



**Saint Pius Tenth School COVID Response Plan for
School Year 2021-2022**

August 2021

Mission

Providing quality Catholic education in a Christ-centered, caring learning atmosphere is the fundamental reason for the existence of Saint Pius Tenth School. We are a community striving to live the Gospel message of Jesus Christ. Instruction in Catholic faith and values are taught in the classroom and permeate all areas of learning and living. Saint Pius Tenth School establishes an environment that enables understanding and acceptance of the values of cooperation, honesty, self-discipline, service, and respect for others, as lived and modeled by Jesus and the disciples.

Teachers and staff believe that every human being is important, unique, and special. Therefore, they strive to instill a strong sense of self-worth in each child. Every effort is made to educate the whole child – to meet his or her needs intellectually, emotionally, physically, and spiritually in today's world.

Saint Pius Tenth School seeks to provide students with a true sense of community – a spirit of belonging that is based on acceptance, growth, and shared experiences of worship, prayer, and fun. By living and learning in a faith community, children become caring and concerned members of the total world family. Commitment to support Catholic School Education is a vision shared by the greater Catholic community.

Saint Pius Tenth School COVID Response Plan for School Year 2021-2022

In keeping with the mission of Saint Pius Tenth School, it is our belief that our students need to be in school and learning in an environment that is as safe as we are able to make it for everyone who enters our building.

This Fall 2021 COVID Response Plan describes the operating protocols that are being implemented for the 2021-22 school year. As conditions and further communication by state and local authorities necessitate updates, this document will be amended and redistributed. This plan supersedes the plan filed with the DOH and NYSED in August of 2020. Questions regarding this document should be directed to Maria Cahill, principal of Saint Pius Tenth School at maria.cahill@dor.org.

Saint Pius Tenth School's COVID Response Plan is a fluid document that is subject to change based on a variety of factors. The primary source of recommendation is taken from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Other resources include the New York State Education Department (NYSED), New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), Monroe County Department of Health (MCDOH), and the school climate survey that was distributed to all families in July 2021.

The CDC resource may be found at the following link:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html>

The overarching goal of the following plan is to maximize in-person teaching and learning, be responsive to students' needs, and to keep students, faculty, and staff safe and healthy.

Following is a list of key takeaways from the health recommendations reviewed:

- Students benefit from in-person learning, and safely returning to in-person instruction in the fall 2021 is a priority.
- Due to the circulating and highly contagious Delta variant, authorities recommend universal indoor masking by all students (age 2 and older), staff, teachers, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status.

- In addition to universal indoor masking, the CDC recommend that schools maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms to reduce transmission risk. When it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of at least 3 feet, such as when schools cannot fully re-open while maintaining these distances, it is especially important to layer multiple other prevention strategies, such as screening and testing.
 - Screening, testing, ventilation, handwashing, respiratory hygiene, staying home when sick and getting tested, contact tracing in combination with quarantine and isolation, and cleaning and disinfection are also important layers of prevention to keep schools safe.
- Students, teachers, and staff should stay home when they have signs of any infectious illness and may be referred to their healthcare provider for testing and care.
- Many schools serve children under the age of 12 who are not eligible for vaccination currently. Therefore, this guidance emphasizes implementing layered prevention strategies (e.g., using multiple prevention strategies together consistently) to protect students, teachers, staff, visitors, and other members of their households and support in-person learning.
- Localities should monitor community transmission, vaccination coverage, screening testing, and occurrence of outbreaks to guide decisions on the level of layered prevention strategies (e.g., physical distancing, screening testing).

Mandatory daily health, travel, and contact questionnaire (PickUp Patrol App)

Prior to entering the school building each day (preferably before leaving home), a health check, contact, and travel questionnaire must be completed by employees and for students by 8:30 AM. For students, this will be done through the PickUp Patrol App. Those who have not properly completed the questionnaire will not be allowed to enter until it has been properly completed. Those who have answered "yes" to any of the questions will be denied access or isolated and subsequently sent home and will be informed of any requirements for next steps. Any visitor authorized to enter the school building will be required to complete a self-certification upon entry. The screening questions may be modified by the Covid 19 coordinator as protocols change. All visitors to Saint Pius Tenth School will be required to wear an appropriate face covering, regardless of vaccination status.

All employees, students, and pre-authorized visitors will be required to undergo a body temperature check each day upon entrance to the school building, using a touchless thermometer. Those with a temperature above 100.00 F will be immediately isolated with our Nurse and subsequently sent home with information about the DOH requirements for next steps.

There is a wide range of COVID-19 symptoms including, but not limited to, the following:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Poor feeding or poor appetite

- Belly pain

While we fully understand and appreciate that some of these symptoms overlap with other medical concerns completely separate from COVID, it is essential for the health and safety of all to consider this list as policy. If a student or staff member is experiencing symptoms, they must remain out of school until appropriate follow up is completed with a medical professional and documentation is received by the school nurse and/or principal.

It is absolutely critical that if a student or staff member exhibits any symptoms that could be indicative of the COVID 19 virus or any variants of such, or if a student or staff member is not feeling well, they be kept home for at least the day. Communication between home and school will be paramount in keeping all students, faculty, and staff safe.

COVID-19 Mitigation Strategies

Masking

Indoors:

- Regardless of vaccination status, all individuals must wear a face mask when in the school building
- Masks may be removed during meals and during mask breaks which will be worked into the daily schedule

Outdoors:

- Masks are optional throughout the school day when students are outside

*****Please note:** Students and staff may choose to wear masks outdoors and during mask break times. Harassment of others based on the choice to wear a mask or not will not be tolerated. Please discuss the importance of refraining from making comments to others if they choose to wear a mask or not wear a mask during these times.

Also important to note is that the use of masks is always explored in contact tracing efforts. In short, the more time spent without a mask, the more possible it becomes that a person may need to quarantine.

Transportation:

- Mask policies for school buses will be determined by students' home public school districts

Acceptable face coverings

Acceptable face coverings include cloth-based face coverings with a minimum of two layers and surgical masks, or other masks approved by the CDC. All masks must cover both the mouth and nose. Single layer bandanas or sun gators are not acceptable. Faculty and students, especially younger students, may use face coverings that are transparent at or around the mouth for instruction or interventions that require visualization of the movement of the lips and/or mouths (e.g., circle time). These alternate coverings may also be used for certain students who benefit from being able to see more of the face of the faculty or staff member.

Physical Distancing

- At a minimum, Saint Pius Tenth School will maintain three (3) feet of physical distancing between students to the greatest extent possible
- Seating charts will be maintained in classrooms to assist with contact tracing efforts if needed
- Faculty, staff, and students will wear masks while transitioning, when appropriate physical distance cannot be maintained, and during arrival and dismissal times

Until further clarification and/or guidance is provided and this document updated, the above policy applies to all students (Pre-K through Grade 5), faculty, staff, and visitors on the school campus, regardless of vaccination status.

Daily cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing,

Ventilation

Ventilation throughout the building will be increased to the greatest extent possible by:

- Increasing flow of outdoor air
- Opening windows (when outdoor air temperatures allow) and using fans, when possible, to increase air flow
- Ensuring air filters are sized, installed, and replaced according to the manufacturer's instructions

Cleaning/Disinfection

- The building will be disinfected daily
- High-touch surfaces and restrooms will be sanitized and disinfected on a regular and scheduled basis
- Areas where symptomatic/positive cases are presumed will be sanitized and disinfected following occupancy
- Drinking fountains will continue to be limited to touchless bottle refilling only - students, faculty, and staff should have their own labeled water bottles for refilling
- Materials and tools used by staff or employees will be regularly cleaned and disinfected using registered disinfectants or sanitizers

Protocols if COVID-19 is suspected at the school

Saint Pius Tenth School will follow the algorithms established by the Monroe County Department of Health to determine the course of action for symptomatic individuals or those suspected or confirmed cases of COVID.

Snack and Lunch Time

The CDC has recommended that students be at least 6' apart while being unmasked during lunch and snack time. For this reason, students will be eating snacks and lunches in classrooms at least for the first half of the school year, unless our cafeteria space allows for maximum distancing for smaller class sizes.

Any treats that are being sent in for special celebrations, coordinated with the classroom teacher ahead of time, MUST be store bought and individually wrapped by the store or vendor.

For the duration of the pandemic, all staff and students will:

- Wash hands, or thoroughly sanitize, before and after eating
- Sit a minimum of six feet apart while eating
- May eat outside at the teacher's discretion
- Refrain from sharing food of any kind with each other (unless siblings from the same household)
- Open windows and doors in indoor spaces while eating, when weather conditions allow

We will revisit the possibility of an optional lunch program in the second semester of the school year. For Semester 1, all snacks and lunches will be family provided.

Music, sports, and recess

Singing, the playing of instruments, and activities that require vocal projection and/or aerobic activity producing heavy breathing, will be reintegrated for this school year on a limited basis. While engaging in the aforementioned activities, masks may be removed, though the requirement will be 6' distancing. When that is not possible, masks must be worn.

PE and recess activities will be conducted outdoors as weather permits. When students are outdoors for any physical activity, including recess, masks are optional.

*****Please note:** Students and staff may choose to wear masks or not when outdoors and during mask break times.

Harassment of others based on the choice to wear a mask or not will not be tolerated. Please discuss the importance of refraining from making comments to others if they choose to wear a mask or not wear a mask during these times.

Also important to note is that the use of masks is always explored in contact tracing efforts. In short, the more time spent without a mask, the more possible it becomes that a person may need to quarantine.

In-School Attendance

- All students in grades Pre-K-5 are expected to attend school in-person every day that they are scheduled to be present
- Remote instruction will not be an option, except in limited circumstances (such as whole class or large-scale quarantine or quarantine resulting in staff shortage)
 - Such determinations will be made on an individual basis and with a medical documentation requirement

Group meetings and events

As we look to reintegrate in-person activities, logistics for meetings and events will be determined on an individual event basis. When small group events are held in person, it will include a minimum of three feet of distance between fully masked individuals regardless of vaccination status. This does not apply to activities during the school day. Students and staff will follow the protocol outlined elsewhere in this plan.

After School Clubs and/or Activities

- Extra-curricular clubs may begin in the month of November, dependent on current guidance, transmission rates, and volunteer status
- Field trips may be considered on a case-by-case basis

As we eagerly prepare to open our building for another successful school year, we are excited that we will include a reintegration of some of the activities that we were unable to enjoy in the 2020-2021 school year. We look forward to continuing the fulfillment of our mission to empower our students as our future leaders and faith-filled children of God.