

September 29, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Orange Shirt Day

On Wednesday, September 30, we come together in the spirit of reconciliation and wear orange shirts to remember the harm residential schools caused the Indigenous community. The color orange symbolizes a brighter future; free of violence. To learn more about Orange Shirt Day go to orangeshirtday.org.

Fall Sports Resume (High Schools)

We are pleased to share that yesterday all CCSD high schools were able to resume fall sports. This includes practice, tryouts and training in cohorts. However, there will be no inter-school competitions at this time. The gradual start-up of fall sport practice cohorts allows for the health and safety needs of our teachers and students to be maintained.

Each of our high schools will take into consideration and respond to the following variables which may impact their ability to either offer and/or maintain practice cohorts in specific sports:

1. impact of required quarantine for staff and/or students
2. community transmission rates
3. availability of staff
4. ability to clean and sanitize equipment and the facility.

When practice cohorts are developed, they must adhere [to the guidelines](#) set forth by the Government of Alberta. Junior high sports continue to be suspended. We will reevaluate this decision in the future.

ThoughtExchange - Diploma Exams

School is well underway and high school students who are in quarter course systems are more than one third into their courses. Some of these students have experienced self-isolation and many others have been dealing with mental wellness. CCSD Administration and the Board of Trustees would like your feedback on this important assessment issue so we can *Create Calgary Catholic together*. Click [here](#) to participate in the ThoughtExchange which will close on Friday, October 2 at noon. Thank you for your ideas.

Cases of COVID-19 in Our Schools

Since the start of the school year, 18 of our schools have had confirmed cases of COVID-19. Alberta Education has launched the [COVID-19 school status map](#). Many of our students who were directed to isolate have completed the required days at home and have returned to school. We will continue to work closely with AHS and Alberta Education as new cases emerge to ensure that we are maintaining learning and the health and safety of our school communities. We would like to thank all our students, parents/guardians and staff for working together through the pandemic.

Peace and blessings.

Dr. Bryan Szumlas
Chief Superintendent
Calgary Catholic School District

September 22, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We hope everyone's first few weeks back at school have gone well. We would like to thank all our students, parents and staff for all your hard work in keeping our school communities safe.

COVID-19 Update

We currently have 13 schools that have reported cases of COVID-19 within the school population. Of those schools, nine are on alert status and four are in outbreak status, meaning two or more cases. Students and staff are being diligent with the five health measures (self-checks, handwashing, sanitizing surfaces, masks, and distancing) in our schools. As a result, with active COVID-19 cases and those in quarantine, less than 1 per cent of our total student population is affected. Also, it is important to note that all of the confirmed cases are a result of COVID-19 in the community, not in our schools.

What is being done with Government funding

Calgary Catholic recently received an additional \$20.5 million in funds from the Canadian government and has developed a balanced spending plan that meets the government's requirements on what it can be used for. More than one-half of this funding will be spent directly on additional teachers to reduce class sizes. Approximately a quarter of the funding will be spent on guest employees covering absences of staff. The final quarter of our funding will be allotted for additional support staff, personal protective equipment, cleaning supplies and other pandemic-related items.

U of C Second Announcement: COVID-19 Student Well-Being and Resiliency During School Re-Entry Study

Alberta students returned to school in the past week, and we would like to learn about your child's return-to-school experience through the COVID-19 Student Well-Being and Resiliency During School Re-Entry Study. We are inviting students ages 12-18 in four metro school districts to participate in the study: Calgary Catholic School District, Calgary Board of Education, Edmonton Catholic School Division and Edmonton Public Schools. With your consent, your child(ren) will be asked to do an online survey that will take approximately 20 minutes to complete; they will also be invited to participate in three (3) follow-up surveys throughout the school year. This study will help us to better understand how COVID-19 has impacted your child, their self-reported well-being and behaviour and the social and emotional resources they are accessing. Please click the link below to read more details about the study and to provide consent for your child to receive the online survey link. The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board and your child's school district have approved this research study. If you have any questions about the study, please contact us at parents@ucalgary.ca.

Parent Information Letter Link: <https://is.qd/MHCOVID>

Thank you for considering our project! If you have already provided consent for your child to participate, we thank you! Your child should now have received the student assent form and survey link.

Sincerely,

Dr. Kelly Dean Schwartz, Associate Professor, School and Applied Child Psychology, University of Calgary

Peace and blessings,

Dr. Bryan Szumlas
Chief Superintendent
Calgary Catholic School District

September 11, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Thank you for your patience and support as we transition to Scenario 1: near normal with health measures. Please know that the health and safety of students and staff remains our top priority.

Today, on the anniversary of the September 11 attacks, we offer our thoughts and prayers to the United States and communities around the globe. We continue to pray for and honour the memories of those who died, their loved ones and the many first responders who risked their lives.

Positive COVID-19 Cases and Continuity of Education

As of end of day on September 10, Alberta Health Services (AHS) has informed us that five of our schools (St. Angela, Divine Mercy, St. Francis, Notre Dame and St. Rose of Lima) were put on “alert” status (one confirmed case of COVID-19). One school (St. Wilfrid) is on “outbreak” status indicating two or more cases.

All COVID-19 positive students are sent home to isolate for 10 days. Their classmates and teachers are sent home for 14 days. In most cases, the classroom teachers will continue the learning online at home. When the 14 days are over the students stop online lessons and return to face to face learning at the school. Parents need to be prepared and have plans ready to go, in the event that we contact you with little notice. For example, if AHS contacts district officials at 11:30 p.m., then you will be contacted by school officials early the next morning to keep your child at home. There are no exceptions. By the laws of Alberta, your child must stay home for the entire 14 days (EVEN IF THEY GET TESTED AND ARE NEGATIVE). This is our new reality in education.

Federal Funding to Support Safety in Schools

Our district will receive 20.5 million dollars to help reduce the risk of COVID-19. Our Board of Trustees approved this money to be spent on additional teachers, support staff, caretaking, guest teachers and PPE expenses. Over the next few days, 75 additional teachers are being deployed in the system to help reduce class sizes. After that, we will be allocating additional support staff to help in larger classrooms. Our goal is to have these supports in place before the end of September.

Chief Medical Officer’s Letters to Parents

The Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Deena Hinshaw, has written a letter to parents in many languages, about adjusting to the new school year in a COVID-19 environment.

[English](#)

[Simplified Chinese](#)

[Tagalog](#)

[French](#)

[Punjabi](#)

[Urdu](#)

[Arabic](#)

[Hindi](#)

[Vietnamese](#)

[Traditional Chinese](#)

[Spanish](#)

U of C Mental Health Survey

Valuable research is being performed by the University of Calgary on the mental health needs of students during a pandemic. We encourage participation in this study ([click here](#)) as it will help researchers and our district learn how best to meet the needs of our students at this time.

Blessings,

Dr. Bryan Szumlas, Chief Superintendent

September 1, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We are excited to welcome all Calgary Catholic students and staff back into our schools this week! We want our community to know that the health and safety of our students and staff remains our top priority. We will continue to work closely with Alberta Health Services and the Ministry of Education to implement measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and we will be prepared to make adjustments to our health and safety protocols as we know the situation around this virus is rapidly changing. Our five key safety measures from our return to school plan are health monitoring, handwashing, sanitizing, wearing masks and physical distancing where possible. For more info on school resumption planning, we encourage parents/guardians to review our [School Resumption Handbook](#) as well as the supporting [School Resumption Handbook FAQs](#) that are posted on our website.

Masks for K-12

This weekend, Dr. Hinshaw outlined details on mask use in the public health order. CCSD is meeting and exceeding the health order. All CCSD schools will continue to maintain physical distancing (greatest distance possible) and we will still expect all our students (K-12), visitors and staff to wear masks. Our staff will build mask breaks into the days. Our reminder to staff, visitors and students is, “keep the space or cover your face”.

We know that younger students (K-3) may have little or no experience with safety practices such as physical distancing and wearing masks. So, as we would with any other learning, it is important that we accept each student’s level of understanding and provide them with the teaching, guidance, and encouragement they need to be safe in their school community. Please also know that our schools will receive their face masks on or before Sept. 2 (the first day of staggered entry) and schools will distribute these masks to their school communities accordingly.

Home Education vs. Online Education

Home education is different from online learning. Parents can register for home schooling through Calgary Catholic as the associate board on a year to year basis. Parents who choose home education have the primary responsibility for planning, managing, providing, evaluating, and supervising their children’s courses of study. [St. Anne Academic Centre](#) is the designated site for any student (grades 1-12) who is interested in home schooling.

Differing from home education, [online education](#) is a teacher-led experience in which a teacher takes responsibility for providing the planning, managing, evaluating and supervising their student’s courses of study. Please note, for those interested in online education for the 2020-2021 school year, please visit St. Anne for grades 10 to 12 ([St. Anne Academic Centre](#)) or the St. Isidore registration page at <https://tinyurl.com/2020RegIsidore> for grades 1 to 9. The deadline to register for St. Isidore online learning (English and French grades 1-9) closes on Friday, Sept. 4 at 6:00 p.m.

Blessings,

Dr. Bryan Szumlas
Chief Superintendent
Calgary Catholic School District