



OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK

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MR. MICHAEL J. DEEGAN, SUPERINTENDENT

November 20, 2020

Dear Catholic Schools Families,

As you are aware, there have been recent spikes in cases of COVID-19 throughout the New York metropolitan area. While your school building remains a safe place for your children to pray, learn and grow, your school now finds itself within a New York State-designated yellow zone for COVID-19 transmission.

The Office of the Superintendent's singular focus, and that of our principals and staff remains our ability to maintain 5 days of full in person learning for as many students as our buildings will safely hold and as long as health and safety conditions enable us to do so. **Nothing is more valuable to children's academic and social-emotional growth than being in class with their teachers and peers, being able to pray and learn together are the foundation of our Catholic schools.** Please know how grateful I am to the pastors, principals, teachers, and you the parents who allowed us to open

Per Governor Cuomo's micro-cluster strategy, schools identified as being in a yellow zone must conduct required bi-weekly testing of a random 20% sample of the in-person faculty, staff, and students, ages 5 and up, to continue in-person instruction. If the infection rate of the school is below the average positivity rate of the county, no further testing is required.

New York City is currently refusing to provide our schools with COVID-19 testing as they are required to do under the law, and we have taken the city to court to fight for the services our schools deserve. As that struggle for our rights unfolds, we have made arrangements to establish a testing infrastructure that will meet the requirements set forth by New York State as we are committed to keeping our students in school for in-person instruction.

In the coming days, you will receive more information about the protocols, procedures and requirements necessary for your school to remain open for in-person learning in a yellow zone.

Since September, our Catholic schools have provided safe in-person learning. We will continue to remain faithful to all the health and safety protocols and procedures as laid out by federal, state and city health officials and the *Catholic Schools Reopening Plan*.

In the event of a closure of public schools, we will remain open until the Health and Safety Task Force of the Office of the Superintendent, working with officials from the New York State Department of Health and the governor's office determines otherwise.

Please continue to entrust our schools, students and families to Mary our Mother, under the title "Our Lady, Mary, Health of the Sick"

Sincerely,

Mr. Michael J. Deegan
Superintendent of Schools
Archdiocese of New York