



ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE SCHOOL

Under the direction of the Basilian Fathers

COVID-19 update: December 20, 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I hope this note finds you well and helps to explain the situation of today as we plan for tomorrow.

We realize your inbox has been filled with notices from the school regarding confirmed COVID-19 cases at the school in the past week. Although these notes are required by direction of Toronto Public Health (TPH), they also serve to keep our community informed of the status of active cases in the school. Although the information can be overwhelming, it is necessary. We do want to summarize a few important details to assist the community in better understanding the current situation.

COVID-19 cases are rising across the globe once again and our region is no exception. The projections suggest case counts will rise for some time yet. The severity of illness has been questioned with the new variant; however, it is too early to confirm any change in health outcomes. We are still concerned for the health of all and particularly those who may be immunocompromised for a variety of reasons.

Since September 2021, we have had 10 confirmed cases at the school, including six in the last week.

- 2 Grade 7
- 1 Grade 8
- 2 Grade 9
- 1 Grade 11
- 1 Grade 12
- 3 Staff

Currently, we are waiting on further information regarding three pending cases still to be confirmed. We pray for a quick recovery for the staff, students, and families that have been impacted by this current outbreak. As the number of cases increases, it becomes more difficult to determine if some of these cases are directly linked to each other.

TPH is becoming overwhelmed with case management, and it does take some time to investigate each one. Our goal is to notify those impacted as quickly as possible for the health and safety of everyone involved. We are fortunate to have a school nurse, who works in support of our community and assists TPH. Official clinical investigations of positive COVID-19 cases must be completed by TPH. In short, we send you as much information as we can as soon as we have it until TPH completes its investigation.

Please note:

- **We are not able to identify or share any information of any individual that has tested positive for COVID-19.**
- **We are not able to provide contact information of case investigators.**
- **We are all dependant on TPH follow-up and direction and understand that they are currently overloaded with cases and school outbreaks.**

- **Some confusion can arise as families get slightly different directives from various regional health units or different case workers. The Omicron variant has led to the altering of some protocols, and this has not been communicated systemically in real-time across the province. In short, directives are changing daily.**
- **SMCS is required to adhere to public directives of TPH and school case management directives.**

As health experts and policymakers continue to be challenged by the evolving variants of COVID-19, conditions are changing once again. We receive new directives daily from public health as they work to keep up with contact tracing and outbreaks. As we move further into the Christmas break you should hear less from us about school-related cases and close contact notifications as the school has been closed to students for the holidays since December 17.

As we have previously shared, SMCS will be considering several possibilities to resume programming on January 3. The final decision will be informed in part by the government, Ministry of Health, Toronto Public Health, and our ability to safely staff and serve the students while keeping them safe, learning, and engaged at school. This requires the ongoing support of everyone to do our best, stay home if not well, and adhere to all the mitigation strategies we have outlined.

We understand the value and need to provide in-person learning and will continue to work toward that goal. Unfortunately, we have been here before and know we can offer our programming under a variety of conditions if necessary.

We are all tired of this constant reminder that our world has changed, and although there will be a variety of opinions on how the situation should or will play out, please know our families, staff and faculty, and community are doing the best they can to keep safe and keep moving forward. We thank you all for that. No one is comfortable with the current uncertainty, and we would all like to put it in the rear-view mirror!

For now, we wish you a very Merry Christmas and may the grace of our God find each of you and your families as we take time to celebrate the coming of Jesus, the Christ child who walks with us, always.

God Bless,

Mr. James McKinnon
Principal