

April 8, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians:

We hope our first week and half of online learning has been a positive experience for your children at home. We have seen some wonderful things evolve as we all embrace the online platform. As we have embarked on the online journey there were many questions that we have encountered and we want to share these answers that we have discovered to date. The intent of our communication today is to share some of the frequently asked questions about the distance learning classroom.

### **FAQs about Distance Learning**

**Question:** Can students connect individually with each other on their own for school work or for socializing?

**Answer:** This is a question that has been asked by our students. As a school, we strongly believe that you as parents/guardians need to be aware of your child's online activities that are occurring outside of the virtual classroom. Therefore, our teachers have been communicating to our students the following message: "you must ask your parents/guardians for permission." Once parental permission has been granted, it will be up to individual students to decide to connect outside of school organized meetings. [Please refer to code of conduct for interacting online.](#)

**Question:** Can I or my child record the online class/meeting with the teacher.

**Answer: NO recording** of online interaction at any time - Things can be taken out of context and used for unintended purposes and we also have to be respectful of the privacy of the other students in the class. We do not record the lessons in our classrooms while in the school. We always have to remember that even though we are not in the traditional classroom at the school, the 'virtual classroom' is our classroom.

**Question:** Can my child's friend from another school join the class for a session.

**Answer:** No – as a school, we have had requests for friends or a child's cousin to join a class in the past. At the start of the school year, we adopted a policy where a child that is not a registered student with our school is not permitted to be in attendance in a class for a visit in order to minimize distractions. This policy would extend to the virtual classrooms as well.



***WHAT STARTS HERE CHANGES THE WORLD***

**Question:** Why were Google Classroom and SeeSaw platforms chosen for the delivery of online learning platforms and not others?

**Answer:** As a school, there were three primary factors that determined our choices for our online learning platforms. First, we wanted to have a platform that parent and students had as much familiarity with as possible as we transitioned from a traditional classroom to a virtual one. Second, the platform had to provide the opportunities for teachers and students to freely share materials (posting assignments and submitting assignments), permit different modes of communication (print, audio, and video), linking to online resources, opportunities for teacher to provide feedback to students, abilities for student collaboration, and be compatible with other programs and applications students are using. Finally, student privacy is also paramount. At least one popular platform that we are not using has had some significant security issues pertaining to student privacy that has affected many schools and school districts in Alberta.

**Question:** When participating in a “Google Meet” or live instruction in SeeSaw, does my child need to have their camera on?

**Answer:** No – we recognize that some students may not want or are comfortable to be on live camera.

**Question:** What are some of the norms and expectations that have been communicated to students about being online?

**Answer:** The Albert Lacombe Catholic Elementary School Google Meet Norms/Expectations to ensure that the classes run as smoothly as possible are as follows:

1. Please make sure the teacher knows who you are. Student are not to be using any aliases.
2. Cameras help students to feel connected with one’s classmates and the teacher. If students choose to use video function (not mandatory), it is important to be aware of one’s surroundings and lighting.
3. Students must be appropriately dressed online.
4. Keep yourself muted unless speaking.
5. “Raised hand” side bar function will be used in larger groups to manage the virtual classroom.
6. Be present. Students should not be flipping through different screens and applications while class is in session
7. Smile! You are on camera, and we can see you chewing! It is encouraged that students refrain from eating or chewing gum while a live class is in session.
8. Be respectful of everyone in the room and their privacy.
9. **Do not record the Google Meet**
10. Choose a quiet workspace with as little background noise as possible.
11. Teachers also have the ability to mute students or remove participants during online instruction if the teacher deems necessary if teaching is interrupted with unnecessary comments or inappropriate student interactions.



**Question:** As a parent, How can I help my child?

**Answer:** There are a number of steps that parents and guardians can take to assist their child/ren and teachers to optimize learning in the virtual classroom.

- Please review our online norms/expectations for Google Meet (section above) so you are aware of classroom expectations.
- Ensure there is location within your home that your child/children can work with minimal disruptions and you can check on them as you determine as needed.
- Parents and guardians, if you are sitting with your child during instruction and assisting them, it is best to have the camera off during this time. We know that parents and guardians have the best of intentions when helping their child, but we want to avoid cases where you openly correcting your child online in the presence of their peers.
- **NO recording** of online interaction at any time. Things can be taken out of context and used for unintended purposes as well as we want to respect the privacy of all of our students while participating on online sessions.
- If you are unsure about something, do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher.

**Reminder: Most Teachers are Working from Home**

We just wanted to remind all parents and guardians that, as per the recommendation of the Chief Medical Officer of Alberta, most of our teachers and educational assistants are working from their homes as they are delivering and supporting programming to students. Consequently, when teachers are making calls to student residences, there will be "Unknown caller," "No Caller ID," "Blocked," or "Private Number."

If parents and guardians are needing to reach their child's teacher, you can either email them, contact the school at 780-459-4478 and a message will be relayed to them, or reach out through Google Classroom.

Yours in education,



Allan Menduk  
Principal  
Albert Lacombe Catholic Elementary School

