



ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE SCHOOL

Under the direction of the Basilian Fathers

SMCS COVID-19 Update and Check-in November 13, 2020

Happy Friday everyone,

Regardless of our personal views on the impact of COVID-19, we cannot deny that the virus is spreading and we are likely months away from a definitive solution to managing the risks it presents to our communities.

We have been committed from the onset to keep our students, staff, and community as safe as possible while still providing quality learning experiences and engagement with the world. The pandemic has challenged our abilities to be adaptive, creative problem solvers who look for every possibility to improve the world. We don't always get it right, but when we don't, we put 100% into a resolution to make it better.

Last week we notified you of our first positive case of COVID-19 in the school community. We have been very fortunate to date, but realize we are not immune to the spread of the virus in the greater community. Thank you for your diligence in communicating, reporting, and adhering to all of our protocols and guidelines.

Our current plan to manage the pandemic has been heavily structured on sparing no expense to improve ventilation, hygiene, human resources, structures, protocols, and technology to provide the safest possible school environment. A second key component of our plan was to be able to deliver a robust university-preparatory programme that honours our belief in the humanity of a Liberal Arts education. We want our boys to be connected at school. All of this has been structured to adhere to the Ministry of Health regulations for opening schools and the recommendations of Toronto Public Health to maintain a safe environment.

Why do we share this today?

As the pandemic runs its course and we continue to learn, adapt, and respond, we do not know what the future will hold. Our hybrid model of learning on alternate days face-to-face was designed to allow students to gather at school regularly, provide subject experts in all curriculum areas, and allow us to move seamlessly between online and in-school learning as required.

With the management of our first positive case of COVID-19, we realize one of the limiting factors in delivering quality learning, is keeping our expert faculty healthy and at school. With every case, we have the potential to have further staff exposed and hence placed in 'quarantine'. Even if they're well enough to teach from home, we must continue to provide quality classroom coverage in school.

As cases continue to rise throughout the province, we must prepare for all eventualities. This could include a temporary move to complete online learning or several other scenarios. Examples such as another grade cohort, an entire cohort, or the whole school moving online for 14 days. This standard period of isolation is a Ministry of Health requirement to ensure no exposure or symptoms persist. If the time comes to make these decisions, please be extra vigilant in monitoring your symptoms, limiting your contacts, and following the health and safety guidelines.

Although it may seem restrictive, we remain committed to our goal of providing a rich in-person learning experience while adhering to public health guidelines. Navigating COVID-19 language like isolation and quarantine, understanding our collective roles and responsibilities, and relying on the sound judgement of our SMCS community are important concepts that allow us to forge forward with a strong defence.

At this time, we are sharing this update as information only, as we continue to navigate the pandemic and observe future trends and possibilities. We remain committed to modelling our Vision and responding to these challenges by changing the world through faith, character, and service.

In closing, we remind everyone of the quotes adorning all our 125 hand sanitizers throughout the building...

“I am doing this to protect myself, BUT, I am really doing this to protect my classmates, my teachers, and everyone who works at SMCS, my siblings, my parents, guardians, and grandparents.”

“For I know the plans I have for says the Lord. Plans for welfare and the not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.” - Jeremiah 29:11

Thank you for your continued support and contribution during these challenging times.

Sincerely,

Mr. James McKinnon
Principal