

## Queen of Apostles Catholic School

### Infectious Disease Preparedness and Response Plan to COVID-19

2021 - 2022 School Year

*(UPDATED: March 2, 2022)*

Queen of Apostles Catholic School is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of our students, faculty, and staff while providing an excellent formation in our Catholic faith and in all academic subjects.

As we continue to monitor the COVID-19 and after consideration and feedback from our school community, and guidance from the Office of Catholic Schools, following CDC, state and local health guidelines, Queen of Apostles Catholic School will continue to offer face-to-face instruction five days a week while continuing to adjust our policies regarding the COVID-19 virus.

As stated previously in our school's COVID -19 mitigation strategies, our intention is to adapt and improve our approaches to this virus as circumstances surrounding the pandemic continue to evolve while maintaining a safe and healthy environment for our community.

#### **HOW ILLNESS WILL BE HANDLED**

Our Health Clinic is ready to assist any student who is injured or ill during the day. The COVID-19 situation requires heightened watchfulness, and the health of our whole community depends on our strong partnership with parents. Families who are concerned about their students' susceptibility to severe illness related to COVID-19, or who are concerned about vulnerable family members at home should contact the school administration.

The current approach to illness is outlined as follows:

1. Parents **must** keep sick children home, and teachers and staff **must** stay home when ill. This is the first and most important line of defense against a contagious disease.
2. If a student becomes ill while at school, parents are expected to pick up their student within 60 minutes of being notified by the school. An earlier pickup time is greatly appreciated in order to maintain school operations.

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3. No one found registering a temperature of 100 or above is permitted to remain in the building.
4. For ordinary illnesses (colds, stomach bugs, ear infections, etc.) without additional COVID-19 symptoms or diagnosis, students, staff, and teachers must remain home for the duration of their illness and be fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications. No diarrhea or vomiting for 24 hours.

### **COVID-19 Prevention Strategies:**

Implementing prevention strategies to reduce risk associated with COVID-19 is a shared responsibility between parents and families, school officials and staff, and local public health authorities.

#### **Parents:**

- Keeping children home when sick and seeking care and testing as appropriate
- Vaccination
- Masking your child if they have a persistent cough.

#### **School Officials and Staff:**

- Adequate and appropriate ventilation
- Encourage students, teachers and staff to stay home from work when sick, and to seek care and testing as appropriate. Make decisions about excluding children or staff from school or work due to illness.
- Educate staff regarding their choices pertaining to masking when experiencing persistent coughing and/or nasal congestion respiratory illnesses that are resolving.
- Ensure handwashing and respiratory etiquette
- Clean and maintain healthy facilities
- Notify school and staff of known cases and/or exposures.

#### **Public Health:**

- Provide data and information to inform parent and family decisions
- Respond to reports of outbreaks at school
- Provide technical assistance on outbreak investigations, prevention strategies, and testing programs

**Lunch and snack:** food cannot include peanut or tree nut products. Three feet physical distancing in **All Saints Hall** is to be maintained while students are eating. Students need to remain seated and may talk using their “indoor voices.”

In light of the updated CDC guidance put forth on February 25, 2022, our school announced changes in our COVID-19 masking policy. The new guidance stresses individual decision making and emphasizes that people can choose to continue wearing masks, regardless of the risk level of their communities. Data about county risk levels, which will be updated weekly, are available on the CDC website.

The CDC’s new guidance allows relaxing our schools layered prevention measures when we have fewer cases and hospitalizations. It does not forego the ability to be able to dial them up again should there be a new variant or a new surge.

Going forward we will only mandate masks when COVID cases and hospitalizations are high per the CDC’s most recent recommendation.

- All students and visitors are no longer required to wear a mask. No additional documentation is needed.
- Decreasing physical distancing to three feet while eating lunch and snack in All Saints Hall.
- At this time, vaccinated faculty/staff may opt out of wearing a mask while at school at their discretion.
- Please remember this continues to be fluid process and we will adjust as needed

On our part, we continue to encourage vaccinations, screening and testing to promptly identify COVID cases, clusters and outbreaks, cleaning and disinfection, and staying home when sick.

Rest assured that we remain committed to keeping our school safe for all to learn and work in-person. Please be vigilant in doing your part to maintain a healthy environment by encouraging the important practice of proper hand washing, monitoring for illness and staying home when sick.

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**QOA Catholic School follows the CDC Guidelines for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools, along with recommendations from the Office of Catholic Schools and the FCHD.**

[Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools](#)

[COVID-19 Matrix](#)

Quarantine and Isolation Guidelines at our school are in line with the guidance put out by the CDC:

[COVID-19 Quarantine and Isolation Guidelines](#)

### **FURTHER HEALTH AND SAFETY MEASURES**

1. **ILLNESS TRACKING:** The school Physician Assistant/nurse, Mrs. Maureen Earner, and office staff monitor the rate of student illness and absenteeism as well as any related health information on a daily basis.
2. **SIGNAGE:** Educational posters and signs reminding students, teachers, and staff to wash their hands, physically distance, etc. are posted throughout the school (classrooms, bathrooms, faculty lounge and hallways).
3. **RECESS:** Weather permitting recess is held outside. Hand sanitization/cleaning occurs before and after recess.
4. **LUNCH:** Meals cannot include peanut or tree nut products. Students are seated 3 feet apart.
5. **PE AND BREAKS:** Students are given breaks to stretch at their desks or outside as much as possible. Physical education classes are conducted outside (weather permitting).
6. **COMPUTERS:** Chromebooks are used by students for classes. Each Chromebook is cleaned with a disinfectant wipe before it is assigned to a student.
7. **STUDENT SUPPLIES:** Students may use their own supplies located at or near their desks instead of sharing supplies and resources. Students will also have communal supplies in some classes (art, computer, etc.) additional cleaning and hand sanitizing procedures are in place.

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8. **HVAC:** The ventilation system is regularly maintained and is on a service contract. During school operations, the HVAC system remains in fan mode to ensure a sufficient exchange of air in each classroom with the system configured to allow for the greatest amount of intake of outdoor air possible. Filtration was increased to MERV-13 in early August 2020 after consultation with the HVAC contractor regarding equipment specifications.
9. **MASS:** Students, teachers, and staff attend a Mass with the community at 9:00 a.m. on Fridays and on Holy Days of obligation.
10. **DISMISSAL:** Students are dismissed to carline from their class homeroom
11. **EXTENDED DAY:** We will offer before and after school care this year.
12. **COVID-19 EDUCATION/TRAINING PLAN:** During the in-service week in August, all faculty and staff are properly trained on the effects of COVID-19, effective preventive measures, and ways to mitigate risk of spread in the school if needed.

### **ONGOING PLANNING**

Due to the nature of the situation, our guidelines and plans may change during the year.

**Persons Responsible for this plan:** Mrs. Kristie Meyers (Principal), Ms. Maggie Walker (Assistant Principal), Mrs. Maureen Earner (Health Clinic), QOA School staff/teachers and QOA families have contributed to developing and implementing this plan.

The plan conforms to the guidance from the Diocese of Arlington, CDC, VDH and FCHD.

Please contact Mrs. Earner, our Physician Assistant, and Mrs. Meyers, our principal, with any questions, health updates, or international travel plans.