

Oct. 2, 2020

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

As I look at the stunning fall colours, as the season changes from summer to autumn, I am in awe of God's marvelous creation. As the Psalmist wrote, "O Lord, how many are Your works! In wisdom, You have made them all; the earth is full of Your possessions" (Ps. 104:24). I hope you are enjoying this unseasonably warm weather and the spectacular scenery.

In our Catholic tradition, the entire month of October is dedicated to the Holy Rosary, largely due to the liturgical feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, which is celebrated on Oct. 7. In this month of October, let us [use the Rosary](#) to draw closer to Christ by reflecting on the great mysteries of the incarnation and our salvation and on the lives of Jesus, our Saviour, and Mary, our Mother.

On Monday, we will join millions across the globe in celebrating [UNESCO World Teachers' Day](#). Held annually on Oct. 5, this is a day to formally commemorate teachers and to celebrate the teaching profession worldwide. This year's theme is 'Teachers: Leading in crisis, reimagining the future.' This is timely, as the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly added to the challenges facing all teachers. They have made incredible accomplishments relative to: providing remote learning, supporting vulnerable students, re-opening schools, and working to identify and close learning gaps. On World Teachers' Day, please thank our teachers for living the heart of Jesus and embodying Christ to our students, families, and communities. Let them know that you appreciate their sacrifices, and, most importantly, please pray for them daily. Here are some [practical ways](#) to thank and encourage our teachers.

As I mentioned last week, our Division has experienced four positive cases of COVID-19, in two different schools, since the start of the school year. I am happy to report that there have been no additional confirmed cases in our Division and that the established protocols set by both the government and our Division have been successful. Thank you to all of our students, families, and staff for following the [health measures](#) that help keep everyone safe.

We have once again updated our [Parent Guidebook for School Re-Entry: 2020-2021](#). As noted on pages 20 and 21, our first notification period is coming up this month. This is a dedicated opportunity for school principals to check in with parents/legal guardians to see how their child(ren)'s education is going – whether that be online, face-to-face, or home-based learning. Principals will ask families to decide whether their child(ren) will attend school in-person or through online instruction. This process will repeat each notification period. Please see pages 19 to 21 of the *Guidebook* for more information and for the notification schedule.

As of Oct. 1, following an extensive review by Alberta Health Services (AHS), our Division is offering a modified [Sports and Recreation Academy](#). Programming will include select activities in approved venues and follow specific public health guidelines. Please [contact our Sports Academy Consultant](#) if you would like to register your child(ren) in our academies or if you have questions.

We are excited about the [official \(virtual\) grand opening](#) of our newest school, St. Kateri Tekakwitha Academy, on **Oct 8, 2020**, at **2 p.m.** While restrictions around COVID-19 prevent us from hosting a public gathering on-site, the formal ceremony will be [livestreamed](#) to the community. The program will feature speeches from government, faith, and community dignitaries; our Division leadership; and students and staff. It will also include an Indigenous cultural performance and a virtual tour of the school. I hope you will tune in.

We continue to follow the direction of AHS, the province's Chief Medical Officer of Health, and all levels of government on preparedness planning and will update our *School Re-Entry Plan* as required. We will make every effort to keep you informed through these weekly notices and other communication channels. As you know, the situation around COVID-19 and school re-entry continues to change rapidly. Please visit the dedicated School Re-Entry section of [our website](#), as well as our official social media platforms ([Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#)). If you have specific questions, please [contact your child\(ren\)'s school](#) directly, as your child's principal can best address your concerns as they apply to your child(ren)'s school.

We encourage you to follow all public health guidelines to help keep you, your loved ones, and your community safe and healthy. Credible information about COVID-19 is available from [Health Canada](#), the [Government of Alberta](#), and the [World Health Organization](#).

Thank you for your ongoing support and partnership. Please reach out to those who need support and encouragement during these times. May we all place our trust in God as we continue to journey and support each other through this time of pandemic, for "with the Lord, there is steadfast love, and with Him is plentiful redemption." (Ps. 130:7). Blessings!

Sincerely,

Dr. Clint Morozuk
Superintendent of Schools