



Sandra Turco  
Chairperson

Rose Burton Spohn  
Director of Education

January 10, 2021

Dear Parents / Guardians:

This letter is a follow-up to the one that was sent to you on Friday, January 8, 2021. In Friday's letter, I promised to provide additional information about the delivery model for elementary students who have opted to continue learning from home.

## **Options for Elementary Students Currently Enrolled in In-Person Learning**

As indicated in last week's letter, the Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board remains committed in the long term to providing distinctly in-person and distinctly virtual learning options for our students and families. Nevertheless, in light of recent events, the board is offering all elementary parents whose children are currently enrolled in in-person learning two options, on an interim basis:

- Have students return to their physical schools, provided students have completed and passed the self-assessment at <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/> and are committed to following the board's health and safety protocols.
- Keep students at home to learn virtually. Students will remain in contact with their current teachers and classmates through a variety of asynchronous and synchronous learning activities.

## **What Elementary Students Currently Enrolled in In-Person Learning Should Expect in the Short Term**

To date, elementary students have either experienced two distinct types of learning – in-person and/or remote – with each form of learning having its own benefits. For a short period of time, elementary students in our board will be exposed to a third form of learning, wherein some of their classmates will be attending in person and some will be attending online. While this form of learning has its own benefits, it also comes with some challenges.

In particular, our employees will quickly need to learn and be trained on how to attend simultaneously to the students physically sitting in front of them and to those learning from home. With this in mind, we are asking for your patience and understanding as we transition to this new form of instruction. Please expect the following to happen in the next few days:

- **Begin with Asynchronous Activities** – Unless you hear otherwise from your child's teacher or school administrator, on Monday, January 11 and Tuesday, January 12, teachers will post only asynchronous work for all students learning from home in the Google Classroom platform. To access this work, students should log into their Google Classrooms on Monday and Tuesday respectively with their regular username and passwords. Synchronous teaching will begin again for everyone on Wednesday, January 13. Teachers will provide students with a schedule and more instructions for Wednesday and beyond.
- **Learn Together** – Since this is our board's first time combining in-person and remote learning, our students, families, and employees will need to learn together. It takes time to develop expertise in and mastery of any kind of instruction, but particularly this kind, which can be quite complex. We ask that you be particularly gentle and patient over the next week, when everyone will be adjusting to this new form of instruction.

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- **Build Community Differently** – One of the benefits of this new form of learning is that students have the opportunity to remain with their existing teachers and classmates, regardless of whether they are learning at home or in person. That said, there might be many times during the school day when students who are learning from different locations won't see each other's faces. Unlike remote learning, where all employees' and students' faces appear on camera, in this environment, students learning from home might only see the faces of employees and the other students learning from home. Our employees will certainly do their utmost to ensure everyone feels included every day, but classmates learning from school may or may not see classmates learning from home and vice versa.
- **Anticipate Technical Challenges** – Although our employees will do their utmost to ensure that any technological challenges that do arise are addressed as quickly as possible, the reality is that they might still occur. In particular, students learning from home might find that background noises from the physical classroom distracting, and students learning in person might find that teachers' expectations for silence during mini-lessons are higher so that such distractions do not occur. Please feel free to bring your concerns forward to your children's teachers so that they are aware of them and can address them as well as they can.

As always, I thank you for your understanding and cooperation. Please expect additional information from your local school throughout the week and continue to monitor our board website at [www.hscdsb.on.ca](http://www.hscdsb.on.ca).

God bless,

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