



January 11, 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians:

As you are aware, the Ministry of Education announced in December that all publicly funded secondary schools were required to transition to remote learning after the winter break. Students enrolled in in-person learning in school boards in southern Ontario are currently scheduled to return to class on January 25.

As we face rising numbers of COVID-19 in Ontario, Niagara Catholic continues to adapt to ensure that our schools continue to be safe places that limit transmission of the virus.

In August, the Ministry included Niagara Catholic District School Board among 24 school boards designated to begin school in September with an adapted-school schedule and class cohorts of approximately 15 students.

In-person students will continue to attend with their class cohort on designated days found on the [updated secondary school year calendar](#) from the Board website. There will be no change for students currently enrolled at the Niagara Catholic Virtual Secondary school.

### **Changes to the Adapted School Day Schedule for Students Attending In-Person**

1. In an effort to address safety concerns and minimize opportunities to spread the virus, the secondary school day for students participating in in-person learning will be adapted beginning in Term 5, which starts on February 8. The school day, which currently begins at 8:05 a.m., will be adjusted to start at 10 a.m. The end of the school day will continue to be 2:05 p.m.
2. For students who receive transportation to school from Niagara Student Transportation Services, bus pick-up times will be adjusted. New pick-up times will be available on [nsts.ca](http://nsts.ca), on Wednesday February 3. There will be no changes made to the end of day transportation arrangements.
3. Students who either walk to school or who are driven to school will not be admitted prior to 9:45 a.m.
4. Students with complex special education needs, currently identified in Cohort C, will not have their school day changed. These students will continue to attend for the current 8:05 a.m. – 2:05 p.m. school day, with current transportation arrangements maintained.



5. The new schedule at the school will include in-person instructional time totaling 225 minutes and a break, determined by the school principal. An additional 75 minutes of asynchronous or synchronous remote learning and independent study to achieve the 110 hours of instruction for the course. Course content will continue to be covered as in previous octomesters.
6. Currently, students who are attending school in-person receive 40 minutes for lunch. Many students are using this time to congregate and leave the property, often without masks. With the adjusted day, students are strongly discouraged from leaving the property on their break. Students will be permitted to eat in their classrooms but will not receive a formal lunch break.
7. You will receive an updated schedule from your school principal.

### **Virtual Secondary School Transition**

1. Given the changes to the adapted school day for students attending in-person, the current remote learning mandate due to rising cases numbers, and the need to ensure stability in the system for Term 5 students, there will **not** be a formal transition for students into the Niagara Catholic Virtual Secondary School.
2. Students will continue to receive instruction from their current location. Students who are attending in-person will receive instruction from their home school. Secondary students who are currently at the Virtual School will remain there.
3. We are committed to student success and will do our best to be responsive to individual student needs. Should there be extenuating circumstances which require a change in modalities, these requests should be made through the home school principal, and we will review each request on a case-by-case basis to determine how needs can best be met.

We will continue to monitor the situation and provide a further update when there is additional information to share.

We appreciate your patience and understanding as we navigate these uncertain times.

Camillo Cipriano  
Director of Education