



**CATHOLIC
DIOCESE OF
JEFFERSON CITY**

*Serving Central
and Northern
Missouri*

Alphonse J. Schwartz

**MEMORIAL
CATHOLIC CENTER**

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Protocol for response to positive test of COVID-19 July 2020

This protocol is proposed for parishes and schools. In general, these guidelines are addressed to staff, including principals.

General Notice

Please notify your staff that anyone visiting a current COVID-19 hot spot or traveling internationally will be required to self-quarantine for 14 days before being allowed back on parish/school property. This includes students or anyone who is on parish/school property on a regular basis. This may require staff to utilize sick days, vacation days, or short-term leave. Please use the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) map of hot spots to help your staff determine if their travel takes them to a current hot spot. States at the highest levels of current cases qualify as a hot spot.

<https://www.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/index.html#cases>

Positive Responses

If you are notified that someone in your school or parish (priest, deacon, liturgical minister, teacher, student, volunteer) has tested positive for COVID-19 or has been told to self-quarantine because of contact with someone who has tested positive:

1. Do not do make any public decisions or announcements immediately.
2. Notify your pastor, the moderator of the curia (Father Jason Doke) and, if a school is involved, the superintendent (Dr. Erin Vader).
3. Under the direction of the pastor, contact your county health department, if they have not already contacted you, and ask what your response should be. This may include quarantining, deep cleaning, temporary closure, etc. Follow their directives.
4. In general, the local health department will investigate the case, determine exposure risk and contact anyone determined to have a risk of exposure. They will also determine when it is safe for the individual to return to work, volunteer or ministry.
5. Relay the information you receive from the health department to your pastor, the moderator of the curia and, if a school is involved, the superintendent. Your parish may determine to go beyond the recommendations of the health department in an abundance of caution or for other reasons in your response.
6. The diocesan communications director (Helen Osman) will assist in creating a response for the parish, including the school community. This may include announcing new schedules, protocols or closures.
7. Send out the response created in collaboration with the Chancery.

8. Do not publicly identify the person believed to have been infected unless a coordinated decision involving the parish, Chancery and Department of Health, has been made.
9. If contacted by the media, please refer them to the diocesan communications director. Please ask them to contact her on her mobile phone, 512-785-3006.
10. If contacted by school parents, and they request more information than you can give, refer them to the superintendent.

This is our basic response to situations; however, every situation is different. The Chancery staff are here to support you in these situations. We will help in every way we can. Please contact us if you have any questions regarding these guidelines, 573-635-9127.

General messaging

The diocesan communication director has messaging templates to ensure a professional, compassionate and cohesive response. In general, in your verbal communications:

1. Stick with the facts. Do not speculate, including, if there are closures, when re-opening will happen.
2. Avoid publicly identifying the person involved in the case, unless it is absolutely necessary.
3. Stress our concern for the common good is the rationale for our actions. Our first concern is for the safety and well-being of people. We follow the guidelines of the local health department because of that concern, not because we are told to do so.
4. Don't unintentionally create a scapegoat, including the person who is ill, their family, public health officials, Chancery staff or the bishop. We are all working together to keep people safe. Remind people we must pray for one another and support one another through this crisis.