

Oct. 9, 2020

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

As we look forward to celebrating Thanksgiving, we [recall the many blessings](#) that God has lavished upon us, His children. Holy Scripture's many verses about gratitude encourage us to have thankful hearts all-year-round: "*Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever*" (1 Chron. 16:34). As you gather with loved ones this weekend, please do so safely. Please follow all normal precautions, as well as the new recommended guidelines [announced](#) by the Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health: "keep gatherings small (15 or less), keep them safe, and protect one another."

I am happy to report that there have been no new confirmed cases of COVID-19 in our Division, thanks to the continued efforts of our students, families, and staff to follow the [health measures](#) that we have put in place to help keep everyone safe. Alberta Health Services (AHS) continues to update information to help keep everyone safe. The provincial [Daily Checklist](#) has been updated for clarity, but it has not changed in substance. AHS has also launched a [new tool](#) for parents/legal guardians of children attending school (or childcare) to assist them with information that addresses frequently asked questions.

AHS case and contact investigators will continue to work with school jurisdictions to identify school-related contacts of cases of COVID-19; however, instead of receiving a phone call from AHS, close contacts will now receive notification via email to expedite notification and contact tracing. Alberta Education has updated its [Scenario One School Re-entry Guide](#). One helpful change for parents/legal guardians and staff is a simplified [one-page document](#) outlining what to do when a child shows symptoms and how long the child is to stay home. These changes have also been updated in our Division's [Parent Guide for School Re-entry 2020-2021](#).

There has been recent [media coverage](#) about the Edmonton Public School Board advocating for the Minister of Education to consider canceling diploma exams for 2020-2021. There has not yet been a ministry announcement; therefore, we will provide updates as we learn more.

What a joy it was to celebrate the official [grand opening](#) of our newest school, St. Kateri Tekakwitha Academy, this past week. While restrictions around COVID-19 prevented us from hosting a public gathering on-site, the formal program was livestreamed to the community. We thank God for the blessing of this new school, which will surely benefit the community for many years to come.

Also this week, our Board of Trustees hosted its annual Long Service Awards. Together, through a virtual celebration, we honoured 103 staff for reaching 5-, 10-, 15-, 20-, 25-, 30-, & 35-year milestones with our Division. We congratulate these dedicated staff on their many successes and achievements, and we thank them for their years of service to our students, families, Division, and God.

As you know, the situation around COVID-19 is changing rapidly. We continue to follow the direction of the province's Chief Medical Officer of Health and all levels of government on preparedness planning, and we will update our *School Re-Entry Plan* as required. We will keep you informed through these weekly notices, [our website](#), social media ([Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#)), and other communication channels. Please also review the updates in our [Parent Guidebook for School Re-Entry: 2020-2021](#). Your child(ren)'s school 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](#), [AHS](#), and the [World Health Organization](#).

In this Month of the Rosary, [let us continue to use](#) this biblically-inspired prayer that centres on the salvific mysteries of Christ in union with Mary, who was so closely associated with her Son in His redeeming activity.

I leave you with words from the letter of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Philippians, as we seek some reprieve from the pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic and reflect on all that we have to be grateful during this time of Thanksgiving:

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Jesus Christ" (Phil. 4:4-7).

We are grateful for all that our students, staff, and families do to support one another and keep each other safe during these challenging times. Let us continue to be Christ to one another through our daily actions. Blessings for a wonderful Thanksgiving!

Sincerely,

Dr. Clint Moroziuk
Superintendent of Schools

