

## **Mask Recommendation FAQs for Educational and Catechetical Activities**

**Q. To whom does “Mask Recommended” apply?**

A. Mask Recommended applies to staff, students, volunteers and visitors engaged in educational and catechetical instruction including religious education and youth ministry. Note that there are times when principals may need to be more restrictive if needed to manage unique circumstances. Federal law still requires masks be worn on buses and public transportation.

**Q. Does “Mask Recommended” include preschoolers?**

A. Yes, all students in our schools over the age of 2 are included. Masks have never been recommended for children 2 and under; that is unchanged.

**Q. Does “Mask Recommended” include staff, students and spectators at extracurricular activities (choir, etc.) and athletics?**

A. Yes, if they take place in a Diocese of Joliet school building/facility. Athletes and their families are expected to follow the mask protocols in place at other program locations.

**Q. The diocese has stated everyone attending Mass has to wear a mask. How do we handle students who refuse to wear a mask in Church?**

A. Churches are public places in which mask wearing is still required under Executive Order 2021-20 until the order is lifted on February 28, 2022. School Masses are left to consultation between the principal and the pastor.

**Q. How did we come to this “Mask Recommended” decision?**

A. We looked at local metrics regarding hospital data and the Covid-19 positivity rate. We consulted with the health departments in the counties in which our schools are located. We looked at our own data and the level of infection in our diocese. We consulted with other dioceses in Illinois and asked our school leadership for data points related to the needs of our students and staff. We carefully, deliberately and prayerfully considered all of this information to reach a decision.

**Q. What is the diocese’s plan if the Temporary Restraining Order gets overturned?**

A. The diocese will review the court’s decision and determine what application it has for the diocese.

**Q. What do I do if I have a concern about an immunocompromised student or staff member?**

A. If you have a concern with an immunocompromised student or staff member, contact the principal or religious education/youth ministry director to determine the appropriate reasonable accommodation.

**Q. What accommodations are there if I don’t want my child to be in a classroom with unmasked children?**

A. Individualized reasonable accommodations will be determined by the school principal and pastor for Catholic school students and the religious education/youth ministry director for religious education students.

**Q. Have the Diocese of Joliet Covid-19 protocols changed since January 13, 2022?**

A. No. We continue to follow CDC guidelines on Covid-19 exposure and isolation. It is important to note if a student or staff member tests positive for Covid-19, 5 days of isolation at home followed by wearing a mask for 5 days upon returning to school is mandatory, per CDC guidelines.