



# Learn at Home

## Distance Learning Plan

A Guide for Parents and Guardians





*For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. 1 Cor 12.12*

On April 26<sup>th</sup>, the Ministry of Education announced that they are extending the school closure period for all schools in Ontario until at least May 31, 2020. This decision has been made as a safety precaution to protect our students and staff, and help minimize the spread of COVID-19 in our community.

In light of this directive, on Monday, April 6, 2020, all HCDSB schools transitioned to teacher-led instruction within a distance learning environment.

## What is Teacher-led Distance Learning?

Distance learning is instruction that takes place outside of a traditional classroom setting. While some of the instruction may be conducted online, students are not expected to be on a device for all of their learning. We encourage students to read, communicate and engage in learning experiences. It may look different for each class, but in general, distance learning:

- Is flexible and can be done at any point during the day
- Does not always require online access
- Requires minimal parent/guardian support

In this model, educators will provide continuity of learning through distance learning and this may involve platforms or technologies that will require getting used to by students, families and staff alike. Our board-supported learning platforms are: [D2L](#), [Google Classroom](#), and [Microsoft Office 365](#). Real time (synchronous) classroom instruction on an ongoing basis is not an expectation. Teachers are encouraged to create an online presence to continue to foster a sense of community with their students. This could be done through prayer, a fun activity, a recorded video so students can see their teacher, interaction through discussion, etc. Educators are welcome to use video conferencing, but it is not a requirement of distance learning.

Our goal is for all students to successfully complete this school year and we will do all we can, in light of the circumstances, to create teaching and learning conditions that will help students advance to the next school year, earn credits, and graduate.

This guide provides parents with information regarding curriculum delivery, assessment and evaluation as it pertains to teacher-led distance learning during this period of school closure.

# Hours of Instruction and Focus of Learning

The Ministry of Education has provided school boards with specific guidelines around hours and focus of instruction.

Grade Range	
K-Grade 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 5 hours of work per student, per week</li><li>• Focus: Literacy and math</li></ul>
Grades 4-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 5 hours of work per student, per week</li><li>• Focus: Literacy and math, science and social studies</li></ul>
Grades 7-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 10 hours of work per student, per week</li><li>• Focus: Literacy and math, science and social studies</li></ul>
Grades 9-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 3 hours of work per course, per week for semestered students</li><li>• Focus: Achieving credits/completion/graduation</li></ul>

Hours refers to the approximate amount of time students would spend on the work assigned by teachers. This does not mean the amount of time educators or students are expected to be in front of a screen.

Teacher work would include preparation of assigned work and providing feedback or assessment. Teacher engagement with students is expected but would vary depending on circumstances and could include a range of ways that teachers would connect with their students.

Specialist teachers – such as teachers of the Arts, Core French, and PTMs – may develop optional learning tasks for students in subjects such as art, music, French as a Second Language and Physical Activity.

During this period, we continue to provide supports for our students with special education needs through our Special Education department.

As a Catholic school system, our focus will also include Religion and Family Life, and our teachers will continue to integrate our faith and Gospel values in all subject areas.



# Assessment & Evaluation

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## Elementary Assessment & Evaluations – Kindergarten to Grade 8

For elementary students, teachers will use formative assessment approaches to gather evidence of how students are progressing in their learning. It is expected that teachers will provide feedback to their students on their progress.

Teachers will use assessments to gather evidence of how students are progressing and will provide meaningful feedback to support students in their ongoing learning. If it is not possible to evaluate a specific curriculum strand, that section of the final report card will be left without a mark and a comment will indicate that the strand was not evaluated.

## Secondary Assessment & Evaluations – Grades 9 to 12

Secondary students will be assigned learning tasks, projects and culminating activities that will be marked by their teachers for the purposes of formative and summative evaluation. Teachers will communicate results of these marked assignments to students.

## Report Cards

All elementary and secondary students (Kindergarten – Grade 12) will receive a final report card.

### For elementary school students:

- Teachers will continue to gather evidence of student learning and provide meaningful feedback to students on their progress.
- Students will receive a June report card, including the Kindergarten Communication of Learning.
- Final grades will be based on learning up until March 13.
- Work completed after April 6 will be reviewed and may be used to increase final grades if a student demonstrates improvement.

### For secondary school students:

- Final marks will be calculated based on work completed from the start of Semester 2 to March 13.
- Final marks CANNOT go down from what they were on March 13 (or at midterm in the case of Grade 12 courses).
- Final marks on June report cards will remain the same or, if a student demonstrates improvement after March 13, marks may go up.
- Students are expected to continue to complete assigned work and be engaged in the learning, lessons and assignments. This is necessary for students to continue to improve their learning skills and to ensure they do not have gaps in knowledge when they return to school.

# Graduating Secondary School Students

A priority will be placed on students scheduled to graduate this year and any student on track to graduate will be supported to graduate.

- Teachers of graduating students will be expected to provide marks for graduating students by April 23<sup>rd</sup> on work completed by that time, in order to meet admission requirements for post-secondary education.
- Final report cards with marks will also be issued.
- Discussions are being held with colleges and universities about the adaptations required to support the admission process for students applying for post-secondary education, and further information will be provided.
- The graduation requirement to complete 40 hours of community involvement activities is suspended for this school year. Community involvement hours that have been completed should be reported on the report cards of graduating students. Graduating students should be encouraged to complete their hours wherever possible, where the health and safety of the student can be assured.

## Mid-Term Marks for Graduating Secondary School Students

In determining mid-year marks for the admissions process, teachers should consider the following:

- Teachers may use evidence that reflects work completed prior to the school closure period, as well as provide opportunity for students to submit a missed and/or additional assignment to demonstrate their learning.
- Teachers can adjust the weighting of assigned tasks in their determination of a mark, if needed. Marks should represent the most accurate reflection of student work, based on what is reasonable and in the best interest of students during this time.
- In alignment with [Growing Success](#), teachers will use their knowledge of curriculum expectations, context, evidence of learning, and methods of instruction and assessment to support their students in the current context.

The requirement to issue mid-year (March/April) report cards for all secondary students, including graduating students, is suspended for this school year.

The Ministry of Education continues to work with the post-secondary sector, including the [Ontario Universities Application Centre \(OUAC\)](#) and the [Ontario Colleges Application Centre \(OCAS\)](#) to support the admissions process and transition to post-secondary.



## Civics, Citizenship & Career Studies

For students enrolled in Civics and Career Studies half-credit courses in the second semester, their final mark for the half-credit course underway at the time of school closures will be based on work completed as of March 13<sup>th</sup>. Where appropriate, teachers may adjust this mark in the best interest of students to be a more accurate reflection of their learning. Students are not required to complete any further culminating assignment for this course.

## Cooperative (Co-op) Education

Cooperative (Co-op) education is a highly immersive form of experiential learning and plays a key role in programs such as Specialist High Skills Majors (SHSM) and the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP).

For students currently enrolled in co-op courses which involve a classroom component and a community placement component, their in-person community placements will need to be suspended. These students will work with their co-op teachers to modify their co-op Learning Plans so that they may work through the curriculum expectations. Where feasible, these learners will be provided with opportunities to connect virtually with industry partners on career exploration activities, and experiential learning opportunities.

Graduating students in the SHSM program who are unable to complete their SHSM requirements due to extenuating circumstances, including the impacts from COVID-19, will be supported in satisfying graduation requirements.

## Support for Students with Special Education Needs

This period of school closure is challenging for students, perhaps even more so for students with special education needs. During this period, we continue to provide supports for our students through our Special Education department, which includes Special Education Resource Teachers (SERTS), Educational Assistants (EAs), Social Workers, Child and Youth Counselors (CYCs), Speech and Language Pathologists, Psychologists, etc.

We are ensuring that students who need SEA equipment to support their learning have access to this equipment. If your child requires SEA equipment or devices, please contact your school principal. We have also posted a collection of resources to support the learn at home experience for children with special needs: [learnathome.hcdsb.org/special-education](https://learnathome.hcdsb.org/special-education)

## Support for English Language Learners

Our school board's youth settlement workers continue to be available to provide settlement information and support to our English as a Second Language (newcomer) families. To access the list of our settlement workers, as well as resources and activities that will support our ESL/newcomer families during this period of distance learning, please visit: [learnathome.hcdsb.org/esl](https://learnathome.hcdsb.org/esl)

## Mental Health & Community Supports

The period of disruption and uncertainty during the COVID-19 pandemic presents increasing mental health challenges for many students and families in our community.

The following have been in place to support our HCDSB community during this pandemic:

- Our HCDSB Mental Health Leadership Team have prepared a list of resources to support families and staff during this period of uncertainty:  
[learnathome.hcdsb.org/mental-health-wellness](https://learnathome.hcdsb.org/mental-health-wellness)
- Our HCDSB social workers and other mental health professionals will continue to provide a critical role in supporting students during this time. We are currently developing parameters which meet professional and ethical guidelines to ensure these supports continue.
- Our Compassionate Care & Crisis Response Team (CCCRT) has developed a continuity plan that will allow for virtual support of students, families and staff in the event of a death or other crisis in the community during this period of school closures.

A variety of community support resources available to families have been posted on our website, and shared through email and social media.

## Access to Technology

We recognize that many families in our community do not have access to devices or internet (Wi-Fi) that will allow their children to engage in distance learning.

We are in the process of distributing school devices to support at-home learning for families without access to technology. If your child requires a device, special education (SEA) equipment or access to internet, please contact your school principal.

## Digital Citizenship

As a Catholic school district, we place a great deal of emphasis on responsible digital citizenship. In keeping with the [Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations](#) and the [21st Century Competencies](#), students are taught to use technology responsibly and appropriately.

Students participating in distance learning are expected to model responsible digital citizenship through appropriate and positive online interactions. Your child should be aware that there are legal implications and consequences to the inappropriate use of images, cyberbullying, plagiarism and hacking. Inappropriate student behaviour or actions in the online virtual classroom setting will be addressed in accordance with our HCDSB policy and procedure on the [Use of Technology and Digital Citizenship](#) and the school's code of conduct.



## The Weeks Ahead

Thank you for your ongoing patience and support as we move through this period of unfamiliar territory. It is the expectation of the Ministry of Education, as well as our school board's expectation, that students will continue to learn during this period of school closure. We know that distance learning does not provide the same type of instruction that occurs in the daily face-to-face setting of our classrooms, and we understand that parents and students may be concerned about learning gaps that may form during this period of distance learning. When schools re-open, we will be very intentional about assessing student learning needs and providing appropriate intervention where needed. That said, it is very important for students to remain engaged in their learning during this period of distance education, as it will help them stay on top of the curriculum and be better prepared when we return to the regular classroom setting or as they begin post-secondary education.

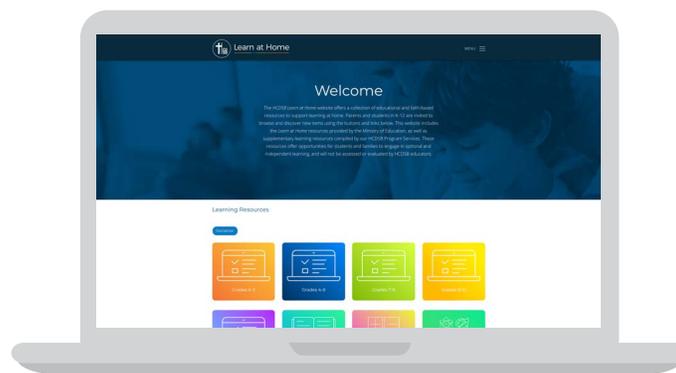
Our shared goal is for all students to successfully complete this school year. Working together, we will continue to do the best we can, in light of the circumstances, to create teaching and learning conditions to help us reach this goal.

## Communication Between Home & School

Now, more than ever, the relationship between home and school is key to your child's success, and we are committed to keeping the lines of communication open. Please continue to reach out to your child's teacher or school principal during regular school hours if you have any concerns around their learning. All of our staff emails are listed on each school website under **Contacts** → **Staff Directory**.

## Additional Information & Ongoing Updates

We will continue to share new information directly with parents by email. All updates regarding this school closure due to COVID-19, including a list of Frequently Asked Questions, are posted at: [learnathome.hcdsb.org](http://learnathome.hcdsb.org)



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