



January 3, 2022

Dear Parents / Guardians:

As you are likely aware, the province announced late this morning that all elementary and secondary schools in Ontario will remain closed to in-person learning for the next two weeks because of the increased spread of COVID-19.

As a result of this important announcement, **both elementary and secondary students in the Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board will move to remote instruction for the period between Wednesday, January 5, 2022 and Friday, January 14, 2022 inclusive.** Should the province determine a need to extend the period of remote instruction beyond January 14, we will alert you as soon as possible.

You may recall that 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 phone, email, or other means as soon as possible to make arrangements for asynchronous learning to occur instead.

We recognize that access to individual digital devices for learning remains a key issue for some families. If your child requires access to a Chromebook in order to participate in remote learning, please contact your local school as soon as possible via phone, email, or other means to make arrangements for this to occur.

Opportunities to pick up devices, for those who need them, will begin on Tuesday, January 4, 2022. Please expect your local school to provide you with additional details in the near future, if it has not already done so.

Although in-person learning will not be available to most elementary and secondary students, the Ministry of Education has clearly indicated that all school boards must make provisions for in-person support for the most vulnerable students who would not derive any benefit from remote learning based on student needs. With that in mind, families who have children who are currently receiving individualized support

and who meet specific criteria will be contacted individually to ensure a plan for instruction is in place as soon as is practicable.

We recognize that this sudden 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 for your ongoing understanding, cooperation, and prayers for the swift and full recovery of all students, employees, families, and communities who have been touched closely by COVID-19. We urge you to follow all public health advice, make an informed decision about vaccinations, and become familiar with the many new restrictions that will come into effect on Wednesday, January 5, 2022. These may be found at <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/public-health-measures>.

Inviting you to rebuild, restore, and renew together,



Rose Burton Spohn
Director of Education