



*Diocese of Knoxville Catholic Schools: Preparing Scholars, Leaders, & Saints*

September 27, 2021

Greetings!

I hope everyone is enjoying this beautiful fall weather. It is truly a blessing to live in our beautiful community and enjoy this time of year where we can reflect on the amazing harvest of God's blessings in our lives!

As I am sure many of you are aware, on Friday, September 24<sup>th</sup>, Federal Judge Ronnie Greer issued a temporary injunction ordering Knox County Schools to mandate the school mask order issued and followed during the 2020-2021 school year. The new order also temporarily blocks Governor Lee's Executive Order No. 84, which allows parents to opt their children out of school mask mandates. U.S. District Court Judge Ronnie Greer acted in response to a lawsuit filed in September by the parents of four Knox County Schools' schoolchildren who argued their children were vulnerable to health risks, alleging Gov. Bill Lee's executive order and Knox County Schools' lack of mask mandate violates the Title II section under the Americans with Disabilities Act. The order will remain in place as the case makes its way through the court system.

I want to assure you that at this time, we will continue to follow the Diocesan policy regarding masks issued by Bishop Stika on August 31, 2021 (revised September 20<sup>th</sup>), which recognizes the fundamental right of parents to make the best healthcare decisions for their children. The temporary injunction in Knox County public schools put in place by Judge Greer does not apply to our Catholic schools. Parents will continue to have the option to send their child in a mask, or opt out at their discretion while our mask mandate is in effect through Friday, October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021. You may find more information regarding our policies and procedures on our website page [www.dioknox.org/schools](http://www.dioknox.org/schools).

Should you have any questions, always feel free to contact my office.

In Christ,

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