



Tuesday, August 10, 2021
Feast Day of Saint Lawrence, Deacon and Martyr

Dear Diocese of Amarillo Catholic school families,

In Catholic Schools, we believe that we are made for each other. We believe that we are better together, because we are community. We are always learning, and we believe that we learn better together. We are excited to welcome you back to campus for the 2021-2022 school year! Students benefit from in-person learning, and safely returning to in-person instruction next week is a priority.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a formidable challenge during these past 18 months. Our goal has been, and continues to be, to protect every member of our community by minimizing virus transmission at school. Your school will be sending out the adopted protocols and precautions for reducing the potential for virus transmission in school. This guidance aims to provide the safest methods of learning and instruction while balancing the greatest sense of normalcy for students, faculty, staff, and parents. Each school community is different. Each school has the authority to implement guidance beyond the basic protocols and guidelines required by the Diocese and the TCCB. The guidance is intended to be fluid in so far as it is designed to reflect the latest information from national, state, and local public health experts regarding COVID-19 disease transmission and mitigation strategies. The information contained within your school's protocols is subject to change at any time as new information emerges from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Texas Department of State Health Services (Texas DSHS) and in accordance with updated guidance from Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops Education Department (TCCB ED), the Dioceses of Amarillo and our local government and county health departments.

Our current concern is the highly transmissible Delta variant of COVID-19 which is spreading quickly in our communities. The numbers of infections and hospitalizations have increased substantially in the last couple of weeks.

Vaccination is the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic and is highly encouraged by our diocese and our schools. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommend the COVID-19 vaccine to all eligible individuals. Further, both the CDC and the AAP advise universal masking while indoors. While minimum protocols are not currently requiring masking, we are **encouraging masking** while indoors, especially for those who are not vaccinated.

A core tenet of Catholic social teaching is to seek together the common good and well-being of all, especially the vulnerable. At this time children under the age of 12 are

unable to be immunized. Until we have more data regarding the variant's effect on elementary children in unmasked settings, we must be cautious and work to protect them and any others who are vulnerable. Again, minimum protocols from the Diocese and the TCCB do not currently require masking but do encourage it. We believe that parents will make the best decisions for their family and their circumstances.

Let us continue to pray for an end to the COVID-19 pandemic. Let us pray for those who are sick and for those who have lost loved ones due to COVID-19. Let us pray especially for patience and perseverance and let charity be the driving force of our actions.

Peace and Blessings,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christine A. Wanjura".

Christine Wanjura
Superintendent
Roman Catholic Diocese of Amarillo