



# ST. THOMAS MORE COLLEGIATE

HOME OF THE KNIGHTS SINCE 1960

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Monday, August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Dear STMC Students & Parents,

## **IMPORTANT 2020-2021 Start-Up Information – Communication No.1**

I trust that your summer break is providing a much-needed opportunity to rest and recharge your batteries for what will invariably be an incredibly busy, academically challenging, and a likely, (at times), demanding school year as we continue our battle to stop the spread of COVID-19.

My communique this afternoon is the first of four important emails that I will be sharing with our returning and incoming students and families over the next few weeks, in preparation for the start of the new school year on Sept. 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

Minister of Education, Rob Fleming's announcement on July 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020 regarding the province's K-12 Education Restart Plan ([FAQ Link](#)) went beyond what we have been planning for in terms of our fall start-up. In my year-end email, sent in late June, I shared with you that ministry communications – at that time – were asking us to plan for a Hybrid Learning environment that might see our students onsite one day and learning remotely from home the next. This most recent announcement will require us to re-tweak our timetable and organize our school around the concept of Learning Groups of 120 students and staff. While challenging... it is not impossible. We simply have to think and do things differently. Over the course of the last 12 days, we have been looking at various ways that would enable us to provide for full in-school learning while adhering to all COVID-19 safety protocols and expectations.

To meet these measures we are currently exploring a number of ***possibilities\****, including:

- Shifting from a linear (full-year Day 1/Day 2 - 8-block rotation) to a 'minimester' block schedule that would see our students take their Day 1 courses for 8-9 weeks before switching over to their Day 2 rotation of classes for the next 8-9 weeks. This rotation would continue during the second half of the year.
- Staggering school start and end times, breaks, and lunches for Grade 8-9s and Grade 10-12s.
- Re-examining our inter-class flow patterns to reduce congestion in hallways and stairwells.
- Implementing daily entrance protocols that provide students with RFID Cards to be scanned when entering the school for COVID-19 sign-off purposes.
- Implementing an amplified intramural sports and fine arts program within Learning Groups as a way to address the current suspension of inter-school athletics and large-scale public performances.
- Continued collaboration with others, (local *and* from around the globe), as we examine 'best practices' happening elsewhere

***\*At this time, obviously, nothing is set in stone. It is clear, however, that our 2020-2021 school year will most definitely have a different look and feel than previous years.***

We are still waiting for additional information from the Ministry of Education, the Chief Public Health Officer, and the Ministry of Health to further inform our STMC 2020-2021 School Start-Up Plan. Once we have refined our plan, we will send it to the Ministry of Education for approval. Our plan must also include a revised/enhanced STMC COVID-19 School Safety-Plan. Our current plan was developed in late May for the partial return to school in June by students and staff. The new plan needs to take into account the full return of all students and staff to the



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school. We have been in constant communication with colleagues throughout the province, and still have a fair bit of work to do before we are able to share a more detailed plan with our students and their families. Our final plan will obviously need to meet the requirements laid out by the Ministry of Education, and additionally, will need to meet the varied requirements and needs of our staff, students, and families.

### **Reminder about Summer Office Hours**

Please note: the Main Office is still on summer hours until August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The office is open Tuesday – Thursday from 9am to 3pm. Should you require assistance for any reason we recommend that you phone ahead to ensure that someone will be there to help you.

### **2020-2021 Summer E-Mail-Out**

Please keep on the lookout for important start-up information arriving in your email inbox during the Week of August 24-28!

Until my next communication, I wish everyone in our community a continued safe and happy summer. May it remain chalk-full of wonderful moments and memories created and shared with good friends and family.

Finally, as noted in all of my communiques since the start of the pandemic, I ask that you pray for the continued good health of our Christian Brothers – Bros. Bassett, Cassidy, & O'Neil – along with everyone associated with our St. Thomas More family!

Yours in Christ,  
Steve Garland – STMC Principal

## **Care + Comfort + Compassion**

Continuing our work to connect Heads & Hearts...

Grounding all of our work in that which fills our soul and gives meaning to our work as a community...