

March 30, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I hope that everyone is staying safe and healthy as we begin our third week of teaching and learning from home. I am writing to touch base as well as provide an update from the provincial government.

On March 28, all publicly funded school jurisdictions in the province were informed by the Minister of Education that adjustments would be made to education funding, so that savings could be redirected to Alberta's COVID-19 response.

The provincial government has requested that school authorities provide immediate notice to educational assistants and non-essential support staff with the expectation that their services continue until no later than the end of April.

There will be support available through the enhanced federal employment insurance program and additional federal programs for our educational assistants and non-essential support staff who have a very important role in the delivery of our education system during regular operations.

This is very difficult news for us as the Calgary Catholic School District (CCSD) is a family and any layoffs are very painful. We would like to emphasize that Calgary Catholic's support staff are amazing and valued members of our community and that this situation is only temporary. We will need them back when we return to our schools.

As we have just received this information from the provincial government, we have asked that all our staff continue to work, and they will be paid as usual for the immediate future. In the next week or so, our senior administration will work closely to determine the positions impacted by this new direction. All of our students will continue to be supported in their online learning by their teachers, principals and our Instructional Services team.

We ask that everyone in our CCSD community continue to practice social distancing and good hygiene and take the [COVID-19 online assessment](#) if you're concerned about your health. I spoke to Bishop McGrattan this weekend and I can assure you that he has all of us in his prayers. Now more than ever, we need to come together in prayer as we Create Calgary Catholic together. Please join us in praying for all those who have been impacted by COVID-19, especially our educational assistants and non-essential support staff.

Peace be with you.

Dr. Bryan Szumlas  
Chief Superintendent  
Calgary Catholic School District

March 23, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As mentioned in my previous letter, we will continue to provide regular updates to our Calgary Catholic community as we journey together during this difficult time.

Unfortunately, we do have a fourth student from our Calgary Catholic schools with a confirmed case of COVID-19. As a Catholic community, let us continue to pray for each of these affected students and their recovery. As previously mentioned, we will not be sharing the names of the schools or students, as sensitive health information is protected by the FOIP Act. The principal of this latest school has contacted the school community with an update from Alberta Health Services and a letter will be sent home. The school building has been declared safe by Alberta Health Services and at this point our buildings remain open and the situation will continue to be monitored.

On Friday, you may have seen that the Alberta government released guidelines and FAQs for the [Continuation of Student Learning](#). Our Instructional Services team, in collaboration with our principals and teachers, will be providing online learning direction for our students based on this information. In addition, we will be delivering options for students who do not have online access or need alternative formats for remote learning. While our teachers create content, parent guidance will be necessary, although parents/guardians are not expected to replace the role of teacher. At Calgary Catholic, we have amazing teachers that will work hard to ensure we are meeting the needs of each and every student during this ‘new normal.’”

Look for more information and instruction from your child’s school later today. We are all in this together and will do our best to support our parents/guardians in the continued learning of our students for the remainder of the school year. Please be assured that no student will ‘fall behind’ and we will work closely with our students and parents to help ensure continuity of education.

Thank you to all of our Calgary Catholic families who participated in the online mass with Bishop McGrattan this weekend. In times such as these, we need to embrace our spirituality and the power of prayer. We will send out more information on further online faith opportunities for our families to participate in.

Again, we want to remind all of our families that if you have symptoms such as fever, cough and difficulty breathing, stay home, complete AHS' [self-assessment tool](#) or call Health Link at 811. Please stay safe and continue to keep social/physical distance from others and have faith that we can get through this together.

As always, we will continue to monitor this evolving situation and provide updates to our parents. Thank you again for your continued support, understanding and patience as we move forward with our “new normal.”

Peace be with you.

Dr. Bryan Szumlas  
Chief Superintendent  
Calgary Catholic School District

March 19, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Thank you for your continued support and understanding as we work through the unprecedented impact of COVID-19 on our schools and worksites. We will continue to provide regular updates to our Calgary Catholic families as the situation evolves.

Firstly, we want to inform our Calgary Catholic community that three Calgary Catholic students have tested positive for COVID-19. Our prayers go out to these students and their families. The names and schools of these students will not be released as sensitive health information is protected by the FOIP Act. The principals of these schools will contact the community with an update from Alberta Health Services and letters will be sent home. In all three of today's cases, the school buildings have been declared safe by Alberta Health Services and at this point the school buildings remain open and the situation will continue to be monitored.

Again, we want to remind all of our families that if you have symptoms such as fever, cough and difficulty breathing, stay home, complete AHS' [self-assessment tool](#) or call Health Link at 811.

Secondly, we want to assure our families that our schools with support from the Instructional Services team are currently working hard to provide alternative student learning solutions. Families will be receiving further information from your child(ren)'s teacher(s) in the coming days.

Thank you again for your patience as the situation continues to evolve. As a Calgary Catholic community, we continue to pray for those impacted by COVID-19 in our district and around the world.

We will get through this together. Peace be with you.



Dr. Bryan Szumlas  
Chief Superintendent  
Calgary Catholic School District

March 15, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As partners in education and public health, we thank Dr. Hinshaw, Premier Jason Kenney and Minister Adriana LaGrange for making the decision to cancel all classes in Alberta schools due to the COVID-19 epidemic. Our number one priority remains to protect the health and safety of our students, staff and communities; Effectively immediately, all Calgary Catholic classes will be cancelled until further notice.

To support student learning, teachers and staff are still expected to work at their workplace and for day-to-day operations, administrative work and cleaning of our schools to continue. We recognize that this decision is necessary and that it will significantly affect our families. We will work to assist them as best we can during this difficult time. We will provide further direction on picking up supplies and belongings as soon as possible. Please wait for instruction around this process before coming to the school.

We are working with Alberta Education to ensure student learning continues and will communicate next steps as they become available. Let me assure you that our schools have been working on emergency plans to address this situation and the continued delivery of student lessons. All Provincial Achievement Tests will be cancelled, and Diploma Exams will only take place if necessary, for admission into post-secondary institutions. More information about Diploma Exams will be forthcoming.

As this situation is rapidly evolving, we expect to receive more information from the province about our next steps and the government will provide daily updates for Albertans at 3:30 p.m.

During these times, we are reminded of the importance of prayer. As a Catholic school community, please join me in offering our prayers to those affected with COVID-19.

Peace be with you,



Dr. Bryan Szumlas  
Chief Superintendent  
Calgary Catholic School District

March 13, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We know that there is growing concern within our school communities around COVID-19. The district is taking precautions to keep students and staff safe. Calgary Catholic is working directly with Alberta Health Services (AHS), Alberta Education and the Calgary Emergency Management Agency and responding in accordance with their recommendations. We have mobilized our pandemic response committee who will continue to closely monitor the evolving situation around COVID-19 and communicate any changes or cancellations if necessary. We are also implementing the current precautions:

**Travel**

- Following AHS' direction to not travel outside of Canada and self-isolate
- Recommending families visit the Government of Canada and Government of Alberta websites for current recommendations
- Cancelling all travel and not planning any additional trips until further notice

**Schools**

- Increasing cleaning of high-touch points in our schools and workplaces; Calgary Catholic is working to ensure we have necessary soap, sanitizer and cleaning and disinfecting supplies
- Using emergency plans to mitigate and prevent the spread of illness, for interruptions to regular instruction and for potential school closures at the direction of AHS
- Creating protocols to regularly review good hygiene habits with staff and students
- Increasing vigilance with staff and students who may present symptoms
- Using communication plans to provide updates to parents

**Prevention**

- Asking staff and students to stay home if they are sick; If you have symptoms such as fever, cough and difficulty breathing and have travelled outside Canada or have been exposed to someone who has COVID-19, stay home and call Health Link at 811. If you are not seriously ill, do not go to a physicians' office, a healthcare facility or a lab without consulting Health Link first.
- Asking parents to report any symptoms of COVID-19 to schools
- Tracking the reasons for student and staff absences to determine if they are related to COVID-19
- Monitoring children who develop symptoms of illness at school in the nurse's room and asking parents or emergency contacts to pick them up; children will not be permitted to take the bus home.

## **Social distancing**

- Any large gatherings of more than 250 people such as sporting events and school events will be reduced to smaller gatherings at the schools. (liturgies, assemblies, etc)

We recommend you get current information from reliable sources such [AHS](#) and take the preventative steps below to reduce your infection and help protect our community. To help you with this, we've provided more information from AHS.

## **Spread**

COVID-19 is believed to spread mainly through coughing, sneezing or direct contact with someone who is sick with COVID-19 or with surfaces they have recently touched. AHS defines a **close contact** as a person who:

- Provided care for the individual including healthcare workers, family members or other caregivers
- Had other, similar and close physical contact with the person without consistent and appropriate use of personal protective equipment
- Lived with or had close, prolonged contact (within 2 metres) with the person while they were infectious
- Had direct contact with the person's infectious bodily fluids (e.g. was coughed or sneezed on) while not wearing recommended personal protective equipment.

## **Risk**

People who develop a fever and/or cough or shortness of breath AND meet any of the criteria below are currently at a higher risk. In the 14 days before illness onset, they:

Travelled to anywhere outside of Canada **OR** Had close contact with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 **OR** Had close contact with a person with acute respiratory illness who has travelled anywhere outside of Canada within 14 days prior to illness onset **OR** Had laboratory exposure to biological material (e.g. primary clinical specimens, virus culture isolates) known to contain COVID-19 virus.

## **Prevention**

As a Catholic community, we can all help to protect one another by following the steps below:

- Wash your hands with soap and warm water thoroughly and frequently
- Avoid touching your face, nose or mouth with unwashed hands
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue, throw it away into a garbage that is lined with a plastic bag and wash your hands immediately afterwards. If you don't have a tissue, sneeze or cough into your sleeve and wash your hands immediately.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces at home, work and school that are used often.
- Stay home if you are sick and call Health Link at 811 if you have questions or concerns about your health; follow the advice given by Health Link.
- Report your child's absence to school as soon as you can.

As a Catholic school community, our thoughts and prayers are with those affected by COVID-19 worldwide.

March 5, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The purpose of this letter is to provide further information about the current status of international student excursions at the Calgary Catholic School District (CCSD), that are being affected by the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). This health-related issue is raising travel concerns for many school boards/districts worldwide.

In light of the rapidly evolving situation surrounding this virus, CCSD made the decision to cancel two high school trips to Italy scheduled for Easter Break. We know this decision is disappointing and we did not make this decision lightly or without weighing all options. Travel is an enhancement of the learning experience at CCSD, but our top priority is the health and safety of students and staff.

We continue to monitor the spread of COVID-19 and may extend trip cancellations beyond Italy. If that happens, we will communicate directly with those families and students who are affected. We are currently working with our travel and insurance providers to review the feasibility of possibly changing travel itineraries to other destinations and we will be communicating with families if any alternative options may be available. If alternative travel is not feasible, we will communicate directly with affected students and families about next steps.

Student and staff safety will be the paramount concern in any decision that CCSD makes with respect to school excursions, whether that includes the approval of alternate itineraries or the cancellation of a trip. As a Catholic school community, our thoughts and prayers are with anyone affected by COVID-19 worldwide.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your understanding and support during this time of uncertainty.

