

# Joplin Area Catholic Schools

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October 27, 2021

Dear Joplin Area Catholic School Community,

As we complete the first quarter of the school year, we are grateful for the many blessings of the 2021-2022 year. Among other accomplishments this school year, a significant one is that we have not had to have any students quarantine outside of school due to an exposure from someone else who was diagnosed with Covid-19 in school. Thanks to all of you who have supported our efforts to keep our school community healthy.

At our school advisory board meeting last week we discussed our ongoing Covid-19 plans and guidelines. We reviewed the updated guidance that we received from the Missouri state health and education departments. In addition, we considered the reality that the Covid-19 numbers in the Joplin area are decreasing after the spike that we experienced in August when school was beginning. We continue to address this issue from the perspective of how we can best keep our students learning in school.

With these various realities in mind, we are adjusting our requirements for masking, providing an option for parents to request that their child not wear a mask at school or to wear a mask more than what we currently expect. ***Our norm for masking will continue to be that students and staff wear masks indoors when 3 feet of distance cannot be maintained between individuals, i.e., when moving in the hallways, going through lunch line, or classroom activities that require students/teachers to be closer than 3 feet from others unless parents complete and return the attached form to their child's school.***

Prior to making a decision for your child, I would encourage you to consider the updated guidance we are sharing with this email regarding the need to quarantine students who may be exposed to someone with Covid-19 at school. We, as a school, will continue to follow this guidance, which is consistent with the Joplin Health Department protocols. Please note that if you elect for your child to not wear a mask in school, there is an increased possibility that they would need to follow these quarantine protocols.

You will note that there are significant differences in the guidance for those who are vaccinated and those who are not. Please consider this information as you make decisions about whether you want your child to receive the vaccine once it has been approved for their age group.

I continue to invite us to entrust our schools, parishes, and Joplin community to the provident care of our God as we pray....

*Holy Mary, Health of the Sick, pray for us.  
Saint Joseph, Hope for the Sick, pray for us.  
Saint Marco, protector against epidemics, pray for us.*

Respectfully,

Sr. Julie Brandt, SSND  
Director of Schools



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