



Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board

Believing, Achieving, Serving

January 4, 2022

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Further to yesterday's communication, beginning January 5th students and staff will pivot to remote learning until at least January 17, 2022 as part of Ontario's [modified Step Two of the Roadmap to Reopen](#). The decision was announced yesterday as one of several time-limited measures implemented by the provincial government to limit Omicron transmission and COVID-19 hospitalizations. This letter provides additional information on the move to remote learning and the province's [updated public health measures and guidance](#), announced on December 30, 2021.

Remote learning

Remote learning will include a combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning activities using the myClass learning management system. Students should access their class myClass page each day to access classroom announcements, daily learning activities, assignments, and the link to their virtual class meeting. Families in need of a technological device to support the extended remote learning period are asked to contact their child's home school.

Tech Support

Technical support for online learning is available on the [HWCDSD Parent Website](#). This portal provides helpful information on logging into myClass, using Teams, getting started with virtual learning, connecting to WiFi, accessing apps, and more.

Virtual Learning

Classes will continue as normal for students enrolled in virtual learning, beginning Wednesday, January 5, 2022.

Special Education

School boards have been directed to ensure plans are in place to support students with special education needs who require additional support that cannot be accommodated through remote learning. Parents/guardians of students who meet these criteria are being contacted and students will **begin in-person learning on Friday, January 7, 2022**. Busing will be available for eligible special needs students.

St. Charles Adult & Continuing Education

Adult Day Schools and remote Continuing Education Programs including International Languages – Elementary and Secondary, Adult ESL and Secondary Night School will be offered online from January 5-14. Adult students and learners in need of technology to access remote learning are asked to please contact their teacher or instructor.

Child Care

Child care centres located in schools will remain open for non-school aged children, however, before and after school programs will be closed for the remote learning period. Before and after school programs will reopen with the return to in-person learning on January 17, 2022, subject to public health trends and operational considerations.

Community Use of Schools

HWCDSB Community Use of Schools bookings have been cancelled for the month of January. In-services are cancelled and will be rescheduled at a later date once the Community Use of Schools program is permitted to resume. Please visit the [website](#) for updates.

Athletics / Extra-curriculars

Athletics and all extra-curriculars will be paused. The resumption of these activities will be re-evaluated once students return to in-person learning.

HEPA filters

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board has more than 1,100 HEPA filters installed in occupied learning spaces in our schools. This exceeds the standards set by the Ministry of Education in August 2021. Once received, additional units from the government will be installed to provide even greater coverage.

Mental Health Resources

As children remain home for the upcoming weeks, it is important to know that there are resources to support their mental health. If you have concerns about your child or youth's mental health or notice changes in their behaviour and emotions, it is important to reach out for help. Support is available free of charge by phone, virtually and in person:

- For children/youth in crisis call Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868 or COAST: 905-972-8338
- Contact Hamilton: 905-570-8888. An intake appointment will be completed over the phone and options for services will be discussed.
- Public Health Services' Mental Health Services for Children and Youth. Free single session video or phone counselling for children and youth under 18 and their family members/ caregivers. Book online or phone 905-546-2424 ext. 3678.
- Youth Wellness Centre provides services for youth ages 17 to 25. Phone: 905-522-1155 ext. 31725
- Centre de santé communautaire Hamilton-Niagara Cherchez-vous des services en français? Phone: 905-528-0163
- De dwa da dehs nye>s Aboriginal Health Centre provides culturally appropriate mental health services. Phone: 905-544-4320
- Canadian Mental Health Association Hamilton provides services for ages 18+. Phone 905-521-0090.
- Good Shepherd Youth Services Mental Health Program - Youth-focused mental health services for individuals ages 12 to 21. Phone: (905) 308-8090 OR call the crisis line: (905) 529-7878
- [School Mental Health Ontario - Resources for Parents and Families](#)
- [Back to School Student Mental Health Kit](#)

Masks

Masks continue to be required for staff and students, JK to Grade 12. The provincial government will be providing 3-ply cloth masks for children, free of charge. While the use of the government supplied masks is encouraged, students are permitted to use their own cloth mask, if preferred. Non-fit-tested N95 masks are being provided as an option to staff in schools. These will be delivered to schools today and tomorrow.

Vaccinations

Getting vaccinated is still your best defense against COVID-19. Vaccination appointments are required for individuals who are eligible for third/booster doses and children 5 to 11 years of age. For available locations, hours of operation and booking an appointment, please visit www.hamilton.ca/GetYourVaccine. Appointments are not required for individuals aged 12 or older receiving first or second doses.

COVID-19 school reporting

Due to recent changes to case and contact management, the Ministry of Education will no longer be reporting COVID-19 case numbers from school boards. The HWCDSB is in discussions with Hamilton Public Health Services to determine how school cases will be reported to our school communities.

Learning during these unprecedented times

We realize the challenges that this transition has caused for parents, students and staff and appreciate your understanding and support. We look forward to welcoming our students and staff back to school on Monday, January 17, 2022.

Through the intercession of Our Lady of Hope, we continue to pray for the well-being of our students, staff and families and for publicly funded Catholic Education.

We wish you and your family a Happy and Healthy New Year.



Patrick J. Daly
Chairperson of the Board



David Hansen
Director of Education