

August 10, 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey identifying the choice of learning mode for your child(ren) starting in September 2021. Below are some *Frequently Asked Questions* which may help inform your decision.

**Q: *What are the learning mode options for my child in September 2021?***

**A:** Secondary students will return to school with a choice of one of two learning modes:

1. ***In-person*** learning where students physically attend school every day. The year will be organized in Quadmesters where students will take two courses per day, every day in ten-week blocks. Each course will be 150 minutes in length and students will also have a 40- minute lunch. Regular bell times that were in place prior to the COVID-10 pandemic will resume.
2. ***Remote Only*** learning where students attend school in a virtual environment. The composition of the class will be with students from the same school. Students will learn simultaneously with their classmates who are attending in person by the same teacher. This is the same as the remote only learning mode that was offered in 2020–2021.

**Q: *Is the commitment for the entire school year?***

**A:** Students must commit to the remote only or in-person only learning mode for the **entire Quadmester**. There will be no opportunity to pivot from one learning mode to another during the quadmester.

**Q: *Will my child be required to wear a mask?***

**A:** Secondary students will be required to wear a properly fitted non-medical or cloth mask indoors. This includes wearing a mask when they are in common areas or in hallways, as well as on school vehicles. Students will not be required to wear a mask outdoors or while participating in outdoor physical education activities. Students will not be required to wear a mask during indoor, low contact, physical activities.

**Q: *Will class sizes be smaller to accommodate physical distancing?***

**A:** The Ministry of Education has advised school boards to create organizational plans based on regulation class size averages (i.e., 23:1) and to encourage as much distancing as possible within the cohort. This means a return to pre-COVID class size averages.

**Q: *What will happen if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in my child's class or school?***

**A:** We are awaiting further direction from the Ministry of Education and our local Public Health Authorities regarding COVID-19 management strategies and will provide this information once it is received. If a student is dismissed from a class into self-isolation for a given period of time, the teacher will teach the student(s) simultaneously with the in-person students until the period of isolation is complete.

**Q: *Will my child be required to self-screen each morning if attending in person?***

**A:** Yes. All staff and students will be required to self-screen every day before attending school. The school will provide you with a checklist to perform daily screening of your child each day before arriving at

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

school. Online reporting of self-screening results is not required at this time but may be implemented if required by the Ministry of Education.

All staff and students who are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, as identified in the screening tool, must not attend school and must follow the guidance of the screening tool which may include seeking appropriate medical attention as required and/or getting tested for COVID-19.

**Q: *Will teachers be wearing masks?***

**A:** Yes. All staff will be wearing medical grade masks and may or may not be wearing eye protection.

**Q: *Will I be informed of my child's teacher's vaccination status?***

**A:** Due to privacy legislation, vaccination status of staff and other students will not be provided or shared. ***Any questions/concerns regarding vaccinations should be directed to the local public health unit or the Ministry of Education.***

**Q: *What cleaning and disinfection standards and protocols will be in place?***

**A:** The Ministry of Education will continue to provide schools with required critical supplies to ensure enhanced cleaning. There will be a focus on regular hand hygiene to reduce the risk of infection related to high touch surfaces. High touch surfaces will be cleaned twice per day at a minimum.

**Q: *Will my child be able to share materials?***

**A:** Shared materials are important for learning (e.g., science materials, art supplies, computers, etc.) The use of shared materials will be permitted. Public Health has advised that the risk associated with transmission with shared objects is low. The focus will be on regular hand hygiene, physical distancing and respiratory etiquette related to the risk of infection.

**Q: *Will my child be able to use the library, gym and cafeteria?***

**A:** Use of shared spaces will be permitted. Schools will develop individual health and safety protocols and staggered schedules of students as related to shared spaces.

**Q: *Will my child be permitted to eat lunch at school?***

**A:** Yes. All students will be permitted to eat lunch at school. Schools will develop supervision plans for students while they are eating their lunch which may be in their classroom, in the cafeteria, or other large spaces within the school. Students will also be permitted to leave the campus for their lunch; however, they will not be permitted to enter freely upon return and will be required to wait for the bell for organized entry.

**Q: *My child takes the school bus. Will the buses run at full capacity?***

**A:** School vehicles will operate at full capacity. The seat directly behind the driver in school buses will remain empty to maintain physical distancing between the driver and students. Students will be assigned a seat and a record of the seating plan will be kept. Students from the same household will be asked to sit together.

**Q: *Will Field Trips be permitted?***

**A:** Based on advice from our Public Health Authorities, students may be permitted to attend some field trips in the 2021–2022 year.

**Q: *Will my child be able to participate in Clubs and After School Extra-Curricular Activities?***

**A:** Yes. Based on staff availability to organize and supervise these groups, Clubs and After School Extra-Curricular Activities will resume in the 2021–2022 year. Please note, extra-curricular activities rely on staff volunteers.

**Q: *Will Cooperative Education (Co-op) classes be offered?***

**A:** For students enrolled in co-op courses, in-person community placements can be arranged under the direction of the local Public Health Authority. If in-person placements are not possible, virtual placements will be offered.

**Q: *Will the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) Assessment of Mathematics be administered in 2021 – 2022?***

**A:** Yes. Students in Grade 9 will write the Grade 9 digital adaptive EQAO assessment of Mathematics. The results of this assessment may count for up to 10% of the student's final mark in Mathematics. All assessments must be written in-person at the school. Students who are learning remotely can choose to participate in the EQAO assessments at the school adhering to all health and safety protocols.

**Q: *Will students be required to write the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) in order to graduate?***

**A:** The literacy graduation requirement is waived for students graduating in the 2021–2022 school year. The literacy graduation requirement will be restored for students graduating in 2022–2023. Students in Grades 10 and 11 and non-graduating students, including those opting to learn remotely, are required to work toward the literacy graduation requirement through participating in the OSSLT, adjudication or participation in the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC). Your child's school will be providing updated information as it becomes available.