



## STUDENT FACE MASK POLICY UPDATE

Effective January 24, 2022

Per Executive Order Two signed by Governor Youngkin, effective January 24, 2022, the following update has been made to the Face Mask Policy for our Diocesan Catholic Schools.

The latest CDC guidance for K-12 schools updated on January 13, 2022, still recommends indoor masking by all students (ages 2 years and older), staff, teachers, and visitors, regardless of vaccination status. We encourage our parents, students, and employees to follow CDC guidance. However, as of January 24, 2022, students will not be required to wear masks in our schools if parents decide they do not want their student to wear a mask. Unvaccinated school employees will be required to wear masks, except under limited circumstances.

Please note: This change in policy does not apply to school buses. Students, bus drivers, and any passengers will be required to wear masks while riding the bus pursuant to the CDC Order made effective on February 1, 2021.

Please also note, however, that under certain circumstances, the choice not to wear a mask will require a longer quarantine period at home:

- After testing positive for COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status, and quarantining for a five-day period, a student may return to school if the parents will allow the student to wear a mask for 5 additional days while attending school. If parent(s) will not allow their student to wear a mask for the 5 additional days, the student must stay home for a total quarantine period of ten days from the onset of symptoms or test date if asymptomatic.
- If a student is not fully vaccinated\* for COVID-19 and deemed as being in close contact\*\* with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, a student must quarantine for 5 days after exposure. The student may return to school if their parents allow the student to wear a mask for 5 additional days while attending school. If parent(s) will not allow their student to wear a mask for the 5 additional days, the student must stay home for a total quarantine period of 10 days after exposure.
- If a student is fully vaccinated\* for COVID-19, or has had COVID-19 in the last 90 days but has been in close contact\*\* with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, the student may return to school if their parents allow them to wear a mask while attending school for the 10 days after exposure. If parent(s) choose not to require a mask for 10 days while attending school after the exposure, the student must stay home for a total quarantine period of 10 days after exposure.

\* Students under the age of 18 do not need to have a booster to be considered fully vaccinated.

\*\*Definitions of Close Contact and subject to quarantining after exposure:

- Those not wearing masks in a classroom setting or while eating lunch and within a 6-foot distance for more than 15 minutes.
- Those wearing masks in a classroom setting and are at less than a 3-foot distance for more than 15 minutes.

Please be advised that choosing not to wear a mask may put students at higher risk for meeting the close contact definition, requiring quarantine.

Parents who do not want their child(ren) to wear masks in school must complete and return the election sheet on or before the first day your child(ren) will not be wearing a mask.

We will continue to monitor all Executive Orders and the updates to guidance from the CDC and VDH. We continually review our policies and will notify of changes in a timely manner.