



Sunday, April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Dear Students, Parents and Guardians:

On behalf of Bishop Bergie, Chair Fera and the Board of Trustees, members of Senior Staff, Principals, Vice-Principals, Administrators and staff across Niagara Catholic, we continue to bring our shared prayers and support that you and your family are healthy and safe.

As we continue to live with the changing realities of life during this pandemic, we draw comfort from our faith and the love and care we provide each other. These are unprecedented times, and we are all adapting as best as we can. We continue to be here to support you.

As part of our commitment to keeping all students and families informed with information and decisions as they are made, this letter is to inform you that Minister Stephen Lecce announced earlier this afternoon that the current closure of all schools in the Province of Ontario will continue until at least May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020. As part of the Ministry of Education News Release, Minister Lecce commented that “the extension was based on expert advice from the Chief Medical Officer of Health and health officials on the COVID-19 Command Table and is part of the government’s ongoing effort to stop the spread of the virus. The advice was to extend school closures for an additional period of time to permit updated modelling and data to inform next steps, given the government’s absolute commitment to safety.”

As new information is provided by the Ministry of Education on the remainder of this school year, summer learning programs and the new school year, we will inform you promptly.

By continuing to work together to reduce the spread of COVID-19, this measure continues to keep students, staff and families safe. The health and safety of our students, staff and families is our priority.

As the school closure continues, our talented and dedicated staff will continue to implement *Niagara Catholic’s Continuity of Learning Distance Education Plan* through teacher-led distant learning supported through the leadership of the Board of Trustees, Senior Staff, Principals, Vice-Principals, Administrators and support staff throughout the system. It is important that students continue to do their best to keep their minds active during this period of school closures. The Board’s *Learn at Home* page continues to be updated with resources for students and families to support student learning.

Thank you to students, parents and guardians for your patience and understanding. We appreciate that this continuation of school closures is challenging for students and families.

A reminder that support is available for families where mental health is of concern. Our *Learn at Home* page has two sections dedicated to mental health; one for students, and one for families, which offer resources for assistance. If someone in your family is in crisis, or in need of additional support, please call your family physician, Pathstone Mental Health at 1-800-263-4944 or Kids’ Help Phone at 1-800-668-6868 or by texting 686868.

As a significant community partner in Niagara, we remain in contact with our colleagues at Niagara Region Public Health for their guidance and support. Please continue to follow their direction to wash your hands often, avoid touching your face, practice physical distancing and avoid non-essential travel.

We continue to extend our prayers to Niagara's health care professionals, emergency responders and essential workers, many of whom are parents, alumni and friends of Niagara Catholic, for their continued health and safety as they work tirelessly to keep us healthy, safe and fed.

As a Niagara Catholic family, let us continue to pray that the actions taken to reduce the spread of this virus will be effective, that we remain courageous and kind to one another and for the continued health and safety of our students, staff and families.

Pray, stay healthy and safe.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Crocco". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "C".

John Crocco  
Director of Education