



DIOCESE of SACRAMENTO  
**CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

From: Lincoln Snyder, Executive Director of Schools  
To: Our Diocesan Elementary School Community

**Re: Update on our Return-to-School Plans and Application for Waivers**

August 5, 2020

Dear Catholic School Community:

I am writing to update you on our plans for a return to school and address your questions about the waiver process that the state of California announced this week.

According to state guidelines, a county must be off the state COVID monitoring list for a period of fourteen days before we can offer in-person instruction. Per this guideline, our schools in El Dorado, Nevada, Shasta, and Tehama counties have started their school years as planned, with all proper precautions in place to mitigate the spread of COVID.

Schools in counties on the monitoring list do have the option of applying for a waiver to return to school, and we are in conversation with public health officers in the counties on the monitoring list - Butte, Colusa, Placer, Sacramento, Solano, Sutter, and Yolo - to do so. We have yet to receive the actual application form from any of the counties, but the state published all the pertinent information, giving us a chance to prepare. We have created a master Return-to-School Plan addressing state and county health requirements. Each school has tailored it to their specific site, but today, I wanted to share with you our updated general plan so that you understand our plans and process.

For now, counties will consider waivers for students through the sixth grade, which means that, in the counties requiring a waiver, our middle school and high school students will be in Distance Learning mode until further notice. For families who wish to have their students learn from home this year, our policy remains to accommodate and support them.

The state is asking us to consult our plan with the community, and we support that transparency. Please know that, in the coming days, our principals and pastors will be scheduling online meetings with a number of community groups, including our faculty and staff; our Catholic School Advisory Committees; Parish Pastoral Councils; and other community groups unique to your parish and school. Your school's principal will facilitate those meetings in your community, and will post the school's plan on its website.



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As we receive the waiver application forms from the counties in the coming days, we will learn more about their local timing, expectations, and concerns. We will keep you informed as we submit our applications and get feedback from them.

The health and safety of our students, staff and communities remain our foremost concern. We are convinced that, beyond social, emotional, and educational benefits for students and the need of parents to work, there is a strong public health case for having our students - especially our younger students - in school. We are taking significant steps to keep our students, families, faculty, and staff safe, and we continue to work with public health to adapt our protocols to meet their guidelines and mitigate the spread of COVID as we return to in-person instruction.

To summarize:

- The state of California announced a waiver process so that schools in counties on the COVID monitoring list can return to in-person instruction.
- We will apply for waivers in the counties where public health officers so allow.
- For families who wish to have their students learn from home this year, our policy remains to accommodate and support them.
- Although we have not yet received the final waiver applications from the counties, we do understand the process and requirements, and are sharing the latest version of our Return-to-School Plan with you.
- Each school will produce its own version of the plan tailored to its site, and it will consult that plan with key stakeholders within the community.
- We will keep you informed of the status of our applications as we learn more.

Thank you for entrusting your children to our care. May the Lord Jesus continue to bless our students and the adults who serve them.

Peace,

Lincoln Snyder  
Executive Director of Schools  
The Diocese of Sacramento