

SAINT MARY'S SCHOOL

900 Hillsborough Street, Raleigh, N.C. 27603 | 919-424-4000 | www.sms.edu

Dear Students, Families, and Guardians:

Happy New Year!

As you are aware, we are experiencing unprecedented numbers of COVID cases locally, regionally, and nationally due to the new Omicron variant along with Delta. Because of this, we are altering our return to campus policy: In order to transition smoothly back from the holiday break and to keep classes going, we are putting the following plan in place:

- There will be no classes on Tuesday, January 4. This will be a faculty workday to prepare to deliver their classes virtually.
- Classes will begin Wednesday, January 5, virtually on Microsoft Teams.
- Classes will be virtual from Wednesday (January 5) through Friday (January 7). The regular schedule will be followed in regard to start/ending times of classes. We will have virtual Assembly on Thursday and virtual Chapel on Friday. Attendance will be taken.
- There will be no athletics next week, January 4-9.
- Boarding students will not return to campus on Monday, January 3, 2022, unless the student has a pre-arranged flight or is an international student. If your daughter already has an airline ticket to return or is an international student, please contact Ms. Wahlstrom (awahlstrom@sms.edu) to confirm that she is returning as submitted in SchoolSuite.
- Meals will be provided for students and residential faculty who are on duty – we are hoping to maintain social distancing during this reentry period.
- *We will evaluate next steps on Friday, January 7, so be sure to check your email on Friday!*

Covid Testing Requirement for January 2022

- All students, both vaccinated and unvaccinated, are required to submit a negative Covid test taken on Thursday (January 6) or later **prior** to returning to campus. **Results should be uploaded to Magnus under the requirement "Covid Testing 2022."** This link will be at the top of the requirement page on Magnus.

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- PCR tests are highly recommended, but a Rapid (Antigen) test is acceptable if the following are true:
 - o Student has no symptoms
 - o Student has no known exposure
 - o Student has not been in a large gathering within the past 5 days.
- For international students returning Monday, January 3, we will have antigen tests available for you.

We will be following the new CDC and NC Strong School Guidelines. This means that “fully vaccinated” includes receiving the booster if you are eligible and six (6) months beyond your last vaccination shot. Whether or not you are fully vaccinated will determine the quarantine guidelines you must follow. We are recommending boosters as noted by CDC.

New Isolation Guidelines for Symptomatic or Positive Students

- Students may return to classes after isolating for 5 days, if all of the following are true:
 - o Student is fever-free for 24 hours without the aid of medications.
 - o Student is feeling better and has no overt symptoms such as sneezing and coughing.
 - o Student is compliant, for 5 additional days, with wearing a *medical grade mask* at all times when around others, and strict 6-foot distancing is maintained during meals.
 - o Boarding students may not resume boarding until 10 days after onset of symptoms or positive test. Please note our recommendation if you have COVID is NOT to be on campus (if at all possible) for ten (10) days since you will need to be isolated in a single room until the ten days are up.

New Quarantine Guidelines

Students must now have a booster within 6 months of their second vaccine in order to be exempt from quarantine after exposure!

Exposed students who are not fully vaccinated **AND** boosted within 6 months of second vaccine must quarantine until all are true:

- o Five days have passed since last exposure
- o Asymptomatic
- o Must strictly wear a medical grade mask for the next 5 days when around others

On Friday, January 7, we will evaluate the situation again so please check your email for updates. If things are looking better and we feel that we can bring students back, we will implement the following steps:

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- Boarders may return on Sunday, January 9, 2022, after 12 p.m.
- All students will return to in-person classes on Monday, January 10.
- Students may return if they are:
 - o Non-symptomatic
 - o Have not had exposure to someone with COVID or were wearing a mask in the presence of someone with COVID
 - o Have not been at a super-spreader event within five days of returning.
 - o There has been more than five (5) days since testing positive for COVID and:
 - Are feeling better
 - Have not had a fever for 24 hours
 - Will always wear a mask for another five (5) days (inside and outside)
 - Have no visible signs of coughing, sneezing, nose-blowing.

I appreciate your assistance in making certain that your daughter follows these new procedures. Also, please check your email for more information on Friday, January 7, 2022, to learn our next steps as this is how we will communicate any adjustments. We are doing this as a precautionary measure both to keep our students and employees safe and to continue offering classes.

Feel free to contact the members of the Covid Task Force should you have any additional questions or concerns: Dr. Townsley (dtownsley@sms.edu), Mr. Healy (thealy@sms.edu), Ms. Wahlstrom (awahlstrom@sms.edu) or Ms. Holmes (sholmes@sms.edu).

Here's hoping that this increase is short-lived!



Carol Killebrew
Interim Head of School