

January 20, 2022
Via email

Dear Parents,

The health and safety of our students and staff at All Saints, while maintaining in-person instruction, remains our top priority. Throughout the pandemic, our Catholic schools in the Dioceses of Richmond and Arlington have been instructed to follow state and local public health directives. *Therefore, Diocesan guidance to our schools is to continue following local public health guidance, without violating the rights of parents as described in Governor Youngkin's recent Executive Order 2 that parents may elect for their children not to be subject to mask mandates.* Executive Order 2 takes effect this Monday, January 24, 2022.

While acknowledging the executive order, as your principal, I appeal to you, our beloved parents, and greatly encourage the wearing of masks for your children at All Saints Catholic School. I do this on behalf of our students and our dedicated faculty and staff who are at a high risk of developing severe illness if infected with COVID-19. We are also aware of several families who are caring for loved ones with compromised health conditions. I ask that you prayerfully consider my request.

Universal masking continues to be an effective mitigation strategy. The Virginia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics issued a statement on Monday urging children to continue to wear masks in schools. In that statement the Virginia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics stated that a successful comprehensive plan to protect children against the Omicron variant and other future variants of COVID-19 includes consistent wearing of face masks during times of infection surge. The Virginia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics states: "Face masks remain safe and reliable, and children have demonstrated their ability to wear them effectively. In addition to protecting a child, face mask use significantly reduces the spread of SARS-Co V2 and other respiratory infections, thus keeping schools operational and ensuring children do not miss in person school."

Masking continues to be a strong and safe mitigation strategy proving to prevent community spread in our building which has enabled All Saints to remain operational and prevent significant interruptions to in-person learning.

It should be noted that under the current COVID-19 guidelines and as you read the attachments to this email, students who do not wear a mask must have a longer quarantine period if exposed and isolation period if they test positive.

Thank you parents and teachers for all the love, support, and sacrifices you are making for the All Saints Catholic School community. Let us pray for one another as we go forward with hope and assurance of God's grace to guide us.

In Christ,

George Elliott
Principal