



March 20, 2020

Dear Parents and Families of Children and Students in Holy Spirit Catholic Schools:

**Current Context**

Since the cancellation of K-12 classes in Alberta schools looked like a possibility, our administrators, teachers and support staff have been working diligently to create platforms and plans that will ensure that all students are able to continue their learning under these challenging circumstances. Holy Spirit Catholic Schools is blessed to have innovative, creative and thoughtful educators. Through collaboration, innovation and creativity they will continue to serve the learning needs of our students during this time. We are confident that we can serve our students and families well in what is a new and unique reality. This pandemic has certainly changed the course of how we live and interact with others. Each and every day, we continue to pray for the well-being of students and families in our school community, the staff in our schools and those who are working to eliminate this deadly illness. I want to thank each family for your patience as we navigate through this challenging time period.

**Planning for Instruction**

Our school administrators have been working with teachers, preparing materials for learning to continue in some format. I think we can all agree that the learning moving forward will be very different than conventional learning that students would have been accustomed to having in our schools. All of our teachers throughout our school division have been asked to provide learning activities in both a digital format as well as 'hard copies' or learning packages that will be available for distribution to families that do not have the capabilities to connect to digital/online resources.

We recognize that this will be a slow roll out to begin with, as not all of our teachers are accustomed to providing learning opportunities in an online method. Inevitably, there will be some kinks or wrinkles that will have to be ironed out as we move forward. We ask your patience and prayers as we move forward.

**Information from Alberta Education**

The decision to move forward in this manner has been a result of gathering information from many sources (our schools and the availability of resources, working in partnership with neighbouring school divisions and the direction from a variety of ministries in the province - predominantly the Ministry of Education). The public has heard directly from the Honourable Minister of

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*All God's Children*

*Excellence in Learning*

*Sacramentality*

*Our Collaborative Community*

*Ministry*

*Stewardship*



*Holy Spirit Catholic Schools...*

*Christ-centered learning communities where students are cherished and achieve their potential.*

*St. Basil Education Centre*

Education, Adriana LaGrange, that all students will receive final grades this year and will progress to the next grade level, including graduation. Last week we learned that all Provincial Achievement Tests (PATs) were cancelled for the 2019-20 school year, **and we have just received confirmation from the Minister of Education this morning (March 20, 2020) that all Diploma Examinations will also be cancelled.** This alleviates a significant degree of stress placed upon our administrators and teachers, but most especially on our students now that the course grade will be determined exclusively by the school. That said, course content will still be delivered to students in an effort to minimize gaps in learning.

### **Timeline**

- Monday, March 23, 2020 - all high schools will begin providing online instruction for students
- Wednesday, March 25, 2020 - Kindergarten to grade 9 online instruction will begin  
NOTE: specific information about this process will be shared on a school-by-school basis

### **Learning Expectations (Time Commitment)**

Teachers are crafting learning activities for students that are geared towards the following guidelines and will focus on key essential learner outcomes:

- Kindergarten - play-based learning with a focus on Literacy, Numeracy and Social Emotional Learning
- Grades 1 to 3 - **5 hours** of student learning time per week with a focus on Literacy, Numeracy, Religion and Physical / Mental Wellness
- Grades 4 to 6 - **5 hours** of student learning time per week with a focus on Literacy, Numeracy (with possible inclusion of Science and Social), Religion and Physical / Mental Wellness
- Grades 7 to 9 - **10 hours** of student learning time per week with a focus on core courses, including Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, Religion Education and Physical / Mental Wellness
- High School: all courses, where applicable and whatever is deemed an appropriate time commitment

Please continue to be safe and adhere to the recommendations from Alberta Health Services as we collectively fight to end this terrible pandemic. Know that you and your family will continue to be in my daily prayers.

Should you have any questions about this information please contact your school administration.

Sincerely,  
Ken Sampson, Superintendent  
Holy Spirit Catholic School Division