



ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE of PORTLAND

510 Ocean Avenue
Portland Maine 04103-4936

Telephone: 207.773.6471
Facsimile: 207.773.0182
Website: www.portlanddiocese.org

2022-23 Maine Catholic Schools Parent Guide

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT THIS YEAR

Maine's Catholic schools will be opening for the 2022-23 school year with similar protocols in place as when we closed the school year in June. These policies are designed to minimize the requirement for school closures to provide safe, full-time, in-person learning for our students. Policies will be reviewed periodically. The plan reflects important guidance from the Maine Department of Education (MDOE), the Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

ALL STUDENT IN-PERSON LEARNING

Our plan allows us to welcome back all students for full-day instruction, five days a week, in our school buildings.

FACE MASKS

Face masks are optional except when returning to school after isolation or close contact.

TESTS

Free home COVID-19 tests may be available from a state program while supplies last:

<https://www.accesscovidtests.org/>

REMOTE LEARNING

Remote learning will be provided if a school closure becomes necessary during an outbreak.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Each school must apply these guidelines to its own unique school setting. As such, if you have specific questions about how these guidelines apply to your school, we encourage you to contact your school's principal.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Q: What does "reopening our schools" really mean?

A: Gathering as a school community is an integral part of Catholic education. This means that all students are welcome to return to classes for in-person instruction five days a week.

Q: Will students be safe?

A: Safety is always our top priority in Catholic education. In constructing this plan, we have closely studied guidance from federal and state authorities and can implement the requirements.

Q: Will all students be allowed to return to school at the beginning of the year?

A: Yes. Our plan provides for the return of all Catholic school students for full five day a week instruction.

Q: Will students need to wear face masks at school?

A: Face masks are optional except when returning to school after isolation or close contact.

Q: Will students be required to physically distance at school?

A: Students who are required to mask due to isolation or close contact must remain 6 feet away from others when not wearing a mask. The mask should only be removed when actively eating or drinking.

Q: Will parents/families be required to take their child's temperature?

A: If your child has had a fever of over 100.4°F within the last 24 hours, or complains of new, unexplained, or worsening symptoms, you should keep him/her home and contact your doctor and the school office. For more information about how to handle the potential illness of your child, please see the Infection Protocol section.

Q: How will drop-off and pick-up at school be handled?

A: Your principal will communicate any drop-off and pick-up procedures to you ahead of the start of school.

Q: What does the plan require regarding safety and cleaning of school buildings?

A: The plan includes specific requirements for the ongoing cleaning of all school buildings. Building ventilation will maximize air flow.

Q: Can parents/family members come into the schools to drop off and/or pick up their child?

A: Parents may not be able to enter the building for drop-off or pick-up. If so, staff will meet parents and their children outside the building.

Q: Can parents/family members still volunteer at school?

A: We have asked schools to minimize the number of volunteers this year to mitigate risk. Unless a parent/family member is an essential volunteer, as determined by the principal, schools will likely not allow volunteering.

Q: Will extended care (before and after care) be available this year?

A: Yes. Schools may continue to offer extended care. Our plan includes specific requirements for such care.

Q: My child and/or another member of my household is in an at-risk group for COVID-19. Should I send my child to school?

A: The CDC has defined conditions in which certain people may be more at risk for severe illness through COVID-19. If your child or another member of your household is at-risk, we encourage you to speak to your doctor. Ultimately, you must decide whether your child should wear a mask and if you believe it is safe for your child to attend school.

Q: Is it okay for my family to travel during the COVID-19 pandemic?

A: Currently, returning from another state does not require quarantine or testing. Refer to the CDC travel guidelines <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html> as well as any requirements for traveling to another country.

Q: What happens if there is a COVID-19 surge in Maine and the state imposes more restrictions on schools?

A: If a COVID-19 surge occurs, we will work closely with state officials to determine whether our procedures need to be adjusted.

INFECTION PROTOCOLS

Q: What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

A: The CDC has identified several symptoms of COVID-19, including high fever (above 100.4°F), sore throat, coughing, nausea, headache, muscle aches, loss of taste or smell, runny nose, fatigue, diarrhea, and difficulty breathing.

Q: What should I do if my child has symptoms of COVID-19?

A: If your child shows symptoms of COVID-19, you should contact your doctor. Your child should be tested as soon as possible. You should alert your school's main office and do not bring your child to school. If COVID-19 symptoms occur during the school day, your child will be immediately sent to the required, designated isolation room and you will be contacted to pick your child up from school.

Q: My child had COVID-19-like symptoms but tested negative for COVID-19. When can he/she return to school?

A: If your child does not have COVID-19 but has another illness, you must keep your child home until symptoms have improved (including no fever or fever-reducing medications for 24 hours) and provide the negative COVID-19 test result. Schools may be able to accept home tests if the patient and collection date can be verified.

Q: What should I do if my child tests positive for COVID-19?

A: You should immediately contact your doctor for additional instructions. You should also inform your school's main office. You must not send your child to school. Privacy laws prevent the school staff from sharing the student's or staff's name if they have a positive test result. Positive cases will be required to isolate for 5 full days, counting from the day after the test was taken or symptoms began, or longer until symptoms have improved (without fever or fever-reducing medications for 24 hours). After isolation ends, the student can return to school but must wear a well-fitting mask for 5 full days. The mask should only be removed when actively eating or drinking, during which the student must be 6 feet away from others.

Q: What should I do if a member of my household or other close contact (who is not my child) tests positive for COVID-19?

A: If your child does not test positive and does not develop symptoms, he/she can attend school but must wear a well-fitting mask for 10 full days (counting from the first full day after last exposure to a person with COVID-19). The mask should only be removed when actively eating or drinking, during which the student must be 6 feet away from others.

Q: Can my student participate in remote learning while in quarantine?

A: Students will be able to participate in remote learning if a school closure becomes necessary during an outbreak.

Q: What happens if my child's teacher tests positive for COVID-19?

A: Should any employee have COVID-19 symptoms or test positive for COVID-19, schools will follow CDC protocols. If a teacher becomes sick and is unable to work, your school will provide a substitute teacher. Parents will be notified.

Q: What happens if another student in my child's class tests positive for COVID-19?

A: Your school will inform the school community when there is a positive case but may no longer be able to trace all close contacts.

Q: Could my child's school building be closed due to COVID-19 this year?

A: We will do our best to ensure a safe and healthy environment in the coming year. However, the Maine CDC may require a school closure during an outbreak. During a closure, the school will switch to remote learning.