



# UTAH CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

*Nurturing Faith, Expanding Knowledge, Preparing for the Future*

Utah Catholic Schools ♦ 27 C Street, Salt Lake City, Utah 84103 ♦ (801) 328-8641 ♦ [dioslc.org/schools](http://dioslc.org/schools)

January 31, 2022

Dear Parents and Friends of Utah Catholic Schools,

The goal of the Catholic Schools' Office and the Diocese of Salt Lake City when designing COVID-19 safety guidelines has been first to ensure that our students and staff remain safe and secure and second that students, whenever possible, remain in the school building, where they can have a full educational experience. Recently with the highly contagious spread of the Omicron strain, we have had also to consider the impact that infected students, whether vaccinated or not, might have on the community at large.

Since testing for most people is no longer an option, the main indicator of community spread is the level of hospitalizations. Presently the rate of hospitalizations in Utah has been steadily climbing. Health care professionals in Utah do expect Omicron cases to peak and then to drop soon. The Catholic Diocese and the Catholic Schools' office have, since the start of the pandemic, been closely monitoring our case numbers and adjusting our safety protocols as necessary and in some cases as mandated by local health orders. As expected, we did see a sharp rise in student and staff cases after the Christmas break due to the Omicron variant. Since January 3<sup>rd</sup>, we have seen a gradual decline in our case numbers system wide.

The Catholic Schools' office will extend its present safety protocols for an additional two weeks; from February 1 through February 15. It is our hope that after two weeks, our COVID-19 case numbers and hospitalizations will begin to drop and we will be able to give our schools more autonomy and management of their safety protocols. Many of our schools have high vaccination rates of students and staff. These high vaccination rates combined with recent Omicron infection rates will put many of our schools at or over the 90% rate considered for "herd" immunity.

I will be meeting with principals this week to discuss evolving safety protocols for our schools. Bishop Solis will be extending the parish safety protocols also for an additional two weeks. We will continue to review hospitalization rates and overall case numbers every two weeks and will make changes or adjustments to our protocols accordingly.

Thank you

Mark Longe  
Superintendent of Schools