



ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE
OF **CHARLESTON**

OFFICE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

July 23, 2021

Dear Catholic School Families,

I hope you are enjoying your summer and time together as families. Last year was a difficult year for our Catholic schools and our communities due to the COVID-19 virus. Even though we faced this difficult challenge, I am happy to report that we had a successful year working together to keep our students, staff, and faculty safe. I would like to thank our school leaders and school staff members for their hard work and commitment to opening our schools on time last fall and keeping our students safe throughout the year. I would also like to thank each of your families for their commitment to our Catholic Schools during the pandemic and your diligence in following all of the school safety protocols that were put into place last year.

I know many of you are anxious for the new academic year to begin and want to know the protocols that will be put in place for the start of the school year, especially social distancing and face masks. At this time, the Diocese of Charleston is planning to modify our protocols for the 2021-2022 school year.

In regards to social distancing, we will require that 3 feet of social distance be maintained among students and staff throughout the day. Facial coverings will not be required as long as social distancing is maintained; however, they are strongly encouraged for anyone that is regularly on campus, especially those who are not vaccinated. There may be times when all present on campus would be expected to wear a facial covering or mask, such as for Mass or large indoor assemblies at the discretion of the principal. Students and staff will need to have face coverings readily available. Visitors and volunteers will continue to be limited and must have the approval of the school's administration to be inside the building. Visitors and volunteers will be encouraged to wear masks, especially for those not vaccinated. There are additional adjustments to the protocols that each school will share with your family prior to the start of the school year.

Each family and staff member will be asked to sign a Statement of Understanding that reviews several items including, wearing of masks, vaccinations, staying home when ill and quarantine requirements. As we all know, the pandemic has been somewhat unpredictable, and plans must remain fluid as we monitor for an increase in cases or other unforeseen circumstances that could require a review of these new protocols and guidelines.

The Diocese of Charleston will continue to work in close collaboration with public health officials and government agencies to address all concerns related to the coronavirus, including promoting awareness and initiating additional responses if necessary.

In closing, I would like to share a prayer for the summer. Please enjoy the rest of your summer and we look forward to working with your family to have another great school year.

Father, Creator of all, thank You for summer!
Thank you for the warmth of the sun
and the increased daylight.
Thank You for the beauty I see all around me
and for the opportunity to be outside and enjoy Your creation.
Thank You for the increased time I have to be with my friends and family,
and for the more casual pace of the summer season.
Draw me closer to You this summer.
Teach me how I can pray
no matter where I am or what I am doing.
Warm my soul with the awareness of Your presence
and light my path with Your Word and Counsel.
As I enjoy Your creation, create in me
a pure heart and a hunger and a thirst for You.

Amen

God Bless,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'William Ryan', with a stylized flourish at the end.

William Ryan
Secretary of Catholic Schools/Superintendent