

January 18, 2022

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We have received several questions regarding the class quarantine policy and we wanted to address your concerns.

The decision to quarantine a student and/or a class is made on a case by case basis. As Covid has changed, so have the recommendations regarding quarantine. It has always been the policy of St. Thomas the Apostle to follow the guidance of the Diocese of Metuchen and the Department of Health. More specifically, the nursing office is in constant contact with the Middlesex County Department of Health as they make recommendations specific to our area, which could be different from other parts of the state.

The current recommendations from the Diocese of Metuchen and the Middlesex DOH are that full classes do not need to be quarantined if there is only one individual in the class who tests positive, rather only students who were in close contact with the positive individual. Close contact is defined as face to face less than six feet apart for 15 minutes or more in a 24-hour period.

In the case of our early childhood classes (Pre-K through 1st grade), we tend to err on the side of caution and quarantine the entire class as it is not as easy to isolate young children. In our other classes, we consult with the teacher(s) regarding who sits near the positive individual in class, and if there are any additional students that may have had close contact. Furthermore, in our middle school where the students change classes, we consult with each teacher to get this information. Students that sit either next to or in front of the student will be directed to quarantine, as well as any additional students who the teacher may recommend.

If there is a positive student in your child's class, all parents/guardians in that class will receive a letter stating that there was a positive case in the class, the dates of the last possible exposure, and to be aware of any symptoms that may arise in your child. Students who are directed to quarantine as a result of a close contact will receive a separate letter instructing them to quarantine, and the recommended dates for testing.

As stated in the guidelines that were sent to parents late last week, any student who is directed by the school to quarantine will be eligible for remote learning access, as well as students who have tested positive or have a member of their household who tests positive.

Please understand that the quarantine decisions are not taken lightly. The experts say that children learn best when they are in school in person, and we fully agree. We are tasked with making difficult decisions for our students based on the information we have available. Not everyone will agree with the decisions that are made, but know that we will always put the health and safety of our students first.

As always, thank you for your continued patience as we navigate these difficult times. We will continue to pray for all of our St. Thomas the Apostle students and their families, and ask that you keep us in your prayers as well.

Sincerely,

Annette Pioppo
Principal