



# DIOCESE OF DALLAS

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## CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

Dear Parents –

As we head into the Christmas Holidays, I wanted to thank you all again for your willingness to work with us during this year as we are navigating the pandemic. I am thankful for the successes that we have had and for the compliance that you all have shown; it has truly allowed us to keep our students and teachers safe and maintain our ability to maintain on-campus learning.

I am writing to share with you two things that are relevant to all of you as travels and gatherings will begin for this holiday season. First, while we still are not seeing in-classroom transmission of the virus, we have seen increasing numbers of cases within the community and have seen a spike in reported infections following Thanksgiving. While this is not going to change our approach to the pandemic, we are going to ask families to take every precaution possible to avoid sending sick students to school and therefore requiring schools to do extensive contact tracing after the break. The easiest way to do this is to follow the CDC's guidance for safe travel, which involves getting a PCR test 1 – 3 days before travel and a second test 3 - 5 days upon returning home. As testing capacity has increased dramatically here in Dallas over the last several months, there are now several free and quick options that you can take advantage of without needing to provide insurance information or identification. You may use your preferred FDA-approved or Emergency Use Authorized (EUA) lab or the two websites below to find a local testing site for the required "PCR" test. *(Please note that rapid antigen tests are not a good method for screening if you do not have symptoms.)*

- <https://curative.com>
- <https://www.gogettested.com>

If you are going to travel or gather with people outside your household over the break, this can be an extra precaution to help keep you and your family safe.

Second, we have received some questions regarding changes to the CDC's guidance on quarantines and we have been working with Dallas County Health and Human Services (DCHHS) to better understand what changes they are going to allow and what they will continue to recommend. At this time, we have decided that we are going to maintain a 14-day quarantine for any students who have been exposed to the virus. The risks of ending quarantine early do not outweigh the benefits at this time, however, we will reevaluate this policy when we see case numbers closer to what we were experiencing in August. Please note that any change would need to be done in concert with DCHHS in order for us to maintain our strong working relationship.

As always, we are thankful for the cooperation of our parents and students, and we wish you all a very blessed Christmas. Stay safe and healthy, and know that you will all remain in our thoughts and prayers.

Respectfully,

Matt Vereecke