



# ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE SCHOOL

Under the direction of the Basilian Fathers

January 13, 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians,

## Provincial State of Emergency Order

The Provincial Government announced the declaration of a second State of Emergency for the province that will take effect at midnight on January 14, 2021. The new measures include the extension of school closures, public and private, in Toronto, York, Hamilton, Peel, and Windsor-Essex until February 10, 2021.

This new order means that we will be committed to complete online learning for the first six weeks of 2021 at this time. We had a great run from September to December in our hybrid model. We gained some momentum and routine by gathering in person with safety protocols in place. Thank you to all for your diligent and responsible support of school and community life in the first half of the school year.

## Asynchronous Wednesdays \*

It is always a challenge to balance safety, learning, and well-being needs and expectations in these times. We continue to review our progress in uncharted territory to be future-focused and responsive to the needs of the students. As we progress through this extended online learning period, we have adjusted our schedule. To reduce screen time and provide flexibility during the week for priorities of learning, activity, and service, we will be introducing 'Asynchronous Wednesdays'.

We will be committing to three Asynchronous Wednesdays on January 20, 27, and February 3. This will be communicated by teachers and via the Edsby calendar.

On these days, students will not be required to be online, but will have access to their teachers. The day is designed to support wellness, reduce screen time, and create some flexibility in their schedule. Teachers will post asynchronous work that students may complete during this time, and will be available online for the first 15 minutes of each class if a personal check-in is desired. Students may continue with classwork as posted or consolidate projects, assignments, and practice. We also encourage students to get outside and walk, use our fit bag (check your app), and exercise.

*\* Asynchronous learning is a general term used to describe forms of education, instruction, and learning that do not occur in the same place or at the same time. The term is most commonly applied to various forms of digital and online learning.*

## Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are still scheduled for February 10 and 11. They will be virtual by online appointment. The schedule and Edsby sign-up link will be coming

soon. As always, you may contact your son's teachers at any time regarding pressing questions or information that will assist in supporting students.

Online learning can have a cumulative effect on motivation and well-being. Below are a few helpful tips to support the boys at home which were also shared with the students earlier in the year.

### **Tips for Online Learning:**

- Ensure ample time to wake up, eat, and prepare yourself for the day's learning.
- Set up a suitable working area with adequate lighting and ventilation such as a table or desk, and store mobile devices away from your dedicated learning space.
- Be properly attired in the uniform top (short or long-sleeved SMCS golf shirt, or SMCS zip-up jacket only).
- Microphone and camera must be enabled at all times while your teacher is conducting a live synchronous lesson, or while you are engaged in collaborative work with peers in Zoom breakout rooms.
- Proactively communicate concerns or issues to your teacher and make effective use of online flex periods for curriculum support and follow-up as needed.
- Parents should communicate expected student absences to the Attendance Office prior to the commencement of daily scheduled classes.
- Build offline opportunities for exercise, physical activity, and wellness initiatives into your daily schedule.

We continue to support teachers and staff in shifting between in-person, hybrid, and online learning, and we are committed to maintaining positive student achievement and wellness during these pandemic days. Our boys deserve it.

Thank you for entrusting us with your sons in these challenging times as we embrace the opportunity to do good, live discipline, and seek knowledge in service to each other.

Alone we go fast, together we will go far - African Proverb.

Mr. James McKinnon  
Principal

