

Dec. 4, 2020

Superintendent's Update: Students, Parents/Legal Guardians, and Staff

We are approaching the second week of [Advent](#). In this season before Christmas, the Church has moved from Ordinary Time in the liturgical year to a time of preparation and celebration, where we both remember the wonder and mystery of the incarnation and anticipate the second coming of Jesus Christ. This is a time of hope, peace, joy, and love.

Students in grades 7 to 12 transitioned to at-home learning this week, as part of new [mandatory, province-wide public health measures](#) announced by Premier Jason Kenney when he [declared](#) a state of public health emergency on Nov. 24. This shift back to online learning may be challenging and inconvenient for some; however, I appreciate the way our students, families, and staff are adjusting to this temporary change. School principals have sent communication to parents/legal guardians outlining the process, and teachers have reached out to their students about learning expectations. If you have questions, please reach out to [your child\(ren\)'s school](#) directly.

May we continue to take this pandemic seriously, each doing our part to respect all [public health measures](#), to help slow down the spread of COVID-19, safeguard our health care system, keep schools and businesses open as much as possible, and protect vulnerable Albertans. With a concerted effort from all Albertans, I am hopeful that we may be able to have some sense of normalcy to our family Christmas celebrations.

If challenges around COVID-19 or other matters are causing you or your child(ren) unmanageable stress and hardship, please reach out for help. This [simple resource](#) provides information on where you can turn, and additional options are noted in the "Supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing" section of our updated [Parent Guidebook for School Re-Entry: 2020-2021](#). Also, our Division retains the services of professional school counselors for students. Please contact your child's school principal if your child needs support.

The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) reminds us that, while it may be tempting to try to block out the world altogether to avoid bad news, it is important to stay informed by accessing credible, up-to-date and accurate information on enacting the required health measures, as we all have a part to play in reducing the spread of the virus. Websites that belong to governments, government-funded agencies, well-known health providers, accredited universities, or groups of medical professionals are generally the most reliable.¹ Examples include the [Government of Canada](#), the [Government of Alberta](#), your local municipality, and the [World Health Organization](#). Of course, it is also healthy to set limits. Check-in a few times a day and stick to trusted sources and media outlets, but also take part in safe, but enjoyable, activities that can help to take your mind off of COVID-19.

As noted in the [letter](#) that was sent to families and staff on Dec. 2, our Board of Trustees, at its regular meeting on Nov. 30, unanimously voted to relinquish the Division's [Faith in Our Future](#) initiative. We are excited to explore new opportunities, as we assess, review, and revise our *Three-Year Capital Plan*. Our goal is to use our existing school spaces most effectively and position our Division so it can be awarded schools in new areas as opportunities arise. We are committed to engaging with our school communities, as required, will seek input and feedback when necessary, and strive to keep you informed as we move forward. On behalf of our Board, thank you for your ongoing participation and feedback throughout the *Faith in our Future* consultation process.

Our schools have partnered with Catholic Social Services (CSS) for the [2020 Stuff-a-Stocking Campaign](#). All funds raised will help CSS provide Christmas stockings and turkey dinners for approximately 300 vulnerable or at-risk youth. Please consider [supporting this worthy cause](#).



Reading our updated *Parent Guidebook* and [website](#), as well as following us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#), is a good way to stay up-to-date regarding COVID-19, as it relates to our Division, but also to stay informed about other Division news and announcements. Your child(ren)'s school principal can best address concerns related to student learning and wellbeing.

As we continue to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic, may we find comfort in our Heavenly Father as we recall the words of Saint John:

*"So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love,
and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them."
(1 John 4:16)*

May God bless and keep all of you as we continue to journey together through the Advent season. It is my sincere wish that the anticipation of our Saviour's birth fills you with joy and hope during these challenging times.

Sincerely,

Dr. Clint Moroziuk
Superintendent of Schools

¹ Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) – British Columbia Division. (2020). "Thinking critically about health information" in COVID-19: Stay well in uncertain times. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2Vu4e69>