



Diocese of Rockford

555 Colman Center Drive
P.O. Box 7044
Rockford, Illinois 61125

Catholic Education Office

(815) 399-4300 Voice
(815) 399-6278 Fax

February 6, 2022

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The Catholic Education Office is firmly committed to providing a solid academic program in a safe environment. As you may already know, more than 140 school districts in Illinois were named in a lawsuit regarding Governor Pritzker's Executive Orders mandating specific COVID-19 mitigation requirements in schools. Among the requirements challenged in the suit were the universal mask mandate and the temporary exclusion of students identified as close contacts to someone who tested positive for COVID-19. This lawsuit also challenged the COVID-19 "Test to Stay" programs.

On Friday, February 4, the Judge presiding over the lawsuit preliminarily ruled that the student mask mandate and the temporary exclusion of students from the school who are identified as close contacts cannot be enforced by the Governor's current Executive Orders.

The Governor is now challenging this preliminary ruling. However, at this time, the Rockford Diocese will not require wearing masks during the school day or excluding students as close contacts. Individuals who were considered close contacts can return to school immediately if they are not experiencing COVID symptoms.

With this ruling, at this time, school staff members are not required to test weekly if they are not vaccinated; students and school staff are not required to wear masks; students who are considered close contacts are not required to quarantine or "Test to stay." The CDC still has an order in place requiring anyone on public transportation including school buses to wear a mask. Therefore, masks are required on school buses.

We recommend that school staff members and students wear masks at school, but parents may decide if they want their children to wear masks. Until we receive other directives from the health department, parents may choose if they wish their children to wear masks. We will notify you if the court reverses this preliminary ruling and implements the mask mandate again.

The success of Catholic Schools depends on the partnership between home and school. Thank you for your continued support of Catholic Education.

Sincerely,

Vito C. DeFrisco
Superintendent of Schools