



Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board  
*Believing. Achieving. Serving*

April 8, 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As you are aware, a State of Emergency and a Stay-at-Home Order were declared yesterday in response to worsening trends in key health indicators across the province. These trends show a rapid increase in COVID-19 transmission and increasing risks from the COVID-19 variants.

While the stay-at-home order has enforced new measures for non-essential retail operations, the Ministry of Education has indicated that schools will remain open for in-person learning during the provincial shutdown out of a priority concern for the mental health and well-being of children and youth. **The spring break will continue as planned, from April 12<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup>.**

Despite that direction, Hamilton Public Health Officials are advising school boards to prepare for a **possible** move to online learning after the spring break. In preparation for such a possibility, we strongly encourage students and staff to take home any personal belongings or learning resources/equipment that they will need for a move to fully remote online learning, beginning on April 19<sup>th</sup>.

We can't emphasize enough the need to continue to follow public health guidance, especially during this next week of spring break. At this critical point in the pandemic, the 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;
- Participate in the [targeted testing](#) offered by the HWCDSB;
- Screen every day, including during spring break, for COVID-19 symptoms before attending child care (the [COVID-19 School and Child Care Screening Tool](#) is available to assist families with symptom screening);
- Practice good hand hygiene habits, masking, and physical distancing; and,
- Refrain from travelling.

With the hope of returning to in-person learning on April 19<sup>th</sup>, please be reminded that students and staff must screen daily for COVID-19 symptoms. If your child or anyone in your household is ill, stay home and follow the guidance in the [school screener](#).

New measures to protect schools against COVID-19, including refresher training for students and staff, enhanced cleaning and asymptomatic testing, are being introduced.

The provincial government has also announced the rollout of vaccines for some Special Education workers during the spring break. Registration for vaccines is expected to follow in the coming weeks for teachers and other education workers. This must be given priority and the HWCDSB will continue to advocate strongly for vaccinations for all teachers and education workers. It is an important and much needed layer of protection for the HWCDSB staff who continue to work diligently to meet the needs of students and families while supporting the continuity of learning throughout this pandemic.

Please be reminded that School Mental Health Ontario has prepared a variety of resources and opportunities to “bolster” student mental health and support the well-being of parents and educators. Please visit the [School Mental Health Ontario website](#) to learn more.

We know that this year has been one filled with many complex challenges and constant change for families and the staff of the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board. We thank you for your patience, understanding and strength throughout this unprecedented time. We pray that Our Risen Saviour Jesus Christ showers you and your families with all of His blessings and you enjoy a happy and safe Spring Break.



Patrick J. Daly  
Chairperson of the Board



David Hansen  
Director of Education