



August 16, 2021

Dear Catholic School Parents and Guardians,

We hope that this letter finds you and your family well and enjoying a relaxing summer after a challenging school year. It was your support and partnership that afforded us the opportunity to safely provide in-person instruction during the 2020-21 school year. Our school leadership, faculty/staff, and nurses are heroes and are to be commended for their tireless efforts to educate our students during the pandemic.

The Archdiocese of Baltimore Catholic Schools operate in 9 jurisdictions/counties across the State of Maryland. Over the past 30 days, all jurisdictions have experienced the impact of the COVID-19 Delta variant. The result of that impact has been an increase in positive cases across all age groups, with nearly 20% of the cases found in individuals between 0-19 years of age.

In an effort to proactively manage the ever-changing COVID-19 landscape as we approach the start of the 2021-22 school year and specifically address the impact of the Delta variant on our school communities, the Department of Catholic schools is instituting criteria, as prescribed below, related to parental choice and school mandated masking of students in our school facilities.

Masking Criteria

The Maryland Coronavirus website tracks daily the average new cases per 100,000 persons in the prior 7 days for all jurisdictions across the State of Maryland. All archdiocesan Catholic schools operating within a jurisdiction are to follow the case count for the county in which they are domiciled, even if students may live in a different jurisdiction. County transmission levels will be monitored daily and masking changes, if warranted, will be implemented at the beginning of each school week. Families will be notified on Sunday evening of the school’s masking status for the week.

Indicator	Low Transmission Blue	Moderate Transmission Yellow	Substantial Transmission Orange	High Transmission Red
Average new cases per 100,000 persons in the past 7 days	0-1.3	1.3-7.0	7.1-14.1	≥14.2
	Parental Choice	Parental Choice	Masking	Masking

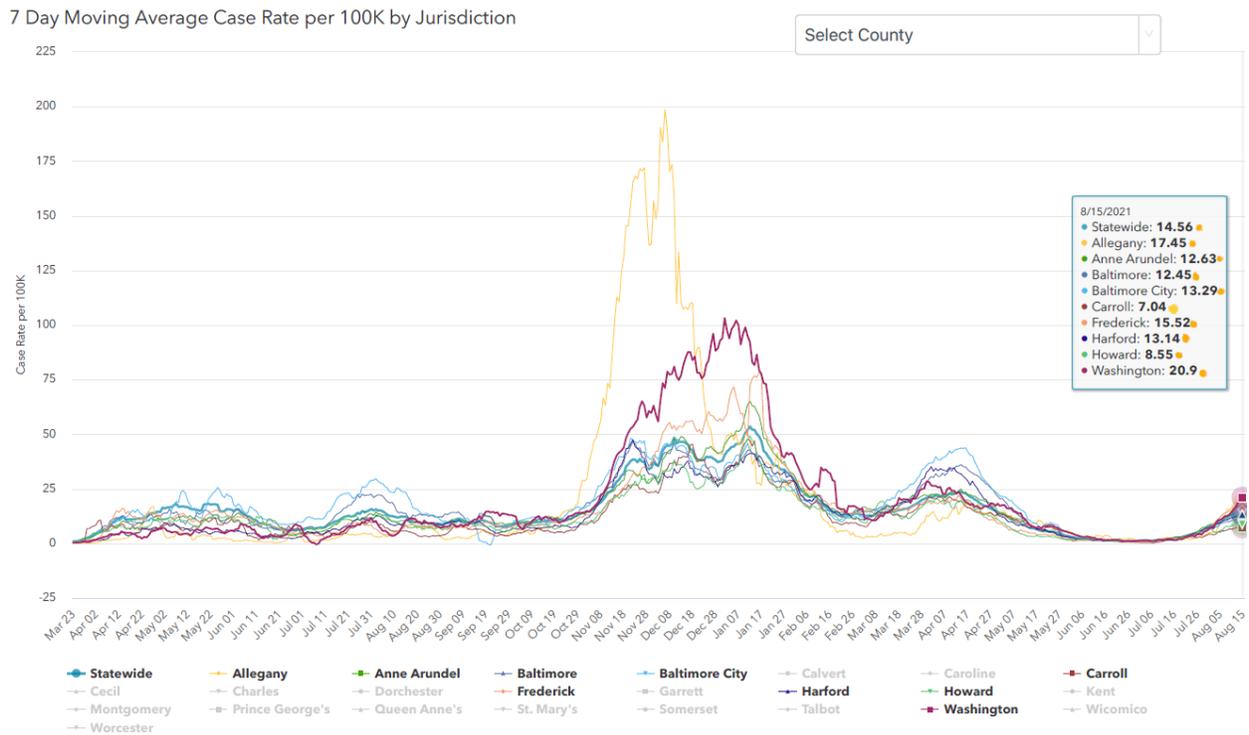
Low / Moderate Transmission-Less than 7.1 new cases per 100,000 persons in the prior 7 days

- Parental choice as to whether their children will wear a mask, regardless of vaccination status. Anyone who wants to wear a mask may wear a mask and is supported in their decision. Parents of children of any age and any vaccination status are entitled to request that their own children wear masks. Enforcement of this request is between the parent and child, and teachers are not required to be the enforcer of such parental requests.

Substantial / High Transmission- Greater than 7.1/14.2 new cases per 100,000 persons in the prior 7 days

- All adults and students are mandated to mask in school facilities regardless of vaccination status. Masking will be maintained in that school, until the case count per 100,000 falls below 7.1 cases for the jurisdiction.

STATUS BY COUNTY 08.16.2021



Additional Guidance:

- State of Maryland and/or a local jurisdiction/health department's order (not a recommendation) regarding masking supersedes this guidance.
- Every school will record any new COVID-19 cases and will record absences on a daily basis. The Department of Catholic Schools and the Office of Risk Management will

monitor any outbreak of COVID-19 or Influenza cases and, if needed, implement more stringent mitigation efforts - including mandatory masking – to provide a safe learning environment for our students, faculty and staff.

- School facilities will continue to operate at 3 feet social distancing where possible in the classroom.
- Classroom cohorts are encouraged, but will no longer be mandated.
- Masks will not be required for outdoor activities or while students are eating in the cafeteria. Students will eat lunch with their class.
- Field trips can resume. Facemasks must be worn by all people on public transportation conveyances including public and private school buses.
- Ongoing sanitization of school facilities and hand hygiene practices will be required to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, RSV infections, and Influenza.
- Schools, where possible, will have COVID-19 diagnostic and surveillance / screening testing capability to test students, faculty and staff. Surveillance testing is voluntary but encouraged for unvaccinated individuals as a strategy layer to mitigate risk of virus transmission.
- Vaccinations are a personal choice; however, we strongly encourage our school community to get vaccinated to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 and Influenza.
- CDC/MDH quarantining guidance for COVID-19 positive cases and close contacts will continue to be observed.

WE ALL HAVE AN IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY to prevent any exposures, spread or an outbreak in the school community. We must remain vigilant and disciplined to maintain the progress that has been made to stop the spread of COVID-19 and other RSV infections. As we enter the fall and winter period, in addition to dealing with COVID-19, influenza will be present in our communities. Influenza affects people of all ages, especially children, and can be as dangerous and contagious as COVID-19 and other RSV infections. We will be utilizing our experience with COVID-19 with our continued emphasis on the risk mitigation strategies of testing, sanitization, ventilation, and influenza vaccine clinics to address this health concern.

Once again, we need the support and partnership of our parents and guardians. We ask you to actively monitor the health of your family and children (symptoms and daily temperature checks) to avoid exposing the school community to children who are exhibiting COVID-19, RSV, or Influenza symptoms. Parents may consider having their child(ren) tested prior to returning to school from summer vacation.

Students who are absent from school for quarantine due to contact tracing will receive asynchronous work at the end of the first day that they miss school. Teachers will continue to provide work to students throughout the duration of their quarantine.

Students who are absent due to illness or other medically related situations requiring rest and recovery, will receive all missed work when they return to school. Families may request work prior to their child's return to school, if students are able to complete work but not in a position to return to in-person learning. If students are absent for a non-medical related reason, they will receive make-up work per the usual policy/practice of their school.

Students will not receive synchronous instruction (e.g., live instruction through Zoom or Google Meet) when absent for any reason during the 2021-22 academic year. If an entire class is absent due to contact tracing, synchronous instruction will be provided to all students.

We will actively monitor the State of Maryland Coronavirus reporting of levels of community transmission and the status of each of our schools. While we hope it will not be necessary to reinstitute more stringent protocols such as last year, if the circumstances warrant due to conditions in our schools and community, we reserve the right to return to masking, cohorting, and if needed, hybrid scheduling to slow the spread of COVID-19 or other infectious diseases.

The safety and well-being of our students, faculty and staff will always be our top priority.

Yours in Christ,



James B. Sellinger
Chancellor of Catholic Schools



Dr. Donna Hargens
Superintendent of Catholic Schools