



November 5, 2021

Dear Catholic School Community Members,

I pray this correspondence finds you well. With new school year in full gear, I'd like to update you on the state of public health conditions in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles (ADLA).

Since mid-September cases of COVID-19 have steadily declined across our region. Our schools have navigated the complexities of returning to in-person instruction and have kept caseloads lower than our large public school district counterparts. This is a testament to the leadership of our principals, teachers, staff and pastors whose continued dedication and commitment to the ministry of Catholic education. They deserve an extraordinary amount of gratitude for what they have done to keep our school communities safe.

As a result of this week's decision by the FDA and CDC to extend Emergency Use Authorization (EAU) to the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine to individuals 5 years old and up, we want to share that the Archdiocese of Los Angeles is not requiring students ages 5 and up to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. We continue to encourage parents and guardians to seek advice from a health care professional about the COVID-19 vaccine for their child.

We anticipate the state legislature will take up a bill in January 2022 to decide if the COVID-19 vaccine should be added to the existing list of 10 required vaccines. It's fair to say that this legislation will receive a great deal of debate as it moves through the state assembly and senate. The public will have an opportunity to voice their opinion to their respective state representative throughout the legislative process. In addition, the FDA and CDC must still consider full general use approval of the vaccine for individuals 5 to 15 years old. We will continue to monitor these developments.

This is a Jubilee Year in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, celebrating the 250th anniversary of Mission San Gabriel Archangel. We also celebrate the year of St. Joseph, adopted father of Jesus. As such, we recognize St. Joseph as a man who loved, taught and protected his son from birth and throughout his life. We pray for his intercession and ask that he shield us from adversity and aid us at this critical time as we seek to protect our children and our neighbors. In words of Pope Francis, getting vaccinated is "an act of love."

Thank you for your continued patience, support and advocacy for Catholic education.

Yours in Christ,

Paul M. Escala
Superintendent of Schools