



## **UPDATE ON COVID POLICY FOR THE ARCHDIOCESE OF MIAMI**

*July 7, 2021*

### **CHURCHES AND PARISH MEETING SPACE**

The ADOM policy for gathering in liturgical or other space within the parishes continues to require the use of masks and social distancing. Groups or in-person ministry meetings make take place with proper social distancing and use of masks. (cf, below for mask requirements for fully vaccinated persons).

As you may remember on May 8, our policy was modified to include CDC guidance on cleaning and disinfecting surfaces. Daily cleaning is sufficient in most areas unless someone who is symptomatic with COVID has been present. In that case cleaning and disinfecting of the area is required. Additional caution to clean and disinfect high touch areas/surfaces is still required in areas used by small children.

We continue to review our protocols weekly. Miami Dade County, as of June 18, reported a positivity rate of 2.4%, Broward at 2.5% and Monroe at 2.8%. We had confirmed then that when county new case positivity rates declined to 2%, our protocols will be revised accordingly. Unfortunately, the decline seen in late May and early June has now reversed and rates for new cases and new case positivity rate in increasing. As of July 2, the New Case Positivity rate for Miami Dade was 3.6%; Broward was 3.9% and Monroe 5.5%.

New case positivity in the State for children less than 12 years old (and not vaccine eligible) is 5.4% and while eligible for the vaccine, 12-19 year olds in FL have a 6.7% new case positivity.

It is encouraging that even though the number of new cases and the new case positivity rate are both increasing, the number of deaths is decreasing. However, the DELTA variant believed to be more transmissible is becoming more prevalent throughout the US.

Number of doses of vaccines administered per week has decreased even though youth 12 years and older are now eligible for the Pfizer vaccine.

In Miami Dade County the rate of vaccination for youth 12-17 years old, with their 1<sup>st</sup> or with both Pfizer shots is 37.4%. Ideally, the rate should be close to 100% to best protect our children and young adults and re-open schools in August without the COVID requirements of masks and social distance.

In our Churches, at Mass, the sign of peace continues to be omitted, and communion is distributed only under the species of bread. As noted above, masks and social distancing remains the requirement as of July 7, 2021.

**ALL SCHOOLS throughout the summer sessions now in progress will continue to observe all COVID requirements.**

### **MASK REQUIREMENTS FOR FULLY VACCINATED PERSONS**

Fully vaccinated persons (adults) **ARE NOT REQUIRED** to wear face covering (masks)

- when out-of-doors
  - a. If not in a crowded area AND
  - b. If socially distant for more than 6' from all other non-vaccinated adults AND
  - c. If NO students are present regardless of social distance.
- when in-doors where all others are also FULLY VACCINATED.
- when in-doors where all others present are of the same household.

Fully vaccinated persons **ARE REQUIRED** to wear a mask **indoors, within** the ADOM school or parish buildings:

- a. when children/students or any other persons that are not fully vaccinated are present in the same room or indoor space, and
- b. when **outdoors** on duty as an employee and students are present.

### **MASK REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE** **For classroom and other indoor space, mask and social distancing requirements continue through the summer of 2021 as they have been in place during the school year, with ONE change.**

Children of any age, regardless of vaccination status, are NOT required to use masks for OUTDOOR activities as long as social distancing at a minimum of 6' apart can be maintained.

However, mask usage for children/youth outdoors remains optional. Some parents may recognize that it is beneficial for their child to use a mask outdoors and that parental decision is to be supported by the staff of the school or parish. As noted above, fully vaccinated adults – even outdoors – are required to wear a mask if students are present.

Many parents in our schools and parishioners in our parishes are asking when the requirement of masks will be eliminated. We had set 2% positivity as the goal, only to see the numbers increase most recently to 3.6%. **The most effective measure is to get vaccinated. Vaccinated students do not need to miss school to be quarantined or employees use sick or vacation time to be quarantined.**

**EFFECTIVE JULY 1**, Health screening for children in summer sessions at ADOM schools and employees of entities of the ADOM is no longer required.

By August 1, it is *hoped* that the increase in vaccination rate and decrease in positivity rate will allow the ADOM to make the use of masks *optional* and eliminate the requirement of masks and social distancing in the schools for the coming school year.

Parents are encouraged to have students 12 and older receive the vaccine in time to be fully vaccinated by mid-August for the re-opening of school. Parish and school faculty and staff are encouraged to be vaccinated unless a documented medical condition exists that prohibits vaccination.