March 13, 2020

On March 12, the Minister of Education issued a Ministerial Order to close schools across the province for a two-week period following the March Break. Accordingly, all DPCDSB schools will be closed until April 5.

The Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board (DPCDSB) continues to take direction on public health matters, including the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), from our regional, provincial and federal public health authorities. The landscape surrounding this issue continues to change rapidly and we will endeavour to keep you updated as quickly as we can.

As we begin the March Break, we continue to post and relay information we receive from these health authorities as well as from the Province, to our school communities and also provide direct links to them on our Coronavirus Information webpage to ensure that you are kept apprised of any developments that impact our schools and operations.

We know that parents/guardians and students have questions about the closure period and the following Q and A will hopefully answer some of these:

**Will eLearning courses continue**
No. Online courses are suspended.

**Will online learning resources be provided during the closure?**
The Ministry of Education has indicated they are working on resources that will be available online to support student learning during the closure.

**Will the OSSLT scheduled for March 31 be cancelled?**
The OSSLT assessment will not take place on March 31. We await further information from EQAO.

**Will students be at risk of not graduating?**
This closure is not expected to impact secondary school graduation.

**Will the closure impact mid-term marks?**
Students will not be penalized for missed work or assessments.

**Will mid-terms be postponed?**
This is being reviewed and an update will be provided shortly.

**Will this impact college and university applications?**
Applications were generally due in January. Check with your college or university.

**Will Co-op placements continue during this time?**
No. Co-op placements are suspended during this time.
Should students in Dual Credit programs attend their college/university classes?
No. Students should not attend during the closure period.

Will the school year be extended into the summer months?
To date we have no information on an extension of the school year.

Athletic/Artistic/Academic Events
No athletic, artistic or academic events will take place.

Will the Catholic Education Centre and Keaton Centre be open during this time to staff and the public?
The CEC and Keaton Centre will be open during March Break with ongoing monitoring and review beyond March Break.

Will Child-Care Centres, Before and After School Programs and March Break Camps in DPCDSB schools continue to operate?
No. Effective Monday March 16, Peel Public Health is recommending the closure of Child-Care Centres, Before and After School Programs and March Break camps until April 5, 2020.

Will Adult and Continuing Education classes and programs continue?
Adult and Continuing Education classes and programs will continue during the March Break only.

Will International Language programs continue?
No. International Language programs are cancelled.

Will permits be cancelled?
Yes. All permits in DPCDSB schools and facilities are cancelled.

Will other measures be taken during the break to reduce the risk to staff and students upon their return?
During the shutdown, all schools and Board offices will receive enhanced cleaning, using approved cleaning products. Enhanced cleaning will continue beyond the closure period.

Will DPCDSB cancel out of province/out-of-country trips?
The board has cancelled all out-of-province and out-of-country school excursions during the closure period. We will continue to monitor the situation and provide updates as information becomes available.

What is the protocol for returning from travel outside Canada?
As directed by our public health authorities, anyone who has travelled anywhere outside of Canada is advised to self-monitor for symptoms (fever, cough, difficulty breathing) and avoid attending locations where it is difficult to distance yourself from others, such as schools, workplaces and mass gatherings for 14 days. Anyone who has travelled outside of Canada AND experiences symptoms should self-isolate (i.e. avoid other people altogether) until they have been free of all symptoms for a full 24 hours. At this time, this means that those who travel outside of Canada and wish to return to work or school on April 6 must return to Canada by March 23.

We have previously communicated the risks associated with travel and their return to Canada. In this regard, parents/guardians are advised to check the Government of Canada Travel website for up-to-date information on areas
impacted by COVID-19. It is recommended that all individuals avoid non-essential travel. There are several active travel health notices for COVID-19. Each country or area may have different levels of risk. These risk levels may change as the COVID-19 event evolves internationally. Before you leave, check the following destinations that have travel health notices for COVID-19: China, Hong Kong, Iran, Japan, Italy, Singapore and South Korea.

Peel Public Health’s website as well as that of Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health is up to date with prevention and protection information for the public.

We reiterate the advice of our public health authorities that the best way to prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including COVID-19, is to:

- Stay home if you are ill.
- Practice social distancing: reduce physical contact with others to break the pathways COVID-19 uses to move between people, such as shaking hands and direct contact.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, mouth and nose as much as possible.
- Avoid contact with people who are ill and their items.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue. If you don’t have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands. Wash hands after coughing and sneezing.
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle, including a healthy diet, exercise and enough sleep, to enhance your body's immune system.
- Get a flu shot. You are more likely to contract influenza than COVID-19 and being sick lowers your immunity to other germs.

Thank you for your attention to this important information. Please be assured that we will continue to keep you updated as new information becomes available.

Communications & Community Relations
Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board