

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### School Closures from March 14 to April 5, 2020

On March 12, 2020, the Minister of Education directed that all publicly-funded schools in Ontario be closed for two weeks following March Break.

As a result, **all Halton Catholic District School Board (HCDSB) schools will be closed from March 14 to April 5, 2020. No curricular or extra-curricular events will take place during this period.**

Please note that this FAQ is a working resource. We will continue to update this document as we receive more information.

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## Programs and Child Care

### Will the Thomas Merton Centre for Continuing Education remain open?

The Thomas Merton Centre for Continuing Education will be CLOSED.

### Will programs run through the Thomas Merton Centre for Continuing Education proceed?

All credit courses, Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC), and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes offered at ALL Thomas Merton Centre locations will be CANCELLED.

### Will the Board Office be open?

In order to protect HCDSB staff and help minimize the spread of COVID-19 in our community, our HCDSB Board Office was CLOSED to public access effective March 17, 2020 and until Monday, April 6, 2020.

### Will HCDSB Welcome Centres be open?

All HCDSB Welcome Centres will be CLOSED.

### Will child care and EarlyON centres continue to operate?

All child care and EarlyON centres will be CLOSED.

### Will International Language programs continue?

International Language programs are CANCELLED.

### **Will Community Use of School permits be cancelled?**

All Community Use of School permits will be CANCELLED from March 14 through to April 5, 2020. This includes all full day and camp programs scheduled during the March break.

### **Will March Break camps and programs in schools continue?**

All March Break camps and programs are CANCELLED.

## **Instruction, Assessment, & Graduation**

### **Will eLearning courses continue?**

eLearning courses will be SUSPENDED during this period of school closures.

### **Will the OSSLT assessment scheduled for March 31 be cancelled?**

**UPDATE:** On March 17, 2020, the Ministry of Education confirmed that EQAO assessments would be CANCELLED for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year.

This means that:

- The Grade 3, 6, and 9 EQAO assessments will NOT take place this school year.
- The Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) assessment WILL NOT take place this school year.
- The Ministry has further indicated that the literacy graduation requirement will be WAIVED for students who are graduating in the 2019-2020 school year.
- Students who are not graduating this school year will have the opportunity to write the OSSLT in the upcoming 2020-2021 school year.

### **Will students be provided with school work during this school closure period?**

**UPDATE:** On March 20, 2020, the Ministry of Education released the first phase of the [Learn at Home](#) resources to support student learning during school closures due to COVID-19.

The *Learn at Home* resources are available at: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/learn-at-home>.

On this page, you will find links to separate resources for elementary and secondary students, as well as a number of resources posted for parents to help guide the at-home learning with your children.

### **Will the closure impact student marks?**

Students will not be penalized for missed work or assessments.

### **Will students be at risk of not graduating?**

This closure is not expected to impact secondary school graduation.

### **Will the closure impact college and university applications?**

Applications were generally due in January. If you have questions, check with your college or university.

### **Will students attend Dual Credit programs?**

Students will not attend Dual Credit programs during the closure period.

### **Will students attend Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Programs (OYAP)?**

Students will not attend OYAP programs during the closure period.

### **Will students attend Co-Operative Education (Co-op) programs?**

Students will not attend co-op education programs during the closure period.

### **Will HCDSB cancel out-of-province and out-of-country school trips?**

All out-of-province and out-of-country trips have been CANCELLED during this period.

### **Will the school year be extended into the summer months?**

At this point in time, we do not have information from the Ministry of Education regarding an extension of the school year. We will provide updates as they become available.

## **Keeping Our Students, Families and Staff Healthy**

### **My child is feeling anxious about this situation. How can I help?**

Our mental health leadership team has shared the following tips and resources to help parents support their children during this period of uncertainty:

- [Mental Health Tips & Resources for HCDSB Families](#)
- [Talking with Children: Tips for Caregivers, Parents and Teachers During Infectious Disease Outbreaks](#)
- [Talking to Children About COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\) – A Parent Resource](#)

## What measures is HCDSB taking to reduce the risk to students and staff when schools re-open?

We will continue to undertake the following actions:

- Enhanced cleaning of touch surfaces in schools, including:
  - Door handles, panic bars, drinking fountains, sinks, faucets, telephones, handrails, washroom fixtures, desks, light switches, vending machines and other common touch points.
- We will also undertake a deep clean and disinfection of all schools during the March Break, and again in the days prior to the reopening of schools.

### Travel Recommendations – Government of Canada

We encourage all HCDSB families and staff to follow the advice of public health authorities and the federal government.

**On March 13, 2020, the Government of Canada announced that Canadians should avoid all non-essential travel outside of the country effective immediately.**

As a Board, we want to ensure we use the two-week closure period to reduce the risk of contagion when schools re-open. We therefore ask that during this time, you follow the advice of public health authorities and avoid public gatherings and travel outside of Canada. Self-isolate as required, so that when schools re-open we can be confident that we have all done our part to keep students and staff safe.