



Catholic Independent Schools of Vancouver Archdiocese

Office of the Superintendent

April 14, 2020

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Staff,

He is risen!

I would like to offer you my prayers and greetings, together with those of the Superintendent's Office staff, as we begin this extraordinary season of Easter. It is my hope that in spite of the many challenges we are facing at this time, the joy of the Resurrection has found its way into your hearts and will continue to do so as we walk together with the risen Christ on this difficult road.

As we have worked hard over the past month in responding to this pandemic and the changes it has wrought not only in our schools and parishes but throughout the world, I have often been seized by a great sense of gratitude. It is in the spirit of this virtue and some reflection on the progress of our schools that I hope to communicate briefly to you in this letter.

Thank you, parents and guardians, for your patience and understanding as we continue to adjust to the new realities of "continuity of learning" that began after Education Minister Rob Fleming announced that all in-class instruction would cease in B.C. schools as of March 17, 2020. The challenges of learning and following new safety directives to stop the spread of COVID-19, having your children learning at home, adjusting to new technologies, and dealing with your own changing circumstances have been unprecedented.

Thank you, principals, teachers, education assistants and support staff, for the great strides you have already made in adjusting to this new way of teaching and learning in response to the challenge of COVID-19. By this time, you will have communicated many of the details of how this new model will work in your particular circumstances and teachers will likely have already connected with parents and students. Please understand that many of the Ministry of Education guidelines and directives are being continuously updated and refined. It will take some time for administrators and teachers to turn these into a complete and effective learning plan. Our path to learning is being phased in through these weeks of April, focusing first on providing tools and methods, then communicating with our students, and then organizing our programs and support to provide learning for the rest of the school year.

This new reality has placed stresses on families, and it is important for our continued health and well-being that the approach to the new educational experience be undertaken in a gradual manner. I encourage you to work together and keep the lines of communication open. Our goal is to provide opportunities for learning for our students that will continue to motivate and enrich them during this time, rather than overwhelm them. Establishing regular daily routines is particularly important in this regard.

While tuition remains in place for the balance of the school year, we recognize that some families have been impacted financially by the economic changes caused by COVID-19, and we wish to emphasize that our schools are here to help you. If your financial circumstances have changed as a result of COVID-19 and you are unable to pay tuition, please contact your principal or Education Committee Chair and they will work with you on an appropriate plan. We do not want any family to leave our schools due to an inability to pay tuition.

A particular and deep gratitude is owed to essential service workers and all who are sacrificing in order to support those in need during this pandemic. Our schools are responding to requests for needed services and opportunities in support of your children. Communicate your needs in this regard to your principal.

I wish to recognize the leadership, vision and courage of our principals in taking our schools into this new world, and the dedicated commitment and care our teachers and educational assistants have for the safety and education of our young people. I particularly thank teachers for their adaptability, creativity and initiative in providing continuity of educational opportunities for all students, especially those who are in need of special assistance. All of our school staff, with the important support of our pastors and Archbishop's representatives, will continue to provide students with opportunities to grow in their faith and in their personal relationship with Jesus in the family of his Church.

Also, I extend my gratitude to all CISVA Superintendent's Office staff, members of our Board of Directors, PEC and REC members, our priests, and especially our shepherd, Archbishop Miller, for their outstanding guidance and support throughout this time.

Once again, my prayers and those of our office go out to families affected in so many ways by the current pandemic. Of primary concern should be protecting ourselves and our loved ones by observing carefully the orders and directions given by our Minister of Health Adrian Dix and our Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry whose work we appreciate immensely.

There will be an end to this trial, and we can do this together. Let us in these weeks and months to come ask for the intercession of Saint John Paul II who reminded us that "We are an Easter People and Alleluia is our song!"¹

Yours in Christ,



Deacon Henk Luyten
Superintendent

¹ Pope John Paul II, Angelus, Adelaide, Australia, Sunday, 30 November 1986.