



ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS

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TO: Pastors, Principals, and Presidents

FROM: Dr. Todd Sweda
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RE: Recent Circuit Court Ruling

DA: November 27, 2021

On Tuesday, November 23, a Missouri circuit court judge ruled that local health department orders connected to COVID-19 are illegal and that all existing health orders issued by local health authorities are “null and void.”

Specific Information for Schools in St. Louis City:

1. On November 23, the St. Louis City Health Commissioner reissued a mask mandate which was approved and authorized on the same day by the Board of Aldermen.
2. As this mandate was an official act of the Board of Aldermen, The City of St. Louis maintains it is not affected by the circuit judge’s court order and remains in effect.
3. This position of the City may be challenged, and we will watch for any such developments.

Specific Information for St. Louis County and all Surrounding Counties:

1. Plans currently implemented at each school site may continue without modification.
2. The wearing of masks has been left to the discretion of school leadership (Pastors, Principals, and Presidents) since the start of the school year.
3. Some schools began in August with masks required and others with a mask-optional policy.
4. A number of schools then made modifications to original plans as the year unfolded and as deemed appropriate by the local school leadership/community.
5. The court ruling does not change the fact that decisions can be made at the local level.

Additional Information:

1. The court’s ruling did not challenge the intent of health orders or invalidate their messages.
2. It is highly recommended for all schools, including any schools who become mask-optional, to continue utilizing the guidance of medical experts at their local health departments regarding quarantining and other safety protocols.
3. We are not currently in receipt of any updated guidance from health departments since the ruling. We will forward such information once available.
4. Vaccinations for all eligible members of our school communities continue to be highly encouraged.

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