

Catholic Diocese of Biloxi



Office of Catholic Schools

COVID-19 Protocol
2021-2022 School Year
Second Semester

Effective January 1, 2022

Most Reverend Louis F. Kihneman, III
Bishop of Biloxi

Rhonda Parkinson Clark, PhD
Superintendent of Education

Living and Learning in the Light of Faith

VISION

Diocese of Biloxi Catholic Schools

To share our journey in faith, as followers of Jesus Christ, through making disciples, in service to each other and the wider community,
and living our faith in partnership with our families, our schools, and our parishes.

MISSION

Diocese of Biloxi Catholic School

- Discipleship – To form disciples and disciple-makers through Faith Formation, accompaniment, and personal faith commitment.
- Faith Formation – To nurture discipleship that leads to transformation and growth on both the personal and collective level and to share and grow by celebrating our faith in prayer and reflection, encouraging and caring for each other and all those we serve, and acting with truth and compassion.
- Service – To foster positive relationships with our schools, communities, and parishes to maintain and enhance quality support.
- Academic Excellence – To respond to challenges, pursue continuous improvement, nurture a love of learning that will last a lifetime, and strive for academic growth in all subject areas.

Catholic Diocese of Biloxi

CORE VALUES for CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Living Faith

- We answer the call to make disciples, baptize all nations, and to teach all that Jesus has commanded us.
- We believe the Holy Spirit inspires all that we do.
- We recognize the true presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.
- We believe in the continuous growth of discipleship.
- We embrace the Gospel of Jesus Christ and encourage a personal relationship with God the Father.
- We acknowledge the diversity of others.

Accepting Responsibility

- We teach how to accompany someone in faith.
- We lead through example and are accountable for our actions.
- We believe and promote our Catholic values.
- We affirm good judgment and trustworthy behavior.

Promoting Teamwork

- We foster small groups for accompaniment in discipleship.
- We communicate honestly, openly, and consistently.
- We work together to achieve common goals with all members of our school and parish communities.

Achieving Excellence

- We make disciples and disciple-makers.
- We respond to challenges and pursue continuous improvement.
- We believe high expectations lead to higher performance that in turn, empowers the individual and strengthens society.
- We believe that all persons have intrinsic value and each person can contribute something of worth to society. Each child is unique, and our Catholic Schools help unlock the distinct interests and talents of each child.
- We believe that excellence is a cooperative partnership with schools, families, community, and churches.

Inspiring Leadership

- We prepare discipleship leaders and disciple-makers.
- We prepare students for leadership and service in church and society.
- We celebrate integrity and seek fair choices.
- We believe Catholic Schools are positioned as the heart of church life and as such, share in the responsibility of being church to the world.
- We believe it is each individual's responsibility to respect oneself as Christ teaches, respect others in a Christ-like manner, and strive to be a disciple of Christ by witnessing to others and being a leader in the church

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The spiritual, physical, intellectual, and emotional wellness of all students, faculty, and staff within our Catholic Schools remains our highest priority. The Office of Catholic Schools will closely monitor the rapidly changing circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic and will remain vigilant in identifying and implementing evidence-based health and safety practices. Administrators will continue to meet with health officials to discuss possible changes to the protocol as conditions dictate.

MASKS

Masks will not be required of students or school personnel. Students and school personnel may choose to wear masks at all times and will be accepted with love, respect, and compassion.

SANITIZING

- Provide age appropriate education on proper hand washing techniques, cough and sneeze etiquette, and avoidance of touching the face with unclean hands. Reinforce often.
- Post age appropriate posters with proper hygiene practices in highly visible areas including posters describing proper hand washing technique near sinks.
- Ensure adequate supply of hygiene items at all times and place them in convenient locations throughout the school.
- Require hand hygiene upon arrival to school and when entering and leaving each classroom, in addition to before and after eating, before and after activities that use shared surfaces, after restroom use, after outdoor activity, after use of tissues for cough/sneezing and when hands are visibly soiled.
- Prioritize hand washing with soap and water above use of hand sanitizer when feasible. Provide hand sanitizer stations in all areas where access to sinks for hand washing is limited.
- Implement an enhanced cleaning and disinfecting schedule that increases frequency throughout the day of the cleaning of high touch shared surfaces like doorknobs, work areas, restroom and locker room facilities, sink handles, desks and chairs, shared electronic devices and any other shared surfaces.
- Utilize EPA approved disinfectants with adherence to dry times for all surfaces to ensure effectiveness. Safely store all cleaning products.
- Ensure staff members treat all bodily fluids as infectious and wear proper PPE for cleaning.
- Adequately maintain HVAC systems with clean air filters and increased ventilation rates to the greatest extent possible.

- Use of buses for transportation should be consistent with all health and safety guidelines including cleaning and disinfecting after each use.
- Be prepared to follow CDC guidance on disinfecting your building or facility if a student or staff member is confirmed with COVID-19.

COVID-19 EXPOSURE/INFECTION

If a student/school personnel has been diagnosed with COVID-19:

- The student/school personnel will be isolated from school and all activities related to the school for 5 calendar days from the date of a positive test or the date of onset of symptoms, whichever comes first. The student/school personnel must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school.
- A negative diagnosis is not required to return.

Vaccinated persons in close contact with an infected person do not have to quarantine unless they develop symptoms. Contact is considered within 3 feet for 15 minutes or more. Students/school personnel who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past three months and recovered do not have to quarantine or get tested again as long as they do not develop new symptoms.

If the student/school personnel has not been vaccinated and is known to have been in contact with someone who has COVID-19, the following will apply:

- The student/school personnel will be isolated from school and all school related activities for 5 calendar days. The clock starts the day someone is alerted they may have been exposed to the virus.
- If the student/school personnel has no symptoms for 5 calendar days and has a negative COVID-19 test collected on day 5 of the quarantine period, the quarantine period can be discontinued.
- Antibody test should not be used to determine the need for quarantine after exposure to a COVID-19 infected person. It does not indicate when the infection may have occurred, it does not indicate that a person is immune or protected from infection and should not be used to diagnose an acute or active infection.

If teachers/staff are identified as contacts who should be quarantined and excluded from the school setting, they may be allowed to continue to work if the school administration deems them essential to the operations, regardless of vaccination status, as long as:

- The individual remains asymptomatic.
- They wear a mask at all times while in indoor settings at the school.
- They self-monitor for symptoms and not come to school if ill.

VISITORS

The Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Biloxi may allow visitors on campuses.

SPECTATORS AT EVENTS

The Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Biloxi will follow Executive Orders issued by the State of Mississippi for events.

MONITORING FOR SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19

Enforce that students and staff must stay home for any one of the following criteria:

- Positive test for COVID-19
- Known close contact with a person who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19 (unless one of the previous stated protocols applies)
- Fever of 100.4F or greater
- All students/school personnel who have symptoms of any infectious illness, regardless of vaccination status, should stay home from school and be evaluated by their healthcare provider.

SCHOOL TO HOME LEARNING

- School to Home Learning will be available to students who are under mandatory quarantine.
- School to Home Learners may not participate in athletics or extracurricular activities during the time they are in School to Home Learning.
- School to Home Learners will follow the academic calendar of the school.
- School to Home Learners must adhere to all grading, academic, and attendance requirements of the school.
- The principal has the authority to allow School to Home Learning in other situations.
- Full tuition is required for School to Home Learners.

SCHOOL HANDBOOK AND HANDBOOK OF CATHOLIC SCHOOL POLICIES

Any area not addressed in this document will continue under normal operating procedures as outlined in the Handbook of Catholic School Policies and the individual Catholic School Handbook.