



ST. SEBASTIAN PARISH SCHOOL

500 MULL AVENUE * AKRON, OHIO 44320-1299 * 330.836.9107 * www.stsebastian.org

Principal Update – August 18, 2021

Dear St. Sebastian Families,

With students and staff returning to school in a little less than a week, we wanted to update you all on where we stand in the fight against the spread of covid-19 and subsequent periods. We know many of you are concerned about vaccinations and mask requirements as well as the quarantine procedures heading into the 2021-2022 school year. Know that our layered protocols include maximizing distance between people; prompt identification and providing appropriate care for people exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19; practicing good hygiene; improved ventilation in the classrooms and building; and routine environmental cleaning and disinfection.

As a school our main priority remains the health and safety of our students and staff. We continue to look to the CDC, Ohio Department of Health, Summit County Public Health, and Catholic Diocese of Cleveland to provide guidance and statistical updates. Currently, the only mandate we are required to follow is the federal requirement to wear a mask on school buses.

As of today, **we are not mandating mask-wearing for students and staff in any other setting**, however it is recommended by the CDC, ODH and SCPH that all students and staff wear a mask in the school building as a precaution to contracting COVID or any variant.

We recommend each student have a clean mask in their possession at all times.

Masks will be strongly encouraged for students and staff in settings, situations, and spaces when a distance of 3 feet or more cannot be maintained. (This may include class transitions, small group work, or large group gatherings.)

As recently stated by Bishop Malesic in a Diocesan Letter to parishes, it is inevitable that people will make different choices about masking and other public health recommendations. Everyone is reminded to show kindness and respect toward one another, especially those who may be taking an approach different from their own. Individuals and families must decide for themselves how best to respond to the current situation taking into consideration information from credible health authorities while following our Lord's command, "As I have loved you, so you should love one another." (John 13:34) In support of this Christ-centered, Christian attitude, St. Sebastian Parish School will not tolerate any bullying, harassment, or discrimination in regard to personal choice for masking. Whatever your decision, please speak with your children about your expectations that they are respectful of other classmates, regardless of the mask choice of the family.

To provide the safest learning environment, we are required to follow the guidelines outlined below should a medically diagnosed case of COVID-19 occur in our school. A **medical diagnosis** means a *medical physician has diagnosed an individual with COVID and/or the individual has tested positive for the virus.*

If an individual **is medically diagnosed**, they are to follow the same isolation guidelines as last year: Stay home at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared AND until no fever for at least 1 day without medication AND improvement of other symptoms.

If a student or staff member is **a close contact** with a medically diagnosed individual and the contact is **unvaccinated and not wearing a mask**, they will also follow the same quarantine guidelines as last year.

If a student or staff member is a close contact but is **vaccinated or wearing a mask**, they can remain active in school and extracurriculars by taking certain precautions provided you remain symptom free.

Asynchronous learning will occur for core subjects in cases of quarantine/isolation ONLY.

For what those precautions are and more details, please click on the following link to guidelines [in the attached flowchart](#) (see: [Guidelines for Quarantine After Exposure in K-12 Classroom Settings](#))

If an individual is sick but **has not** been **medically diagnosed**, they are required to stay home until they are symptom-free for 24 hours. This will be regarded as a regular absence. St. Sebastian Parish School continues to express the importance of just staying home when not feeling well.

Families will no longer receive school-wide notifications in the event of COVID cases except in the Friday Bloomz Blast. Families will only be contacted should their child be considered to have been in close contact with a medically diagnosed individual.

We understand some may be frustrated with sudden and recurring changes to policy, but the climate we live in needs to remain fluid for the time being. We are hoping with enough precautions and working together, we can do our part in the fight against the virus spread while keeping our students, staff, families, and parish community safe and healthy.

We will continue to keep you updated as information becomes available.

