

ST. JOHN CATHOLIC SCHOOL



February 16, 2022

Dear Families,

These first seven weeks of 2022 have been challenging on the COVID front. We recognize the fatigue that has built up over the last two years as we have navigated this pandemic as a St. John community. The purpose of this communication is three-fold: to express our gratitude to you; to re-outline established COVID-related travel protocols and recommendations prior to the upcoming holiday; and to address state-wide discussions around masking.

To the first end: thank you – to all students, families, caregivers, and staff – for all you’ve been doing to keep our community safe and classrooms open during these first weeks of 2022. Your efforts have resulted in a low case count in the St. John community during a time of a highly transmissible variant.

Mid-Winter Holiday Travel

We are aware families may be traveling during this holiday weekend and want to send the current CDC travel and quarantine guidance for your planning purposes, along with St. John’s recommendation regarding return to school next week.

- **St. John Recommendation:** If you are traveling and/or gathering with other households during the upcoming holiday, we recommend rapid antigen testing the morning your student(s) returns to school. The

school has a supply of rapid antigen tests available; tests can be picked up with Mrs. Q. at the school office during school hours between now and Friday at noon.

- **CDC Travel / Quarantine Guidelines:** Guidance pertains to commercial air, train or long-distance bus travel
 - *For Fully Vaccinated Students (2 doses received)*
 - No need for quarantine after travel
 - We recommend rapid testing as above
 - *Unvaccinated or Partially Vaccinated Students*
 - Quarantine for 5 days, beginning the first full day after returning home
 - Monitor for any symptoms
 - Take a rapid antigen test the morning of planned return to school (test sooner if symptoms develop)

Regardless of vaccination status, all travelers should carefully monitor symptoms during travel and for 14 days after arrival home. If your child develops COVID-like symptoms (regardless of travel), testing is recommended to determine if symptoms are due to COVID before your child returns to school. St. John has rapid tests available and can also do a PCR test at school (with turnaround times between 18-48 hours).

Our COVID response team is available to answer questions about symptoms, testing, return to school, or anything else: covidresponse@st-johnschool.org.

Masking Guidance

The school has been closely following local discussions regarding updated masking guidance and is aware there is an eagerness to see masking requirements eased for our community. Governor Inslee's lifting of the outdoor mask mandate, effective this coming Friday, 2/18, is of particular focus. Given this announcement and the forthcoming guidance at the state level, we'd like to clarify for you how St. John School will make its decisions regarding masking for students.

Schools, including St. John, are required to follow the Washington State Department of Health Guidance for K-12 schools. In addition, St. John operates under the guidance of the Office for Catholic Schools (OCS), which follows the recommendations of Public Health - Seattle & King County (PHSKC).

As such, when state-wide mask mandates are lifted, this does not mean schools will automatically and/or immediately follow. It takes some time for the local entities (PHSKC and OCS) to review state-wide mandates and determine how to safely incorporate them into the school setting. Please know our administration is in close contact with the OCS and is ready to make changes to our policies that are deemed reasonable for our community and safe by PHSKC and OCS. When mask mandates are lifted at school, we are committed to supporting families and staff who make the choice to continue mask-wearing. The school, like you, is eager to strike the right balance between safety and normalcy for our staff and students. We will communicate any changes in guidance with our school community as promptly as possible.

Please refer to the [COVID Response Page](#) on the school website for additional information.

We hope you enjoy a *healthy*, restful break with loved ones.

Bernadette O'Leary
Principal

Paul Kelley
Assistant Principal

