



Covid Safety Protocols for Oakland Catholic 2021-2022



Oakland Catholic High School and the Diocese of Pittsburgh retain the right to modify this document based upon changing circumstances and ongoing guidance from federal, state, and local governments.

Oakland Catholic High School is committed to delivering an outstanding educational experience to our students. Grounded in Spirituality, Scholarship, and Service, our mission to educate globally-focused, confident, faith-filled female leaders, lies at the core of every OC program - whether curricular or extracurricular, in-person or remote. We live that mission through commitment, community, and collaboration.

Commitment, Community, Collaboration

Since the onset of the current pandemic, Oakland Catholic has responded quickly and in innovative ways as we continued to fulfill our responsibilities to students, faculty, staff, the Diocese of Pittsburgh, and the broader community. In March 2020, we successfully responded to the nation-wide shut-down and had the entire school up and running virtually in a matter of 24 hours. In 2020-2021, the faculty, staff, and administration, with the expert and full support of the OCHS Board of Directors, conducted school under multiple models that ranged from hybrid to fully reopen, with a virtual option available throughout the year. The Class of 2021 graduated with a record number of acceptances to elite universities and over \$30 million in college scholarships.

This year, we intend to hold in-person instruction for all students, five days a week. In full support of Bishop David Zubik and in alignment with the Diocese of Pittsburgh, Oakland Catholic High School maintains a universal indoor mask policy, meaning that all individuals, both vaccinated and unvaccinated, will wear a mask inside our buildings. This policy will be revisited on a monthly basis as the Diocese consults with infectious disease experts in our region, Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, the Allegheny County Health

Department, the PA Departments of Health and Education, and the CDC guidelines on Covid protocol for the coming school year.



We take very seriously our obligation as Catholics, as Christians, as faith-filled individuals, as educators, and as human beings to act in a manner that does not just serve us and our personal needs and desires. Instead, we are called to protect those who are vulnerable, to watch over our brothers and sisters, and to love one another as Christ loves us. Wearing a mask, remaining informed, and understanding that an inconvenience on our part to protect the health of another are small sacrifices that we willingly accept in this time.

The ongoing support of our extensive community (faculty, staff, administrators, students, parents, board members, alumnae, former parents, and friends) has been a constant and noteworthy element of the OC educational experience. As we embark on another impactful year filled with excellence, tradition, and legacy, we are grateful for this support and cooperation. Your collaboration with the policies, measures, and protocols outlined in this document will ensure that we can maintain our responsibilities as committed educators, enthusiastic learners, and ethical global citizens.

STATEMENT FROM THE DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH AND OAKLAND CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

***This statement is also included in the OCHS Parent/Student Handbook as part of the understanding and agreement that parents/guardians sign.**

REGARDING COVID-19:

The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) has been declared a worldwide pandemic by the World Health Organization. COVID-19 is extremely contagious and spread mainly person to person through respiratory droplets. COVID-19 can cause long-term medical problems and death, regardless of age. Therefore, the School has implemented a Health and Safety Plan in compliance with the most recent guidance from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, PA Departments of Education and Health, Allegheny County Department of Health, American Academy of Pediatrics, and Children's Hospital of PA Policy Lab in an effort to reduce the risk associated with COVID-19. As a condition of enrollment and participation in in-person instruction and School extracurricular activities, all members of the School community understand and agree that they shall act in full compliance with the terms of the Health and Safety Plan. School community members likewise understand and agree that the School cannot completely mitigate the transfer of a communicable disease when involved in in-person instruction or extracurricular activities and acknowledge and accept any risk associated with the same.

Regarding Potential Disruption of School Operations:

Parents/Guardians acknowledge and agree that events beyond the School's control, including but not limited to fire, power outage, act of God, war, governmental action, acts of terrorism, pandemic, and epidemic, may disrupt School operations, and that such disruption does not relieve Parents/Guardians of their financial obligations to the School or entitle Parents/Guardians to a refund. In response to such events, the School may, but is not required to, modify, relocate, reschedule and/or cease its operations in full or in part, and/or continue certain operations through alternative means (for example, the School may choose to extend or shorten the School Year; extend, shorten or reschedule breaks; and/or institute distance learning).

*Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought
to love one another.*

-1 John 4:11





Oakland Catholic High School

Covid Health and Safety Plan

2021-2022



This document was prepared with the assistance of the COVID-19 Task Force of Oakland Catholic High School, the Diocese of Pittsburgh, and input from members of the medical community in our region. It also includes any orders, directives, and/or clarifications from the CDC, Pennsylvania Departments of Health and Education, the Governor's Office, the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association, and the Allegheny County Health Department. It is understood that this is a fluid document that will be edited as necessary as circumstances and/or government or diocesan directives change.

This document was last updated on August 24, 2021.

Health and Safety Plan: Oakland Catholic High School

All members of the Oakland Catholic High School Community should be mindful that as long as there are cases of COVID-19 and subsequent variants in the community, there are no strategies that can completely eliminate transmission risk within a school population. The goal is to keep transmission as low as possible in order to safely continue in-person instruction and school activities. With the safety measures and policies outlined in this plan, Oakland Catholic strives to minimize exposure and transmission to the maximum extent possible. It is incumbent on all students, faculty, staff, coaches, and parents to abide by the school and diocesan policies to which they agreed, as indicated by their signatures on the Parent/Student Handbook agreement sheet, the teacher/employee agreements, the Memorandum of Understanding, Acceptable Use Policy, and other permission slips, MOUs, and waivers. More importantly, as members of a Catholic school community, grounded in the gospel teaching that calls each of us to be our brother's keeper, we recognize our obligation to those who are unable to be vaccinated and respond to Pope Francis' call to do our part to prevent the spread of the virus and protect all of God's children through increased vaccination efforts, masks, and respecting and honoring one another in how we think, speak, and act.

In August of 2021, the Diocese of Pittsburgh, under the direction of Bishop David Zubik, issued a universal mask mandate for all who enter a Catholic school building at the start of academic year 2021-2022. This mandate will be reviewed on a monthly basis; new or continuing directives regarding mask-wearing will be conveyed each month by the Director of Catholic Schools Michelle Peduto. As a diocesan high school, Oakland Catholic High School both supports and adheres to this diocesan policy. The current mask mandate was developed after significant research on the ongoing developing data on the virus, its mutations, the vaccination rates of our schools, the vaccine effectiveness, and current infection/transmission rates in the region. Both Children's Hospital of Pennsylvania Policy Lab and infectious disease experts from the region informed the Bishop and Director of Catholic Schools on the valuable protection that masks offer against this virus. The mandate also reflects both the Allegheny County Health Department and the CDC guidelines that strongly recommend indoor mask wearing as a safety protocol for schools. Finally, the mission and identity of our Catholic schools, which exhort us to act selflessly for the sake of others, contributed to the decision to institute universal mask-wearing for both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals in our schools. As noted above, the same extensive network, data, resources, values, and beliefs will be consulted monthly in order to determine the continuation of, or changes to, this policy and all other safety protocols established to maintain in-person instruction and to keep our schools safe.

It is also understood that if circumstances change for the worse, the Diocese of Pittsburgh and its Catholic schools, including Oakland Catholic High School, will adhere to orders and/or directives from the Governor's office and the Pennsylvania Department of Education, including those that might mandate school closure for an extended period of time. We do not anticipate this and pray that our current mitigation efforts prevent this type of action. With that said, Oakland Catholic has proven its ability to very successfully conduct an academic year under virtual or hybrid conditions; parents, students, and faculty can rest assured that, regardless of circumstances or directive, the school year will continue on pace as planned.

Universal Mask Policy

Please note the following:

- All students, faculty, staff, and other individuals will be required to wear a well-fitting mask whenever indoors on the campus of Oakland Catholic High School with the start of the 2021-2022 academic year. The policy will be reviewed and adjusted according to new data on a monthly basis.
- Face 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, PA DOH, PDE, and Allegheny County DOH. This policy is subject to change at any time and will be communicated when adjustments are made.
 - 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>
 - When counties are in moderate, substantial or higher, all individuals, regardless of vaccination status, wear masks indoors.
 - 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.
 - When masks are required, mask breaks will occur while implementing six foot social distancing during the day and will not have to be worn when eating or drinking.
 - At this time, masks are optional outdoors. Masks should be worn in crowded outdoor settings when there is sustained close contact.
- Mask breaks can occur under the following scenarios:
 - When a student, teacher, or staff member is six feet or farther from all other individuals and engaged in independent activity, s/he may take a mask break for under 15 minutes. (Five to ten minutes is maximum recommended time.)
 - When a student, teacher, or staff member is eating lunch, it is understood that a mask will not be worn. As soon as the individual has finished eating/drinking, s/he must resume wearing a mask. **Please note special arrangements and dining circumstances below.*
 - Whenever a student, teacher, or staff member is outside, provided that it is not in a large crowd situation, masks are NOT required at the time of this document's creation.
 - When a teacher or staff member is alone in a closed, but ventilated office space, s/he may take a mask break.
 - A teacher may pull down his/her mask to speak, if six feet or farther from students, for a brief period of time, in order to clarify something pertinent to the lesson being conducted.
 - When an athlete is engaged in active play (not on the sidelines or in a group huddle), a mask break can be taken.
- Medical exemptions that excuse an individual from wearing a mask must be documented and signed by a practicing physician who is currently treating the individual. A PCP, pediatrician, or relevant specialist (e.g. a pulmonary specialist who treats lung and respiratory disorders would be considered a relevant specialist; an orthopedist or optometrist would not be considered a relevant specialist), providing a medical exemption, must explain the reason for the exemption in accordance with the guidelines of the medical community and government for exempting an individual from a public health measure.
- Shields are not a substitute for masks, **unless** an individual provides clear and valid documentation for a medical exemption. In this situation, the medically exempted individual must wear a shield in

place of a mask in all instances where a mask is required.

- For maximum effectiveness, masks should be washed daily and never shared. As more information on the virus has become available, it is now known that transmission of the virus occurs through respiratory droplets and close human-to-human contact. The careful practices of hygiene, frequent hand washing, wearing masks, and minimizing touching of the face significantly reduce the risk of transmission and will be regularly reinforced throughout the school day.

Key Strategies, Planning, Policies, and Procedures

Virtual Learning

While we realize that in-person instruction is the most conducive environment for student learning and well-being, the need for virtual learning may become necessary due to school required COVID-19 quarantine. **These are the only instances whereby virtual learning will be utilized.** Virtual learning experiences will be initiated and coordinated by the Administration and Faculty of Oakland Catholic and will consist of a combination of asynchronous and synchronous learning, recorded video instruction, online resources, and Zoom opportunities.

Extracurricular Activities & Sports

- Provided that students maintain physical distance and wear masks when indoors, after school activities may continue.
- If in compliance with the state guidelines for events and gatherings, in-person gatherings may occur.
- High School sports may continue following the local PIAA regulations and Diocesan protocols. Currently, CDC guidelines do not require masks to be worn while actively playing sports if the individual is fully vaccinated.

Cleaning, Sanitizing, Disinfection, and Ventilation

The school buildings are always cleaned in the summer in preparation for the return to school. All hard-surface floors have been stripped, cleaned, and waxed. All carpeting has been professionally cleaned. All hard surfaces, including furniture, countertops, window sills, windows, doors, stairwells, hallways, and restrooms have been thoroughly cleaned and sanitized. All fabric furniture has been professionally cleaned. Cleaning in the summer and throughout the school year is always done with soap and water, followed by the application of an EPA-approved disinfectant (see www.epa.gov). Disinfectants differentiate themselves from other cleaning products by killing germs with chemicals rather than removing them. According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](https://www.cdc.gov), disinfectants should be used on surfaces that have already been cleaned of dirt and grime—especially high-touch surfaces—to prevent the spread of diseases.

If it is discovered that an individual in the school has symptoms of Covid or has learned that they have tested positive for Covid, the area(s) where the individual has been will be specially treated with a disinfectant mister once the individual has departed.

With renovations and newer construction conducted over recent years, Oakland Catholic meets or exceeds ventilation standards for a school. In addition, teachers and office staff have been instructed to increase the flow of outdoor air to classroom and office space by opening windows daily and keeping doors to closed spaces open whenever possible.

OCHS Pandemic Coordination Team

Members of the OCHS Pandemic Coordination Team are noted below. They have reviewed and endorsed this document. The team will continconvene as necessary throughout the coming school year in order to make revisions, discuss recommendations, and communicate changes to the OC Community.

Mary Claire Kasunic	Administration - President
Nicole Powell	Administration – Acting Principal
Jeff Patrizio	Pandemic Coordinator; Teacher; Safety & Security Committee Member
Mary Pat Bielich	Teacher; Safety & Security Committee Member
Debbie Ceponis	Administrative Assistant to President; Alumna; Parent of Alumnae
Cassidy Checketts	Teacher; Safety & Security Committee Member
Dennis DeFilippo	Teacher; Parent of Alumna
Kevin Fink	Director of Maintenance; Building/Grounds Engineer
Elyse Lanzendorfer	School Counselor; Safety & Security Committee Member
Greg Martz	Teacher; Army Reservist
Molly McCracken	Athletic Director; Alumna
Sean O’Neil	Teacher; Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)
Angela Orbin	School Counselor; Current Parent
Nikki Richardson	Administrative Assistant in School Office; Current Parent; Alumna; Parent of Alumna

Distancing and Other Safety Protocols

Classrooms/Learning Spaces Organized to Mitigate Spread

Student desks will be separated by three feet or more, to the maximum extent possible. When students are in collaborative situations, teachers will be mindful of maintaining physical distance as much as possible, and/or limiting the amount of time students are closer than three feet to under fifteen minutes. Whenever students are indoors and six feet or less apart, masks will be worn, whether a student/teacher is vaccinated or unvaccinated, in accordance with the diocesan universal mask policy.

Adequate spacing that aligns with CDC guidelines for schools will also be accommodated to the maximum extent possible in all community spaces throughout the school. The following parameters have been set for K-12 schools, and is noted on the flowchart at the end of this document with regard to close contact tracing:

In the K–12 indoor classroom setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student (laboratory- confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) if both the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time.¹

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/contact-tracing/contact-tracing-plan/appendix.html#contact>

As noted under the mask policy statement, “mask breaks” are permitted indoors for approximately five to ten minutes, provided that six feet or more of physical distancing is in place. Also as noted previously, masks are not required in outdoor settings unless students, teachers, and/or staff are gathered in a large crowd and cannot maintain physical distance.

Hand sanitation centers will once again be easily accessible in hallways, classrooms, and throughout the school buildings.

When weather permits, classes can be held outdoors on our campus, at the prerogative of the teacher.

Dining Hall

Breakfast and lunch in the cafeteria will be provided as usual, with all food options available to students, faculty, and staff. The dining hall windows will be opened daily to enhance the air exchange by increasing the influx of outdoor air. The patio and grassy courtyard will be open to all students at lunchtime to encourage dining al fresco. A wide range of seating options will be made available to students so that they can spread out during lunch and minimize the number of individuals in close contact with each other while eating and without masks.

Student Transportation

Individual school districts and bus companies will set their own policies regarding transportation. At the time of this document (August 2021), it is the understanding of Oakland Catholic that masks are to be worn at all times in all modes of public transportation or private bus transportation.

Visitor and Volunteer Policies

Outside visitors or volunteers, including parents, will be permitted on campus with prior approval, provided that they comply with standard school policies regarding guest arrival procedures, the universal mask policy, and all other school policies concerning safety protocols for outside visitors to campus. **All visitors must be masked at all times indoors. As stated in our handbook, all visitors, whether scheduled or impromptu, must come to the main entrance on Craig Street, enter via the Welcome Center, sign in, and wear an identification nametag while on campus. Once their appointment or business is completed, the visitor must return to the Welcome Center to sign out and exit the building. The only exception to this procedure is for contracted building maintenance workers who are permitted to meet the school’s maintenance director by the maintenance area and enter the building there.*

Travel Policies Related to Covid

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. Current CDC guidelines are available at:

- Domestic Travel: [Domestic Travel During COVID-19 | CDC](#)
- International Travel: [International Travel During COVID-19 | CDC](#)

The Diocese of Pittsburgh and Oakland Catholic High School will follow CDC [international](#) and [domestic](#) travel guidelines with regard to students and staff who participate in travel either abroad or out of state during the coming school year. A quick summary is provided below, but detailed descriptions can be found on the CDC website via the links above.

- **International travel:** In addition to masking during airline travel and crowded situations, vaccinated students and staff members who return from travel abroad are asked to self-monitor for symptoms and get tested 3-5 days after travel. If symptoms develop or the test result is positive, student/staff should follow the appropriate quarantine protocol. Unvaccinated individuals who travel abroad should adhere to all masking expectations, and get tested 3-5 days after return and self-quarantine for a full 7 days upon return, OR, self-quarantine for a full ten days after return. If symptoms develop or the test result is positive, student/staff should follow the appropriate quarantine protocol.

- **Domestic travel:** In addition to masking during airline travel and in crowded situations, vaccinated students and staff members who return from domestic travel should self-monitor for symptoms and get tested if symptoms develop. If symptoms develop or the test result is positive, student/staff should follow the appropriate quarantine protocol. Unvaccinated individuals who travel domestically via air should adhere to all masking expectations, and get tested 3-5 days after return and self-quarantine for a full 7 days upon return, OR, self-quarantine for a full ten days after return. If symptoms develop or the test result is positive, student/staff should follow the appropriate quarantine protocol.

Monitoring Student and Staff Health

Monitoring students, staff, and others on campus to ensure that they are healthy and not exhibiting signs of illness

All faculty, staff, students, outside consultants, and visitors/volunteers will be asked to self-screen prior to leaving home and checking for possible symptoms. If any symptom of illness is present, or the individual has even a slight fever, the teacher, staff member, student, consultant, or visitor/volunteer is asked to remain home until symptom-free and fever-free for at least 24 hours. If symptoms persist, it is recommended that the individual obtain a PCR or rapid test at least 3-5 days after symptoms appeared to determine if it might be Covid. If the test result is positive for Covid, the school should be notified and the individual should follow the quarantine procedures as outlined later in this document.

Symptoms of Covid originally included coughing, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, or 2 or more of the following: lack of smell or taste (without congestion), sore throat, chills, muscle pain, headache, congestion/runny nose, nausea/vomiting, diarrhea. With the Delta variant being the predominant strain at the time of this document's origination, it should be noted that symptoms are very similar to the common cold and may not mimic the same symptoms as the earlier strains of Covid, except for a lack of taste and/or smell. Testing is the best way to determine if symptoms are Covid-related.

If it is determined that an individual is exhibiting symptoms that might potentially indicate a Covid infection, or if an individual discovers, while on campus, that s/he is positive for Covid or has been exposed to someone who is positive for Covid, the following protocol will be followed:

- The individual will be isolated in the main office or other area easily accessible by administration and/or the school nurse, but removed from others at the school.
- If a student, parent(s)/guardian(s) will immediately be notified.
- Arrangements will be made for the individual to be picked up for transportation home.
- Contact tracing will be conducted by the school principal.
- The Director of Catholic Schools will be notified of a positive or potential Covid case on campus.
- All individuals (and parents/guardians if a minor) who are deemed to be close contacts will be notified in person, via phone, and by email. They will be instructed to follow up with their doctor, get tested, and follow the quarantine procedures as outlined in the flow chart on page 10.

Procedures and Protocols When an Individual is Sick, Exposed to Covid, or Positive for Covid

The individual who is ill or who informs a member of administration or a member of the school office that they have been exposed to an individual with a confirmed case of COVID-19 will be sent to/retained in the office and sent home immediately. If the individual is exhibiting shortness of breath, a high fever, or other distressing symptoms, 911 will be alerted so that the individual can be transported to a healthcare facility.

The area occupied by a sick individual will be closed off so that respiratory droplets can settle, and then thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. All areas that the sick person may have used, such as offices, bathrooms, and common areas, will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.

Close contact tracing and quarantine procedures will be followed according to the flowchart noted on both the [CDC](#) and ACHD websites. A graphic design of these protocols has been included on page 10 to clarify the steps that will be followed, depending on whether an individual is vaccinated/unvaccinated, how close and how long an individual was in contact with an infected person, and whether an individual is experiencing symptoms or tests positive for Covid in the days following exposure.

The Principal and/or other Administrator will be responsible for making decisions regarding quarantine or isolation requirements of faculty, school staff, or students. The President or Vice President will be responsible for making decisions regarding quarantine or isolation requirements of Advancement and Business Office personnel.

Conditions to be met prior to the return to school for a staff or student with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 are outlined on the flowchart provided below.

Health and Safety Plan Communications

Notification of confirmed staff or student illness, or exposure, and resulting changes to the local Health and Safety Plan

School families will be notified through the parent alert system (School Messenger) on the same day that the school is alerted of a positive COVID-19 case. Notifications will be sent via email or text.

Parents should opt into the School Messenger text alerts as instructed by Administration in order to receive the most recent communications. School Messenger works in conjunction with PowerSchool and will send text alerts to the cell phone number recorded in PowerSchool. Please contact the Principal/Assistant Principal with questions.

When communicating with families and staff about Covid cases, no names or identifying attributes of the individual with a confirmed case will not be shared at any time.

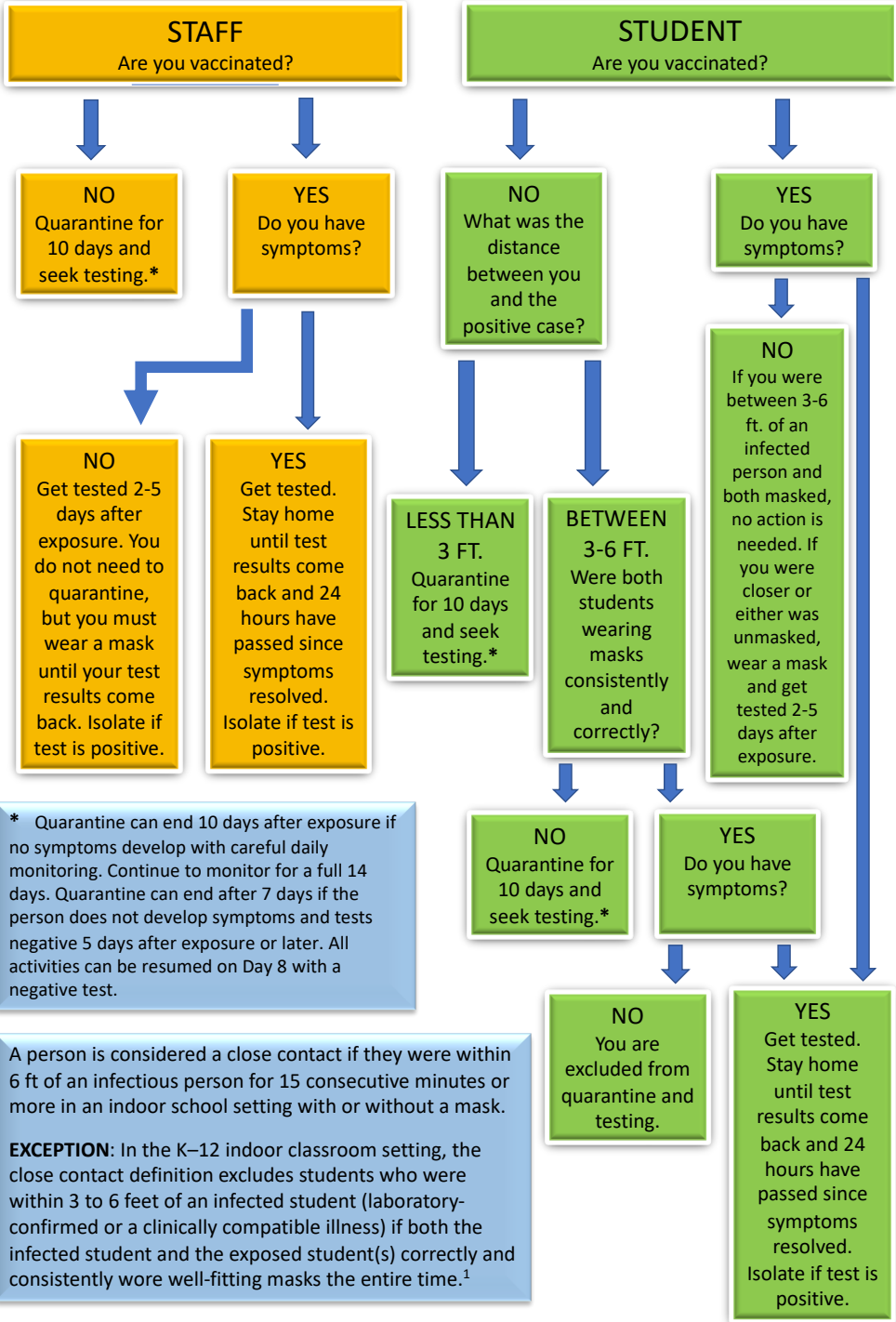
Timely, ongoing, and effective family and caregiver communication about health and safety protocols and schedules will be critical. Additionally, Oakland Catholic has established and will maintain ongoing communication with local and state authorities to determine current mitigation levels in our community,

Established communication channels (weekly electronic newsletter, email, School Messenger, Schoology notifications, and Constant Contact emails) will serve as the means of communication with parents, student

COVID-19 Quarantine Guidance Flowchart

K-12 schools

Close Contact
Are you staff or a student?



* Quarantine can end 10 days after exposure if no symptoms develop with careful daily monitoring. Continue to monitor for a full 14 days. Quarantine can end after 7 days if the person does not develop symptoms and tests negative 5 days after exposure or later. All activities can be resumed on Day 8 with a negative test.

A person is considered a close contact if they were within 6 ft of an infectious person for 15 consecutive minutes or more in an indoor school setting with or without a mask.

EXCEPTION: In the K–12 indoor classroom setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) if both the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time.¹

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/contact-tracing/contact-tracing-plan/appendix.html#contact> Updated 8/11/21