



Sandra Turco
Chairperson

Rose Burton Spohn
Director of Education

December 23, 2020

Dear Parents / Guardians:

As you may have heard in Premier Doug Ford's announcement on Monday afternoon, the province of Ontario will be shut down beginning Saturday, December 26 at 12:01 a.m. This shutdown, which will have an impact on all our schools, is scheduled to last 14 days in northern Ontario and 28 days in southern Ontario.

As a result of the Premier's announcement, **both elementary and secondary students in the Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board will learn remotely between Monday, January 4, 2021 and Friday, January 8, 2021.** Unlike at-home learning opportunities offered between March and June in 2020, remote learning involves students in Kindergarten participating in 180 minutes and students in Grades 1 – 12 participating in 225 minutes of synchronous (i.e., real time) learning every day from home. Students will thus need access to a reliable Internet connection and digital device in order to participate in their classes. **Should you wish to have your child exempted from synchronous learning, please contact your local school via voicemail, email, or other means as soon as possible** to make arrangements for asynchronous learning to occur instead. **Please note that, since all schools and board facilities are closed until Monday, January 4, you are unlikely to be contacted until that day.**

We recognize that connectivity remains a key issue for some of our families, and that this may not be able to be resolved before students return to in-person learning on Monday, January 11, 2021. We also acknowledge that access to digital devices may be problematic for some families. **If your child requires access to a Chromebook in order to participate in remote learning, please contact your local school via voicemail, email, or other means to make arrangements for this to occur.** Since schools are closed until Monday, January 4, pick-up opportunities will not occur before that date and will need to be scheduled. Beyond this, please expect that your local school will be providing additional details to you about where and how to access virtual learning opportunities in the new year.

The Ministry of Education has clearly indicated that all school boards must make provisions for in-person support for the most vulnerable students with special education needs who cannot be accommodated through remote learning based on student needs. With that in mind, families who have children who are non-verbal and/or who have high medical needs who are receiving individualized support and who meet the criteria will be contacted individually to ensure a plan is in place by January 4.

We recognize that everyone's movement to remote learning may be a source of anxiety for many students and their families. With that in mind, should you find that your child(ren) require mental health supports, please contact your local school or feel free to access the mental health resources at www.smho-smso.ca. Alternatively, students can also access around-the-clock counseling and referral services through the Kids Help Phone at 1-800-668-6868, or text CONNECT to 686868.

Thank you once more for your understanding and cooperation. Please continue to do your part to keep our region as safe as it can be at this unprecedented time in history, and do access our website at www.hscdsb.on.ca for ongoing updates.

Respectfully,

Rose Burton Spohn
Director of Education

Catholic Education Centre

90 Ontario Avenue
Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6B 6G7
Tel: 705.945.5400
Fax: 705.945.5575
website: www.hscdsb.on.ca