



# ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON

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March 5, 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians,

It is with great joy that I share with you that approximately 70% of Archdiocese of Washington (ADW) school personnel have now received their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccination. We expect to have the overwhelming majority of all school personnel, who are willing, fully vaccinated by mid- to late March.

As we enter into March, schools are operating in different operational models throughout the archdiocese to ensure the needs of their school communities are met. As COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations declined in our region, school communities began requesting approval for the expanded return for students. As a result, the Catholic Schools Office began to engage key stakeholders and, ultimately ADW leadership, to move forward with updating our COVID reopening framework. Please know that the safety of our students, staff and community remains our top priority.

In order to accommodate requests to bring back more students to in-person learning, schools will have the option to decrease the social distance requirement from 6 feet to 4 feet within the classroom. Although 6 feet is ideal, 4 feet is acceptable when combined with other mitigation strategies such as masks, handwashing, and ventilation. All reasonable efforts to implement the 6-foot distancing rule should be made to the greatest extent possible and all other health and safety protocols are to be followed.

Many of our school communities are not ready for this transition; this would be an option for those schools who have successfully engaged in a hybrid model and whose communities are prepared for more in-person learners. We are confident that this is a logical necessary step toward offering more in-person learning, as COVID cases continue to decline and more people are vaccinated throughout our region.

Several important factors remain in place for those schools considering this transition to 4 feet of social distancing. The different operational model should meet the need of the school community and align with the pastor or canonical administrator.

Principals will continue to keep you apprised of any transition or changes in their operations status. Please direct any questions or concerns to your school leadership.

May God bless you as you continue with a quality Catholic education for your child(ren).

Sincerely in Christ,

Kelly Branaman  
Secretary for Catholic Schools  
Superintendent of Schools