide all schools within the Diocese of Covington consistent procedures to return to school for in-person instruction for the 2021-2022 school year. Case activity will continue to be monitored across the diocese to determine if additional strategies need to be used to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Extra precautions may be implemented diocese-wide or in a targeted manner (school-by-school basis) in response to case activity. This coincides with our data and experience that many school communities have no case activity while other school communities have active cases. This occurs even when community case activity is high in the counties where our schools are located.

These protocols are subject to change based on new state guidance or government orders which will be reviewed and communicated to schools should that occur. A key factor in reducing the spread of COVID-19 and all illnesses is to keep children home when they are exhibiting symptoms and continue teaching general illness prevention strategies such as frequent hand washing and covering coughs and sneezes.

School Activity	Diocesan Requirements
<b>Student Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Schools will offer in-person learning for the 2021-2022 school year.</li> <li>▪ In the event that a student is required to isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19, the school will include the learner in daily instruction using the procedures established by the school.</li> </ul>
<b>Daily Health Assessment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Employees, students, and volunteers should complete a daily personal health assessment and temperature check before leaving for school each day.</li> <li>▪ Any employee, student, or volunteer who is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 should not come to school and contact their doctor.</li> </ul>
<b>Mask Requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Beginning Monday, November 8<sup>th</sup>, schools will follow the guidelines below to determine whether or not masks are required for students, staff, and visitors:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Schools located within a county designated as High Community Transmission (Red Zone) by the Kentucky Department of Public Health (KDPH) will require masks. <a href="https://govstatus.egov.com/kycovid19">https://govstatus.egov.com/kycovid19</a></li> <li>○ Schools will determine the upcoming week’s masking status based on Thursday’s data.</li> <li>○ If schools have 5 COVID-19 cases with increasing illness, regardless of the KDPH transmission designation, schools will implement masks until case activity decreases.</li> <li>○ Schools will continue to encourage the use of masks as a COVID-19 mitigation strategy even when masks are not required.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<b>Masks Requirements</b> <i>(Continued)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The following procedures must be observed while mandatory masking is in place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ All students, staff, and visitors must wear a mask within the school building.</li> <li>○ Masks are not required outdoors.</li> <li>○ When engaged in physical activity masks may be removed.</li> <li>○ Students or staff with a disability, or physical or mental impairment that prevents them from safely wearing a mask may be exempt with proper documentation from a physician.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Mask breaks will be encouraged by the school when distancing can be observed.</li> <li>▪ Masks are required on all public transportation including school buses.</li> <li>▪ Messages or images on masks must align with the Catholic faith and school dress code requirements.</li> <li>▪ Schools have the final determination on acceptable masks.</li> </ul>
<b>Immunizations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students must be current with the Kentucky immunization requirements to return to school for the 2021-2022 school year. All forms must be on file with the school office. The COVID-19 vaccine is not part of Kentucky’s schedule of vaccinations for children.</li> <li>▪ The Diocese of Covington schools will not require students to get the COVID-19 vaccine. Families are encouraged to explore this option for their eligible children and get the vaccine if it meets their family’s needs.</li> </ul>
<b>Spacing/Classroom</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ It is recommended that student seating is spaced three feet apart when possible.</li> <li>▪ Create and maintain seating charts for students in all classes. These may be used for contact tracing if a student tests positive for COVID-19.</li> </ul>
<b>Water Fountains</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Water fountains should only be used to fill water bottles.</li> <li>▪ Students bring their own water bottles to be refilled throughout the day.</li> <li>▪ Water fountains are to be cleaned and sanitized frequently.</li> </ul>
<b>Cafeteria</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ It is recommended that students are spaced three feet apart when possible.</li> <li>▪ Surfaces must be cleaned and sanitized between cohorts of diners.</li> <li>▪ Students and staff use hand sanitizer or wash hands well before eating lunch or snacks.</li> </ul>
<b>School Sponsored Athletics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ High schools and high school athletes must follow the KHSAA guidelines.</li> <li>▪ All student athletes must complete the Diocese of Covington waiver and release form to be kept on file with the school.</li> </ul>
<b>Sanitation and Environmental Standards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Schools must clean and sanitize high touch surfaces frequently.</li> <li>▪ Utilize the CDC’s guidance on cleaning and disinfecting school facilities: <a href="https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html">https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html</a></li> </ul>
<b>Contact Tracing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Be prepared to cooperate with a contact tracing investigation, if needed, due to a positive COVID-19 case.</li> </ul>

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## COVID-19 School Questions

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**Q1. What are the symptoms of COVID-19?** The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has identified a wide-range of symptoms that can be mild to severe and symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with the following symptoms may have COVID-19: fever (above 100.4°F), chills, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle/body aches, headache, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea and a new, uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing. Follow this link to check your [symptoms](#).

**Q2. What should a parent do if a child has illness symptoms?** If your child shows illness [symptoms](#) that could be COVID-19, you should contact your doctor. Your doctor may ask that your child participate in a COVID-19 test. You must alert your school's main office and do not send your child to school. If the symptoms occur during the school day, your child will be sent to the office and you will be contacted to pick your child up from school. Your child may return to school when he/she has been symptom and fever free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication or your child's doctor has provided an alternative diagnosis.

**Q3. My child had COVID-19-like symptoms, but tested negative for COVID-19. When can he/she return to school?** If your child tested negative for COVID-19, but has another illness, your child may return to school when he/she has been fever and symptom free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication. A doctor's note will not be required for return.

**Q4. What should I do if my child tests positive for COVID-19?** You must contact your child's school immediately to report the positive case. You will need to provide details to the school principal to assist with contact tracing. This may include, but not be limited to: the date symptoms began, close contacts your child had with others, siblings (their school/grade levels), other activities, etc. This information will be used to determine if there were any close contacts in the school community. You should work with your child's primary care physician for treatment.

**Q5. When can a student return to school after receiving a positive COVID-19 test?** If a student tests positive for COVID-19, the student must isolate and not return to school until they have met [CDC's criteria to discontinue home isolation](#). This includes:

1. At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared; and
2. At least 24 hours have passed since the last fever without the use of fever reducing medications; and
3. Other symptoms have improved.

**Q6. What should I do if another member of my household tests positive for COVID-19?** You must immediately contact your school's office to report the positive case. You may need to provide details to the school principal to assist with contact tracing. Your school will ask that your child(ren) quarantine and monitor for symptoms. Your child's quarantine will begin when they are no longer exposed to the positive case. If a family can separate from the COVID positive case within the home, then they are considered no longer exposed. The quarantine options include 14 days, 10 days with no symptoms, or 7 days with no symptoms along with negative COVID test results from a test taken on day 5.

**Q7. What happens if a student in my child’s class tests positive for COVID-19?** Your school will make all parents in the class aware that a student has tested positive for COVID-19. Contact tracing will be used to determine which students had close contact with the positive case. Students who are considered to be close contacts will need to quarantine from the date of exposure and monitor for symptoms. In some cases, it is possible that the entire class will be quarantined at home.

**Q8. I suspect someone in my household may have COVID-19, should I keep my children home from school?** Yes, if you suspect that someone in your household may have COVID-19 or is going to be tested for COVID-19 due to symptoms then all the household members should stay home and not attend school or other activities. The family members should remain isolated at home while awaiting the test results.

**Q9. If my child has had a close contact with a positive case (outside of the household) and is required to quarantine, do my other children need to quarantine?** No, your other children will not need to isolate since they were not considered a close contact to the positive case. However, the child in quarantine should remain isolated at home as much as possible while monitoring for symptoms. If symptoms should appear in the isolated child or any household member, you must keep all your children home from school, notify the school office, and work with your physician for treatment and COVID-19 testing.

**Q10. Can I use an at-home test kit to determine if my child or household member is positive or negative for COVID-19?** A family may choose to use a home test kit but schools will need official test results from a medical provider or state approved testing site. If the home test is positive, families should isolate at home until they can obtain a test and results from a medical provider. Negative home test results cannot be used.

**Q11. Can an antibody test be used to avoid a quarantine?** No. According to the CDC, there is not enough information to determine how protected someone might be from being infected again following exposure to the virus. Therefore, antibody tests cannot be used to avoid a quarantine.

**Q12. What happens if my child’s teacher tests positive for COVID-19?** Should any employee have COVID-19 symptoms or test positive for COVID-19, we will follow the same protocols used for students. If your child’s teacher becomes sick and is unable to work, your school will provide a substitute teacher. It is important to note that many schools have limited substitute teachers. If a substitute is not available, the class may be moved to NTI until the classroom can be staffed.

**Q13. Will the school communicate positive student cases?** Yes. Schools will continue to inform parents when their child is deemed a close contact to a positive case, if there is a positive case in a classroom, and will also keep the entire school community informed of general case activity.

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## Quarantine Procedures

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Parents must report COVID-19 cases to their child’s school. Each COVID-19 report will be reviewed and contact tracing will be conducted for the positive case. The guidance below will be used when determining the appropriate actions for each report. This guidance comes from the Kentucky Department of Public Health for schools.

## Quarantines

When a positive case is identified and reported to the school contact tracing will be conducted to identify any close contacts to the positive case. A close contact is defined as follows:

- **Close Contact:** A close contact is someone who was within 6 feet of the positive COVID-19 case for a cumulative total of 15 minutes while the person was considered contagious. The contagious period is 48 hours prior to the onset of symptoms.
  - a. Exception: In the classroom setting, students who were at least 3 feet away or more from the positive case and masked may be excluded from quarantine based on the circumstances and prevention measures in place at the time. This will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis as long as specific details can be obtained and reviewed.
- **Student Deemed A Close Contact:** If a student is deemed a close contact to the positive case, the parents will be notified and provided the close contact letter from the health department. The family may choose from the following quarantine options for their child:
  - Quarantine for 10 days if you have no symptoms.
  - Quarantine for 7 days if you have a negative COVID-19 test on or after day 5 and have no symptoms.
  - **Test-to-Stay/Remain in school if they meet the following requirements:**
    - The student has no symptoms.
    - The student must wear a mask for 7 days following the close contact exposure.
    - The student gets a negative PCR test within 48 hours of the notified exposure and on day 5. *Gravity Diagnostics provides free, drive-thru testing options with results in less than 24 hours. Location information can be found here:*  
<https://nkyhealth.org/individual-or-family/health-alerts/coronavirus/covid-19-testing/>
    - If the student meets all of these conditions, he/she may remain at school and return to regular procedures on day 8.
- **Close Contact Quarantine Exemptions:** If an individual meets the following criteria, he/she will not have to quarantine when considered to be a close contact to a positive case:
  - The person has been fully vaccinated (14 days after the final dose) and shows no symptoms of COVID-19. Proof of vaccination will be required.
  - The person has previously tested positive for COVID-19 and recovered (within the past three months) and shows no symptoms. Proof of the positive test may be required.
  - If someone is exempt from quarantine and begins to show symptoms within 14 days of the close contact exposure then he/she must isolate immediately, notify the school, and contact their doctor for treatment/testing.
- **Household Close Contact:** If the close contact lives in the same household as the positive case, the following guidance from the NKY Health Department should be followed:
  - The quarantine for a household contact will begin after their last exposure to the positive case. If the contact can separate from the case within the home then they are considered no longer exposed. Families may choose the 7-day quarantine with a negative test on day 5 or the 10-day quarantine.