



SIMCOE MUSKOKA CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

November 7, 2020

Dear Secondary Families,

On October 15th, the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board announced that it would be moving to a hybrid model of learning for its nine secondary schools. This means that although virtual learners will continue to work from home, they will now join face-to-face learners in classes that are being offered at their home school. The hybrid model has been successfully implemented in other secondary schools across the province and provides many benefits for our students.

This model will enable our families the flexibility to easily transition between face-to-face and in-class learning; will provide much-needed stability and sustainability until the end of June and beyond if necessary; and allow us to respond quickly to the Health Unit or Ministry of Education directives in the case of partial or full school closures.

In addition to these benefits, one of the most important reasons why this change was necessary is so that we are able to offer all students (especially our virtual students) a more robust range of programs and course selections. We know our students have specific course requirements in order to pursue their post-secondary goals. Due to a number of pressures within the virtual secondary school environment, we simply would not be able to provide all of our students with the range of courses they need to complete their post-secondary pathway. Moving to this hybrid model will allow us to provide a wider range of course selections, which we know is critically important as students prepare for their post-secondary future.

SECONDARY HYBRID MODEL OVERVIEW

We recognize that students and staff will be required to make changes and adaptations to teaching and learning. Please know that the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board is committed to working with schools to make this transition as smooth as possible. Below you will find some important additional information regarding the next steps as we prepare for the **November 16th** transition to the hybrid model of learning at our secondary schools.

2nd Quadmester Schedule

To prepare for a successful transition to the secondary hybrid model, we have made significant changes to the Secondary School Calendar, beginning on Friday, November 13 through to Friday, November 20. We ask that you **carefully review** the attached [First Week of Secondary Hybrid Model Calendar Summary](#) (PDF format) with your child.



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For this week of classes, there will be different expectations for both our face-to-face and virtual learners so that we can gradually transition to our new model. **Please note: During this first week there will be days in which your child will not be required to attend class but will be required to complete course work at home.** However, students who require full-time Educational Assistant support on a daily basis to attend school will continue in the face-to-face model. Please review this [First Week of Secondary Hybrid Model Calendar Summary](#) (PDF format) for all of the details.

If you have any questions, please contact your child's school directly. This phased-in approach will not be used during period 2 the following week, since staff and students will have already had the opportunity to adapt to the hybrid learning model.

Attendance and Flexibility to Transition Between Modes of Learning

All families will be asked to make a firm commitment to either virtual or in-class learning. Requests for a change from one mode of delivery to the other must be made in writing in consultation with the classroom teacher and with approval of the school principal.

Attendance will be taken daily and regardless of the delivery model (virtual or in-class) absences will be tracked and communicated with families, as per our current practice.

Timetables

Timetables will be shared with students at the end of this week.

Appropriate Use of Technology and Behaviour Expectations

Students, staff and families will be provided with a revised version of the [Board's Responsible Use of Technology Policy - LE-25](#). In addition, students and staff will receive explicit expectations around appropriate behaviour, dress codes and acceptable use of information and communication technology. Details about these expectations will be clearly communicated as part of the phased-in rollout of the hybrid model during the week on November 16th.

Technology

Board staff are working closely with the school to ensure appropriate technology is in place to ensure all those participating in a hybrid classroom have what they require for teaching and learning success.



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We know that we have asked our families and staff for a lot over the past several months and it seems that the only thing that is consistent is that things are constantly changing. However, this change will provide our secondary system with the stability and sustainability that we need to carry us forward in the long-term. Our hope and prayers continue to guide us through challenging times and I do have faith that we are on a solid path forward for our students and staff. As always, we thank you for your support and encourage you to reach out directly to your school should you have additional questions.

Our hope and prayers will continue to guide us through these challenging times and I do have faith that we are on a solid path forward for our staff and students. Once again, I sincerely thank you for your commitment to Catholic education and I continue to pray for the health and wellbeing of everyone in our school communities as we navigate these turbulent waters.

Yours in Faith,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bagley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Frances Bagley
Director of Education