



**Diocese of Buffalo**  
**COVID 19: Pastoral Responses to**  
**Recent Surge of Cases**  
**Faith Formation**

***Parish Protocols for Contact and Closure***

*If a pastor, parish administrator, or any other employee of a parish believes they have COVID-19, or that they have had enough exposure to someone who has contracted the virus to pose a threat to their own personal health:*

The priest, deacon, parish administrator responsible for the parish, or Faith Formation Director/Coordinator should contact their county health department to determine proper actions for the individual(s) exposed, including but not limited to: testing, monitoring of symptoms, additional sanitization of the parish campus, any contact tracing, and the possibility of a need to close the parish campus/facilities. This should be done in compliance with recommendations made by government health officials.

***How might the State’s “Cluster Action Initiative” affect my program?***

The state’s recent initiative to mitigate the spread of infection has prompted three categories, each with successively higher restrictions: Yellow Zone (precautionary), Orange (warning), and Red (most restrictive). The guidelines for schools are listed with each zone since Faith Formation involves children and young people.

*Yellow* — Schools remain open with 20% testing of in-person students and faculty.

**Non-residential gatherings are 25 people maximum, indoors and outdoors.**

**Residential gatherings are 10 people maximum, indoors and outdoors.**

(For those parishes who are doing in-home Faith Formation.)

If the local school district(s) in your parish close and move to remote learning, then your Faith Formation Program should do the same.

*Orange* — Schools are closed and move to remote learning.

All Faith Formation, including in-home meetings, moves to remote learning.

*Red* — Schools are closed and move to remote learning.

All Faith Formation, including in-home meetings, moves to remote learning.

**NOTE:** It is strongly advised that Faith Formation activities *not move* to the Church building to allow for potentially easier restrictions under the guidelines for Houses of Worship.

***What if there is no apparent/immanent threat in my parish or region?***

Continue to monitor the infection rate in your area and follow the guidelines of your region’s health department.