

June 5, 2020

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

This weekend, we will participate in Trinity Sunday, an annual feast that the Church celebrates one week following Pentecost Sunday. On this special day, we honour one of the most fundamental of our Christian beliefs – the Holy Trinity. The Trinity shows us that God is a constant Love that consistently flows between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and that we are invited to become participants in the giving and receiving stream of that Divine love. Embracing and celebrating this relationship that God has created for us helps us to grow in faith. The Blessed Trinity provides comfort that God has used, and continues to use, three unique but continually connected pathways to make Love known to us. Because of such extensive giving, and our acceptance of it as a Christian community, our relationships and prayers assist us to understand that, through time, we can get through our challenges with divine and human help.

We want to know your thoughts and perspectives on returning to school in the Fall. As such, we have developed three surveys – for [students](#), for [parents](#), and for [staff](#) – that were sent out to the community on June 2. We will compose plans for school re-entry based on your feedback and in accordance with the directions of the Alberta Government and the province's chief medical officer of health. The responses, so far, to these surveys have been impressive, and we sincerely thank you for your valuable input. If you have not yet completed the survey, [please do so](#) by **Sunday, June 7 at 6 p.m.** All responses are anonymous and will be kept confidential.

In May, our Board of Trustees approved the budget for the 2020-2021 school year. Like all school jurisdictions in Alberta, Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools has faced significant challenges that have impacted all budget decisions. In [this letter to the community](#), our Board Chair, on behalf of the Board of Trustees, shares important information about the challenges of 2019-2020, as well as an update on the budget for the upcoming school year. The letter illuminates how we will approach a new provincial funding model to continue our track record of excellence in student learning.

As I noted in my previous communication, online learning will continue until the final days of school for Kindergarten (June 19) and Grades 1 to 12 (June 26). Because teachers need to submit their marks on June 19, in preparation for report cards, they will work with students to get assignments completed and marked prior to this date. Report cards will be issued electronically for all students on June 25. During the last week of school (June 22-26), teachers will be available to continue learning with students, while also supporting year-end requirements. Your child's school will communicate with you how students are to return school materials, such as textbooks and technologies. Each principal will work with school staff to:

- determine dates for students to return borrowed items,
- indicate which items (e.g. textbooks, Chromebooks) are to be returned,
- detail where and how to return the items (e.g. scheduling returns to minimize social contact and to maintain physical distancing), and
- communicate any missing items or items not returned.

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 2020-2021, it continues to work 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](#) and expert advice from the chief medical officer of health. GSACRD will be ready for any scenario the province brings forward.

As is the case in other school jurisdictions in Alberta, GSACRD will offer [summer school](#) for grades 9 to 12 students in July. Due to restrictions around the pandemic, we have streamlined our course options, and only online classes will be offered; however, a recent provincial ministerial decision means diploma exam courses will be offered. We will communicate how diploma exams will be completed, as details regarding exam protocols are confirmed.

I encourage you to keep sharing your stories of faith and learning at home, using the hashtags #ABLearnAtHome, #GSACRDproud, and #GSACRDgrace. Please tag GSACRD in your posts, and follow and like us on [Facebook](#) (fb.com/GSACRD), [Twitter](#) (@GSACRD), and [Instagram](#) (@GSACRD_official). 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](https://canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html)
- [Alberta Government: alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx](https://alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx)
- [Alberta Health Services: albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16944.aspx](https://albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16944.aspx)
- [City of St. Albert: stalbert.ca/city/eps/preparedness/resources](https://stalbert.ca/city/eps/preparedness/resources)
- [World Health Organization \(WHO\): who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel- coronavirus-2019](https://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](mailto:studentsupport@gov.ab.ca) to studentsupport@gov.ab.ca. Services are available on weekdays, between 8:15 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

I wish you a blessed weekend, as you celebrate the Holy Trinity. Stay well.

Sincerely,

David Keohane
Superintendent of Schools