



March 15, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

This afternoon, the Province of Alberta ordered the cancellation of all K-12 classes due to recent developments regarding COVID-19. Effective immediately, students are expected to stay home from school in order to help stop the spread of the virus in Alberta, where we have just seen the first cases of community transmission.

This decision comes after discussions between school leaders and the Province determined the difficulties of enforcing necessary hygiene protocols and respiratory etiquette in schools, and other challenges faced during continued operation, such as staffing shortages.

At this time, it is not known how long schools will remain closed to students. Minister of Education Adriana LaGrange has indicated the closures may be in place for the remainder of the school year. Buildings will remain open to teachers and other staff, who will continue to work either from home or at the school site.

Minister LaGrange also announced the cancellation of all Provincial Achievement Tests, as well as any diploma exams not necessary for student acceptance into post-secondary institutions. The Province is confident grade 12 students will graduate this year, and they will be able to write the diplomas required for admission into their chosen post-secondary program. Alberta Education will work with post-secondary institutions to ensure these unprecedented circumstances do not hinder student admission.

The Province has emphasized all students will receive a final grade this school year, and will progress into the following grade level year. Alberta Education will be working with school boards and divisions in order to determine what resources will be made available to teachers, students, and families to ensure students complete the remainder of the school year. More information about this is expected to become available in the coming days and will be communicated to parents as soon as possible.

The Province also announced the immediate closing of daycare facilities in Alberta. Licensed day homes are permitted to remain open for the time being due to the small number of children they care for, but are expected to follow strict hygiene protocols. We understand this

will prove to be incredibly challenging for many parents of STAR Catholic families as they attempt to make alternate childcare arrangements.

Because COVID-19 is easily spread from person to person, it is not currently safe for large groups of people to gather. Both children and adults should avoid large gatherings and crowded locations such as shopping malls, movie theaters, and community centers. The provincial cancellation of gatherings of 250 or more has now been expanded to include places of worship.

Please continue to practice good hygiene and respiratory etiquette, and instruct your children to do the same. Monitor yourself and your children for symptoms such as fever, cough, extreme tiredness, and shortness of breath. If you exhibit any of these symptoms, please visit [albertahealthservices.ca](http://albertahealthservices.ca), complete the online screening, and follow the direction you are given.

As always, the safety of our school communities and families is our number one priority. We thank you for your cooperation and understanding as we work together through this incredibly difficult time.

Sincerely,

STAR Catholic School Division