



SIMCOE MUSKOKA CATHOLIC  
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

## Frequently Asked Questions COVID-19 and School Closures

### 1. **Will schools be providing refunds for items such as field trips and food orders that were made prior to school closures?**

Currently, we are working on a process for providing refunds to families. We will begin with refunds for the March 23 to April 3 time frame and then will reassess and process additional refunds as more information regarding closures becomes available.

For parents who made payments using Interac Online, Visa, Visa Debit, MasterCard, MasterCard Debit through School-Day, the refund will be processed through School-Day and applied in the same manner as the item was purchased. We anticipate that this should happen in a fairly timely manner.

For parents who have made payments either by cash or cheque, we are currently in the process of determining the best way to make refunds available to you as quickly as possible. We understand that many of our families are dealing with an additional financial burden because of COVID-19 and so we are looking for ways to process these refunds in a timely manner.

**If you paid by cash or cheque and are in urgent need of a refund, please contact the board office at [info@smcdsb.on.ca](mailto:info@smcdsb.on.ca) or 705-722-3555 and be sure to leave details including your first and last name and the name of your school.**

### 2. **My child left important items at the school prior to school closures - can I arrange to get these items back?**

We understand that some important items such as medication and equipment for students with special education needs were left at the school when we were ordered to close so unexpectedly. According to the Ministerial Order, our schools must remain closed, but we are working closely with the Ministry of Education and other school boards to develop a plan for families to retrieve **only essential items** in a way that respects physical distancing requirements. Once we have finalized a plan we will communicate that with our families directly.



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**3. When will my child begin learning from home?**

We are committed to providing our students with quality education, even if they can't physically be at school. We are unsure how long our schools will be closed, but are planning and preparing for our students to continue their learning from home during the closure.

For the period of March 23rd to April 3rd, families are asked to access the Ministry of Education's [Learn at Home](#) website. In addition, our staff will provide complementary resources, which will be available on our board website at [smcdsb.on.ca](http://smcdsb.on.ca) beginning on Friday, March 27th.

Please know that during this unprecedented and unexpected situation, staff is working diligently on putting together a meaningful distance learning program for our students. Families can expect for this to begin on April 6th.

**4. My children do not have access to technology, how will they participate in distance learning?**

We want to make every effort to ensure that students have access to the technology needed for distance learning during this time away from the classroom. **Please recognize that our resources are extremely limited and we can only provide to those who are in greatest need.** We distributed a survey to all of our families (it is also posted on our website at [smcdsb.on.ca](http://smcdsb.on.ca)) in order to gather important information regarding our students' access to technology at home. The deadline for that survey completion is/was Monday, March 30th.

**5. Are field trips and mission trips cancelled?**

All field trips and mission trips have been cancelled for the remainder of the school year. For those who have already paid (full and/or partial) amounts, please see more details in the question 1 above.

**6. What is happening with school fundraising Initiatives?**

All school-based fundraising initiatives have been cancelled for the remainder of the school year.



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**7. My child has special education needs, how will my child participate in distance learning?**

We are working on a plan so that all of our students are included in a distance learning program.

**8. Can I still register my child for Kindergarten, even though schools are closed?**

Yes. We are still accepting and processing [online registrations](#) for Kindergarten.

**9. How do I get in touch with someone at my child's school?**

Even though our physical buildings are closed, our staff are continuing to work remotely. You can call your child's school directly and leave a voice message. Messages will be checked twice daily.

**10. Why are the school playgrounds closed?**

For the health and safety of our students and community members and to assist with the province's physical distancing directives, we have made the decision to close our playgrounds.

**11. Will the school year be extended into the summer months?**

We have not received this direction from the Ministry of Education. The decision to extend the school year would be made by them. It's too early to determine if this will be necessary.

**12. Will eLearning courses continue?**

Yes. eLearning courses will resume. If your child is currently enrolled in an eLearning course, they can expect to hear from their teacher shortly.

**13. What is happening with EQAO testing?**

The Ministry of Education has informed us that they have cancelled EQAO testing for this school year. For students in Grade 12 who have not completed the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test or course, this will not be a requirement for graduation, this year.

**14. Will students be at risk of not graduating?**

Graduation will not be impacted by this closure.



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**15. How will the school closure impact scheduled school events when the students return?**

At this time, we are unsure when or even if the school year will resume and we will continue to take our direction from the Ministry of Education on this matter. However, if we do return to school, we do know that our primary focus will be on student learning and so we would expect all non-essential activities to be postponed or cancelled.

**16. Will this impact college and university applications?**

We do not believe there will be an impact.

**17. How will Co-op courses be impacted?**

Student work placements will be discontinued. However, your child should expect to be involved with other learning opportunities as part of their course work.

**18. Are Dual Credit programs continuing?**

Yes. We are expecting to get these programs back up and running. Teachers will reach out once the details have been finalized.

**19. Will Adult and Continuing Education classes and programs continue?**

Yes. We are expecting to get these programs back up and running. Teachers will reach out once the details have been finalized.

**20. Will International Language programs continue?**

The Saturday programs are cancelled.

**21. Will child care centres in SMCDSB schools continue to operate?**

After much consultation and discussion with school boards across the province as well as health authorities, we have made the difficult decision to close our school facilities to our child care partners. We understand that this will be a significant concern for families, but this decision has been made with the health and safety of the public as our top priority, which is consistent with the intent of the school closures.

We will continue to advise our school communities in the event the provincial order is modified.



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**22. Will community use of schools permits continue?**

No. All community use of school permits are cancelled for the duration of the school closures. The Board will reimburse user groups accordingly.

**23. Are schools and board office buildings open during this shutdown period?**

All board office buildings and school locations will be closed to staff, students and the public for the duration of the closure. Some staff may be required to attend to essential services and those who are required to prepare for the reopening once the Ministerial Order has been lifted.