



March 25, 2020

Re: Remote Learning at Star of the Sea School

Dear Parents:

First of all, our prayers go out to the members of our community directly affected by COVID-19. During this unprecedented global pandemic, it is important to remember that as a faith community, we are called to work together with Christ to help each other during this difficult time. Please know that all of the students and families have been in our prayers and we will continue to pray for all of you in the coming days and weeks ahead. We ask that you keep in your prayers those who provide essential services in our community and abroad, as well as for the health and safety of our friends and families. Together we will get through this.

During these unparalleled times, students across BC and the rest of Canada will not return to the classroom for the foreseeable future. The reason for this is to protect the health and safety of students and staff. As a result, the teachers will be required to provide remote learning opportunities for students (please read below for more details on remote learning). The CISVA is working closely with the Ministers of Health and Education, as well as with the Federation of Independent Schools to coordinate a plan to ensure continuity of learning. As of yet, there is no road map for how the learning opportunities will be delivered, but some guidelines have been provided which will be outlined below, along with our school's own local decisions.

### ***Will schools re-open on March 30<sup>th</sup>?***

Schools will reopen on March 30<sup>th</sup> for staff only. Teachers will contact families on this date with a simple plan for the week and the weeks ahead. The Ministry of Education and CISVA have stated that parents should expect online learning to commence within a couple of weeks of that date. In consultation with teachers, the decision has been made that SOS will begin online instruction on Monday, April 6<sup>th</sup>. That is one full week earlier than required by the authorities.

The Ministry of Education is not releasing the planning framework for teachers until Friday, March 27<sup>th</sup>. SOS staff will be working hard next week planning and preparing for remote learning that suits our community in the interim.

### *How will remote learning work?*

Remote learning will be delivered mainly through the two online platforms; **SeeSaw** for Kindergarten - Grade 4 and **Google Classroom** (plus SeeSaw) in Grades 5-7. Both platforms are already in use in the school and the teachers have been familiarizing themselves with it slowly through the year, in anticipation of full scale roll-out in the fall of next year - we're just pushing our timeline up, given the present needs. Activities/ lessons will be assigned through these platforms and students will largely complete tasks independently or under the guidance of parents, and submitted as required. You can also expect, especially at first, a focus on the fundamentals of Christian Education, Math, and Language Arts. Assignments will vary, but generally students in primary can expect one hour of academic work per day, while intermediates should expect approximately 2 hours. These times may be longer in the case of project based learning, passion-projects or individual inquiries, but that will be determined by your child's interest and enthusiasm.

You can expect communication from your child's teacher each day, but anticipate a variation from class to class (and week to week) depending on the individual teacher's preferences and class needs. Communication may take the form of written notes/ emails, audio clips, videos or even occasional live-video chat (individual or large scale).

It may take time to work this out. Patience will be required by all parties. The goal is not to replace the classroom, but to provide continuity of learning, connection between teachers and students and a sense of normalcy in these uncertain times. We do not want learning to become a source of stress and conflict in the home. Ultimately, it will be up to parents to determine when and how much work needs to be done each day.

### *What materials will students use?*

We are working on a plan to have staff members bag and tag student materials, including personal belongings, workbooks and textbooks that they may require at home (textbooks, novels etc., will need to be returned at the end of June). The pickup will take place on Thursday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> and Friday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>. Details on that pickup will follow in the coming days.

### ***What are the technological requirements?***

All students will require a device with which to participate in online activities. iPads are required K-4. Laptops or Chromebooks in 5-7. We are cognizant of the fact that you may not have these devices in your home or that they may be in use by adults to also work remotely from home (which would understandably take precedence). Therefore, the school is willing to loan devices out should your child require one. We will devise a plan for loaning out these devices early next week. Please know that there is a limited number, we cannot provide 1:1 devices for the whole school population.

### ***Will students who receive extra learning support at school be receiving extra support at home?***

Yes, our Learning Support teachers will continue to work closely with the teachers and Education Assistants to support students with needs in a virtual environment. What that looks like is still in development. Details will follow next week from your child's IEP case manager.

### ***Will tuition be waived?***

No. The Minister of Education has made it clear that while in-class learning has been suspended it is expected that schools ensure learning for students continues. Our goal is to continue offering a quality educational experience complete with full-time staff. We will continue to receive the government grant and will need to continue to charge tuition to make ends meet.

If you have lost income as a result of the health crisis or loss of work and cannot afford tuition, please email Father Dion as is our normal route for bursary requests. We will take this issue one month at a time for now, as we do not know what the future holds.

### ***What about other fees?***

- PPP cheques will not be cashed
- Hot lunch money - will be returned ***if possible***, we are investigating this
- Outdoor Ed money for this year's grade 7's will be returned in May, if it is cancelled

### ***Will this impact First Communion and Confirmation dates?***

Students in Grades Two and Seven will continue preparation for receiving the Sacraments in the virtual classroom, with the support of parents. The dates for these sacraments are scheduled in May. At this time, it seems likely that they will be postponed, but a decision will be made in the coming weeks. We will provide more information as soon as possible.

### ***What if I work in an essential service and require childcare?***

YMCA will be opening up their service to families of essential service workers. Contact Cathy if you need childcare. [ymcakidsclub@gv.ymca.ca](mailto:ymcakidsclub@gv.ymca.ca)

### ***My child is in grade 7, what about their transition to high school?***

Grades will be calculated for the year based on the first two report cards. Contact your child's teacher if your child requires a letter of recommendation to get into your choice of school.

### ***What about other upcoming events?***

- Purdy's chocolate fundraiser pick up April 1 at 10:00 in school parking lot - see email if you ordered
- Track, girls soccer - suspended until further notice
- Field trips in April cancelled
- Walkathon - cancelled

### ***What about Mass and spiritual life?***

This is a unique time in history, including in the history of our church. Never before have masses been closed to the public congregation. However, Masses continue to be offered in private at local parishes by their pastors. Many of these are being streamed online. A link to a message from our Archbishop, Michael Miller, and listings of local virtual masses is posted below.

The parish has recently signed up for a trail of **FORMED**, which is an on-demand service that offers spiritual books, video and audio. During this most holy season of the

year, this is a great way to connect with our faith and deepen our understanding of it, particularly as we are not able to worship in traditional ways. There are materials available for young children, teens and adults. Follow the directions below to sign up for free access.

- Archbishop's Message and listing of local online Masses <https://rcav.org/coronavirus/>
- FORMED - Visit [formed.org/signup](https://formed.org/signup)
  - Select our parish by typing in our parish office's postal code – V4A 9J3
  - Register with your name and email address
  - Check that email account for a link to begin using FORMED

### ***Still have questions?***

We've tried to answer as many questions as we could, but many of you may have specific needs that need personal communication. Please reach out to our office, admin staff, or your child's teacher - we're here to support you and your family. The school office is closed to the public, but staff are working via email and taking phone calls at 604.531.6316. All of our emails are posted on the school's website.

Keeping you all in our prayers,

On behalf of the staff at Star of the Sea School

Mrs. Miriam Campagne

Mrs. Lee, Mr. Pasta and Mrs. Gat