

Saint Thomas Aquinas Catholic School
Covid-19 Policies
August 22, 2021

Our St. Thomas staff feels very fortunate to have been able to teach in person last year and we are looking forward to beginning to “go back to normal”. However, as you know, Covid-19 remains a threat to our health.

We will continue to receive recommendations from the CDC, Marion County Public Health Department and Archdiocese of Indianapolis. Navigating Covid-19 is fluid, and we may have to change our direction at a moment's notice. Please continue to keep our administration, staff, students, and community in your prayers. It will be another year of the unknown, and we need your help by being flexible and understanding.

The remainder of this document outlines our current policies related to Covid-19:

Face Masks:

All students and staff will be masked indoors, regardless of vaccination status. Recent data informs us that the unvaccinated and younger students who are not eligible for vaccinations are at risk. Eighty percent of our students are not eligible for vaccinations. Although the Marion County Health Department is only “recommending” masks, we are making it mandatory to err on the side of caution.

We would like to encourage, in consultation with your personal healthcare provider, all vaccine-eligible staff and students receive the Covid vaccine.

Prevention:

The most important thing that all students, staff, and families can do to protect St. Thomas, in addition to getting vaccinated, is to stay home if you have any symptoms of Covid-19.

These symptoms may include:

- A fever of 100.4 F or greater
- Upper respiratory symptoms (congestion, sneezing, runny nose)
- Cough
- Headache
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Sore Throat
- New loss of taste or smell
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

It is important that the STA community works together to prevent the spread of Covid-19 to the school environment. Prior to coming to school each day, employees of STA will be asked to self screen using the above checklist. We ask that you use this checklist to screen your children each morning before coming to school. Students who need to stay home should communicate with their classroom teachers regarding make-up work.

Building Safety:

The regular cleaning and sanitizing procedures at St. Thomas will continue to be as extensive as they were last year. We will continue to encourage proper hand washing and hygiene practices for all of our students and staff.

Classrooms:

- Mask will be worn indoors at all times, except when eating and drinking.
- Hand Sanitizing bottles will be available for students to sanitize hands on the way in and out of the classroom.
- Students' desks will be arranged so that each child's seat is at least 3 feet away from another student's seat if possible.
- Students will move from classroom to classroom.
- Staff members provide instruction and regular reminders on the importance of social distancing within the classroom and around the building.
- The cafeteria will be used, but tables will be spaced out as much as possible.
- Outdoor spaces will be utilized for lunch and other times throughout the day.

Personal Hygiene

All of our students, staff, families, and guests will be educated on and requested to practice the following:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer. Saint Thomas will provide hand sanitizing stations in common areas and hand sanitizer in each classroom.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Please continue to monitor your students each day before bringing them to school.

Quarantine:

In Indiana, communicable disease laws require individuals, schools, healthcare settings, and others to comply with disease intervention activities, called control measures, to help stop the spread of disease. Pursuant to IC 16-41-2-1, the Indiana Department of Health (IDOH) is required to publish a list of reportable communicable diseases and their control measures on its website, and those diseases listed (Covid-19 included) must be reported, investigated, and mitigated as appropriate. The control measures for Covid-19 to be followed by schools are also posted on the IDOH website. These control measures include case and contact reporting, contact tracing, isolation of positive cases, and quarantining of close contacts as necessary to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

Quarantine guidance for asymptomatic **VACCINATED close contacts:**

- Individuals who are fully vaccinated (2 weeks post second vaccination) and are a close contact of a positive individual do not need to quarantine unless they develop symptoms.

Quarantine guidance for asymptomatic **UNVACCINATED close contacts:**

Option # 1: Return on Day 8

- Quarantine can end after day 7 if no symptoms have been reported and the student obtains negative PCR tests (rapid antigen test not accepted) on days 5-7 from the date of exposure. PCR test results must be submitted to the school nurse prior to return. Individuals may return to school on day 8, but must utilize enhanced precautions on days 8-14.

Option # 2: Return on Day 11

- Quarantine can end after day 10 without testing and if no symptoms have been reported. Enhanced precautions must be utilized days 11-14.

Option # 3: Return on Day 15

- Individuals may return without enhanced precautions as long as no symptoms have been reported during the quarantine period.

Enhanced Precautions for Options 1 and 2:

- Masked at all times during school day
- Lunch to be eaten separately from other students because the mask will be off when eating.
- If any sign or symptom is identified at home, students should not come to school.
- Masks will need to be worn at all times during extracurricular activities. If masks cannot be worn due to risk associated with that activity, students should not practice, compete, or attend the activity.

Quarantine Guidance for symptomatic students:

- If a student has symptoms of Covid-19 (symptoms provided above) they must stay home from school and all extra curricular activities. To return to school students must obtain a PCR test (rapid antigen test not accepted) or note from a primary care physician with alternative diagnosis. Students must also have improvement of symptoms and be fever free without the use of fever reducing medication for 24 hours.
- If a student tests positive for Covid-19 students must be isolated for 10 days from the date of first symptoms.
- If a student tests negative and is not a close contact, student must also have improvement of symptoms and be fever free without the use of fever reducing medication for 24 hours.

Visitors in the Building:

- All adult visitors, regardless of vaccination status, must be vaccinated and wear masks.