

March 31, 2020

Today, the Minister of Education officially extended the closure of schools in Ontario to May 1 for teachers and May 4 for students, to further prevent the spread of COVID-19. Additionally, the Minister announced that the Ministry of Education is launching the second phase of *Learn at Home*, establishing clarity for parents/guardians, enhancing education supports, and creating opportunities for teachers and educators to connect with students. A link to the [Ministry announcement](#) is provided for information and reference.

DPCDSB is working hard to reconnect our students in a new, active, teacher-led, faith-informed learning environment. DPCDSB teachers, similar to teachers in other school boards, have varying degrees of experience with online delivery of curriculum. We also know that students learn in different ways, and some will require different approaches in order to engage in distance learning. The transition to teacher-led distance learning will take some time, and your patience and understanding as we transition will be appreciated.

This environment may be in a digital format through technology or through another platform. To assist us in the development of our strategy to deliver quality education to your child(ren) in this new reality, we are conducting a needs assessment survey of parents/guardians. This survey will be sent to you through email this evening (Tuesday, March 31). This very brief survey requires your prompt response, which will greatly assist us as we move to deliver equitable and supportive, teacher-led learning beginning on Monday, April 6. We recognize that not all students have access to a device or internet service, and the results of this survey will help us plan moving forward. Please be advised that while we will endeavour to deploy our digital devices to students, at this time, we would not have enough devices to deploy to all students. It is possible that teacher-led distance learning may be delivered using methods other than on-line means.

We wanted to also let you know that part of our work to re-establish teacher-led learning involves teacher training on online curriculum delivery, as well as giving teachers access to retrieve their teaching resources from their schools. In this regard, under protocols established by our public health authorities, we are allowing teachers to access their schools on a strictly controlled basis on Thursday and Friday this week to retrieve teaching resources and other materials to help them better support their students in our new remote teaching environment. If you live near a school and observe vehicles and some activity on-site, it would be related to this initiative. Currently, there is no public health-supported access protocol for students or family members to retrieve students' personal effects from schools. In this regard, schools remain closed to student and parent/guardian access.

We thank you for your patience and understanding as we strive to deliver your child's education under challenging circumstances. Please continue to monitor our [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Information](#) webpage and our [Online Learning Resources](#) webpages for updated information including links to Ministry and DPCDSB bulletins, letters and learning resources, as well as Frequently Asked Questions. More information regarding our plans for April 6 will be sent to you soon.

In his homily on March 27, Pope Francis declared, "How many people every day are exercising patience and offering hope, taking care to sow not panic but a shared responsibility? How many fathers, mothers, grandparents and teachers are showing our children, in small everyday gestures, how to face up to and navigate a crisis by adjusting their routines, lifting their gaze and fostering prayer? How many are praying, offering and interceding for the good of all? Prayer and quiet service: these are our victorious weapons." (Homily of Pope Francis March 27, 2020).

May we navigate this crisis with grace, perseverance and determination so that we can continue to provide a great Catholic education to those entrusted to our care.

May God continue to bless you and keep you and your family safe.