

June 12, 2020

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

What a joy it was to celebrate our Year-end Mass and Retiree Recognition earlier this week. While this annual event looked different this year, we still celebrated – virtually – thanks to the wonders of technology. We are grateful for the steadfast love, kindness, and faithfulness of God throughout this school year. We also congratulate all 26 retirees and thank them for their many contributions over the years. We wish them health and happiness in their retirement.

Thank you for sharing your thoughts and perspectives on students returning to school in the Fall. The high participation in our three surveys – for students, parents, and staff – is impressive and clearly indicates how important this matter is to you as a faith and learning community. 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. I appreciate you taking time to share your ideas, concerns, and suggestions, and I sincerely thank you for your input.

Now is the perfect time to enrol your child in classes for the new school year. 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 government [has not made any final decisions](#) regarding school operations for 2020-2021 school year, The Hon. Adriana LaGrange, Minister of Education, [announced](#) on June 10 that the province is "targeting a return to near normal operations, with health measures in place" to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The government is considering three scenarios for the upcoming school year: near normal operations, a partial return to school, or continuing with at-home learning. The province will make a decision by Aug. 1.

The government continues to work with school authorities and education system partners on developing and implementing a comprehensive [school re-entry plan](#), which allows schools and parents to prepare for learning while putting students' and staff safety first. The plan offers guidance on a wide range of operational issues and will be informed by both Alberta's [Relaunch Strategy](#), as well as expert advice from the chief medical officer of health. GSACRD will be ready for any scenario the province brings forward, and we will continue to share information with you as it is available.

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.

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

I encourage you to keep sharing your stories of faith and learning at home, using the hashtags #ABLearnAtHome, #GSACRD Proud, and #GSACRDgrace. Please tag GSACRD in your posts, and follow and like us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/GSACRD) (fb.com/GSACRD), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/GSACRD) (@GSACRD), and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/GSACRD_official) (@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](https://bit.ly/2XXLNc6): bit.ly/2XXLNc6
- [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://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019): [who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019](https://www.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.

Have a blessed weekend, and stay well.

Sincerely,

David Keohane
Superintendent of Schools