



Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board
Believing, Achieving, Serving

December 30, 2020

Dear parents/guardians,

We hope you had a wonderful Christmas and that the peace, love and hope of the Christmas season remain with you and your families throughout the new year.

On December 21st we wrote to inform you about the provincial shutdown and the Ministry's decision to move to remote learning after the Christmas Break. Over the past few months, our instructional staff have been hard at work planning for such a move and we are well positioned to make the transition to remote learning on January 4th. Unless advised otherwise, elementary students can return to in-person learning on January 11th while secondary students will not return until January 25, 2021. For elementary and secondary students enrolled in our Virtual School, the new learning protocols do not affect their learning.

To prepare for the transition to remote learning, schools will be holding virtual staff meetings on the morning of Monday, January 4th. Classroom teachers will connect virtually, using the myClass Learning Management System (LMS), with students/families later in the morning to provide a schedule and outline learning expectations for the week. In the meantime, parents and guardians should make any necessary arrangements to ensure that their children will be properly supervised at home for the first week of January as before and after school care services will not be available as part of the government's shutdown requirements.

Elementary

For elementary students, learning will be delivered remotely from January 4-January 8, 2021 by your child's current teacher using the myClass LMS. The Ministry's [Policy/Program Memorandum \(PPM\) No. 164: Requirements for Remote Learning](#) provides specific standards for instruction of synchronous learning so that parents and students not only know what to expect but supports students to continue to be engaged in their learning. Students in Grades 1-8 can expect 75% (225 minutes) of the instructional day to be synchronous. Students will return to in-school learning on Monday, January 11th.

Secondary

For secondary students, remote learning will extend beyond the first week of January until January 22, 2021. 80% of the school day will be delivered synchronously. Synchronous learning is part of the 300-minute instructional day during which teachers must be available to students.

Below is the HWCDSB daily remote learning schedule.

Class	Activity
Session 1	90 minutes of synchronous instruction (can include some asynchronous instruction/independent learning)
Break – 15 minutes	
Session 2	90 minutes of synchronous instruction (can include some asynchronous instruction/independent learning)
Break – 15 minutes	
Session 3	90 minutes of synchronous instruction (can include some asynchronous instruction/independent learning)
Lunch – 40 minutes	
Session 4	30 minutes Synchronous/Asynchronous Instruction

Special Education

Elementary and secondary students with special education needs will also be supported remotely by their classroom/program teacher(s). This includes virtual support from education workers and board professionals as required (e.g. Social Workers, Mental Health Professional Workers, Speech and Language Pathologists, Psychologists and other professionals). Beginning January 4th, school staff will be contacting families of those special education students who cannot be accommodated through remote learning directly to discuss any concerns, answer questions and explore available support options including in-person learning.

HWCDSB Parent Site

The HWCDSB has recently launched a new website specifically for parents. The [HWCDSB Parent Website](#) was designed to bring together a number of resources and systems that parents need, all in one place. The new parent site contains explanations of how virtual learning works in both elementary and secondary as well as a new "Tech Help" area for accessing these systems. Parents can also find tips on supporting virtual learning at home and a video series on different technologies. Other features include links common school resources such as School Messenger (absence reporting), the Parent Portal, School Cash Online, Busing and other helpful information.

Child Care and Before/After School Programs

All before and after school programs will be closed from January 4-January 8, 2021. Child care programs in HWCDSB schools are permitted to remain open, however, these programs are prohibited to school-aged children during the shutdown period, January 4-January 8.

Transportation

Since learning will be delivered remotely during the first week of January, regular transportation services will not be operating between January 4-8. Student transportation services will resume for elementary schools on Monday, January 11, 2021. Staff will be in contact with parents of those students with special education needs whose learning cannot be accommodated remotely regarding transportation services.

Mental Health Resources

Just like physical health, our mental health changes. We go through periods when we do not feel as mentally well. For a variety of mental health resources and supports, we invite you to visit our [HWCDSB website](#). Students are also encouraged to contact [Kids Help Phone](#) for 24/7 counselling and information. Students can call 1-800-668-6868 or text CONNECT to 686868.

In his Christmas Day homily, Pope Francis reminded us of our connectedness as a global family. He stated, “May Christmas be an opportunity for all of us to rediscover the family as a cradle of life and faith, a place of acceptance and love, dialogue, forgiveness, fraternal solidarity and shared joy, a source of peace for all humanity.” In these final days of Christmastide, that is our hope and prayer for each of you.

God bless,



Patrick J. Daly
Chairperson of the Board



David Hansen
Director of Education