



July 30, 2021

Dear Catholic School Community:

As we look to the new school year, we want to first reflect on last year and give thanks to God for our successes. Due to the tireless efforts and sacrifices of our students, parents, faculty, and staff, as well as our adherence to the state and county guidelines, we were able to offer in-person instruction as early as the fall of 2020, and our schools remained open throughout the academic year.

With summer concluding and the start of the new school just around the corner, we'd like to update you on changes to state guidance for our Catholic school students.

We are pleased to share that in-person instruction has been identified as a priority for this coming school year. With the recent increase in COVID-19 cases, public health authorities have been considering what measures schools will be required to implement to maintain a stable and healthy in-person learning environment. Guidance and health orders have been evolving over the past several weeks and now we have a clearer picture as to how the start of the school year will look.

All K-12 schools in California are permitted to reopen in-person for full-time, daily instruction. This represents significant progress from last year when we all reopened with distance learning. To maintain a safe in-person learning environment, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) released updated guidance for K-12 schools reflecting recent revisions from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The update removes several requirements that were included in last year's guidance such as physical distancing, cohort scheduling, temperature checks and the wearing of masks outdoors – these are no longer mandated. With the elimination of these restrictions, CDPH is relying on a multi-layered transmission prevention strategy in schools.

**Regardless of vaccination status**, the State of California has issued the following mandates, which are supported by the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#).

- All K-12 students are required to mask indoors, only.
- Adults in K-12 school settings are required to mask when sharing indoor spaces with students.
- Consistent with guidance from the 2020-21 school year, schools must develop and implement local protocols to enforce the mask requirements.

We understand that some consider any restrictions, like the wearing of masks indoors for school-aged children and the vaccinated, unnecessary. Others believe the state's guidance does not go far enough to mitigate transmission of COVID-19 in schools. As we have from the beginning of the pandemic, the Diocese of Stockton will maintain its alignment with public health orders and for this reason, students, faculty and staff in our schools are required to wear masks while indoors until the order has been lifted.

With the masking requirement, CDPH has created new options that will reduce, and in some cases eliminate, absences required for quarantine following a close contact with someone who has COVID-19. This will allow us to avoid sending full classrooms of students home for quarantine. Please see Quarantine and Isolation Chart on page 2.

The Catholic Schools Office and your school's administration will continue to monitor our state's guidance and will keep you posted on any changes that impact Catholic school operations. May God bless us as we anticipate the new academic year. Thank you for your continued patience and understanding.

May you and yours be blessed,

Marian DeGroot Graham  
Director for Catholic Schools

Most Reverend Myron J. Cotta

