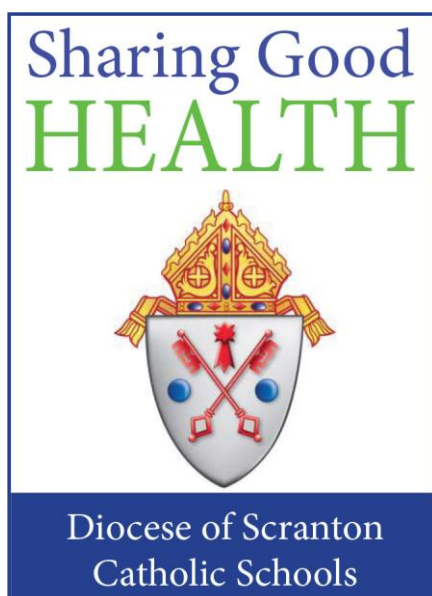


# **Diocese of Scranton Opening of Schools**

*Sharing Good Health*

## **Guidance and Procedures**



2021-2022



## **Introduction**

Our promise has been and always will be to offer an excellent, faith-based education that allows each child to achieve her/his God-given potential.

Last year provided all of us the opportunity to achieve what many others did not – the ability to open our doors and maximize the amount of in-person learning – because we worked together in following thoughtful health and safety protocols that resulted in minimal interruptions. This required flexibility, patience and the need to routinely monitor various sources of information. While many schools across Northeastern and North Central Pennsylvania have been discussing how to make up for learning loss due to a lack of consistent in-person instruction, we saw growth in our students’ achievement and abilities.

This year, we find ourselves in a similar position to make some adjustments to our planning for the school year as we evaluated the information from a myriad of sources and put forth a successful operational plan that ensures a safe environment for in-person instruction. The nature of the evolution of the science behind the pandemic requires such. We know the most effective education is in-person, and our focus is on providing health and safety protocols that reduce potential exposure and reduce the number of students having to quarantine.

Using the latest guidance from various sources including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Pennsylvania Departments of Education and Health (PDE and PA DOH), American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and Children’s Hospital of Pennsylvania (CHOP) Policy Lab, the accompanying framework will serve as the template for the 2021-2022 school year. Take the time to read through the protocols. Of critical importance is the knowledge we all have from living through this pandemic that the environment can change quickly. We will be responsive to those changes as the situation improves or worsens in our communities. This includes every layer of mitigation and may require decisions to be adjusted on short notice.

We all long for a full return to normalcy, but must do so safely. We need to partner together to work through these ever-changing times. With your help and patience, we will achieve that return together. We were successful last year, and will be again this year.



## **General Principles for the Building**

### **Process**

1. It is our intent that visitors will be allowed back into the building. They will need to follow all health and safety requirements in place at the time of their visit.
2. High touch surfaces should be cleaned and sanitized frequently.
3. Hand sanitizers should be available in the hallways, near entrances and in strategic areas.
4. Sharing supplies will be limited, and when materials must be shared, cleaning in between use is essential.
5. Students and teachers will use individual technology devices when possible.
6. When necessary, special teachers and departmental teachers should go into the students' classrooms. If students transition to other classroom spaces, assigned seats should be maintained for contact tracing purposes. Students will be able to sing during music class if masked, 3 feet apart and all facing the same direction.
7. To increase ventilation, windows will be opened if and when possible.
8. Masks requirements will be determined in accordance with the county transmission metrics and the guidance from various sources, which may include, but not limited to the CDC and PA Department of Health. At this time, the information below has been determined to be masking policy using the aforementioned sources. This policy is subject to change at any time and will be communicated when adjustments are made.
  - a. The levels of transmission for a county are listed as Low, Moderate, Substantial and High and found at <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>
  - b. When counties are in moderate, substantial or higher, all individuals will be required to wear masks indoors.
  - c. When a county is in a low community transmission rate for at least 2 weeks, masking may return to optional. Anyone that is not vaccinated at that time, will be encouraged to continue to mask indoors.
  - d. When masks are required, mask breaks will occur during the day and will not have to be worn when eating or drinking
  - e. At this time, masks are optional outdoors. Masks should be worn in crowded outdoor settings when there is sustained close contact.

## **Catholic Identity**

### **Process**

1. There must be a level of intentionality across all grade levels and all subject matter that course content is intentionally Catholic.
2. School Masses will require their own protocols that will maintain the appropriate physical distancing. Principals will work with their respective pastors and/or chaplains to develop a Mass schedule that is either in person or live-streamed.
  - a. Attendance of parents and general community at the school liturgies will follow school guidelines. If the Mass is live-streamed, parents and families can also attend virtually.



## **Entering the Building**

### **Process**

1. Parents/Guardians will complete the daily health questionnaire at home. (Attachment A)
2. Temperatures of students, faculty, staff and visitors will be taken when they enter the building.
3. All who enter the building should immediately sanitize their hands by using sanitizers or washing hands.
4. Use of a mask for students who ride a bus will be dictated by school district policy.
5. When masks are required, they must be worn properly (covering nose and mouth) by faculty, staff, students and visitors as they enter the building and throughout the day.

## **Daily Monitoring of Health**

### **Process**

- Adherence to following.
  - Masking in accordance with school policies at any given time. This will likely vary throughout the year given the dynamic nature of the virus, community spread and vaccination rates.
  - Temperature checks
  - Promoting good hygiene and proper handwashing
  - Physical distancing measures
  - Proper cleaning and disinfection
- Daily use of Symptom Screening Tool (Attachment A)
- Faculty and staff will also use the Symptom Screening Tool before arriving to work.
- Ongoing health monitoring of faculty, staff and students

## **Lunch**

### **Process**

1. Students should wash/sanitize hands before lunch.
2. Students should stay with their class as they eat lunch, if possible.
3. Students should remain physically distant during lunch, ideally 6 feet apart.
4. The table and desks should be wiped down before and after each meal.
5. Meals will not be shared.
6. Meals and utensils should be served directly to the student and prepackaged if possible.
7. Students should wash/sanitize hands after lunch.



## **Recess**

### **Process**

1. Students will go to recess using the procedures established in school operations regarding movement within the building.
2. Students will wash/sanitize their hands before going to recess and before returning to class.
3. Students will not need to wear masks for outdoor recess.
4. Games and activities used during recess will be pre-approved locally by the principal and school health and safety committee to limit the spread of infectious disease.
5. Students will wash/sanitize their hands before returning to class.
6. Practice physical distancing while walking to recess.
7. Use activities that have been pre-approved by the principal or school level Health and Safety Committee.

## **Traveling Within the Building**

### **Process**

1. As people travel about the building, masks will be worn if required.
2. Directionality should be considered in each school.
3. A schedule should be developed that takes into consideration the movement of students around the building.
4. Increased cleaning of all commonly touched items like railings and door knobs should be cleaned throughout the day.

## **Physical Education**

### **Process**

1. Weather permitting, PE class should be held in outside space. Weather non-permitting, PE in the Gymnasium.
2. Students should wash/sanitize hands before and after activity.
3. It is preferred that students are carrying personal water bottles for hydration before, during and after activity
4. Class equipment sanitized frequently (arrange class times to allow for buffer between classes to allow teacher to facilitate moving, washing and sanitizing).
5. Limit shared items or keep same groupings throughout lessons.



## **Isolation**

### **Process**

1. Establish an area that is supervised and can be physically distanced until a parent arrives. This may be the nurse's office.
2. Require masks to all who enter the room.
3. Sanitize room after each use.
4. Provide the room monitor additional PPE: Mask, Gown, Disposable Gloves, Face Shield or Goggles etc.
5. Keep in the room:
  - a. Disposable paper towels
  - b. Tissues
  - c. Waste container with plastic liner
  - d. Soap and Water or Hand Sanitizer
  - e. Hard-surface disinfectant

## **Classroom Operations**

### **Classroom Set-up**

### **Process**

1. Desks should face the same direction whenever possible. There may be times when this is not possible, but the students will maintain the 3 feet of distancing.
2. Desks will be placed a minimum of 3 feet apart.
3. The first row of desks should be at least 6 feet from the teacher when he/she is teaching.

### **Materials within the Classroom**

### **Process**

1. Classrooms should set up areas where students can store personal items that keep them isolated from use by others.
2. Sharing supplies and materials will be limited, and when materials must be shared, cleaning in between use is essential.
3. Establish procedures to wipe down before and after every use.
4. Remind students to wash/sanitize their hands after using a shared item.
5. If students travel to an alternative room, an area and place should be established for the traveling student to store items away from those being used by others.



## **Enhanced Distance Learning**

### **Introduction**

While we realize that in-person instruction is the most conducive environment for student learning and well-being, the need for enhanced distanced learning may become necessary due to school required COVID-19 quarantine. These are the only instances whereby distance learning will be utilized.

### **Process**

1. Provide the use of a Google Classroom and Google Meet to centralize materials, lessons, instruction, assessments, feedback and communications.
2. Enhanced Distance Learning instruction will take place as teachers:
  - Provide a continued focus on our Catholic identity throughout instruction and in all content areas.
  - Provide asynchronous and synchronous direct instruction by teacher.
  - Incorporate recorded instructional follow up videos.
  - Provide materials that are age- and grade-appropriate.
  - Use textbook online components with timely follow-up.
3. Use assessments with timely feedback.
4. Goal is mastery of concepts within the curriculum.
5. Use small group and large group instruction to meet needs of students.
6. Have regular communication with parents/guardians.

### **Health Protocol**

#### **Guidance for Dealing with COVID Cases**

Schools will make efforts to monitor for COVID-19 related symptoms of students, faculty and staff. If a community, or specifically school, has cases of COVID-19, local health officials will be contacted to help identify those individuals and follow up on next steps.

Below is some specific guidance related to situations involving the school, community and COVID-19. All guidelines are subject to change due to updated public health guidance.

**Vaccinations:** It is highly recommended that everyone who is eligible get vaccinated, and those who are not yet eligible, get vaccinated when it is their turn.

Please note that we are awaiting additional guidance from the PA DOH regarding the impact of vaccination status on quarantine requirements. We will inform you of any changes as they arise.



**If a student, faculty or staff member has a suspected case of COVID-19 or is demonstrating symptoms.**

1. Immediately separate staff and student with COVID-19 symptoms (such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath) at school. Individuals who are sick should go home or to a healthcare facility depending on how severe their symptoms are. CDC guidance for caring for oneself and others who are sick should be followed.
2. Provide an isolation room.
3. Call for home transportation, if necessary.
4. Can return in accordance with one of the following scenarios
  - a. With a negative COVID test:
    1. Documentation of a negative COVID test from the individual's health care provider, and
    2. At least 24 hours fever free with no fever reducing medication, and
    3. Symptoms improving
  - b. With an alternative diagnosis
    1. Documentation of an alternative diagnosis from the individual's health care provider, and
    2. At least 24 hours fever free with no fever reducing medication, and
    3. Symptoms improving
  - c. With no COVID Test
    1. 24 hours with no fever with no fever reducing medication, and
    2. Symptoms have improved, and
    3. 10 days since the symptoms first appeared

If case is confirmed, please see the following section (**confirmed case of COVID-19**)

**If a staff member or volunteer has a confirmed case of COVID-19**

1. Notify the local health officials to ask for guidance.
2. Dismiss the staff or volunteer while local health officials can determine next step.
3. Consider dismissal of close contacts, related to the suspected case of COVID-19, according to health official guidance.
4. Communicate to staff and families that there was a confirmed case – without using a name or identifying information of the person(s) involved.
5. Clean and sanitize the areas that may have been infected by the identified case of COVID-19.
6. Evaluate if any other cases related to the case were identified and decide to extend or end the dismissal of close contacts.
7. The staff/volunteer can return after the following conditions have been met:
  - o 24 hours with no fever with no fever reducing medication **and**
  - o Symptoms improved **and**
  - o 10 days since symptoms first appeared





**If a student has a confirmed case of COVID-19**

1. Notify local health officials to ask for guidance.
2. Dismiss the student(s) for while health officials can determine next steps.
3. Consider a dismissal of close contacts related to the suspected case of COVID-19 using health official guidance for this.
4. Communicate to staff and families that there was a confirmed case. Name or identifying information of the student with COVID-19 is not permitted.
5. Clean and sanitize areas related to the identified case of COVID-19.
6. Evaluate if any other cases related to the case were identified and decide to extend or end the dismissal of close contacts.
7. The student can return after the following conditions have been met:
  - o 24 hours with no fever and no fever reducing medicine **and**
  - o Symptoms improved **and**
  - o 10 days since symptoms first appeared

**If a student/staff member has an exposure to a confirmed case of COVID-19 not living in your household, she/ he can return after the following conditions have been met:**

1. Option 1
  - o No symptoms.
  - o 10 days have passed since exposure to the confirmed case.
  - o Return on day 11, and mask must be worn days 11-14 regardless of transmission category.
2. Option 2
  - o No symptoms.
  - o Negative COVID test on or after day 5.
  - o Monitor for symptoms days 6 and 7.
  - o Return on day 8, and mask must be work days 8-14 regardless of transmission category.

**If a student/staff member has an exposure to a confirmed case of COVID-19 and the confirmed case lives in your household, she/he can return after the following conditions have been met:**

1. Stay at home through the entire isolation period of the household member.
2. Once the isolation period ends, the student/staff member must begin her/his quarantine period according to the above schedule for exposure to a confirmed case.

**If a student/staff member is fully vaccinated and has an exposure to a confirmed case of COVID-19, please contact the school for guidance.**



### **Before Care/Aftercare (if applicable)**

#### **Process**

1. Physical distancing practices and all required protocols at the time are to be observed.
2. Students are responsible for providing their own snack and beverage during their time in Aftercare. There will be no snack sharing.
3. All employees should follow the same health checklist practices as school employees.
4. All operational guidelines put into place in the school (e.g. movement through the building, recess, etc.) are to be practiced during sessions.
5. Sanitize shared rooms before and after use.
6. Materials and toys used by during these programs need to be cleaned and sanitized daily.
7. Monitored hand washing and sanitizing will be done on a regular basis.
8. Follow the recommendations for any suspected illness.

### **After-school Activities & Sports**

#### **Process**

1. Each principal is asked to examine the after-school activities in the school.
2. If there is a room available, where students may be physically distant, after school activities may continue. All rooms must be disinfected after use by the activity/club.
3. If in compliance with the state guidelines for events and gatherings, in-person gatherings may occur.
4. Sports may continue following the local PIAA regulations in the case of high schools, and Diocesan health and safety protocols at the time in the case of intramural and Jr. High athletics.

**Travel:** If you are traveling, please inform your school principal. The guidance regarding travel changes frequently, and depending on the travel destination, there may be a need for quarantine.



**Attachment A**

Part of our Partnership in Sharing Good Health will require teachers, staff and students/parents to review this Screening Tool at home each day prior to coming to school. While it will not be collected, it is imperative that the screening be completed at home to ensure everyone’s safety.

**Diocese of Scranton School Symptom Screening Tool**

Part I: If you answer “yes” to questions 1, 2, or 3, please contact your school prior to sending your child to school.

1. Are you/is the student taking any medication to treat or reduce a fever such as Ibuprofen (i.e. Advil, Motrin) or Acetaminophen (Tylenol)?
2. Have you traveled to an area with travel restrictions or a very high level of transmission?
3. Have you/your child been in close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19 in the last 10 days or told by the Department of Health that you/your child should quarantine?

Part II

1. Are you/is the student experiencing any of the following?

<b>Group A 1 or more symptoms</b>	<b>Group B 2 or more symptoms</b>
Fever (100.4 or higher) Cough (New and persistent) Shortness of breath Difficulty breathing	Sore throat Runny nose/congestion Chills New lack of smell or taste Muscle pain Nausea or Vomiting Headache Diarrhea

**Stay home if, you or the student:**

- Have one or more symptoms in Group A **OR**
- Have two or more symptoms in Group B **OR**
- Are taking fever reducing medication **OR**
- Are within a window for recommended quarantine