

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION RESTRICTIONS
Effective Friday, September 10, 2021

The following updates have been made concerning restrictions:

Following the 8/24/2021 document from NM Department of Health and directives from the [NM Environment Department](#):

- Masks for all in attendance
- Social distancing 6' apart (3' is for schools that have had their airflow or purifiers checked and certified).
- “In-person” catechists: fully vaccinated or weekly testing.
- Capacity restriction: Sufficient for social distancing.
- Cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces.
- Paid employees of the parish who test positive for COVID-19 must be reported to the New Mexico Environment Department (NMENV) within the four hours stipulated by State Law. Volunteer catechists no longer need to be reported.
- Contact parents of a positive test notification in their child's classroom(s) by either catechist/volunteer or another child.

Highly Recommended:

- Offer Virtual Faith Formation (video conferencing) or at-home, parent-led Faith Formation rather than in-person gathered classes.
- Sanitizing RE rooms regularly.
- Suspend large gatherings (retreats, activities, etc.).

The virus behaves according to standard microbiological processes: the virus spreads through exhalations of airborne moisture from the infected to the inhalations of the non-infected. Masks mitigate this to an extent (see [LINK](#)), so please have charity for others and wear a mask when among people; this has been recognized for well over 100 years (including during the Spanish flu pandemic). Incubation periods vary, and a person can be asymptomatic but very contagious, thus unwittingly endangering those with whom one comes in contact if standard precautions are not taken.

Vaccines, while not 100% effective, do appear to offer very significant protection from infection or mitigation of symptoms of the various variants, and all are encouraged to receive them. Vaccination has been highly encouraged by the Holy Father, the USCCB and Archbishop John C. Wester.

FAQs

Q: Where’s the scientific study that says that allowing only the celebrant, lector and cantor to be unmasked makes us safer? Don’t restrict our prayer and singing!

A: It’s based on volume and exposure time—the same reason you won’t get as wet in a sprinkling than you would in a downpour.

Q: If masks worked, we wouldn't have the current situation.

A: Masks work when used, even if not 100%; otherwise, why would surgeons, nurses and dentists utilize them in normal times? Also, one could argue that seatbelts don't work since fatal accidents can occur. The goal is to balance benefit with reasonable risks, aided by medical experts; it's almost impossible to eliminate all risk and still allow people to live/worship, which is essential to their mental and spiritual health.