



Dear Immaculata Community,

As you have likely heard, recently the CDC changed the COVID guidance, particularly with regard to masking for vaccinated individuals. Since we returned to school in September, we have been working closely with the NJ Department of Health and especially with the Somerset County DOH. At present, these agencies have not adopted this guidance. While we welcome this new guidance from the CDC, with renewed hope that masks and other restrictions will be a memory before long, since most of the student body remains unvaccinated, we must require that masks continue to be worn inside the school building. Again, we are hopeful that this will change in the near future.

However, we are able to remove the mask mandate at outside Immaculata events, sports and activities effective immediately. Also, NJ has removed the required quarantine period for out of state travel.

Additionally, the Catholic Church has encouraged vaccination of all people when eligible. All students, by age, are now eligible to receive the vaccine for COVID-19. Immaculata certainly encourages this as an important step to assuage the pandemic in our area, not to mention the more immediate logistical benefits of not getting sick and not having to quarantine for close contact. However, it is important to note that there are no changes to the student vaccination schedule at this time. In short, the vaccine is not required, but encouraged.

Finally, the NJ Department of Education and Governor Murphy announced that the executive order that released students from the law that requires in person attendance at school, will expire at the end of this school year. This was the order that enabled Immaculata to provide a virtual option for families that were concerned about the COVID-19 situation. With that order removed, Immaculata will be required to verify in-person attendance again next year and, therefore, we will not be providing a virtual option for the 2021-2022 school year. While very few students currently remain fully virtual, we wanted to make sure those families are aware of this change. If any of those students would like to return now, we would encourage that return. We believe, even with the little amount of time left in this year, that the students would benefit from a return to school and possibly ease the transition for next September.

As we prepare for the end of this academic year, we are greatly encouraged by the changes we are seeing to our daily lives related to the pandemic. Close contact quarantines are at an all time low, COVID positivity of students and staff is the lowest it has been since last year... all of this gives hope to the idea that we are getting back to normal. Immaculata has, I believe, taken a very proactive approach to our COVID situation. We opened, full day, when many stayed completely closed. We pushed to do activities and events all year, although modified to be safe. I am confident that Immaculata will be leading the way, as we have done all year, on our path back to normal. We simply ask that you continue to work with us as we finish.

Immaculate Heart of Mary, Pray for Us!
Mr. Webber