

January 8, 2022



Dear Saint Philip School Community,

Thank you so much for your patience and support as we strive to implement the new guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the RI Department of Health (RIDOH) which was updated on January 6, 2022. Since the start of the school year, we have responded well to every phase of the pandemic with the health and well being (body, mind and spirit) of our students, teachers, staff, and families as our top priority, and we will continue to do so.

Since our return from Christmas break, we have seen a spike in the number of COVID positive cases among those who are both unvaccinated and vaccinated; those who wear masks and those who do not. This has impacted our ability to keep kids in school for in-person learning which is our number one goal. Now that we have updated guidance from RIDOH we are ready to make several important updates to our protocols moving forward. These new updates are more closely aligned with the CDC's guidance on isolation and quarantine and are based on the latest data that has been reported in relation to student health and their educational experience.

Highlights of our new policies effective Monday, January 10, 2022:

*At-home quarantines for asymptomatic students are now discontinued through the RIDOH "Monitor to Stay" (MTS) Program effective immediately

*Testing will not be required for asymptomatic students.

*Covid Positive Quarantines will have a shortened duration.

Monitor To Stay Program:

Students will enter the Monitor to Stay (MTS) Program if identified as a close contact in school. This program allows asymptomatic students to attend school throughout their quarantine period regardless of vaccination status for a total of 10 days. During that time, the following is required:

1. Masks will be mandatory for the entire 10 days and must be worn correctly.
*Please note that at any time, families may choose not to have their child wear a mask for their MTS quarantine period, but they will have to stay home and distance learn for the entirety of that time.
2. Only asymptomatic students can continue to attend school.
3. Daily attestation forms must be filled out for the first 5 days in the MTS program.
4. Lunch and special subjects will take place in the classrooms. (No nut products will be allowed)
5. Any student who develops one symptom will be sent home for testing.*
6. Any symptomatic student must receive a negative PCR test to return to school.

*Please note: Whole classes may be considered close contacts as before due to the continuation of the mask-optional policy. However if the student who tested positive and your child were both wearing masks correctly at all times in the classroom and were sitting at least 3 feet apart then they will be exempt from the Monitor to Stay Program.)

*For those students in our Monitor to Stay program it is imperative for you to keep your children home if they are sick with any 1 symptom. We are asking our teachers to be hyper vigilant about this and to send any child who appear sick to the office for a further observation by Mrs. Graham.

Covid Positive Staff and/or Students:

If anyone develops Covid-19, regardless of vaccination status, he/she will need to stay home and isolate as in times past. Please contact the school nurse for further guidance.

The current isolation period is 5 days at home. **IF** the student/staff has no symptoms on the 5th day, has improved and is fever free for more than 24 hours without fever reducing medications they may return to school on day #6. If the symptoms are not improving, more days may be needed before returning to school, so an open line of communication is necessary. When the COVID positive student is ready to return to school, a well-fitting mask for the remainder of their quarantine period must be worn (up to a total of 10 days from the onset of symptoms).

Vaccinated Students and Staff:

According to the RIDOH, if your child is fully vaccinated (2 vaccine doses and 14 days since the second dose) your child will not need to be quarantined but will be required to wear a mask for the full 10 days if considered a close contact. Staff are considered fully vaccinated if they have had both vaccines and a booster. The 5-day attestation form to monitor for symptoms will be required. You must still monitor for symptoms for a full 14 days.

Unvaccinated Students and Staff:

According to the RIDOH, asymptomatic, unvaccinated staff and students, who are identified as close contacts, and are not exempt from quarantine will enter into our “MONITOR TO STAY” program. This program allows students and staff to stay in school and participate in all school-related activities during their quarantine period of 10 days. During this quarantine period of time they will have to wear a well-fitting mask at all times, except when eating. This is still a quarantine, so any activities, gatherings or public places outside of school are NOT allowed until the quarantine is over.

Symptomatic Students and Staff:

Any student or staff member, regardless of vaccination status, who develops any one symptom will be sent home. They may return to school after 5 days if symptom free or when a negative PCR is received.

Covid-19 Symptoms: Any 1 symptom and your child must stay home and get tested:

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|--------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Headache | Fever/Chills | Cough | Shortness of Breath or difficulty |
| Breathing | Runny Nose/Congestion | Fatigue | Muscle/Body Aches |
| Diarrhea | Sore Throat | New loss of Taste or Smell | |
| Nausea or Vomiting | | | |

Family members with Covid-19:

Students who are unvaccinated and are a close contact because of a positive family member, must isolate for 5 days at home and quarantine for an additional 5 days at home for a total of 10 days. Distance learning will be available for these families so that learning is not disrupted. If the student is fully vaccinated, according to the RIDOH, that student may come into school IF they are asymptomatic. They must wear their masks and get tested on Day 5. Masks will be required for up to 10 days.

Important Notations:

*Students and staff who have had COVID in the last 90 days are exempt from quarantine.

*When outside, students will be encouraged to take off their masks unless otherwise noted on their individual Parental Mask Guidance Form. We will also be encouraging mask breaks at various times of the day when possible for the MTS classrooms.

*In order to ensure more adequate spacing while students are eating with masks removed, we will rotate classrooms who are not in our Monitor to Stay protocol into the parish center during lunch periods. We will come up with a rotating schedule in the coming days to let families know when to avoid peanut products.

*We continue to run HEPA air purifiers in all classrooms and keep windows open to ensure air quality. As this can lower the temperature in classrooms, please make sure that your child has a uniform sweater or an SPS-issued sweatshirt each day.

*When and if the weather permits, we will continue to take classes outside for PE, recess, and learning time as much as is feasible. Please send your child to school dressed warmly each day (hats, gloves, etc).

*To simplify these guidelines: If your child is sick PLEASE HAVE THEM STAY HOME, and if they are healthy please have them join us in school for in-person learning.

*These new changes will be a great blessing to our school community. They allow students to remain in school more often for in -person learning and help to alleviate burdens on all families. A sincere thank you for your continued solidarity in these challenging times. I have never been more convinced of the great collaborative work of our entire school family. We are working tirelessly every day to ensure that your children have the best educational and social-emotional experience possible. Your continued prayers and support of our teachers and staff are much appreciated. As always, please do not hesitate to reach out for further clarification.

God Bless and Go Cardinals!

Mr. Keith Kline

Mr. Keith Kline
Principal

Mrs. Mary-Regina Bennett

Mrs. Mary-Regina Bennett
Vice Principal

Mrs. Amy Graham

Mrs. Amy Graham
School Nurse