

# The Pandemic Review

September 2020 - Mia Abate

Student life, both physical and virtual



## Welcome Back

After months of being closed due to Covid-19 restrictions, the St. Patrick's high school building opened its doors to staff and students once more. September 14th, 2020, marked the start of class for the new grade nines with grades ten, eleven and twelve beginning on the 15th. This day devoted to the grade nines allowed them to become more comfortable in and familiar with their new surroundings.

## What's New?

This year, the school building has been divided into 4 houses upper right, upper left, lower right and lower left. The house a student's classes are in affects which door they will use to enter and exit the school. Additionally, there are 3 lunch times a class may be assigned: 10:15-11:10, 11:10-12:05 and 12:05-1:00. The reason for this is to minimize the number of students

who are using the washroom at any given time. St. Patrick's staff and students have seen the addition of "Coffee Questions", a weekly google meet segment to answer questions students may have. A google document is shared with all staff and if a student has a question, they can ask their teacher to put it on the google doc. During "Coffee Questions" the administrative staff (Mr Kehoe, the principal along with Mrs. Lobsinger, Mrs. Johnson and Mrs Moffat-Sharpe, the three vice principals) go through the questions on a live google meet. Additionally, the school has seen the return of the much loved "Breakfast Club" in a new form. Prior to covid, Breakfast club was a "club" held in



the foods classroom each morning that provided a free breakfast for any student who may need it. At Breakfast club, students could find a variety of breakfast foods such as bagels, toast, cereal fruit and other healthy options. This year, in order to keep students safe, Breakfast club has taken on a new form: tables with a variety of grab and go snacks have been set up at each entry into the school. Breakfast Club may look different, at its heart, its goal is still the same: that ensures that no student misses the most important meal of the day!



## Mental Health

Having good mental health has always been an important component in maintaining one’s overall health. During this pandemic, it is now more important than ever, that we address our mental health. The past few months have been incredibly difficult and have taken a toll on everyone’s mental health. When we are struggling with our mental health, it is important we turn to the resources we have available to us. St. Patrick’s students have

access to a full time social worker, Mr. Ostropec as well as a mental health and addictions nurse, Mrs. Zoccano.

## A Day in the Life of a Student

Life for students looks quite different from how it has in previous years. With new safety protocols put in place, students have 4 semesters with 2 classes a semester. The students remain in the same class all day while the class they’re attending alternates between period 1 and 2 each week. Olivia Graham, a grade 12 student at St. Patrick’s shared what a day in the life of a student looks like.

“My morning begins the same way it always did, the only thing that’s different is now I grab my mask on my way out the door. I get to school around 7:55 and make sure to put my mask on before leaving my car. Our school has been split up into 4 houses: upper right, upper left, lower right and lower left; because both of my classes are in house 4 (the upper left) I

2020-2021 Secondary School Year Calendar				Catholic Education + Future Ready							
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H – Holiday P – Professional Activity Day E – Secondary Exam Day				Quad 1 – Period 1 Period 2 Quad 2 – Period 3 Period 4 Quad 3 – Period 1 Period 2 Quad 4 – Period 3 Period 4				First Day of Classes: September 14, 2020 Christmas Break: Dec 21/20 – Jan 1/21 March Break: March 15-19, 2021 Last Day of Classes: June 28, 2021			
				John Van Heck Chair of the Board				Deb Crawford Director of Education			

enter through the door on the south side of the school. Once I've entered the building, I go straight to class. When I get there, I put my bag on the floor next to me, pull out my notes and sit at my desk while I wait for morning announcements to start the day. During the announcements, Mrs. Clarke, our chaplain, leads morning reflection. This year, we as a student body are focusing on finding joy. Once announcements are over class begins. We work until

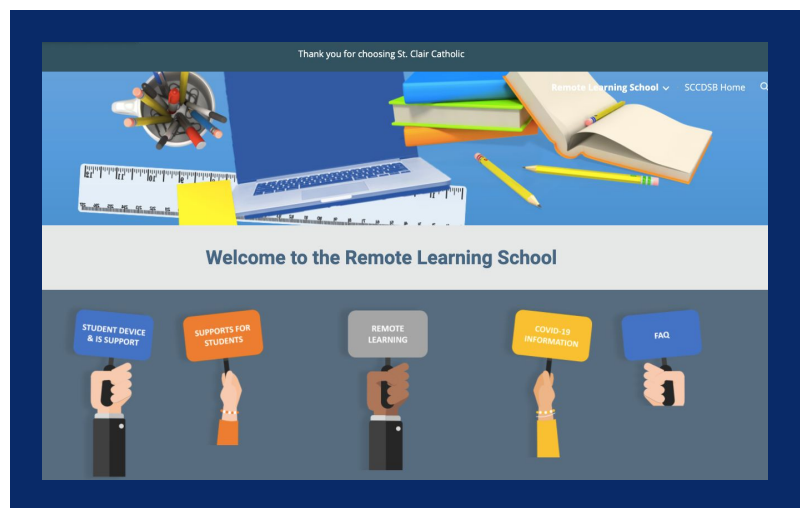


around 9:00 when we are given a 5 minute break to have a snack. After the break, class resumes until lunch. The school has been broken up into 3 lunches so because we have lunch A, we have lunch from 10:15 until 11:10. We eat our lunches in the classroom and once we've finished, we go outside for a lap around the track. When we are outside, we are allowed to take our masks off as long as we are socially distanced. At the end of lunch we come inside which is preceded by us putting

our masks on and using hand sanitizer. After lunch, class resumes again until the end of the day with a few five minute breaks dispersed throughout. At the end of the day there is a staggered dismissal with the students who are on wave 1 of busses being dismissed at 2:08 and students who drive, walk, are being picked up or who ride wave 2 of busses being dismissed at 2:10. We exit through the same door we entered through and masks must remain on at all times. Overall, the school has done a great job of adjusting protocols as needed and I feel safe walking into the building each morning.”

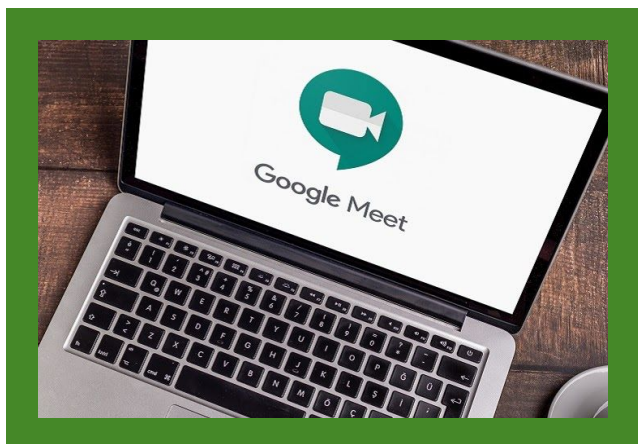
## A New Journey

This year has also seen the start of a new learning platform: e-learning. The addition of this learning platform has seen Mr. Rob Cicchelli instated as principal and Mr. Mike Giroux as vice principal. In talking to Mr. Cicchelli, he has this to say about virtual learning: “I am very proud of our staff and students who have taken on this new learning platform in such a positive way. We have almost 1200 students from JK to 12, with almost 70 staff members who energetically provide learning for our students. We will continue to enhance and improve our techniques and





strategies to make the learning as impactful as possible. We are glad that students and families who made the decision to learn from home have the learn at home option, as part of our Board’s September Ready planning.”



## A Day in the Life of an Online Student

For students who have elected to learn online, a school day can look quite different. Mia Abate, a grade 12 student shared what life as an online student is like.

“A school day for me starts at the dining room table, logged into our google meet by

8:05 which is when class starts. We are asked to sit in a public space in our house and refrain from sitting in our bedroom. Our day starts much like it would in the classroom with attendance, Oh Canada and then prayer. We often spend our mornings doing synchronous learning. This means attending a google meet where we are able to verbally communicate with our teacher and fellow students like we would in a normal classroom. We have lunch from 10:45 until 11:25 allowing us to leave the google meet and eat and/or spend some time outside getting some fresh air. We must be back on the google meet by 11:25 as that is when attendance is taken. Once attendance has been taken, learning resumes, it may be synchronous like the morning or it may be asynchronous. During asynchronous learning, students are provided time to work independently. We are given short breaks throughout the day to get a snack or go to the washroom. Our day ends at 2:10 when we are able to log off for the night. I have really enjoyed online school so far. I decided to learn online because it is what is safest for me and my family but I don’t feel as though I’m missing out on anything. I am very grateful to the school board for allowing me this opportunity.”

## Closing Thoughts

We are living in times fraught with uncertainty and in hard times such as these, it is easy for us to lose hope. When we are experiencing despair, we can turn to the Bible to remind us that God is always near. For as it is said in Deuteronomy 31: 8 “The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.”

