



January 6, 2022

Dear Catholic School Parents and Guardians,

New Year blessings to you and your families – I pray this correspondence finds you well. With the recent increase in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations throughout our region, I'd like to update you on the state of public health conditions in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles (ADLA).

Over the past three weeks our region, along with the rest of the world, has experienced a sharp increase in COVID-19 cases. This has been primarily driven by the Omicron variant, a far more transmittable mutation of the coronavirus. While early data is showing that illness upon contracting this form of the virus is generally less severe to human health, particularly for those vaccinated or with natural immunity from prior infection, it remains a threat to public health and is proving to destabilize workforces in many business sectors, including schools.

While many of our schools are resuming in-person instruction this week and next, some have elected to delay a return to campus and/or resumed instruction via distance learning due to elevated cases in their community triggering quarantine or isolation protocols. We are giving school leaders maximum flexibility to determine the best course of action following the Christmas break. To ensure all schools can resume in-person instruction, we need everyone's cooperation and support during this challenging time.

To maintain operations, the health of our workforce is essential. We must marginalize on-campus transmission of COVID-19, otherwise infected persons and their close contacts will be forced to quarantine or isolate for a period of five to ten days. When this happens to school personnel, it reduces the school's ability to operate and may force schools to return to distance learning. We want to avoid this at all costs. We ask that you honor and reinforce with your child(ren) the public health protocols our schools are required to follow by public health, along with any elevated protocols individual schools have implemented.

Our workforce is the most essential aspect of our ministry and without them we cannot deliver a Catholic education to your child. Our pastors, principals, teachers, staff and volunteers are doing everything they can to maintain a healthy, fully operational campus for students. The next few weeks are going to be crucial – we must remain vigilant and not let down our guard.

Thank you for your support, love and cooperation as we overcome another public health challenge, together.

Yours in Christ,

Paul M. Escala
Superintendent of Schools