



February 12, 2021

Superintendent's Update: Students, Parents/Legal Guardians, and Staff

I am hopeful that you are all finding moments of warmth and hope during these chilly days. I would like to thank our families, specifically parents and guardians, for your patience, support and understanding with our need to suspend transportation services for a few days this week. Please know that we understand that this can place extra pressure on families during those busy morning drop-offs and after school pick-ups. However, student health and safety is a top priority and decisions regarding transportation services during extremely cold weather are made with due diligence and in accordance with our Division administrative procedures. When temperatures are -40C or below including wind chill, rural transportation services are suspended and a determination is made regarding urban transportation depending on what is deemed prudent. Often, urban transportation services will operate even when rural service is suspended. However, the difference this year is due to the pandemic. Typically, should there be a problem with a bus in an urban area in extreme weather, there is an opportunity to quickly get students to shelter indoors at a nearby school or community facility. Such a safeguard is not possible at this time due to the restrictions around gatherings and the closure of many public facilities. Thanks again for your patience and understanding.

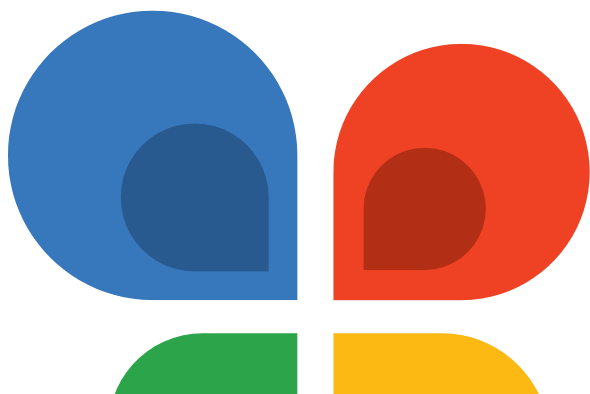
As we continue to enjoy time with our loved ones this Family Day long weekend, we are looking forward to the beginning of Lent on Wednesday, February 17, 2021 (Ash Wednesday). Ash Wednesday marks a period of prayer, penance, repentance, and almsgiving. Our students will be taking part in Ash Wednesday safely and in compliance with all current Alberta Health Services and Chief Medical Officer guidelines.

Many of you will have heard Premier Kenney's announcement on January 28, 2021 that was further detailed by Dr. Deena Hinshaw on Saturday, February 6, 2021:

Indoor and outdoor children's sport and performance: K-12 schools and post-secondary children's sport and performance activities, such as physical education classes, can now use off-site facilities to support curriculum-related educational activities.

Further to such messages, Deputy Minister Tremblay provided [guidance](#) to interpret this with respect to school programming. Based on all of this information, our school division has collaborated with surrounding jurisdictions, and we will be taking a stepped approach to implementing these new parameters:

Extra-curricular athletics: Being non-curricular in nature, and therefore not central to our mandate of providing education, all extra-curricular activities are to remain on hold for the month of February, at least. This means no practicing, training or activity, whether grouped 10 or less, or individual, whatsoever.





Physical Education and Academy Instruction: Being curricular in nature, these opportunities will continue in already established cohorts in activities outside the footprint of the school with the following conditions:

- Where possible, walking distance to facility/venue is preferred.
- Only venues/facilities currently allowed by Provincial mandate may be accessed.
- We continue to work with our municipalities and we will access recreational facilities as they are available. That process has yet to be clarified. More information will be provided as it is made available. Only activities deemed COVID-appropriate under current guidance may be undertaken.
- All guidance for activities remains with respect to physical distancing, mask use, etc. for physical activity.

Performances: Music and drama students will continue to practice within the parameters already outlined. There will not be a focus on preparing for live performances with face-to-face audiences. At this time, we are assuming virtual audiences until such time that guidelines change.

Field trips: will only be permitted when necessary to carry out curricular outcomes that cannot otherwise be met through in school, in class activities.

Please continue to check the [Alberta Health website](#) for updates from the Minister of Education about changes to such measures as they relate to school jurisdictions. We continue to update our [Parent Guidebook for School Re-Entry: 2020-2021](#) accordingly, with any relevant changes. Our [website](#) and official social media channels ([Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#)) are also reliable sources of Division news and announcements.

Consider taking part in the remaining [virtual information session](#) regarding the benefits of French Immersion Kindergarten in Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools. Please [join us](#) to hear from some of our families, who will share their personal experiences with French Immersion in our schools. Time will also be allotted in these one-hour sessions for questions and answers. Questions can either be submitted in advance, using the online [registration form](#), or asked during the live events. All sessions will start at 6:30 p.m.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Host School</u>
Tuesday, Feb. 23	École Notre Dame

Please [register](#) by Friday, February 19 if you would like to attend the final session. After you submit your online registration, you will receive a confirmation with details on how to access this virtual sessions.



Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools



Thank you in advance for taking part in our Division Assurance Survey. You will be receiving a link to provide your input between February 12-26 on how we are doing with respect to progress on key strategies of our Division 2020-2023 Education Assurance Plan.

Foundational to our Division's 2020-2023 Assurance Education Plan, our Faith Priority is at the core of who we are and emphasized in all facets of our work. To that end, yesterday, February 11, 2021, was The World Day of the Sick, which is an awareness day, or observance, in the Catholic Church intended for "prayer and sharing, of offering one's suffering for the good of the Church and of reminding everyone to see in his sick brother or sister the face of Christ." Given the pandemic, it is especially fitting to recall together that we collectively pray for and share in the offering of our service to comfort and care for the sick and suffering. The day was instituted on May 13, 1992 by Pope John Paul II and is celebrated annually on February 11, which is also the memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes. In parallel to this special day, we honor Black History Month in February and emphasize that beyond this month, we value the dignity and worth of all children of God.

Wishing you all warmth during these cold days, health during this time of pandemic, and many blessings as we continue to journey through this school year together.

Sincerely,

Dr. Clint Moroziuk
Superintendent of Schools