

January 14, 2022

Dear DPCDSB Families:

As we prepare for the return of students on Monday, we wanted to share some additional reminders to parents and guardians.

#### **Bus Cancellations**

As per recent direction from the Ministry of Education, every effort will be made to keep schools open for in-person learning. In the event of bus cancellations, schools will remain open to students and staff.

#### **Absenteeism Reporting**

The Ministry of Education requires schools to monitor their own absenteeism rates and report on student and staff absences, and school closures, daily.

DPCDSB schools will report daily absenteeism of staff and students on a school-by-school basis. These daily reports will not be broken down into “reason for absence” categories. The daily absentee reporting by school will be available by Wednesday, January 19 on the DPCDSB website.

Given the widespread transmission of the Omicron variant and changes to the provincial testing approach, schools and childcare operators will no longer be routinely notifying families of positive cases or if an individual is absent due to symptoms associated with COVID-19.

If absenteeism rises to a defined level (approximately 30% above their baseline) in schools, principals will notify the Regional Public Health Unit. We are awaiting further direction from the Ministry of Education regarding the 30% threshold.

#### **Preparing for Potential Operational Challenges**

We may be faced with operational challenges given the rise in COVID-19. Every effort will be made to maintain in-person learning, exhausting all efforts to fill staff absences. If a school is faced with supervision/safety issues, it may be necessary to combine classes for the day.

In extreme cases, a class or school may be moved to remote-only learning for a period of time. Parents should also anticipate the possibility of a switch to asynchronous learning for students who are in full-time remote learning. In such cases, the teacher will post work in the Learning Management System (LMS).

We understand the disruption that operational challenges will create and, as such, a decision to combine classes or switch to remote learning will only be made once all other options have been considered.

#### **Rapid Antigen Tests for Students**

Next week, all students will receive two Rapid Antigen Tests. Elementary students will receive them earlier in the week with tests for secondary students to follow later in the week. These tests are only to be used in the event the child is exhibiting COVID symptoms.

**Extraordinary lives start with a great Catholic education.**

Thank you for your attention to these important reminders as we prepare for the return of in-person learning on Monday.

*Marianne Mazzorato*

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