



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

January 7, 2021

Dear Parents & Guardians,

The return to in-person learning has been extended for elementary school students until January 25, 2021, as community COVID transmission, especially among school aged children, continues to rise throughout the province. The announcement was made today by Education Minister Stephen Lecce, in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health and other health experts, as part of provincial measures to keep students, teachers, education staff and families safe.

The extension aligns with the planned return to in-person learning for secondary school students and the shutdown period for Southern Ontario, announced by Ontario Premier Doug Ford on December 21st.

The extension means that elementary students will continue to learn remotely until January 25, 2021, following the same practice as during this past week with the majority of instruction provided synchronously by the classroom teacher using the myClass Learning Management System (LMS). Elementary and secondary students will return to in-person learning on Monday, January 25, 2021. Families in need of a technological device to support the extended remote learning period are asked to contact their child's home school.

#### **HWCDSD Parent Website**

Please visit our [HWCDSD Parent Website](#) for a variety of resources, including a "Tech Help" area for accessing the myClass student and parent portals, and other learning supports.

#### **Special Education**

In our earlier correspondence, we indicated that support would be provided for elementary and secondary students with special education needs who could not be accommodated through remote learning. In-school learning for those students who are unable to learn remotely will continue as has been communicated to parents this past week.

#### **Child Care and Before/After School Programs**

All before and after school programs will remain closed until January 25, 2021. Child care programs in HWCDSD schools remain open, however, these programs are not available to school-aged children during the extended shutdown period, January 11-January 22, 2021.

#### **Transportation**

Since learning will be delivered remotely until January 25, regular transportation services will not be operating between January 11-22, 2021. Student transportation services will resume for elementary and secondary schools on Monday, January 25, 2021.


**Financial Support**

The province has indicated that financial support is available for families during this temporary remote learning period through the [Support for Learners](#) program. Starting on January 11, 2021, an expanded Support for Learners program is providing \$200 for each child or youth up to Grade 12 and \$250 for each child or youth up to age 21 with special needs. Applications will be open until February 8, 2021.

**Mental Health Supports**

COVID-19 has impacted different people in different ways. For a variety of mental health resources and supports, we invite you to visit our [HWCDSB website](#). 24/7 counselling and information is available for students who are struggling with social isolation and other effects of COVID-19 at the [Kids Help Phone](#). Additional mental health resources will be provided by School Mental Health Ontario next week.

In closing, while we know that nothing can replace the professionalism and Christian witness of our classroom teachers and school staff, we appreciate the advice of our provincial health experts and recognize why this difficult decision had to be made. Particularly during this Christmas season, we are reminded, as Catholic Christians, that we are people of hope. Please know that you and your families are in our thoughts and prayers.



Patrick J. Daly  
Chairperson of the Board



David Hansen  
Director of Education