



ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE SCHOOL

Under the direction of the Basilian Fathers

April 9, 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians,

This latest update comes on the heels of a new Provincial Emergency and Stay-at-Home Order as well as the Section 22 Health Order to move to online learning. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to monopolize our lives as we navigate our path forward.

As we head into the spring break (April 12-16) it is important to report to you the most current data on provincial orders and our status at SMCS.

We will complete this week of learning online and enjoy a much-needed break and regeneration week away from zoom calls, posts, and submissions. We are planning for a safe return to hybrid in-person learning with Cohort A on April 19.

The COVID-19 case numbers are presenting more challenges in the general community than earlier in the school year. At SMCS, we have experienced an increase in cases affecting families, students, and staff. To date, only one recent case has caused an exposure at school requiring the dismissal of a cohort. There have been no epidemiological links from the case to any other SMCS community members.

Since that time, we have seen three additional positive cases in staff and students at SMCS who had not been in contact or attendance at school during the infectious period. These cases have an epidemiological link to COVID-19 from an external source in their community.

Our message is the school has been relatively safe, but our community is not immune to what is transpiring around us. We commend and appreciate the supportive action of our families and staff to take every precaution and transparently report symptoms, exposures, and cases. It has kept us all safe.

Although we are at a critical time in this battle, the adage that "it is always darkest before the dawn" comes to mind. We have vaccine access being expedited and we have been able to adhere vigilantly to all recommended health protocols, most notably our investment to increase ventilation capacity and efficacy. It has not been easy on anyone, but with your support, we continue working toward being engaged, connected, and learning at school.

We have been asked to share the following reminder from public health and the Ministry of Education:

Following public health measures are crucial to help prevent and limit the spread of COVID-19:

- *Socialize with your own household.*
- *Stay home and get tested if you feel ill.*
- *Screen every day, including during spring break, for COVID-19 symptoms before attending childcare, day camps, or sport activities.*
- *Practice good hand hygiene habits, masking, and physical distancing*
- *To learn what public health measures are in place in our community, please refer to: [COVID-19 response framework: keeping Ontario safe and open | Ontario.ca](https://www.ontario.ca/covid)*
- *Refrain from travelling.*

In order to be back at school, we need everyone to do their best to stay safe.

We will also be able to offer an invitation to voluntary testing for students during the break period. This is a precautionary practice, promoted by the Associate Medical Officer of Health to assure you of your own well-being as well as of the school and community impact. Toronto Public Health is currently organizing this resource which you will receive when more information becomes available.

We continue to live in uncertain times managing with daily fluctuations of data, opinions, and directions. This is a time to open our minds, stay the course, and embrace the opportunities that are new to us. We continue to look out for each other as we move forward in finding ways to thrive and enjoy the encounters we least expect.

Sincerely,

Mr. James McKinnon
Principal

