



# FATHER JOHN V. DOYLE SCHOOL

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## COVID-19 Protocols & Procedures *Academic Year 2022-2023*

Updated November 15, 2022



### Father Doyle School

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# A Message from the Principal

## CHARTING A NEW COURSE

Dear Father Doyle Families,

Since March of 2020, Father Doyle School has continually been challenged to meet the spiritual, academic, and social-emotional needs of our community amidst an ever-changing pandemic landscape. This was perhaps never truer than in the past academic year as we navigated dramatic shifts in masking policies, quarantine protocols, and more.



Now, as we look to the 2022-2023 school year, there is a sense that we have entered a “new normal” in which COVID-19, while still present, is better understood, and therefore more readily mitigated, contained, and treated.

The following plan outlines the school’s COVID-19 protocols and procedures for the start of the 2022-2023 school year. It is a balance between the need to acknowledge the still-present risk of COVID-19 while also allowing for a return to more traditional ways of life within our school community.

Over the course of the upcoming school year, some of our students and staff will test positive for COVID-19 and become ill. While this is an unfortunate reality, our response must be measured and appropriate. This means mitigating risk using the latest research and guidance while also allowing for a learning environment that best supports the continued growth and development of our students.

Please join me in continuing to pray for the health and safety of our school community in the upcoming school year. May God bless you and your families, and may God continue to bless Father John V. Doyle School.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin Peloquin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kevin Peloquin  
Principal

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## Monitoring for Symptoms

One of the most effective means to limit the spread of COVID-19 is staying home when an individual is ill with symptoms of COVID-19. All families are asked to closely monitor students for [symptoms of COVID-19](#). To that end, families will be asked to complete a digital form in the FACTS Family Portal at the start of the year that recognizes the importance of symptom screening and ensures every family is conducting appropriate screenings with their student(s). Please note, families will *not* be required to complete a daily screening form.

If your child becomes ill with symptoms of COVID-19, please complete the following steps:

1. Keep your child home from school.
2. Contact the school to alert the nurse of the symptoms and discuss additional guidance/next steps.
3. Continue to monitor symptoms to determine if they are improving over the course of twenty-four hours.

Students with [symptoms of COVID-19](#) may return to school only if symptoms are improving, the student has been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication,<sup>1</sup> and the student has tested negative on a rapid antigen test.<sup>2</sup>

For example, a student who wakes up feeling ill with symptoms of COVID-19 on Monday morning *should not attend school on Monday, even with a negative rapid test*, as symptoms have started but are not yet improving.

Tests may be conducted at school, at home, or by a medical provider. If using a home test or an outside medical provider, proof of negative test (i.e. photo of test or doctor's lab report) must be sent to the school nurse via email prior to the student returning to school. See the testing section of this policy book for information regarding testing options available at the school.

Please note, students who test negative on a rapid test while at school may still be sent home if it is determined by the school nurse that the student is too ill to participate effectively in regular learning activities.

<sup>1</sup> *Outbreak Response Protocols: Pre K -12*. Rhode Island Department of Health (2022) p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> See "Staying Home When Sick," <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-childcare-guidance.html> (2022).

## Isolation Protocols

Students who test positive for COVID-19 on either a rapid antigen or PCR test are *required* to isolate at home for five days from the start of symptom onset<sup>3</sup> or from the date of positive test if the student is asymptomatic/the date of symptom onset is unclear. For assistance determining symptom onset and date of return, contact the school nurse.

Students may return to school on day six; however, **students returning from a positive test *must* wear a well-fitting mask at school for days six through ten of their recovery periods.**<sup>4</sup>

Please note that students and staff **do not need a negative rapid test to return to school on day six**, as noted in the latest CDC guidance;<sup>5</sup> however, a well-fitting mask must be worn on days six through ten.

For those unable to properly wear a well-fitting mask, a ten-day isolation period is required.

## Monitor to Stay Protocols

For those students who are considered close contacts of a confirmed positive case within the school setting, the school utilizes a monitor-to-stay protocol. Under this protocol, *close contacts in the school setting may remain in school so long as they remain healthy and continue to closely monitor for symptoms of COVID-19.*

In addition, the school ***strongly recommends*** students who have been identified as close contacts wear a mask for ***at least*** five days and up to ten days from their last contact with the positive case.<sup>6</sup>

Close contacts who develop *any* symptoms, even if it is only a minor symptom, should remain out of school, contact the school nurse, and review additional testing options.

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<sup>3</sup> *Outbreak Response Protocols: Pre K -12*. Rhode Island Department of Health (2022) p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> *Outbreak Response Protocols: Pre K -12*. Rhode Island Department of Health (2022) p. 15.

<sup>5</sup> See "Management of Cases and Exposures," <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-childcare-guidance.html> (2022).

<sup>6</sup> See *Outbreak Response Protocols: Pre K-12*. Rhode Island Department of Health (2022) p. 15.

# Testing

The school currently has the capability to offer rapid antigen tests utilizing a grant through the Rhode Island Department of Health. So long as this partnership remains in place and rapid tests are available, the school will offer rapid testing at our facility under the following circumstances:

- Students develop symptoms *while at school*;
- Students are close contacts who were exposed *while at school*;
- Students have symptoms of COVID-19, but the symptoms are improving after 24-hours and therefore the student requires a negative rapid antigen test to return to school.

Testing consent forms will be provided at the beginning of the year and will also be available via the FACTS Family Portal. ***No student will be tested at the school without written consent on file.***

Please note, depending upon symptoms, potential exposure, and other particulars of a case, a single negative rapid test may not be sufficient for a student to return to school. Families should consult with the school nurse. *The nurse may determine additional testing is required.*

Because of changes in the grant structure with the Department of Health, **the school will *not* provide PCR testing directly at the school.** PCR testing may be conducted through a primary care physician, test to treat program, pharmacy, etc. For additional information regarding testing options, please [see the information from RIDOH here.](#)

Please note, students with symptoms of COVID-19 who are awaiting PCR test results may **not return to school until those test results are returned negative.**

Lastly, in accordance with current CDC guidance, routine screening testing (i.e. pool testing or sample testing) is no longer recommended in K-12 schools.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> See "Screening Testing," <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-childcare-guidance.html> (2022).

## Masking Policies

The school generally utilizes a *mask optional* policy. Under this policy, the decision to wear a mask in school is at the discretion of each individual student and/or family. Please note that *the responsibility for enforcing masking decisions lies with the individuals and families. Teachers and school staff are not responsible for enforcing the unique masking preferences of each individual student/family.*

Masks will be *required* by the school under the following circumstances:

- A student has tested positive and is returning to school after a 5-day isolation period. A mask is *required* for that individual for five additional days (days six through ten of the isolation period).<sup>8</sup>

Masks are *recommended* but not required in the following circumstances:

- Students identified as close contacts of a positive case, regardless of symptoms or vaccination status, are *recommended* to wear a mask for 5 -10 days after last contact with a positive case.<sup>9</sup>
- The school identifies an outbreak, defined by the Department of Health as three or more related cases within a specific grade level/group. In this case, masks will be *strongly recommended* for all close contacts for a minimum of five days from the last contact with a positive case.<sup>10</sup>

## Stable Groups and Distancing

While students will be encouraged to maintain appropriate distancing whenever able, the school is not adhering to strict distancing or stable group protocols when our community is within low or medium levels as determined by the Centers for Disease Control.<sup>11</sup> This will allow for more dynamic classroom environments in which students can freely engage in group work. In addition, recess play may occur across the grade levels. It is also aligned with the latest CDC guidance, which no longer recommends using a stable group or cohort model in the K-12 setting.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *Outbreak Response Protocols: Pre K -12*. Rhode Island Department of Health (2022) p. 13.

<sup>9</sup> See *Outbreak Response Protocols: Pre K -12*. Rhode Island Department of Health (2022) p. 15.

<sup>10</sup> See *Outbreak Response Protocols: Pre K -12*. Rhode Island Department of Health (2022) p. 20.

<sup>11</sup> See the [link here](#) for more information on community levels as determined by the Centers for Disease Control.

<sup>12</sup> See "Summary of Recent Changes," <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-childcare-guidance.html> (2022).

Should the county reach high levels according CDC metrics, additional stable grouping and distancing measures may be implemented at the discretion of the administration and in consultation with the Department of Health.

## Ventilation & Air Filtration

The school continues to prioritize ventilation, filtration, and air flow as one of the primary tools to combat the spread of COVID-19.<sup>13</sup> Each classroom space has a designated air purifier that runs throughout the school day and allows for a minimum of four full air exchanges per hour.

In addition, all classrooms are equipped with at least two fans for circulation, along with exterior windows which remain open, weather permitting. Should cold weather prevent the windows from remaining open, the fans in each room can also be equipped with air filters to promote additional filtration.

## Maintaining Learning Progress During Absences

If your child is out of school for *more than two days* due to COVID-19 or another illness/injury, materials/assignments will be available for pick-up from the front office *after 10am on the third consecutive school day absence*. For example, a student who is in school on Tuesday and tests positive that evening would be eligible to pick up materials on Friday after 10am.

Please note, the materials and assignments provided are *not* meant to be a representation of all topics and skills covered during the student's absence. Rather, these materials will focus on essential skills and assignments that will help the student return more quickly to the regular course of study upon his or her return to school.

**Video and online learning lessons will not be provided during student absences.**

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<sup>13</sup> See *Outbreak Response Protocols: Pre K -12*. Rhode Island Department of Health (2022) p. 13.



## Notification of Positive Cases

In the event of a student or staff member testing positive who attended school within the infectious period, families of the same grade level of the student/staff member will be notified via email.

Depending on the specific details of the case, the school may notify additional grade level groupings as deemed necessary in consultation with the Rhode Island Department of Health and other health professionals.

## Adapting and Responding to Change

As we have learned over the past two and a half years, the course of the pandemic may shift dramatically within a single academic year. Considering this, it should be noted that the policies and procedures detailed above are subject to change as our understanding of COVID-19 continues to evolve.

Should changes in state or national policies dictate changes in our local school policies, we remain committed to frequent, detailed communication regarding these changes.