

Dear Parents,

As we move into a new phase of the pandemic, I want to thank you for all you continue to do to keep our school community healthy. Working together as parents, school leaders, teachers, staff and students, we have provided as normal a learning environment as possible over the past two years. We are so grateful for your partnership that has allowed our students and school to continue to learn.

As we look forward with optimism to an end to the pandemic, St. Patrick Catholic School will continue to take a holistic approach to education understanding the role we all play in the physical, social, emotional, and spiritual well-being of our students.

We will adjust our protocols to follow recommendations from various sources including the NC Department of Health and Human Services and local health and education experts. Our updated guidance is as follows:

- Individual **contact tracing** and exclusion from school of asymptomatic (no symptoms) people after an identified exposure will no longer be required.
- Students and staff exposed to COVID-19 no longer need to **quarantine** at home before returning to school as long as they don't have symptoms and have not tested positive for COVID-19.
- Students and staff who test positive for COVID-19 are required to isolate at home for 5 days. They may return to school on day 6 if symptoms have improved and are fever free for 24 hours without the use of medication. Masks will be optional upon return.
- Recognizing that COVID-19 is a virus that is here to stay, moving forward we will include this virus under our infectious disease policy. This means we will treat those infected as we do other illnesses that we encounter throughout our school. Current practices include sending students home when they show signs of illness i.e. fever, sore throat, cough, vomiting etc. Students and staff should stay home when they are ill.
- Remote learning will no longer be an option for those who test positive for COVID-19, Flu, Mono, Strep throat etc. This time at home is necessary for extra rest, hydration and recuperation.
- As the primary educators of their child, parents have the right to make the decision whether their child(ren) will wear a mask to school. We will continue to support families and their decisions. We ask that all community members be respectful of others and their choices.

The most important things we can do to keep our school healthy is to continue to take care of ourselves and our child(ren) (get a good night sleep, eat healthy, get regular exercise and work to reduce stress). In addition, please continue to monitor your child(ren) for symptoms i.e. fever, congestion, cough, headache, abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, and loss of taste or smell, and keep them home when they are sick.

Thank you for your continued trust and partnership moving forward with our new guidelines.