

DIOCESE OF SAN ANGELO
Department of Catholic Schools
COVID-19 Health and Safety Protocols
Version 6.2
January 4, 2022

The Department of Catholic Schools of the Diocese of San Angelo provides this “COVID-19 Health and Safety Protocols” document for all Catholic schools within the Diocese of San Angelo for the 2021-2022 school year. Each school must ensure that the local level school plans and procedures are compliant with the diocesan requirements. Local Catholic school implementation of these protocols may vary based on the current conditions for each city and/or county. Some circumstances influencing local directives may include but are not limited to national or state guidelines, positive test results in students or staff, shortages of personnel, substantial student absences, or major campus cleaning. In such situations, the local school’s directives may be altered with approval by the diocese. The diocese will continue to monitor the public health situation to respond to any changes in the pandemic, government guidance, or mitigating factors.

As new health information is received, pastors and principals will be notified of updates, changes, deletions, suspensions, or discontinuance in part or in whole to these requirements at any time with or without notice.

We ask for your ongoing patience and partnership as we continue navigating the COVID-19 pandemic.

Health Assessment/Screening:

- All involved in the school must monitor their health for any COVID-19 symptoms. If any of the following new or worsening signs or symptoms of possible COVID-19 should occur, the individual should stay home and seek medical help: cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, loss of taste, loss of smell, diarrhea, feeling feverish, having a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit, or known close contact with a person who is lab confirmed to have COVID-19.
- Parents will review the health conditions of their children before the school day.

Immunizations/Vaccinations:

- All Catholic school students must be current on any immunizations required by civil authorities and the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops Education Department.
- COVID-19 vaccinations are encouraged but not required.
- All employees are encouraged to be vaccinated against COVID-19 both for their own health and for the health of those around them.

Facemasks:

- Use of facemasks is determined on an individual school basis with approval by the diocese. If any person chooses to wear a facemask for his or her own personal reasons, their choice is to be respected and there is to be no mocking nor bullying for anyone who chooses to wear a facemask.

- According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the coronavirus is spread mainly from person to person through respiratory droplets. The facemask acts as a barrier to prevent the droplets from traveling. Students and staff are still welcome to wear a mask if they wish to manage their own health care risk.
- Messages or images on facemasks must not be contrary to Catholic faith and morals. School administration has the final determination on acceptable facemasks.

Food:

- When food is served, it is suggested that it be pre-packaged in individual servings. It is also recommended that those who are serving food and those who are going through self-serve buffet lines wear facemasks.

Quarantines/Isolations:

- In the case of an individual who was diagnosed with COVID-19, the individual may return to the school when all three of the following criteria are met:
 - (1) at least 5 days (120 hours) have passed since diagnosis; and
 - (2) the individual has no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and an improvement in symptoms (for example, cough, shortness of breath); and
 - (3) the individual must wear a mask at all times for an additional 5 days.
- In the case of an individual who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and does not get evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, the individual is assumed to have COVID-19, and the individual may not return to the school until the individual has completed the same three-step criteria listed above.
- In the case of an individual with known close contact to a person who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19, their return to the school will depend upon their vaccination status:
 - a. For someone who is fully vaccinated, including all applicable boosters, the exposed individual does not need to quarantine, but a facemask would need to be worn at all times for a period of 10 days after exposure.
 - b. For someone who is not fully vaccinated or not up to date on any boosters, the exposed individual should quarantine for the first 5 days; if no symptoms appear, the exposed individual will have a choice to either remain quarantined for an additional 5 days (10 days total) or they may return to school after those initial 5 days but would need to wear a facemask at all times for an additional 5 days. (10 days total from exposure).
- The whole school campus may close down due to COVID-19 exposures. We will do our best to ensure a safe and healthy environment. If numerous cases appear in a single school resulting in the isolation of multiple classes/cohorts/pods, we may need to close the building(s) and transition all students to remote learning for a time (in consultation with the local health departments). Parents/Guardians will be updated regularly should that need arise.

- We are always striving for the goal of remaining on campus with our students. Safety and health, however, are our number one priority for our students, families, and staff. While we adhere to our plans as closely as possible, each case is handled based upon its unique circumstances. Aspects such as close contact, extended exposure time, and significant exposure area, are just a few of the items that are considered in the event of necessitating a quarantine of students and/or classrooms or an overall school. The schools shall notify parents immediately. It is important that we respect the privacy of the individual and not engage in any shaming, gossiping, or bullying of that person or their family. Instead, we pray for them.

Social/Physical Distancing:

- Social distancing is determined on an individual school basis with approval by the diocese. All are to be respectful of those who choose to maintain social distancing.

Visitors in Diocesan Schools/Facilities:

The regulation of visitors in schools is determined on an individual school basis with approval by the diocese.

Field Trips:

- Day field trips will resume in 2021-2022.

Athletics and Activities:

- Athletics and activities will be determined on an individual school basis, with approval by the diocese.

Hand Hygiene:

- Hand hygiene is encouraged, such as upon arrival, after using the restroom, before meals, and throughout the day. Hand sanitizer shall be provided throughout campus buildings.

Sanitization:

- Touchpoints/high-touch areas (i.e., doorknobs, light switches, faucets, etc.) will continue to be disinfected throughout all buildings on a daily basis.
- Teachers and staff will continue to have access to disinfectant supplies, including sprays to clean high-touch areas regularly. Train personnel for sanitizing equipment and facilities.
- Health room supplies must include gloves, facemasks, and hand sanitizer.
- Shared items, such as athletic equipment and art supplies, must be sanitized regularly.
- School buses will be thoroughly cleaned after each use, focusing on high-touch surfaces such as seats, steering wheel, knobs and door handles. Provide hand sanitizers on the bus.
- Consult a list of COVID-19 resources and materials from the COVID-19 Coordinator of the Diocese of San Angelo (Deacon Marc Mata).

Ventilation:

- When possible, the circulation or exchange of outdoor air within buildings should be increased to assist in maintaining a safer environment.

School Masses:

- The Diocese of San Angelo Protocols for Public Liturgies will be followed. In the case of any discrepancy between the liturgy protocols and the school policies, the stricter practices are to be utilized.

Sharing of Facilities:

When a school shares its classrooms and other parts of the facility with other parish programs, the school and parish leaders must plan together for building use, especially in areas of sanitizing the environment.