



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

November 13, 2020

Dear Parents & Guardians,

Late last week, the Ministry of Education released its revised Operational Guidance: COVID-19 Management in Schools, which delineates expectations around daily screening and provides additional guidance around continuity of learning as the number of COVID-19 cases in our community and province continues to rise. The Ministry document stresses the crucial need for teachers and students to be ready to switch to remote learning on a moment's notice where a class cohort of students has been identified to self-isolate due to exposure to a confirmed case of COVID-19.

To date, our schools in a quarantine situation have managed the transition very well. This is a testament to the leadership of our school principals and vice-principals, and the preparedness of our classroom teachers and support staff. As part of our Ministry reporting requirements, the HWCDSB was recently asked to evaluate our continuity of learning plans. Our plan focuses on seven areas of readiness preparation to support a seamless transition to remote learning. These areas include the establishment of school-based continuity of learning teams, device distribution where needed, online resources to support parents during the online learning period, teacher/staff readiness, Special Education provisions and student support. Currently every teacher in the HWCDSB has a virtual classroom set up with their students on the myClass Learning Management System. Over the next couple of weeks, they will be working to ensure that all students are able to log in to myClass/Teams and are familiar with the platform so that they can continue with their learning should their in-school cohort be closed by Public Health.

Elementary School Re-organization

This past October, the HWCDSB provided parents/guardians of elementary students with the first of three opportunities to transfer between learning modalities (e.g. from face-to-face learning to virtual learning or from virtual learning to face-to-face learning).

In order to ensure the greatest stability for students it has been determined that the next opportunity for elementary students to change learning modalities will take place on February 1, 2021 rather than at Christmas break as previously indicated. Information on how to request a change will be shared in the coming weeks.

Staying safe during the COVID-19 pandemic

As we enter the second wave of COVID-19, there are preventative measures we can take to stay safe and keep the virus from spreading in our classrooms and schools. Daily COVID-19 screening is an important first step. Parents and guardians are required to screen their children for symptoms of illness every day before school. Please review each screening question carefully and

answer honestly. If your child is feeling unwell or the self-screening advises that he/she not attend school, you must keep your child home. If your child develops COVID-19 symptoms, he/she must stay home from school and should get a COVID-19 test. To book a COVID-19 test, please go to www.HamiltonCovidTest.ca.

We understand that as COVID-19 fatigue sets in, there can be a tendency to become more relaxed in our routines. It is important, however, that students and staff continue to limit their social circles to immediate family only and restrict their outings to essential activities. Physical distancing is especially important during lunches and breaks when masks are removed.

Hope in our world

Earlier this week, our schools participated in virtual Remembrance Day ceremonies in memory of and gratitude to the many men and women who bravely fought in wars and conflicts around the world and made the ultimate sacrifice so that today we might live in freedom. Their sacrifices and the sacrifices of those at home demonstrate the strength that can be found in unity.

During this month of remembrance, we not only honour our heroes, but reflect on their sacrifice. It is a time, as our beloved Faith Animator Jerry Creedon told us, “to listen to the call to reconciliation and peace: peace with our God, with our fellow human beings, with our own selves. Because that is where true peace begins: in the depths of our hearts. And this is why those we remember gave their lives in war, so that, from the horrors of that war, peace might be born.”

Through the intercession of Our Lady of Hope, we continue to pray for the well-being of our students, staff and families and for publicly funded Catholic Education.



Patrick J. Daly
Chairperson of the Board



David Hansen
Director of Education