

ASSUMPTION CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Health Guidance, Protocols, and Mitigations for the 2021-2022 School Year

Revised March 15, 2022

“Jesus said to me, ‘**My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.**’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.” **2 Corinthians 12:9**

The Washington Department of Health published updated guidance on March 8, 2022 for K-12 schools, early learning, and child-care programs to prepare for the change in mask mandate which began at midnight on Saturday, March 12th. The following guidance is in effect for all Washington State schools.

- [Requirements and Guidance to Mitigate COVID-19 Transmission in K-12 Schools, Child Care, Early Learning, Youth Development, and Day Camp Programs \(wa.gov\)](#)

MASKS and FACE COVERINGS

- a. Face coverings are now optional for all students, staff, and visitors in most cases.
- b. Through April 1st, masks will be required where students are singing in a music class or during Choir in the church.
- c. They will not be required during congregational singing at the school Mass on Fridays.
- d. Upon returning to school after isolation, a student will need to test negative (with antigen test) or wear a mask for Days 6-10. This is required, not recommended.
- e. Anyone wishing to continue wearing a mask must be encouraged/supported to do so.
- f. Masks must be worn by all in the isolation room when a child is being tested or waiting to go home (if symptomatic).

DISTANCING

- g. Students will be spread out in classrooms to achieve a minimum of **three-foot** distancing.
- a. Main bathrooms can be used for **three** students at a time, separated by three feet. Individual bathrooms on each floor can be used by students.
- b. School Masses- All students may attend Mass together each week, but may be spread out into the gym and church on feast days when many community members are also in attendance.

- c. Teachers will require mandatory handwashing two times per day, and include hand-sanitizing stations in each classroom. Self-screening will be done at home for symptoms instead of screening by the staff in the morning. (See page 3 below for details of self-screening.)

VENTILATION

The school's filters have been upgraded to MERV 13 in the HVAC system, and for classrooms not in the school building (music classroom), portable HEPA air cleaners are used to increase filtration.

VACCINE MANDATE FOR WORKERS (This has not changed as of March 14, 2022.)

Governor Inslee announced on Wednesday, August 18th that all employees, coaches, teachers, and volunteers in K-12 schools are now required to be vaccinated. ([Proclamation 21-14.1 COVID-19 Vaccination Requirement](#))

- We cannot legally allow unvaccinated adult “workers” around students indoors. This includes all volunteers, staff, teachers, and coaches.
- The mandate **does not exclude** parents and other adults from attending school events, activities, or sporting events. Parents are also welcome at school Masses regardless of vaccination status. Parent/teacher meetings may happen on campus regardless of a parent’s vaccination status.
- If one has a medical or religious exemption from the vaccination, that person may volunteer with other parents but will not be able to work where students are present. Note: *The Catholic church doesn't currently allow for religious exemptions related to the Catholic faith.*
- We are required to check vaccination status for anyone “working” in the building (volunteers, coaches, teachers, staff, etc.). Students and parents have the right not to present the vaccination card, however, this may limit his/her capacity to “work” on campus or whether or not to be quarantined after possible exposure. To save time, please feel free to scan or take a photo of your vaccination card and send to Mrs. Dennis (ddennis@school.assumption.org). As we confirm vaccination status for parents, we'll keep a list so as not to have to ask multiple times.

VACCINE MANDATE FOR CHILDREN

We're still uncertain what the state is going to require. However, specific information will be coming from the Archdiocese in the next few weeks, and Assumption (along with all schools in the Archdiocese) has been given permission to wait on implementation of a COVID vaccine for children in the 2022-2023 school year. Vaccines will not be required for Assumption students in

the 2022-2023 school year. Future decisions starting in August 2023 will be dependent on authorization, future requirements, and allowable exemptions.

SELF SCREENING GUIDE FOR HOME

Assumption is following the lead of PeaceHealth and other healthcare facilities by asking our families to self-screen for wellness each day before coming to school rather than screening on site.

Please remember that sending children to school with even mild cold symptoms can translate into many students having to be tested and missing school. If you are at all unsure of your child's wellness in the morning before leaving for school, err on the side of caution and keep him/her home. Thank you for your partnership to keep our students, teachers and staff healthy and able to attend school in person.

The following symptoms could be related to COVID-19. Parents are responsible for ensuring their children remain at home when ill and inform the school when there has been exposure. Use the [Symptom Decision Tree](#) to determine when students should remain at home and when they should be tested. Has your child had any of the following symptoms that cannot be explained by an existing condition?

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- A fever of 100.4 or higher
- Sore throat
- Chills,
- Loss of taste or smell
- Muscle or body aches
- Nausea/vomiting/diarrhea
- Congestion/runny nose not related to seasonal allergies
- Unusual fatigue

LEARN to RETURN and TEST to STAY PROGRAMS

The *Learn to Return* on-site testing program is an optional program for schools within the Archdiocese of Seattle to help keep students in school.

The *Test to Stay* program has been approved by the Whatcom County Health Department and they have permission to use this process.

Learn to Return provides:

Screening (on-site rapid antigen tests)- This is for high-risk groups, and high contact activities (sports). It is no longer used after travel. The guidance has changed to include students and staff who have been exposed OUTSIDE of school and are asymptomatic.

Test to Stay

Individuals completing a *Test to Stay* protocol are strongly recommended to monitor for symptoms and wear a well-fitting mask when around others for ten days from the last day of contact. If an individual tests positive for COVID-19 at any time, they must isolate at home and follow DOH isolation guidance.

*Antigen tests, point of care (POC) molecular tests, or at-home tests are acceptable and preferred, given the ability to obtain results within minutes and the need to identify positive individuals and isolate in a timely fashion. Collection of diagnostic specimens for asymptomatic persons during a *Test to Stay* protocol may occur in schools, health care settings, or other locations supervised by school or health care personnel. Students may participate in *Test to Stay* if:

- The exposure was outside the household and the student is willing to test. (Return to school on Day 1, tested twice in a five-day period.)
- The exposure was within the same household and the student is willing to test. (Return to school after last day of contact with the family member in isolation.)

Regardless of vaccination status, students participating in *Test to Stay*:

- Are tested* serially over a 10-day period (e.g., twice per week) of the protocol
AND
- Are asymptomatic.

In consultation with the health department, the school will use the [criteria on this site](#) to decide when the student might be able to return using the *Test to Stay* option.

ISOLATION

- Students/staff with symptoms at school must isolate, and testing at school is encouraged with parent permission. Consent forms are available.
- Isolation room will be available/used to separate symptomatic individuals; masks must be worn by all in isolation room.
- Anyone who tests positive is required to isolate at home. He/she can return after 5 days if symptoms have improved AND there has been no fever for 24 hours without medication, OR the child has been asymptomatic for the duration of the isolation.
- This isolation guidance applies regardless of vaccination status.

A student, child, or staff who tests positive for COVID-19 is required to isolate at home, regardless of vaccination status. The isolation period is 10 full days from the start of symptoms or the date of positive test. The individual may return to school after 5 full days of isolation if:

- Their symptoms have improved or they are asymptomatic, AND
- They are without a fever for the past 24 hours without use of fever-reducing medications.

AND IF returning to school on Days 6-10, the individual is required to:

- Wear a well-fitted mask or face shield with a drape during days 6-10 of their isolation period, consistent with CDC guidance, OR
- Test negative with an antigen or at-home test any day after day 5 before returning without a mask. Testing beyond day 10 is not necessary.

Isolation of COVID-19 Cases within a Facility

Any student, child, or staff who reports or exhibits COVID-19-like symptoms is required to be immediately isolated from others, sent home, and referred to diagnostic testing as soon as feasible, regardless of vaccination status. While waiting to leave the school or program, the individual with symptoms is required to be isolated in a designated isolation space. They are required to wear a well-fitting face mask, if tolerated and age appropriate. Anyone providing care or evaluation to the isolated individual is required to wear appropriate PPE. Masks are required by all children, staff, and visitors aged 2 years and older in the nurse/health room and in the isolation room as these are considered health care settings.

WHAT IF THERE IS AN OUTBREAK OR AN INFECTION ON CAMPUS?

COVID-19 Outbreak is considered when the following have been met:

- Three or more lab-positive cases among students or staff; or >10% of a cohort
- Cases have a symptom onset within 14 days of each other
- Cases are epidemiologically linked
- Cases do not share a household
- Cases are not identified as close contacts of each other in another setting during investigation

a. Isolation Room

If a child is symptomatic during the school day, or a staff member becomes sick during school hours, he/she will go directly to the isolation room where one of the office staff will meet them there. Isolation room is under the stairwell by second grade. Students can leave through side door to Virginia Street. A parent will be called to pick the child up and the child will be tested that day.

b. The Whatcom County Health Department will be notified.

We rely on the health department to inform us of next steps. All parents whose children are in that class will be informed without identifying by name the student who went home that day. If there has been an exposure at school, the health department will tell us who needs to be quarantined or isolated. They define “close contact” as fewer than three feet, without a mask, for more than 15 cumulative minutes over a 24-hour period. Not all students will need to quarantine or self-isolate, but we’ll defer to direction from the health department.

c. Decontamination of the isolation room.

Decontamination procedures of the isolation room will be conducted immediately after the person with symptoms has vacated the isolation room. The cleaning team and COVID supervisor on site will provide instructions for this that include necessary PPE and solutions to use for disinfecting and sanitizing that space.

CONTACT TRACING

Assumption School will directly notify any student/family who has been identified as immunocompromised, medically fragile, or high risk of potential exposures.

The school will inform families of cases/outbreaks through group notifications (i.e., by class or activity); notification of individual close contacts is no longer required (although there may be instances where individual contact tracing is necessary). This is done through our email system.

All positive cases will be reported to the Archdiocese and WCHD.

Important points for students & parents (From the DOH):

- “While we are moving into a new phase of the pandemic, COVID-19 remains with us, and it should be recognized the COVID-19 pandemic response must remain flexible with the possibility for changes that occur at the state and local levels.”
- “While masks are no longer required universally in schools or provider settings, there will be situations when the use of well-fitting masks may be temporarily required.”

Note on masks: Although teachers won’t be “policing” the use of masks in the classroom, it is important for them to know when your child will be wearing a mask—either permanently due to a family decision or temporarily because of exposure (or returning from isolation). Communication will be VERY important with your child’s homeroom teacher, and please include the office staff in that communication.

- Staff need to teach students that some may need/choose to wear a mask for a variety of reasons – there will be no tolerance for bullying/harassment.