

February 22, 2021
Feast of the Chair of St. Peter

Dear Catholic School Families,

I wanted to share some COVID-related updates with our school communities based upon the recent announcement by the CDC about a return to schools. **Since September our Catholic Schools have been providing in-person instruction.**

Without our pastors, principals, teachers, and parents, none of this would have been possible. **I am proud to say the newly released CDC guidelines are nearly identical to the Catholic Schools: Moving Forward Together, re-opening plan we published in July 2020.** Let me again thank the work of the Catholic School Reopening Advisory Council for setting this national gold standard. In addition to the millions of dollars the Archdiocese funded in technology, health & safety staff, ventilation improvements, disinfecting & sanitizing upgrades, and facilities enhancements; these policies have proven to keep our buildings open and school communities safe. **We are continually evaluating our policies and protocols with your child's health and safety in mind.**

Thank you for faithfully completing the daily health checklist; as you honestly answer the questions each day for you and your child, it ensures a safe environment for our schools. [I have linked it here again for your convenience.](#)

Since September, we have been notifying you of positive cases in our schools. In addition, each case is also reported on the public NYS Health Department COVID schools report card website. To streamline communications moving forward, we will continue to report cases of non-exposure, or positive cases outside of the infectious period, as required on the State COVID report card, but we will not send home additional letters.

Some of you have decided that you may be traveling for the Easter recess. We would encourage you to stay home and not travel given the pandemic is still ever-present and new variants are spreading. If you must travel, please be mindful of the Governor's travel quarantine of 10 days or testing three days before leaving your destination and four days after returning home. The archdiocese policy is a PCR molecular test only; antigen and rapid tests are not accepted.

Just as we use the season of Lent to prepare for Easter, **the Office of the Superintendent of Schools will use this time to look forward as we plan for spring events, such as communions, confirmations and graduations ensuring they are conducted with all required health and safety protocols in place.** While it would be easy for us to ease up restrictions, we must remain vigilant; in this way, **we can continue with in-person learning for as many students as possible and look perhaps to September when we hope to return to a new normal.**

As we celebrate the year of St. Joseph, in a particular way this Lent, let us entrust our schools, parishes, and students to his protection, a most powerful intercessor for our families.

Sincerely,

Mr Michael J. Deegan
Superintendent of Schools
Archdiocese of New York