News

Science students at St. Leo's School in Elmwood, N.J., pose for a photo in this undated photo.

Science students at St. Leo's School in Elmwood, N.J., pose for a photo in this undated photo. (CNS photo/courtesy Archdiocese of Newark)

by Associated Press

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BRAINTREE, Mass. — Face coverings will not be required during public Masses at Roman Catholic churches in the Boston area starting Feb. 28, the Archdiocese of Boston announced Thursday.

Priests, deacons, and extraordinary ministers will not be required to wear masks during the distribution of Holy Communion, the archdiocese said.

However, church pastors can keep requiring parishioners to wear masks beyond Feb. 28 if they choose to do so, based on their knowledge of the needs of the community. Also, if a particular municipality continues to require mask wearing in public places, the parish must comply with the local regulations.

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Parishes will also be required to set aside worship space for people who choose to continue to wear masks in church.

The announcement came a day after church leaders announced that students and staff at parochial schools overseen by the archiocese will no longer be required to wear masks in the classroom beginning Feb. 28, in line with updated masking

guidance for public schools.

"As always, however, we will follow any local health board mandates," the archdiocese said. "Similarly, we will follow the existing federal order for mask wearing on school buses."