



Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board
Believing, Achieving, Serving

April 14, 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We hope you have been able to enjoy a much-deserved break with your children this week and take some time to recharge after the ups and downs of the past many months. Amid this Spring Break comes the announcement of a return to remote learning. While not totally unexpected given the rapid rise in COVID-19 cases both locally and across the province, we appreciate that for so many of us, this time of transition is not without its struggles.

Following a previous Ministry-mandated move to remote learning in January of this year, our schools and staff are not only better prepared for a return to online remote learning but are more cognizant of its mental health toll on students and families. However difficult this return to remote learning, we also understand that it was necessary to keep our homes, schools and communities safe. Our priority continues to be the health, safety and well-being of our students and staff.

Transition plans

Following our letter of earlier this week, we are writing to share our plans for the transition to remote learning on April 19, 2021. To support a successful transition to this remote learning period, Monday, April 19 will be a transition day for elementary school students.

Elementary teachers will connect virtually with students/families early in the week, using the myClass Learning Management System (LMS), to provide a schedule and outline learning expectations for the remote learning period. Parents/guardians are urged to make any necessary supervision arrangements for their children as child care and before/after care will not be available to school-aged children during the school closure.

For secondary students, instruction for all students will continue on Monday, April 19. The last date of the current Octomester is Wednesday, April 21. This day will provide a transition to the next course that will begin on Thursday, April 22.

Special Education

Families of students with special education needs who cannot be accommodated through remote learning based on the student's needs will be contacted on Monday, April 19 regarding arrangements for in-person learning. In-person learning for these students will begin on Wednesday, April 21. Transportation will be available for eligible special needs students who regularly receive transportation services.

Child Care and Before/After School Care

All before/after school programs will be suspended during the remote learning period. Child care programs in HWCDSB schools are permitted to remain open for non-school age children.

Tech Support

Technical support for online learning is available on the [HWCDSD Parent Website](#). This portal provides helpful information on logging into myClass, using Teams, getting started with virtual learning, connecting to WiFi, accessing apps, and more.

Taking Care of Our Mental Health

As a parent, guardian, caregiver or family member, you have a particularly special role in supporting child and youth mental health. **School Mental Health Ontario** has prepared practical resources for educators, parents and families to support student mental health during COVID-19. Learn more at [School Mental Health Ontario](#). This may also be a challenging time for you, and you may find the resources on [Mental Health and the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) helpful.

Stay Home, Stay Safe

A stay-at-home order has been in effect since April 8 for all of Ontario. Individuals are required to stay at home except for essential reasons, such as grocery shopping, medical appointments, and work that cannot be done remotely. We strongly encourage students, staff and families to continue to follow public health guidance during this remote learning period. Please stay home and stay safe.

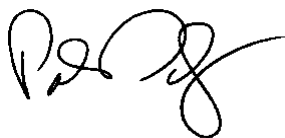
Voluntary asymptomatic testing

The HWCDSD will be holding asymptomatic testing clinics this week at various school sites. This COVID-19 testing is voluntary and is for asymptomatic individuals only (those who are not experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms). Please see [board/school websites](#) to learn more. Asymptomatic testing is an important layer of protection that helps to track and prevent the spread of COVID-19 by identifying cases early.

April Devotions

This month of April is dedicated to the Holy Spirit. “The Holy Spirit is the strength of God; it’s what gives us the strength to go forward,” Pope Francis reminds us. Despite the many complex challenges that we have faced this year, through the presence of the Holy Spirit, we will find the strength to go forward.

Your patience, understanding and strength throughout this unprecedented time has been crucial to our ability to continue to support the continuity of learning. We thank you for your unwavering support and pray that the power of the Holy Spirit fill you and your families with peace and hope.



Patrick J. Daly
Chairperson of the Board



David Hansen
Director of Education