

DIOCESE OF ALLENTOWN
SECRETARIAT OF EVANGELIZATION, EDUCATION & FORMATION
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December 2, 2021

Dear Diocesan Educational Community,

I hope you are all doing well and that you had a wonderful Thanksgiving. Thank you for your cooperation and support through the first third of the 2021-22 school year. As we continue to work through the many challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, our main goals remain keeping students, teachers and staff members safe, keeping schools open for in-person learning, and ensuring our students continue to thrive spiritually and academically.

Many of you may have been following the rulings by the Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania and most recently by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court of Pennsylvania regarding the mask mandate instituted by the Acting Secretary of the Department of Health on August 30, 2021. On Tuesday, November 30, 2021, the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania reinstated the mask order in schools while it considers the merits of the appeal of the decision (that overturned the mask order). That appeal is not being argued until December 8th and a decision on the state mask mandate will not be made until after that date.

In our Diocesan schools, we continue to review our COVID-19 mitigation strategies on an ongoing basis. These policies and procedures are driven by guidance from health officials, levels of community transmission in the five counties of our Diocese, the number of positive cases in our schools and the number of our students and staff who were quarantined. To date, our mitigation strategies have kept our schools open for in-person instruction and lessened the number of students and staff who needed to quarantine when identified as a close contact in school.

Currently all five counties in our Diocese remain at high levels of community transmission. We will continue to comply with the Pennsylvania mask mandate. We will review our mitigation strategies including the mask policy in mid-January. Our current mitigation strategies will remain in place until that time. This will be after the Christmas break, which in reviewing the trend from last school year, showed a spike in cases of COVID-19. This will also allow time for children ages 5-11 (whose parents choose) to be fully vaccinated. Finally, by January, all adults will be eligible to receive a COVID-19 booster shot and be fully vaccinated from the booster. If there are any changes in our COVID-19 mitigation strategies, you will be notified.

I am most grateful to each of you, our parents, teachers, staff and administrators for all of your efforts and support through these challenging and uncertain times. Through your efforts, we continue to provide our students with a safe, faith-filled, and academically sound experience that is authentically and uniquely Catholic.

As we journey through this season of Advent, and prepare ourselves for the celebration of the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ on Christmas Day, may we be truly open to welcome Christ into our hearts.

Sincerely,



Philip J. Fromuth, Ph.D.

Superintendent of Catholic Education