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## **NEW HAMPSHIRE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IMPLEMENT PARENTAL CHOICE FOR MASK USE NEXT YEAR**

(MANCHESTER, NH) - David A. Thibault, Superintendent of Schools for the Diocese of Manchester, announced today that all Catholic schools will implement a “parent choice” mask policy for the next academic year.

“Our Catholic schools have been open for in-person learning since August 2020,” said Thibault. “We led the way in our decision to return to the classroom, and our students are thriving. With a year of in-person learning under our belt and the positive trends in our state’s COVID statistics, the time is right.

“We will continue to work with leaders in our Catholic schools to ensure the health of our faculty and staff, students, their families, and the community at large,” said Thibault. “This includes continuing our COVID mitigation efforts including air purifiers in classrooms, cohorting students, and more. As we prepare for the next academic year, we remain committed to operating safely and responsibly, with a high level of flexibility should unforeseen circumstances arise. Our guidelines are still being finalized but we intend to return as close to pre-pandemic operations as possible.”

“Last year, nearly five hundred new students enrolled in our diocesan Catholic schools, and the overwhelming majority have decided to stay next year,” said Alison Mueller, Director of Marketing, Enrollment, and Development for Catholic schools. “We listened to parents’ desire for a return to normalcy with in-person learning, and now we’re listening again. We believe that our Catholic schools are partners with parents in the education and formation of their children. Parents throughout our system of Catholic schools will have the flexibility and freedom to make their own decisions on whether or not they want their child to wear a mask at school, and the same is true for our teachers and staff.”

Parents interested in learning more about these updated guidelines, or how to enroll their child in one of the 18 Diocesan Catholic schools, can visit [www.nhcatholicsschools.com](http://www.nhcatholicsschools.com).

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*The Diocese of Manchester is the Roman Catholic Church in New Hampshire, serving the needs of 235,000 Catholics. For more information, please visit [www.catholicnh.org/overview](http://www.catholicnh.org/overview).*