

## RE-OPENING FAQ'S

These FAQ's were created in an attempt to ensure transparency and open communication. As such, it is important that you read them, and then we ask that you sign the acknowledgement you will receive from your school.

### COVID-19: MONITORING TESTING, CASES AND CONCERNS

#### ***What are some of the signs and symptoms of COVID-19?***

The CDC provides a number of informative resources including a symptom self-checker that can be accessed through their website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

#### ***Are teachers, staff or students required to be tested for COVID-19 prior to returning to school?***

While we ask that all those with symptoms of COVID-19 to be tested or to quarantine, we do not require the mass testing of the school community.

#### ***What will my child's school require when a student or staff member has or develops: possible signs and symptoms of COVID-19; a diagnosis of COVID-19; or exposure to a person diagnosed with COVID-19?***

The Catholic schools in the Diocese of Bridgeport will follow the protocol established by the state of Connecticut as outlined here: <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/COVID-19/Addendum-5-Interim-Guidance-for-Responding-to-COVID-19-Scenarios-in-CT-School-Districts.pdf>

#### ***Will parents be notified when there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in my child's school?***

Yes. Parents will be notified if there has been a confirmed case of Covid-19 in their school. Additionally, the school will communicate directly with those who may have had direct contact with the student or adult who has tested positive. While we will maintain everyone's privacy as per HIPAA guidelines, we will always keep you informed of any positive COVID-19 cases that could impact your family.

Upon notification of a positive case in the school and with guidance from local health officials, the school administrator will engage in a contact tracing investigation to determine which members of our school community might have had direct contact with the person who tested positive.

#### ***What will happen if my child's teacher tests positive?***

Students and faculty impacted by a teacher testing positive will receive communication from the school. The school will work with the town's Department of Public Health to determine the appropriate next steps. Depending on the circumstances, A positive test by a teacher could result in the class engaging in distance learning until all direct contacts have been identified and contacted. Whenever necessary, A

substitute teacher will replace the teacher in the classroom (or in distance learning) during the time period recommended by the CDC and Department of Public Health.

## UNDERSTANDING THE ACADEMIC YEAR AHEAD

***With so many school districts and state agencies using terms differently, can you define some of the key terms used in this document?***

### **LEARNING OPTIONS**

***In-Person Learning:*** When all students have the opportunity to attend school on campus five days a week for a full school day.

***Hybrid Learning:*** When students have the opportunity to attend school on campus but due to the size of the school, only half of the school will attend in person at a time with the other half participating online. Schools using a hybrid model will rotate students based on a process that makes the most sense for the specific school.

***Distance Learning:*** When an entire school has to transition, for a period of time, to having all students learn from home.

***Remote Learning:*** When the student has the opportunity to attend in person but chooses, for whatever reason, to participate in our online academy for a specific period of time whether it be short term or long term. Our Online Academy allows students to remain enrolled in their school, receiving work and some virtual instruction from their teacher while receiving the support of a diocesan provided learning coach. For more information on this program, please go to [www.OnlineCatholicAcademy.org](http://www.OnlineCatholicAcademy.org)

### **GENERAL TERMS**

***Contact Tracing:*** Schools will keep track of interactions between teachers/staff and students and the intermingling of cohort groups to determine who may have had direct contact with staff or students.

***Direct (or close) Contact:*** As per the CDC guidelines, a person is considered to have had direct contact with another if they have an interaction within 6 feet of each other (masked or unmasked) for 15 minutes or more.

***Potential Exposure:*** When someone had contact with another (i.e., in the same room but not direct contact) for more than 15 minutes.

### ***What if I do not want to send my child back to school at this time?***

We realized there could be a number of reasons why you may not want your child to attend class in person at this time. In an effort to help families, we have established an online academy that will partner with your child's school to provide remote learning opportunities. Please contact your school administrator or visit [www.OnlineCatholicAcademy.org](http://www.OnlineCatholicAcademy.org) for more information.

### ***How will teachers evaluate and assess my child's readiness for learning as they return to school this fall? And, how will student knowledge/skill gap areas be addressed?***

Thankfully, we worked last Spring and over this summer to ensure that all of our schools would be able to implement our personalized learning initiative that was started three years ago. The personalized

learning initiative will give teachers the tools to assess knowledge and skills and create an individualized learning path to ensure student success. Additionally, for those students who used our Edmentum Exact Path program over the Summer, data can be made available to teachers so that they can get a snapshot of student progress. More information about our personalized learning initiative can be found on our website <https://www.dioceseofbridgeportcatholicschools.com/personalized-learning/>

***My local public school is opening in a hybrid model. How come our Catholic school can open full time if the public school cannot?***

Our Catholic schools have followed a very strict protocol developed in compliance with CDC and state guidelines for reopening schools. While all educators agree that students should be back in school to ensure learning and to provide appropriate socialization opportunities, not all public schools are able to meet the State and CDC requirements to bring students back full time. In most cases it has to do with the size of the school population, the space available and the ability to schedule teachers. Thankfully we do not face the same issues. The smaller size of our school populations and the mission driven zeal of our teachers and administrators have allowed us to be flexible in our planning, to use space and instructional time creatively and to create school environments that are healthy, safe and nurturing. Put simply, we are able to open because we can meet, and in many cases exceed, the requirements and guidelines of the CDC and the State of Connecticut.

***I am experiencing financial difficulty as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic, is there any financial assistance available?***

Thanks to the generous donors to Foundations in Education, we are able to announce the COVID-19 Emergency Tuition Assistance Fund for Catholic elementary schools. With the benefit of their generosity, we will do the best we can to support a family's desire to remain in Catholic education. More information can be found at <https://www.foundationsineducation.org/>

## **TRANSITION TO DISTANCE LEARNING**

***What criteria will be used to determine if my child's school will transition to distance learning?***

Decisions to transition a school will be made in consultation between the school administration, the Office of the Superintendent, and the Health Department from the township within which the school is located. The decision to transition to remote learning will be informed by the following data:

1. The primary factor will be the 7-day average number of cases of COVID-19 per 100,000 people in the town in which the school is located. We will monitor the state reports weekly.
2. If the 7-day average is at or above 10 cases per 100,000, we will review:
  - a. The 7-day average of the town's Percent of test positivity and the number of Number of new Covid-19 hospitalizations per 100,000 people.
  - b. The number of confirmed cases in the specific school.
  - c. The ability of the school to mitigate risk of virus spread.

***If my child's school has to transition to distance learning at some point in the year, how might it look different than last year?***

We have the benefit of having learned a great deal from the past spring semester. Based on parent feedback through surveys and focus groups, teacher feedback from cross-school meetings and surveys, and feedback from principals, we have identified key structures and strategies that were found to be successful and have identified areas of weakness in which to improve. A detailed description of our distance learning program can be found in the "Sudden Closure" section of the reopening plan which can be accessed at <https://www.dioceseofbridgeportcatholicschools.com/coronavirus-reopening-plan/>

**SOCIAL EMOTIONAL SUPPORT**

***What is MyCatholicDoctor.com?***

MyCatholicDoctor.com is being offered to our schools as an extra layer of support for all of our families, students, teachers and staff. With parent consent, MyCatholicDoctor can provide in-school telehealth visits that include the child and the parent. Information sessions are being offered over the next few weeks. Please contact your school administrator for detailed information on dates and times. MyCatholicDoctor works directly with your insurance company and is available for telehealth visits during and after school for students and staff.

***If my child needs emotional support during this time, who can I reach out to?***

All of our Catholic schools will have either full time or part time counseling support for students. We realize the stress resulting from all the uncertainty surrounding us and we are working to ensure a full complement of social-emotional resources are available for our students. We also realize the incredible stress being experienced by parents. Please remember that there is a helpline available should you need to assistance. The confidential help line number is 1-833-258-5011. More information can be found at <http://www.talkitoutct.com/>

**SCHOOL SAFETY PROTOCOLS**

***I am a parent. Will I ever be able to come to campus outside of pick-up and drop-off?***

One of the hallmarks of a great Catholic school community is its parent volunteers. We know parent support is a critical component of our community engagement and partnership. Unfortunately, during the current health crisis, we will limit parent volunteer activities and limit parent visitation during the school day until further notice.

***Will the school enforce the state travel ban?***

Anyone who travels to one of the states listed on the CT advisory (found at <https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/travel>) is required to self-quarantine for 14 days. Additionally, we have chosen to extend that requirement to anyone who travels internationally.

***What steps is my child's school taking to ensure the safety of my child?***

Each school has adopted additional protocols to ensure a clean and healthy school environment. Many have brought on additional cleaning staff during the day, purchased additional cleaning supplies and hydrostatic cleaning machines to sanitize classrooms daily. Additionally, procedures for entering the building have been changed to require health checks and temperature monitoring. Hand sanitizing stations have been placed throughout the building and social distancing measures put in place.

Our Superintendent of Schools is personally visiting every Catholic school in the Diocese to ensure it is in compliance with our re-opening plan which you can find at:

<https://www.dioceseofbridgeportcatholicschools.com/coronavirus-reopening-plan/>. Additionally, each school has developed a school specific plan and I encourage you to reach out to your school administrator if you have not yet received it.

***Is there a risk for my child to attend school?***

The Diocese of Bridgeport and your child's Catholic school have put in place preventative measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and are following all of the CDC guidelines and recommendations associated with reducing the spread of COVID 19. As the school year school continues, the Diocese and your school will monitor and adjust as needed based on the most up to date guidance. Attending school, as with visiting any public space, could increase the risk of contracting COVID-19. Therefore, despite taking all appropriate and recommended steps, we are unable to guarantee that a student, staff member or visitor will not become infected with COVID-19. By sending your child to school in person, you are acknowledging and assuming this risk.

**For more information OR to report a positive COVID-19 test result call the  
Diocese of Bridgeport Catholic Schools COVID-19 Help Line at 203-209-2894  
or email [schools@diobpt.org](mailto:schools@diobpt.org)**