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**BROOKLYN AND QUEENS CATHOLIC SCHOOLS ANNOUNCE BACK TO SCHOOL COVID-19
SAFETY PROTOCOLS**

The Office of the Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Brooklyn, which includes 69 elementary schools in Brooklyn and Queens, today has announced the COVID-19 safety protocols that will be in place when school opens on Wednesday, September 8, 2021.

In the absence of a mandate, the New York State Department of Health recommends school districts adopt universal indoor masking for all based on guidance from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Therefore, Catholic Academies and Parish Schools in Brooklyn and Queens will require all students, faculty, and staff members to wear masks beginning on the first day of school.

In addition, school officials will continue to encourage vaccinations, social distancing, hand washing and hand hygiene, while maintaining the rigorous daily cleaning and sanitizing of facilities as well as enhanced ventilation. Parents will be reminded to keep their child home from school if they are sick, and their child will be required to receive medical clearance from a healthcare provider that they can safely return to in person instruction.

The Catholic Academies and Parish Schools will also continue to follow city and state guidelines regarding contact tracing, quarantine and isolation protocols.

“As the numbers of Coronavirus cases continue to spike in children, and the overall numbers of hospitalizations in New York City are on the rise, this is the most responsible approach to take when we begin the new school year. I know the return to these safety measures is not the situation parents, teachers or students were hoping to be the case in the 2021-2022 school year, but we cannot ignore the trends,” **said Superintendent Dr. Thomas Chadzutko.**

“Let us do our part from day one to prevent further increase of cases. If we are successful, as this academic year moves along, we will revisit these guidelines and adjust them accordingly. As much as we want a return to normalcy in our classrooms, we want our students, faculty, and staff to be safe,” **continued Dr. Chadzutko.**

“Looking at the trajectory of past pandemics, it seems that a virus such as this one does linger for some time even with the vaccination. I have received my vaccination and continue to encourage others to do so as well. It is our hope that the COVID-19 vaccines will help bring an end to this terrible virus that has controlled our lives for much of the past year and a half,” **said The Most Reverend Nicholas DiMarzio, Bishop of Brooklyn.**

Catholic schools in Brooklyn and Queens, in adherence to strict guidelines, opened on time for the 2020-2021 school year, and were able to offer five day a week instruction. Enrollment increased in nearly 40% of the schools last year in grades K-8. To learn more about Catholic Schools in Brooklyn and Queens, visit catholicschoolsbq.org.

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