



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS *in the* ARCHDIOCESE *of* NEW YORK

Faith-Based. Future-Focused.

March 24, 2022

Dear Catholic School Communities,

Over two years ago, we started a journey together, unknown to most, what the next day would bring you, your families, our teachers, staff, principals, and pastors. We all demonstrated with faith and fidelity to safety, we could overcome anything that is put in our way – even a pandemic.

Since late January 2022, and nearly every three weeks since, the Health & Safety Task Force has eased COVID protocols in our schools. With optimistic caution, each step we took maintained the extraordinary safety of our children and teachers throughout our school system as we have done since March 2020. I am happy to share that the data I shared with you early last month continues to indicate nearly no spread in our schools.

To that end, and informed by our established metrics, **on Monday, March 28th, principals, working with their individual school communities, will begin to ease virtually all the remaining COVID-19 restrictions before the Easter holy days.** All contracted 3K and Pre-K for All Programs will continue to follow the COVID protocols currently mandated by New York City DOE. Mayor Adams announced that masks may become optional for children and staff in child care settings beginning Monday, April 4, 2022 if there are no concerning increases in transmission or other COVID-19 indicators in the next two weeks. We will immediately make adjustments once they are announced. The Health & Safety Task Force will, of course, continue to monitor COVID-19 cases and spread in our schools. NOTE: Our schools will maintain the ventilation and HEPA filtrations program, continue our sanitizing and disinfectant protocols, retain our full complement of health & safety school aides and maintain the social distancing requirements.

Following the week after we return from Easter vacation, as we assess the number of post-Easter COVID-19 cases and our metrics, if cases remain low, we **will remove the remaining social distancing restrictions in our schools on May 2nd.** We will remove these final restrictions trusting you, our devoted parents, will continue to safeguard your child's health. If you or your child have ANY COVID-19 symptoms, stay home until symptom free, and be sure to TEST! We encourage you to remain vigilant as you make intentional decisions to keep all safe. **Naturally, if cases increase or another variant sweeps through our communities, it may be necessary to return to some safeguards.**

Just as spring begins this week, we are eager to feel the warmth of the sun and return to pre-COVID days. With the removal of all restrictions in the coming weeks, we will end this school year and begin the 2022-23 school year with a true sense of normalcy.

Last year on the Feast of St. Joseph, I wrote our Catholic school families. The message today is the same as it was last year: *“As Lent ends, spring begins and the light of the Resurrection shines, our message is one you know – we are reminded as St. Augustine tells us:”*

“We are an Easter people and Alleluia is our Song!”

Sincerely,

Michael J. Deegan
Superintendent of Schools
Archdiocese of New York