



To: Catholic Academy and Parish School Communities

From: Reverend Monsignor David L. Cassato
Vicar for Catholic Schools

Thomas Chadzutko
Superintendent ~ Catholic School Support Services

Joan McMaster
Deputy Superintendent ~ Catholic School Support Services

Re: NYS DOH School Mask Mandate

Date: February 28, 2022

Governor Hochul announced on Sunday, February 27, 2022, that the NYS School Mask Mandate would be lifted as of Wednesday, March 2, 2022.

For all the Catholic Academies and Parish Schools within the Diocese of Brooklyn effective Wednesday, March 2 the face covering mitigation strategy will be a recommended mitigation strategy. Face coverings will be an individual choice for school personnel and a parental choice for all students.

However, **please note** that the New York City funded Pre-K-3 and Pre-K-4 programs (UPK) must continue to wear masks as required by the New York City Department of Education.

The Catholic Academies and Parish Schools of the Diocese of Brooklyn remain committed to offering safe in person instruction. In September 2021 the decision was made by the Office of the Superintendent ~ Catholic Schools Support Services to temporarily implement the face covering mitigation strategy with the intent to monitor the COVID-19 impact on the return to schools and reevaluate on October 1, 2021. During that reevaluation period the New York State Department of Health (NYS DOH) and Governor Hochul issued a Face Mask mandate requiring all individuals over the age of two to wear a face mask while on school property.

Beginning September 2020, the Catholic Academies and Parish Schools of the Diocese of Brooklyn have been compliant with the COVID-19 health and safety guidelines of both the NYS DOH and NYC DOH. The Catholic Academy and Parish School communities working together successfully keep their schools safely open for in person instruction by implementing a layered approach of multiple preventive mitigation strategies.

As the pandemic evolved and public health officials learned more about the COVID-19 virus and its variants, we experienced many changes in the NYS DOH and NYC DOH COVID-19 Safety and Health protocols. The Catholic Academies and Parish schools continued to adapt their COVID-19 safety and health protocols as new guidelines and information was shared by city and state health officials.



Governor Hochul announced on Sunday, February 27, 2022, during a rare weekend press briefing that the NYS School Mask Mandate would be lifted as of Wednesday, March 2, 2022. The Catholic Academies and Parish Schools will adapt our COVID-19 safety and health guidelines in alignment with this update. Effective Wednesday, March 2 the face covering mitigation strategy will be a recommended mitigation strategy. Face coverings will be an individual choice for school personnel and a parental choice for all students. However, **please note** that New York City funded Pre-K-3 and Pre-K-4 programs (UPK) must continue to wear masks as required by the New York City Department of Education.

As we continue to adapt the COVID-19 mitigation strategies we are mindful that other mitigation preventive strategies will continue to be implemented:

- ✓ Speaking with your Healthcare Provider regarding Vaccination
- ✓ Staying home when sick and getting tested
- ✓ Recommended face covering
- ✓ Physical Distancing
- ✓ Ventilation
- ✓ Handwashing and respiratory etiquette
- ✓ Isolation and quarantine protocols in combination with Test to Stay Strategy
- ✓ Cleaning and disinfection

We respect all faculty, staff, and parents of differing opinions, and we understand the concern on both sides of the issue. No individual, faculty, staff, or student will be discouraged from wearing a face covering at school and face coverings will remain a recommended mitigation strategy. If you have questions or concerns it is recommended you speak with your or your child's healthcare provider. However, the Catholic Academies and Parish Schools will continue to adapt their COVID-19 Safety and health protocols as new guidelines and information is shared by city and state health officials.

Together our Catholic Academies and Parish Schools have safely guided their school communities from the beginning of the pandemic and together will continue to safely guide their school communities to the end of the pandemic.

We appreciate your support and cooperation with the updated COVID-19 health and safety guidelines. These guidelines will continue to be monitored and updated as city and state guidance continue to evolve.

May God continue to bless all our Catholic Academy and Parish School communities!

Thank you.