



UPDATE of COVID-19 POLICY for the ARCHDIOCESE OF MIAMI

As of January 1, 2022, the statistics in our community related to the risk of COVID-19 transmission have shown substantial increase, albeit the severity of the symptoms experienced by many seems to have remained moderate. By November 30, when the ADOM provided the opportunity to parents on behalf of their unvaccinated children to opt out of wearing a mask, the number of cases in Miami Dade County had decreased to 61.7 per 100,000 population with a positivity rate for new cases at 1.6%. Hospital admission data was equally low and within the parameter viewed to be safe for removal of the mask without undue concern for transmission.

Fully vaccinated students in Archdiocesan schools already had the option to remove their masks. With the improved statistics, it was viewed safe for students to remove their masks even if not vaccinated and parents were able to consent for the student to omit masks indoors in school. The Archdiocese noted it “continues to monitor the community statistics, the advice of its physician advisors, the guidance of the CDC and County Departments of Health. As community transmission risk changes, the ADOM reserves the right to re-implement the requirement for mask usage in schools for those who are unvaccinated or for all persons regardless of vaccination status.”

By December 28, 2021 the total number of PCR confirmed cases in Miami Dade County increased to 57,675 in the most recent week from 12,594 in the previous week. On the average, there was an increase of approximately 6,440 reported cases every day in Miami Dade County. Breakdown of the those who tested positive showed that 12.0% were children aged 5-17 (there had been 8.4% in the previous week. (from the FL Department of Health) with a 7-day average positivity rate of 24%.

By December 23, 2021, the number of cases in Miami Dade County had increased to 1,796.4 per 100,000 population from 61.7/100,000 on November 30, with a positivity rate for new cases increased to 16.6%. from 1.6% only 3 weeks earlier.

Because of the substantial increase in positive cases per 100,000 persons in the tri-county area in the last four weeks it is necessary for the safety of all students and school employees to temporarily reinstate the requirement that all persons over the age of 2 years old are required to wear a mask indoors in the schools regardless of vaccination status or parental request to waive the requirement.

This REQUIREMENT to wear a mask indoors in school will be in effect beginning with the return to school on January 3, 2022. The directives in the ADOM policy related to *opt out* options based either on vaccination status or parental request/consent associated with masks **are suspended for the period Monday, January 3, 2022 – Friday, January 21, 2022.** Conditions within the community will be monitored on a regular basis. This suspension may be extended, modified or ended based on the circumstances in the community and the policy amended as needed.

Masks continue to be required indoors for all STUDENTS, FACULTY, STAFF, VENDORS, AND VISITORS. Masks are optional for everyone outdoors if social distance is maintained.

Quarantine¹ of students or faculty who experience a close contact continues to require a 7-day quarantine and PCR testing for those not fully vaccinated as per the policy of the ADOM.

- For unvaccinated students regularly wearing a mask in the classroom any person closer than 3’ from the contagious person for longer than 15 minutes must quarantine.

¹ At the present time the Archdiocese has not adopted use of the shortened quarantine and isolation protocols offered by the CDC on December 27, 2021. If the school believes a fully vaccinated individual might be considered for the shortened protocols, the school may present the case for consideration.

- Fully vaccinated persons do not need to be quarantined following a close contact but must wear a mask indoors until a negative result is received from PCR test taken 3-5 days after exposure. A person who has recovered from a COVID infection within the last 6 months follows the protocol of those fully vaccinated.

Anyone who has experienced a close contact (as defined by CDC) where transmission may have occurred, and subsequently develops symptoms is to be isolated for a minimum of 10 days for resolution of symptoms. Should a student need to be quarantined or isolated, their school will be providing classwork, which may or may not include direct virtual instruction at the discretion of the local principal.

Requirements of quarantine and/or testing following travel continue as per the ADOM policy.

International travel	VACCINATED: No quarantine needed, PCR test day 3-5
Travel within FL	VACCINATED: No quarantine or testing needed
Travel outside FL but within US	VACCINATED: No quarantine or testing needed
International travel	UNVACCINATED: 7-day quarantine, PCR day 6
Travel within FL	UNVACCINATED: No quarantine or testing needed
Travel outside FL but within US	UNVACCINATED: no mandatory requirement; school may require 7-day quarantine, PCR day 6, depending on destination and activities during travel
Persons within 90 days of recovery from a COVID infection do not need to quarantine following return from international or US travel. However, they should monitor for symptoms and if symptomatic, isolate for the full 10 days or until symptoms resolve.	

- Requirements of reporting exposures or diagnoses continue as per the ADOM policy.
- Requirements of use of masks and social distancing defined in this statement is also applicable for any activity in the parish church.
- Essential visitors and volunteers in the school are required to wear a mask regardless of vaccination status.
- School social events will be scheduled outdoors or virtual for the time being.
- ADOM COVID protocol (revised January 1, 2022) remains in effect except for the changes outlined in this UPDATE.

Students who are sick (isolated) or have tested and await results because of probable exposure (quarantined) must remain at home until negative test results are received.

TESTING BEFORE RETURN

For the safety of all children parents are encouraged to consider testing their child prior to the re-opening of school if there is any reasonable probability the child has been exposed to COVID during the Christmas break. While a PCR test is always preferred as its specificity is superior to the antigen (rapid) test, testing of the child using either method is helpful to rule out any probability of infection before returning to school. A child believed to have been exposed to COVID should remain AT HOME until the negative test result is received.

A child who was diagnosed positive during the Christmas holiday should remain at home until the parent communicates with the school the child's diagnosis, dates of symptoms or testing, and the minimum of ten (10) days of recovery and assurance of full resolution of symptoms. Ideally, this communication could occur during the weekend so that the child is cleared to return to school on Jan 3.

December 31, 2021