

May 22, 2020

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update: Parents, Students, and Staff

It was wonderful to celebrate Catholic Education Week together last week. United as a faith and learning community, we joined other like-minded Albertans from across the province to promote and celebrate the gift of Catholic education. Together, we publicly recognized the significant contributions that our Catholic schools make to our communities, province, country, and world. Catholic educators are proud to be part of a public mandate to provide education that is fully permeated in our Catholic faith. Most importantly, our schools support students to know, model, and witness Jesus Christ.

Last week, I invited you to create and submit short video responses to the statement: “I am grateful for Catholic education, because...” We have compiled the comments that we received from students and staff. We are sharing them in [this week’s community story](#), which is also available on our [website](#). I appreciate everyone’s contributions. I also thank you for wearing blue on May 21, in support of World Catholic Education Day. Your pride in Catholic education was clearly demonstrated in both the photos you shared and by your use of the official hashtags: #IbelieveinCatholicEd, #BlueforCatholicEd, and #GSACRDproud. Finally, we are grateful for the support of our local parish priests, who shared encouraging words with the community during Catholic Education Week. In case you missed their greetings, you can [watch the videos](#) on our website.

As I noted in my communication on April 24, online learning will continue until the final days of school for Kindergarten (June 19) and Grades 1 to 12 (June 26). There will be no face-to-face finals or provincial exams. Marks will be based on evidence collected before and during online learning, and report cards will be issued electronically for all students on June 25. Returns of any school materials, including textbooks or technologies, will be organized according to division protocols and communicated by school principals in coming weeks.

Now is the perfect time to enrol your child in classes for the new school year, starting in September. We are excited to have our students back this fall for another exciting year of learning! I encourage you to submit your child’s registration as soon as possible. While the Alberta Government [has not made any decisions](#) regarding school operations for the 2020-21 school year, it is working with school authorities and education system partners on developing a comprehensive [re-entry plan](#). The plan will prioritize the safety and well-being of teachers, staff, and students and be informed by both Alberta’s [Relaunch Strategy](#), which will depend on expert medical advice from the chief medical officer of health. GSACRD will be ready for any scenario the province brings forward.

As is the case in many school jurisdictions in Alberta, GSACRD will offer online [summer school](#) for grades 9 to 12 students in July. Due to restrictions around the pandemic, we have streamlined our course options, and only web-based classes will be offered. Students can take courses from anywhere with an Internet connection. Registrations are open – [enrol today!](#)

We continue to honour our Heavenly Mother during this Month of Mary. Let us continue to ask Mary to intercede – that is, to pray – on our behalf to her Son, Jesus Christ. You will find [resources](#) on our website to help you and your family celebrate the Month of Mary.

I encourage you to keep sharing your stories of faith and learning at home, using the hashtags #ABLEarnAtHome, #GSACRDproud, and #GSACRDgrace. Please follow and like us on [Facebook](#) (fb.com/GSACRD), [Twitter](#) (@GSACRD), [Instagram](#) (@GSACRD_official), and [YouTube](#) (@GSACRD). You can also [e-mail your stories](#) to us.

Just as we continue to follow and implement the recommendations of the chief medical officer and all levels of government, we encourage you to do the same. You can find credible and relevant health and safety information, as well as important updates about COVID-19, as follows:

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

This continues to be a challenging time for some families. If you need support, please reach out to your local school. You may also access Alberta Education’s help-line and email service for parents of students, especially those requiring specialized supports. Call 780.422.6548 (toll-free: 310.0000, followed by the nine-digit phone number), or [send an e-mail](#) to studentsupport@gov.ab.ca. Services are available on Monday to Friday, between 8:15 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

I wish you a blessed weekend. Stay well.

Sincerely,

David Keohane
Superintendent of Schools