

August 23, 2022

Dear Blessed Sacrament Families:

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the health and safety of our students, faculty, staff, and families have been our top priorities. As you may have heard, COVID-19 restrictions have eased in recent weeks. What, exactly, does this mean for our school community? Blessed Sacrament School's COVID-19 policy is based on the latest information put forward by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Department of Public Health (DPH). This letter is intended to outline for you our COVID-19 policy for the opening of the 2022-2023 school year.

Our expectation is that all families comply with this policy to ensure that our students, faculty, and staff may enjoy the positive educational experience of in-person learning. The COVID-19 Safety Pledge for Blessed Sacrament School Families will be distributed to all students on the first day of school. The pledge must be read and signed by each student and each parent/guardian for us to successfully proceed with our policy. All of us doing our part will benefit the entire Blessed Sacrament School Community.

COVID-19 Policy for the Opening of the 2022-2023 School Year

Masking: There is no mask requirement. As always, anyone who wishes to continue to mask, including those who face a higher risk of COVID-19, will be supported in their choice to do so.

***Exception: In the event of an outbreak, a mask mandate may return.**

COVID-19 Positive: Anyone testing positive for COVID-19 must stay home for five (5) days and can come back to school on Day 6, if fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and symptoms are improving. Re-test after Day 5. A Rapid Test is acceptable. **A high-quality mask (parents must provide) must be worn Days 6-10.**

If still experiencing a fever or other symptoms have not improved, continue to stay home until they improve.

Isolation and Exposure: Regardless of vaccination status, a person should isolate from others if they have COVID-19. A person should isolate if they are sick and COVID-19 is suspected, even before getting test results. No asymptomatic person will be excluded from school because of exposure, regardless of vaccination status or exposure setting. A person should get re-tested after five (5) days. A Rapid Test is acceptable.

There will be no contact tracing: If you were exposed to COVID-19, regardless of your vaccination status, the CDC recommends that instead of quarantining, you wear a **high-quality mask** for 10 days and get tested five (5) full days after your last exposure (Day 6).

Classroom Social Distancing: All classroom desks will remain three feet apart.

The use of sanitizer and frequent hand washing is expected.

Noncompliance of this COVID-19 policy will result in introducing more restrictions.

As always, please do not send your child to school if she/he is sick.

COVID-19 vaccines are now available, as are treatments for those at higher risk for severe disease. Self-tests are also widely available. For anyone preferring a PCR test—not required by Blessed Sacrament School at this time—Curative has two locations in our area:

Curative—Holyoke Community College

Hours: Mon.-Fri., 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Sat.-Sun., 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Curative—19 Railroad St., Westfield

Hours: Mon.-Fri., 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Sat. 10:00 AM to 1:30 PM; Closed Sun.

Appointments are suggested. Register through www.curative.com.

DESE and DPH strongly recommend that all students, staff, and faculty receive the COVID-19 vaccine as it continues to be the best way to protect against the effects of COVID-19. Consult with your health care provider.

We will continue to provide updates as needed. Please be advised that this policy is subject to change as warranted. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call. We want all our families to feel comfortable and confident sending their children to Blessed Sacrament School. The challenges of these past two years have impacted all of us, but the upcoming school year holds the promise of wonderful social interactions throughout our school community. Thank you for doing your part.

Gratefully,

Mrs. Susan R. Heaven, Principal

Ms. Catherine Sharkey, LPN