



April 16, 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians:

As we advised you earlier this week, on Monday, the Premier of Ontario, Minister of Education, Health Minister and Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health announced that the Stay-at-Home Order has been expanded to include schools.

There is no date for a return for in-person learning.

This Order does not affect students in our Virtual elementary and secondary schools, who will continue as scheduled on Monday, April 19.


To assist parents of students learning in-person to return to virtual learning on Monday, we offer you the following information:

- Elementary classroom teachers will connect with students during the day on Monday, April 19 and will provide asynchronous instruction on Monday and Tuesday. Students will begin synchronous learning (225 minutes of combined learning a day for grades 1 to 8, and 180 minutes for Kindergarten) on Wednesday, April 21. This will continue for the duration of the school closure.
- Secondary teachers will connect with their students on Monday, April 19, and will provide asynchronous instruction on Monday, beginning full-time synchronous learning on Tuesday, April 20 (225 minutes of instruction over the course of the day). This will continue for the duration of the school closure. Secondary school students will complete their summative activity, as planned, on Friday, April 23.
- The government has once again instructed school boards to provide in-school learning to students with complex education needs. At Niagara Catholic, transportation and in-person learning for students with complex special education needs will begin on Wednesday, April 21.
- The expectations within this Stay-at-Home Order are stricter than the last, and to comply with the Order, we have an obligation to limit the number of people in our schools. Parents of students with complex special education needs who wish to have their child attend school in person must submit their request to the school on Monday, April 19.
- In-person learning will only be available to students with the most complex special education needs who cannot learn successfully online. We regret that it may not be possible to accept all students who attended in-person during the last school closure, due to stricter expectations of the provincial government and thank you for your understanding.

- We hope that none of our students or families become ill during the school closure but advise you that if your child does become ill, you are not required to notify the school unless your child is attending in-person. We are not required to report cases among students learning virtually.
- We understand that Monday's announcement is a hardship for many families, and we are committed to helping you through this latest, and we hope last, school closure. Niagara Catholic has limited technology resources to lend to students but will make as many tablets or Chromebooks available as possible to students in need, so they are able to successfully learn from home. Please contact your child's classroom teacher or principal to arrange to borrow technology for your child if necessary.
- We also recognize that learning at home can be difficult for many students and many students struggle with mental health challenges during virtual learning. Virtual Chaplaincy and mental health services will be available to students in need and can be coordinated through your child's classroom teacher or school principal.
- Niagara Catholic students that are accessing social work or mental health services through the school board will continue to receive virtual counselling services. Child and Youth Workers will continue to support schools by providing mental health programming in the virtual classrooms.
- School Mental Health Ontario also has a number of great resources for students, parents and families on their website at www.smho-smso.ca. Students and families that need additional support, can access crisis services locally by calling the Pathstone Mental Health Crisis line at 1-800-263-4944 or the Kids Help Phone which offers 24/7 counselling. To use this free resource, students and families can call 1-800-668-6868, or text CONNECT to 686868. If students are in need of immediate service, parents/guardians are to bring their child to the hospital, or call 911.
- Niagara Catholic's [Learn at Home](#) page will be active on the main page of our website beginning on Monday. This page offers many activities for your child to do during asynchronous learning on Monday and Tuesday.
- Finally, parents of students who left items behind prior to the shutdown, particularly those who were off school due to a classroom closure, may arrange to pick up items. Please contact your child's principal for assistance.

Thank you again for everything that you are doing to support your child's learning this year. We know it has been a difficult year, and we are grateful to have such dedicated partners in Catholic education.

Sincerely,



Camillo Cipriano
Director of Education