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July 27, 2021

Dear Parents:

As we announced in June, we will be returning to full in-person instruction in all Archdiocesan high schools this coming fall.

Given the continued presence of the Coronavirus and the high level of transmissibility associated with its Delta variant, we will continue to follow the guidance of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the PA Departments of Education and Health, and local health departments to keep students and staff safe during the coming school year.

Last year, we carefully followed all guidelines and recommendations including masks, social distancing, and increased ventilation, among others. We also developed creative educational solutions such as modified schedules and classroom cameras to ensure that education could continue effectively in real time. This planning enabled us to operate successfully through the most difficult days of the pandemic and to provide the high-quality education you expect and deserve.

We have evolved with the shifting COVID-19 landscape. As such, our plans for this year will be different and we hope to conduct operations on a basis that is as close to pre-pandemic normal as possible. However, we need and we count on your continued cooperation and participation with pandemic protocols until the health officials declare an end to the pandemic nature of this disease. Below you will find an outline of projected operational procedure for the 2021-2022 academic year as they relate to COVID-19 mitigation strategies.

### **Social Distancing and Masks**

With three feet distancing now recommended, all students can attend classes in-person daily. The use of masks indoors is strongly recommended for individuals currently not vaccinated. We understand that those who are vaccinated may still wish to wear a mask and they are free to do so. We are currently not mandating masking for any individual. That decision is subject to change pending circumstances.

### **Vaccines**

COVID-19 vaccines are the most effective tool at our disposal to combat the virus and provide for the health of everyone around us. Through the spring and early summer, health officials lifted restrictions as more individuals were vaccinated and the number of cases went down. In order to ensure consistent operations in our schools this year, we are encouraging parents to ensure that their children are vaccinated. The importance of full vaccination is underscored by the available public health data demonstrating that the vast majority of new COVID cases are taking place within the unvaccinated segment of the population.

The CDC strongly recommends that all individuals over the age of 12 be vaccinated. Vaccines are free and now available in multiple locations.

*Vaccination gets our kids back to the programs, activities and social interactions they desperately need for appropriate academic, social-emotional and physical development. The sooner all eligible Americans are vaccinated, the sooner we can get our country — and our kids' lives — back to normal. Source: Children's Hospital of Philadelphia*

If you have been hesitant about getting a vaccine, we encourage you to visit the following websites to gather more information.

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[CDC Vaccine Site](#)

[Children's Hospital Website for Parents on the Vaccine](#)

[US Bishops Conference Statements on Vaccines](#)

All of our schools will have at least one opportunity for students to receive the COVID-19 vaccine on school grounds. You can search for locations near your home to get the vaccine at [vaccines.gov](#).

Our schools will not be requiring the COVID-19 vaccine. However, all schools will ask parents to provide information regarding whether or not a student is vaccinated. That course of action is consistent with existing policy regarding student vaccination in general and will allow for effective school health and safety planning. This information will be entered into individual student health records, which have appropriate privacy safeguards in place. School administrators will use this information in conjunction with the school nurse and county health officials if COVID cases become present in school. Unvaccinated students who become exposed to someone who has tested positive for the virus may be required to quarantine for a certain period of time. Such quarantines would require temporary exclusion from extra-curricular school sponsored activities. If families do not supply information regarding the vaccination status of their child(ren), the school will need to assume that the child(ren) are not vaccinated and treat them as such.

### **Other Supports**

As students return to campus fulltime, there will be additional social/emotional support in place through teacher training and counseling so that the whole school community feels safe and ready to begin a successful school year.

### **Other Changes**

We will no longer require daily health questionnaires or temperature screening, but we continue to advise that all students stay at home if they are sick or exhibit an elevated body temperature. We will continue working with health officials to provide Covid testing.

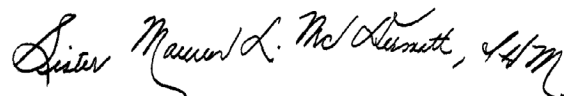
We will also continue with enhanced cleaning and sanitation protocols implemented last year throughout the system and encourage all students and staff to practice good hygiene habits.

Thank you for your family's efforts to keep all of our students safe. Because of your continued cooperation we expect to continue this year in maintaining high safety standards, our traditional academic rigor and a full array of clubs, activities and sports. May the closing days of your summer break be peaceful and relaxing ones.

Sincerely,



Irene Horstmann Hannan  
Chief Executive Officer  
Faith in the Future Foundation



Sister Maureen L. McDermott, IHM, Ph.D.  
Superintendent of Secondary Schools  
Archdiocese of Philadelphia

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