



Aug. 21, 2020

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update: Students, Parents/Legal Guardians, and Staff

It is hard to believe that the summer break is winding down and that students will be back to school in less than two weeks. Our staff are busy getting ready for another year of growing in knowledge and faith together, and we are excited to welcome our students back to class.

Safety is our top priority

As we prepare for the new school year, the safety of everyone in our faith and learning community continues to be our first priority. In fact, it is at the forefront of all of our decisions, protocols, and actions. As I noted in my previous communication, our [School Re-Entry Plan](#), which was developed collaboratively with our community partners as well as health and government authorities, complies with the [directions and guidelines](#) of the Alberta government and the province's Chief Medical Officer of Health.

Multiple [measures](#) have been put in place in all Division buildings, including all schools, to reduce the risk of COVID-19 and to help keep our students, staff, and communities safe. These protocols are described in detail on our website, as well as in the [Parent Guidebook for School Re-Entry: 2020-2021](#) that was sent to families last week (this can also be [downloaded](#) from our website). This resource provides essential details about programming, health and safety, sports and recreation, transportation, communication, and other important logistical matters for school re-entry so that parents/legal guardians can prepare for the upcoming school year.

Our *Guidebook* was first published and shared in my last communication on Aug. 13, 2020. The just-updated version features new details about the online education survey results, staggered school start-dates, and online learning. The *Guidebook* will continue to be updated as new information becomes available from the Prime Minister of Canada, the Premier of Alberta, the Minister of Education, and Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health. We will be responsive and flexible as the COVID-19 situation, and any related health matters, continues to evolve.

Online education – survey results and next steps

Thank you to the parents/legal guardians who participated in our *School Re-Entry Online Education Survey*. Your valuable feedback helped us determine the level of interest in online education. It also enables us to plan how best to support students and families who prefer online learning.

Of the 3,735 parents/legal guardians who responded, 30 per cent requested to be contacted about online education for their children. In response, we have developed the *Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools' Online Learning Pathway* for our students. Earlier this week, our school principals provided parents/legal guardians with detailed information about online learning. If you would like to learn more about online education, please review '[Programming Options](#)' in the *Parent Guidebook*. Our Division is in the process of determining staff who will teach online courses. For more information, including details regarding the process for online education, please see the *School Re-Entry Online Education Survey Results & Next Steps* on the following page.

Student enrolment

Our Division will offer both face-to-face and online programming to all Pre-K to 12 students in 2020-2021, depending on student enrolment. Parents and students will have the flexibility to move between these pathways (online and face-to-face) at pre-determined notification periods (See 'Reporting and Notification Periods' in the *Parent Guidebook*. **Whether your child attends school in a physical classroom or a virtual one, it is important that you enrol him or her for the new school year.** Parents/legal guardians must choose online or face-to-face education by no later than by **Friday, Aug. 28, 2020**. To register your child, please [contact your school](#) directly.

Preparing for school re-entry

- Anyone entering a school must complete the prescribed **COVID-19 Information Screening Questionnaire** (available in [multiple languages](#)) **prior** to arriving at school. Parents/legal guardians are expected to conduct this checklist **daily** with their child(ren) to determine if the child(ren) should come to school or stay home.
- If a child shows any signs of illness, he/she should not to come to school, unless the symptoms are related to a pre-existing health condition.

- If a student becomes ill at school, he/she will be supervised in a designated area until he/she is picked up.
- Your child's principal will share specific details about student drop-off and pick-up routines.
- Signage and directional foot-markers placed throughout the school will remind students and staff about physical distancing, hand-washing, hand-sanitizing, staying healthy, and other health and safety protocols and standards.

School Re-Entry Online Education Survey Results & Next Steps

Thank you to all of the parents/legal guardians who participated in our School Re-Entry Online Education Survey.

Your input has helped us to determine the level of interest in online education and to plan how best to support students whose families prefer online learning.

School Re-entry Info & Updates:
gsacrd.ab.ca/schoolreentry

RESULTS



Number of responses
3,735



65%
Response rate



30%
want online education

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

As there is significant interest in online education, GSACRD has developed an online learning pathway for our students.

TIMELINE

Phases*

- 1: School updates sent to families
- 2: Online teachers selected
- 3: Division update sent to families
- 4: School principals inform families about:
 - > the staff who will teach online
 - > the online courses that students will take
 - > the process for starting online classes
 - > what students and families need to know in order to take part in online learning

Parents/legal guardians will need to choose online or face-to-face education before school begins, so please contact your child(ren)'s school principal to learn more about this exciting opportunity.

- 5: Teachers provide information to families about all programming details:
 - > course outlines
 - > supplies
 - > routines
 - > assessments
 - > check-ins
 - > teacher support

* phases may run concurrently

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Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools



Testing

Alberta Health and Alberta Health Services have been working hard to expand COVID-19 testing capacity and reduce turnaround times for results. As another measure to minimize the spread of COVID-19, the [government recommends](#) that all teachers and staff voluntarily participate in asymptomatic testing prior to the start of the 2020-2021 school year. The province has indicated that sufficient capacity will be in place for regular testing of teachers and staff throughout the fall.

School start-dates

Both face-to-face and regular classes will follow the staggered entry schedule for Kindergarten to Grade 9:

Staggered entry for K to Grade 9

- Aug. 31, 2020: students whose last names start with A-K
- Sept. 1, 2020: students whose last names start with L-Z

Pre-kindergarten programs and high schools (Grades 10-12) and Morinville Community High School (Grades 9-12) will follow their own schedules for school entry. Regular classes resume for all students on Sept. 2, 2020.

Faith theme (2020-2023)

Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools' overarching faith theme for 2020-2023 is **Arise: Get up, get going, and go with God!** Each of the next three years will focus on a different element of the theme:

- 2020-21: Get up!
- 2021-22: Get going!
- 2022-23: Go with God!

This reflects the three-fold [themes for the next three World Youth Day celebrations](#), as announced by Pope Francis in 2019. "*Do not tune out the voice of God, Who urges you to arise and follow the paths that He has prepared for you,*" the Pope said.

As a Division, we have a unique opportunity to engage, encourage, and support our students in developing a relationship with Jesus Christ. Our faith theme for the next three years seeks to echo the Pope's summons for youth – and, indeed all of us – to listen and respond to the voice of God, Who calls us to 'Arise!'

Communication

Our goal is to answer any questions that you may have so that you are ready for school re-entry this fall. We will continue to keep you informed through these weekly Superintendent's updates. Furthermore, our new, [dedicated section of our website](#) (www.gsacrd.ab.ca/schoolreentry) provides detailed information about school re-entry and is updated regularly. As well please follow us on our official social media platforms ([Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#)); it's a great way to stay in-the-know. If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions, please reach out to [your child's school](#) directly, or [send us an email](#) (schoolreentry@gsacrd.ab.ca).

Stay informed

Just as we continue to closely follow and implement the direction of Alberta Health Services, the Chief Medical Officer of Health, and all levels of government, we encourage you to do the same. You can find credible and relevant information, as well as important updates about COVID-19, via the sources below:

- [Health Canada](https://canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html): canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html
- [Alberta Government](https://alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx): alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx
- [Alberta Health Services](https://albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16944.aspx): albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16944.aspx
- [City of St. Albert](https://stalbert.ca/city/eps/preparedness/resources): stalbert.ca/city/eps/preparedness/resources
- [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](https://who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019): who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019

I encourage you to visit these websites often and to follow the suggestions to keep you and your family healthy.

I look forward to another successful and exciting year of learning and growing together. I wish you an enjoyable rest of your summer.

Sincerely,

Dr. Clint Moroziuk
Superintendent of Schools