



Diocese of Rockford
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Catholic Education Office
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August 5, 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Governor JB Pritzker announced an Executive Order yesterday that supports safe in-person learning and requires that, effective immediately, in both public and private schools, masks be worn indoors by all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to PreK-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention strengthened its guidance last week for universal indoor masking in schools, and Illinois will continue to follow the science, data, and public health experts to keep students in school and keep communities safe. Although our letter dated July 15, 2021 stated parents individually determine whether they and their child will wear a mask while attending school or religious education gatherings this fall, the Governor's Executive Order has the force of law, and we are required to follow it. Our objective is to keep our students in school for in-person learning.

With the approval of Most Reverend David J. Malloy, the Office of Catholic Education has directed our 35 diocesan elementary and secondary schools and our parish religious education programs to comply with Governor JB Pritzker's Executive Order mandating the wearing of masks for in-person learning in our schools.

We will continue to monitor COVID-19 positivity rates and levels of transmission and provide you with updated information from the Governor's office, the Illinois Department of Public Health, and the Illinois State Board of Education should these protocols change. For more information, I encourage you to watch the Governor's [press conference](#).

The Catholic Diocese of Rockford has the greatest concern and care for God's children, and we will do what is required by the Governor to hopefully, eradicate COVID-19 and its variants.

Sincerely,

Vito C. DeFrisco
Director of Educational Services
Superintendent of Catholic Schools