



ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE SCHOOL

Under the direction of the Basilian Fathers

December 30, 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We hope you have had a wonderful Christmas celebration and had time to share the spirit of the season with your family.

Once again, after much discernment, we have been forced into mapping a route forward regarding school programming and managing the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the Government of Ontario is poised to announce information regarding the operation of schools for January 2022, we must be responsible for the safe learning experience we can best provide at SMCS.

As we review and monitor cases within the school community over the current period, there are some difficult decisions to be made. The critical component to keeping the school open to in-person learning is monitoring the health of students and staff. Without qualified, healthy staff in the building, we cannot deliver our programme.

Public health guidelines and direction regarding contact tracing and isolation periods is shifting. We are uncertain how this current wave of COVID-19 will unfold, so we will proceed with caution.

With a shortlist of uncertainties regarding current active cases in the school community, as well as delays in test results and Toronto Public Health (TPH) investigations due to volume, there is a shift occurring in response to the pandemic protocols.

First week online learning:

To provide some stability in a safe return to in-person learning and assist with what we hope will merely be a transition period, St. Michael's College School **will begin the first week of classes online (January 3-7) using our Schedule B - 9:30 a.m. start** and slightly shorter classes, as posted on Edsby.

As the week unfolds, we will have a better sense of the current impact of Christmas holiday gatherings, travel, and viral spread. We will have a better understanding of shifting public health and Chief Medical Officer of Health directives. We will also ensure that when students enter the doors on Monday, January 10, that most of our students and staff will be able to pass our daily screener with certainty.

To clarify:

Classes will begin online on Monday, January 3 for one week, returning to in-person learning on January 10. (subject to any provincial mandate)

When we return on January 10, we must bring renewed vigilance to health protocols in place:

1. Daily Screening – this is one of our greatest mitigation strategies. Please read and complete the daily screener with your son. If he is not feeling well or shows any symptoms, have him stay home.
2. Optional online learning will be provided in January for those who have symptoms or prefer to study from home, by administrative request only.
3. Rapid Antigen Tests – we ask that all students complete a rapid antigen test on the afternoon of Sunday, January 9, before returning to school on January 10. If you have a positive result, please stay home and contact our school nurse.
4. We will maintain cohorts by grade for all activities.
5. We will be implementing increased masking expectations.
6. We may be pausing co-curricular activities until January 14 to mitigate expanded contacts for staff and students. (CISAA decisions pending)
7. As you prepare for a return to school, please adhere to all [federal guidelines](#) if you have travelled outside of Canada over the Christmas break, and limit contacts where you are able before returning to school.
8. After we manage the return to school and our ability to respond to active cases in our community, we will re-evaluate our position moving forward. Once again, our priority is to maintain healthy, qualified staff to provide programming at school.

Please note:

Every decision and direction we take these days continues to be uncharted territory, and none of it is without risk. If we provide marginal student contact and enrichment to learning at school, we also have more contacts to send home when positive COVID-19 cases arise. We will continue to try to balance the risk as we move from pandemic to endemic living as this virus will be with us for some time yet.

We share this in as timely a manner as possible, so we can all plan and prepare for a return to school online on January 3 and in-person on January 10. If conditions or information change, we will adjust.

Happy New Year.

Sincerely,

Mr. James McKinnon
Principal

