



November 5, 2020

Dear Catholic School Leaders,

To date, our Catholic schools have been successful in implementing mitigation measures to provide safe and healthy school environments. The number of positive COVID-19 cases within schools has remained low. Schools have been challenged by quarantine numbers due to staffing levels and offering both “in-person” and remote learning simultaneously.

As conditions continue to change across our Kentucky communities, the following topics have surfaced in recent conversations with the health department and Catholic school leaders:

- Increasing number of positive COVID-19 cases and potential exponential increase in community spread across the state of Kentucky.
- Challenge for schools to manage school mitigation protocols and appropriate staffing levels with increasing community spread, changing weather conditions, cold/flu season, and increased travel and family gatherings during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays.
- Identification of reasonable school reporting practices to the health department over the holidays to minimize anxiety for school administrators awaiting direct contact/quarantine information to resume “in-person” instruction.
- Challenge for health department to review and provide guidance on direct contacts/quarantine during holidays to school administrators to take action ahead of a “Monday” return to “in-person” instruction.

The following are mutual recommendations from the Louisville Metro Department of Public Health and Wellness (LMDPHW) and the Archdiocese of Louisville for our Catholic elementary and secondary schools to implement to adjust to changing conditions and strengthen mitigation measures during the upcoming Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons.

1. Increase communication to members of Catholic school communities about community increase in positive COVID-19 cases and the need for all community members (students, family, faculty/staff, etc.) to follow recommendations regarding use of healthy protocols, participation in outside activities, travel, family gatherings, etc. to assist with schools continuing to offer “in-person” instruction.
2. Schools may choose an alternate model (reduced capacity, hybrid, etc.) in which to start “in-person” instruction after extended holiday breaks, perhaps similar to what was implemented in

August with the return to “in-person” instruction. This would be most applicable following the Christmas holidays.

3. Balance potential increase in positive COVID-19 cases following holidays with returning to “in-person” instruction by providing a buffer to address holiday reports of cases and identification of potential new positive cases after holidays.
4. Provide a 3-5 day “buffer” of remote learning in the school calendar before and/or following a holiday break to allow the health department to process any reported cases, communicate to those who will be impacted by quarantine, and give administrators ample time to plan accordingly for a gradual re-entry to “in-person” instruction. The number of days could be extended based on conditions at the time of the given break.

Thanksgiving Break 2020

- Remote Learning or Days Off on Monday and Tuesday, November 23-24, 2020
- Remote Learning on Monday, November 30, 2020

Christmas Break 2020

- Remote Learning Monday through Friday, January 4-8, 2021 (May be extended based on conditions)

Licensed PreK and Child Care Programs

Parishes and schools may make the decision whether their licensed PreK and child care programs remain open when K-12 schools apply the buffer and move to remote learning.

Michael Fullan, in his book, The Principal, states that principals need to become system players – *school leaders who contribute to and benefit from the increased performance of other schools in the district and of the system as a whole.* Taking this a step further, Catholic schools should understand that a decision that serves only the local level and does not take into account the needs of other schools within the Archdiocese creates tension within the system. While we all have some degree of autonomy, the decision to apply the recommendations of the Health Department and the Office of Catholic Schools does have implications on the system as a whole. Please consider the “system” and other archdiocesan schools when considering your application of the recommended buffer.

Thank you for your dedicated efforts during this ever-changing and challenging time!

Sincerely,



Leisa Schulz
Superintendent of Schools